Assembling Social forms: Sociological Art Practice in Post-1968 France

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Abstract
The social sciences rarely figure in histories of 1960s and 70s art despite the fact that sociology, anthropology, and psychology inspired novel artistic practices in that period. This dissertation is the first comprehensive study of "sociological art," a movement and artist collective that developed in France following the upheavals of May and June 1968 and declined by the election of the Socialist François Mitterrand in 1981. Artists and critics associated with the movement, including artists Fred Forest, Hervé Fischer, and Jean-Paul Thenot, who founded the Sociological Art Collective in 1974, and critics François Pluchart, Pierre Restany and Bernard Teyssèdre, sought to make art more responsive to the world by combining sociological methods and theory with new artistic currents and media. This dissertation draw on significant archival resources to chart the formation and work of the Sociological Art Collective and to identify dynamic and constitutive relationships between the emergence of sociological art and contemporaneous intellectual, social, and political changes. Structured around four key actions--organizing, questioning, animating, and teaching--the chapters lead readers chronologically through the history of sociological art, seeking, at each turn, to expand art historical interpretation beyond the objects produced to the processes initiated. In its historiographic dimensions, this dissertation examines the concurrent "cultural turn" in the social sciences and "social turn" in art and art history in the 1970s, methodological shifts that led to a dramatic re-conception of art. Rather than rarified objects made by individuals, art would be increasingly envisaged as a cooperative process of communication operating within an enlarged visual field. Furthermore, this project positions sociological art as an important yet unacknowledged historical precedent and foundation for the recent rise of "relational" and "socially-engaged" art practices since the mid-1990s. Originating at the shifting interfaces between the arts, humanities, and social sciences, sociological art advances a hybrid and interdisciplinary model for future histories of art.

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ASSEMBLING SOCIAL FORMS:
SOCIOLOGICAL ART PRACTICE IN POST-1968 FRANCE

Ruth E. Erickson

A DISSERTATION

in

History of Art

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in

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ASSEMBLING SOCIAL FORMS: SOCIOLOGICAL ART PRACTICE IN POST-1968 FRANCE

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Ruth E. Erickson

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ABSTRACT

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The social sciences rarely figure in histories of 1960s and 70s art despite the fact that sociology, anthropology, and psychology inspired novel artistic practices in that period. This dissertation is the first comprehensive study of “sociological art,” a movement and artist collective that developed in France following the upheavals of May and June 1968 and declined by the election of the Socialist François Mitterrand in 1981. Artists and critics associated with the movement, including artists Fred Forest, Hervé Fischer, and Jean-Paul Thenot, who founded the Sociological Art Collective in 1974, and critics François Pluchart, Pierre Restany and Bernard Teyssèdre, sought to make art more responsive to the world by combining sociological methods and theory with new artistic currents and media. This dissertation draw on significant archival resources to chart the formation and work of the Sociological Art Collective and to identify dynamic and constitutive relationships between the emergence of sociological art and contemporaneous intellectual, social, and political changes. Structured around four key actions—organizing, questioning, animating, and teaching—the chapters lead readers
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INTRODUCTION

The Sociological Art Collective (le Collectif d'art sociologique), formed by Fischer, Forest, and Thenot in October of 1974 amid a global call to connect art with society, provides an invaluable framework with which to reconstruct the experimental and ephemeral practices of early sociological art. During their six years of collaboration, the members of the Sociological Art Collective (SAC) drew on an international network of artists, sociologists, philosophers, and students to organize exhibitions, conduct questionnaires, mount large-scale urban interventions, write books, and open a free school in Paris. They sought to make art more responsive to the world by researching and developing an "active practice in the social field." Despite gaining recognition in avant-garde circles and at major international exhibitions in the 1970s, including the Venice Biennale, Documenta, and the São Paolo Bienal, the Collective remains largely unknown in art history. The story of the Collective, however, instantiates a revealing example of the ways that political, intellectual, and artistic histories and practices intersected in the post-1968 period and fundamentally altered art's relationship to society.

The artists recognized sociological art as part of a broad turn toward social issues by a range of practitioners and initially proposed the formation of the collective as a "refuge and working group for all whose research and artistic practice concern social facts and the link between art and society." While the Collective and its supporters

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1 Fred Forest, Hervé Fischer, and Jean-Paul Thenot, "Manifeste II de l’art sociologique," May 1975. See reproduction of this and all the Collective's manifestos in Appendix B. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are the author's own.
2 "Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, et Jean-Paul Thenot ont décidé de constituer un collectif d’art sociologique qui puisse fonctionner comme une structure d’accueil et de travail pour tous ceux dont la recherche et la
hoped to foment a larger and international "movement," the trio constantly struggled
between, on the one hand, the maintenance of the Collective as an entity with defined and
specific conceptions of sociological art and, on the other hand, the radical expansion and
potential dissolution of the Collective and sociological art as such. Seeking to learn about
and promote sociological art as well as enlarge its devotees internationally, Forest carried
out a questionnaire in the fall of 1975. He mailed a printed page with the following three
questions to over 120 artists, critics, and acquaintances around the world: “1. Does
sociological art exist? 2. Do you consider yourself part of this tendency/trend? 3. What is
your own definition of sociological art?” Rather than a survey in the “classic sense of the
word,” Forest envisioned the questionnaire as an “invitation to freely express one’s
opinion on the subject” and, thus, as a pretext for a developing dialogue and community
around sociological art. He referred to respondents as "collaborators" and received
replies from 86 individuals or artist groups, including Art and Language, Didier Bay, Ben
Vautier, Robert Filliou, Gérard Fromanger, Dan Graham, Guerilla Art Action Group, Les
Levine, Marshall McLuhan, Catherine Millet, Jacques Monory, Antonio Muntadas,

pratique artistique ont pour thème fondamental le fait sociologique et le lien entre l’art et la société.” Hervé
Fischer, Fred Forest, Jean-Paul Thenot, “Collectif d’art sociologique, manifeste 1” Le Monde, Arts section,
October 10, 1974, 21.
définition de l’art sociologique?” Fred Forest, “Enquête: Trois questions sur l’art sociologique,” Art
Sociologique vidéo: Dossier (Paris: Union générale d’éditions, 1977), 235. See examples of responses to
the mailed questionnaire in Isabelle Lassignardie, “Fred Forest: Catalogue Raisonné” (Ph.D. dissertation,
Université de Picardie/Amiens, 2010), 421-594. Originals are located in Fonds Fred Forest Ecrits, Dossier
7, Inathèque, Paris.
4 “Il ne s’agit nullement d’une enquête au sens classique du mot comme les envisagent les instituts
spécialisés par exemple mais d’une invitation à exprimer en toute liberté son opinion sur un sujet. Les
questions posées étaient finalement un prétexte.” Fred Forest, Art Sociologique: Dossier, 233-234.
5 I discuss Forest's questionnaire as well as responses in chapter two.
The questionnaire project demarcated a field of parallel practices–of artists and artist groups also engaged with the question and practice of art vis-à-vis society. A dozen people aligned their own work with sociological art, including Carlos Hernandez-Mor of Grup de Treball, one of Spain's most important conceptual art collectives; the American conceptual artist Roger Welch; and Alain Snyers of the French collective Untel. Many more respondents drew comparisons between sociological art and other artists and movements, especially the work of Joseph Beuys, Hans Haacke, Victor Burgin, Stephen Willats, Daniel Buren, Michael Asher, Dan Graham, and Wolf Vostell as well as "contextual art" in Poland, conceptual art, and institutional critique. Some respondents identified commonalities between contemporaneous artistic practices and what they imagined or understood sociological art to be. These included an engagement with facticity or "the real"; art as a process, action, or research project rather than an object; investment in the specificities of a given site or audience; and reliance on the media of photography, text, and video. All of these characteristics have come to define art of the 1960s and 70s, articulated by such key concepts as dematerialization, "the return of the real," and site-specificity. The questionnaire on sociological art constituted by its very existence a temporary and ad-hoc "community" of artists and ideas. The qualities common to these diverse artists–the fabric of this "imagined community"–illustrate the ways in which sociological art integrates and exceeds art history's established narratives about 1970s art practice to propose new ones.

The members of the Collective turned to sociology because it provided alternatives to certain pitfalls of modernist artistic practice and its attendant ideologies, moving away from subjective expression, the production of commodities, and self-referential autonomy. Social science methods of observation, inquiry, and data collection and the representation of findings through photographic media, text, and diagrams appeared to the Collective as more neutral than conventional artistic techniques and media. Sociological research depended upon demographic data and other markers to define the sample or site for social science fieldwork. Furthermore, the idea of research conducted collaboratively by a group attracted the artists who sought to avert the fabrication of finite, saleable objects and the isolation of individual authorship. In contrast to traditional aesthetic and art historical discourses, the sociology of art situated cultural objects in terms of non-cultural forces, underscoring the importance of social, economic, and political contexts often obscured by art's aura of exceptionality. By importing sociological methods and approaches into artistic practice, the artists sought to make visible the conditions and ideologies that shape contemporary society and thereby critically interrogate art's (and people's) relationships to them. As the group wrote in its founding manifesto, published October 10, 1974 in *Le Monde*, "the Sociological Art Collective, through its artistic practice, calls art into question, brings to light sociological facts, and 'visualizes' the elaboration of a sociological theory of art."7

The models denounced by the Collective, however, were themselves passing out of fashion in the 1970s as a rapacious hunger for radical formal experimentation, political

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engagement, and participation took hold in multiple spheres. Indeed, responses to Forest's questionnaire signaled many correspondences between contemporaneous artistic practices and the Collective's critical impulses. But the group argued that its specific relation to sociology—its use (and misuse) of the field's methods—distinguished sociological art from artistic tendencies with which it was often confounded, including the "carryall cultural theme of 'art and society'," "militant art," and conceptual art. In its second manifesto, the Collective sought to clarify sociological art's "necessary epistemological relationship with sociological science," a relationship the artists describe as dialectical: "It sets up an artistic practice that tests it out and that in turn objects it to the force of social reality." According to the Collective's propositions, sociological art acquires a distinct connection to the "objects" of sociology's study—namely, human social behavior and its institutions—that distinguishes it from "all the other traditional or avant-gardist approaches."

The Collective, however, did not simply take from sociology but also contributed to it by generating "a field of investigation and experience for sociological theory." The

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8 "D’autre part, l’art sociologique, par la spécificité de sa relation à la sociologie, n’a rien à voir avec le fourre-tout culturel du thème ‘art et société’. [. . . ] Engagée politiquement, notre pratique sociologique se distingue de l’art militant traditionnel avec lequel on veut aussi la confondre. Ce dernier s’exprime encore avec les formalismes esthétiques et les poncifs picturaux petit-bourgeois, auxquels nous voulons substituer une pratique active de questionnement critique." Fred Forest, Hervé Fischer, and Jean-Paul Thenot, "Manifeste II de l’art sociologique," May 1975. The members of the Collective frequently denounced conceptual art for its tautological replication of modernist introspection, abstraction, and lack of engagement with social issues, citing the work of Joseph Kosuth as a prime example. See, for example, Hervé Fischer, Théorie de l’art sociologique (Paris: Casterman, 1977), 14-20.


10 Ibid.

11 "Le collectif d’art sociologique recourt fondamentalement à la théorie et aux méthodes des sciences sociales. Il veut aussi, par sa pratique, créer un champ d’investigation et d’expérience pour la théorie sociologique." Ibid.
artists often pointed to sociology's lack of an active practice in comparison to psychology and anthropology, and they envisioned their work as means of testing, applying, and modifying sociological theories and methods in the field. In his 1975 essay "Art Sociologique?", Vilém Flusser, the Czech-born philosopher who lived in São Paulo and Paris and was a significant supporter and critic of the Collective, beseeched the group not to renew art through science but rather to renew science through art. He asks rhetorically, "To create a new sociology inspired by artistic activity and, from there, a new kind of knowledge about reality. Is this the reason that the Collective calls itself 'sociological art'?"\(^\text{12}\) If not the initial reason, the practice of sociological art did challenge many aspects of what the artists called "official sociology," which they sharply criticized for its underlying positivism and its service to those in power.\(^\text{13}\) In lieu of the presumed distance between observer and observed and the impulse to construct and represent "man" and "human experience" through rationalist frames of reference, the Collective employed certain sociological methods, such as questionnaires and fieldwork, to involve individuals in dialogical exchange and to encourage the reflection and modification of existing conditions according to participants' ideas and desires. "It is not to enslave art to


\(^\text{13}\) “[La méthodologie de l’art sociologique] ne peut guère emprunter à la sociologie officielle, en ce sens que celle-ci vise à constater et à gérer, à manipuler les attitudes des électeurs/consommateurs par rapport aux propositions fictivement alternatives du système social lui-même, et non pas à mettre en question ces propositions. L’histoire de cette méthodologie constatatoire et bureaucratique est liée aux demandes des organismes gouvernementaux et économiques qui ont financé les enquêtes sociales dans le but d’assurer l’exercice de leur pouvoir.” Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, Jean-Paul Thenot, “Collectif d’art sociologique, manifeste II,” May 1975.
sociology," wrote Fischer in 1977, "but to use one against the other, to get out of the current ideological impasse."\(^{14}\)

Through the mutual encounter of art and sociology, the Collective set out to initiate micro-scale events in response and in opposition to what Michel Foucault described as the "empirico-transcendentalism of the modern episteme." In his important critique of the "human sciences" (psychology, sociology, and anthropology), \textit{Les Mots et les choses: Une archéologie des sciences humaines} (1966) (translated into English as \textit{The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences}, 1970), Foucault argued that these fields constructed "man" as an object of knowledge and a discursive category of study, thereby submitting human beings to administration and control: "man for the human sciences is not that living being with a very particular form (a somewhat special physiology and an almost unique autonomy); he is that living being who, from within the life to which he entirely belongs and by which he is traversed in his whole being, constitutes representations by means of which he lives."\(^{15}\) The Collective challenged the representational claims of sociology and endeavored rather to overcome a quasi-scientific approach to the environment and to engage spectators in reflecting on and inventing new systems. As the group writes in its second manifesto of 1975: "sociological art attempts to question the ideological superstructures, the system of values, the attitudes and mentalities conditioned by the massification of our society. It is for this purpose that the

\(^{14}\) De fait, il n’est pas question pour nous de considérer la sociologie comme une excellente théorie qui puisse faire progresser l’art grâce à un rationalisme qui nous admirerions. À l’opposé de tout scientisme ou positivisme, nous considérons la sociologie comme une théorie extrêmement discutable […]; et ses méthodologies nous paraissent encore plus contestables. Il s’agit non pas d’asservir l’art à la sociologie, mais d’user de l’un à l’encontre de l’autre, pour sortir des impasses idéologiques actuelles." Hervé Fischer, \textit{Théorie de l’art sociologique}, 13.

group uses sociological theory, its methods, and that it develops a pedagogical practice of animation, inquiry, and disruption of communication channels.”

The emergence of sociological art intersected with two significant changes following May '68: the French state launched a major program of "cultural action" and a "cultural turn" took place in the social sciences with the formalization of the sociology of art and visual anthropology as sub-disciplines. Each of these transitions encompasses numerous causes and effects that could be (and are) topics of extensive analysis themselves. However, this dissertation claims that sociological art developed via the confluence of these concurrent shifts and, thus, aims to consider them together, acknowledging the interrelatedness of political, intellectual, and artistic histories via the hybrid practice of sociological art.

16 "L’art sociologique tente de mettre en question les superstructures idéologiques, le système de valeurs, les attitudes et les mentalités conditionnées par la massification de notre société. C’est dans ce but qu’il recourt à la théorie sociologique, à ses méthodes et qu’il élabore une pratique pédagogique d’animation, d’enquête, de perturbation des canaux de communication." Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, Jean-Paul Thenot, “Collectif d’art sociologique, manifeste II,” May 1975.

17 One the one hand, these changes were reactions to May ’68, specific, identifiable shifts that coalesced in a relatively short timeframe following the rupture of the spring protests. On the other hand, they are part of a chain of historical changes—a gradual evolution—which defy the identification of a singular point of origin. These two models of historical understanding and writing—one of ruptures and epistemic changes and the other of gradual cumulative change—pose a particular tension in writing about May ’68. Though often described by its manifestations in Paris, May ’68 encompasses a diverse set of experiences and was part of a swell of uprisings globally. Even within France, it is important to consider May ’68 as connected with protests, such as those surrounding the Algerian war of independence, during throughout the "the long sixties" (a phrase Dr. Nuit Banai and Dr. Hannah Feldman proposed in relation to May ’68 in their 2012 College Art Association Conference panel "Avant ’68: France and the Transnational Flow of Culture in the 'Long Sixties'"). While none of the members of the Collective participated directly in the May ’68 uprisings, each of them describes the events as a turning point, psychologically, intellectually, politically, and artistically. I thus understand May ‘68 as a major break and yet attempt as much as possible to consider precedents in the 1960s.

In many respects, the early events that led to 10 million workers—or two-thirds of France’s workforce—striking in mid-May 1968 issued from the uses and abuses of sociological methods. "Among French students, the field of sociology," the historian Richard Wolin writes, "had become little more than 'data provider'—a handmaiden to the forces of 'governmentality.'" Just after leading the pivotal occupation of administrative buildings on March 22, 1968, at the University of Nanterre, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, a key organizer of May ’68, and three other sociology students wrote and distributed a tract called “Pourquoi des sociologues?” (“Why sociologists?”). The tract, which *Esprit* republished in May, denounces sociology for supporting capitalist rationalization and reaffirming authoritarian structures and calls upon students of sociology to interrogate the field’s social function. Some of these sentiments stemmed from the sociology department’s own radicalized professors, including Henri Lefebvre and Alain Touraine, both of whom were among a small number of faculty members who protested alongside students. "At Nanterre," the sociologist Jean-Louis Fabiani wrote in reflection of the pivotal role the sociology department played in the lead-up to May, "sociology has all the characteristics of a turbulent discipline, where innovation in teaching probably has more importance that conceptual innovation, but where an alternative space of existential possibilities emerges." The protests of May offered an occasion for the galvanization of

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20 The other authors were Jean-Pierre Duteuil, Bertrand Gérard, and Bernard Granautier.
21 The tract was re-published as part of the section “Journal à plusieurs voix,” *Esprit* 6-7 (June-July 1968), n.p..
that "alternative space." Graffiti scrawled on the walls of the Sorbonne in May asked, “When the last sociologist has been strangled with the intestines of the last bureaucrat will we still have ‘problems’?” The question exposes the circular, dead-end process of sociologists defining “problems” so that bureaucrats could occupy themselves with fixing them, the structure that many sociologists worked to transform following May '68.

The French sociologist Edgar Morin, who, not coincidentally, also began teaching at Nanterre in 1968, argued in his article of that year "Pour une sociologie de la crise" (For a Sociology of Crisis) that sociology had attained such "expansion, growth, and development," it was becoming–by its sheer predominance–the source and the cause of its own re-evaluation. The inability of sociology to justly render, with its given methods, the crisis of May '68 led to the field's revision. According to Morin, the events of May–and crises in general–spontaneously evolve and exceed any system of measure. To study a crisis necessitates a dialectical relationship between the observer and observed, whereby analysis constantly adjusts according to the profoundly variable inputs of the unfolding events. Morin's "sociology of crisis" calls for a more qualitative approach, a sentiment echoed by such fellow leftist sociologists as Touraine, Lefebvre, Lefort, and Castoriadis.

24 “De même que la société dont elle était le regard (le miroir?), la sociologie est atteinte par mai 68 en pleine expansion, croissance, développement. […] Avec plus ou moins de violence, plus ou moins de discrimination, la sociologique triomphante, officielle, est dénoncée. Ses techniques en font un instrument de manipulation entre les mains des pouvoirs ; ses théories sont des idéologies camouflées : l'empirisme parcellaire lui-même apparaît moins comme une nécessité de l'investigation que comme une philosophie râtrée, timide et intimidée, destinée à briser en puzzle l'image de la vie sociale." Edgar Morin, "Pour une sociologie de la crise," Communications 12 (1968): 2.
and René Lourau, each of whom infiltrated the field in his own way in the 1960s and 70s. In short, the uprisings of May ’68 catalyzed novel approaches in the field of sociology.

Concomitant with a wave of opposition to sociology's instrumentalization by the state was the institutionalization of the sociology of art as a sub-discipline, which took place through the field's involvement with the French state's new cultural programs. While the identification of the sociology of art as a sub-discipline began in the 1950s, the first foundational studies and texts did not appear in Western academic circles until the mid-1960s to early 70s. In France, Pierre Bourdieu, perhaps more than any other sociologist, is associated with the formation of the sociology of art, beginning with his publication of *Un Art moyen. Essais sur les usages sociaux de la photographie* (1965) (*Photography: A Middle-Brow Art*, translated into English in 1990), an essay inspired by his own use of photography while conducting quantitative research in Algeria, and *L'Amour de l'art* (1966) (*The Love of Art*, translated into English in 1991), an analysis of

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26 Touraine outlined what he termed "sociology of action" in his 1965 text by the same name. He began to study the work of groups in minoritarian social movements, such as feminism, regionalism, and anti-nuclearism (cf. *Le mouvement de mai ou le communisme utopique*, 1968; *Vie et mort du Chili populaire*, 1973). Lourau focused on episodes of radical self-management, such as the takeover at the watch factory LIP (*L'analyseur Lip*, 1974), and the processes of institutionalization (cf. *L'instituant contre l'institué*, 1969; *L'analyse institutionnelle*, 1970). He outlined his views of sociology in *Le gai savoir des sociologues*, 1977. Lefebvre developed his well-known work on cities and urbanism, advocating the interventionist occupation of space (cf. *La révolution urbaine*, 1970; *La production de l'espace*, 1974).

museum audiences. Between these early publications and his best-known book on taste as a means of class reaffirmation, *La Distinction: critique sociale du jugement* (1979) (*Distinction: A Social Critique on the Judgment of Taste*, translated into English in 1984), Bourdieu founded the Center for European Sociology in 1968 and the academic journal *Actes* in 1975, co-published innumerable articles on cultural issues, and advised a generation of young sociologists of art. Bourdieu's concept of "cultural capital" succinctly captures his fundamental argument that culture, rather than simply economics, reproduces social hierarchies. Individuals embody and reaffirm their class position in society by, for instance, visiting a museum, expressing certain tastes, or dressing in a particular style, in other words through the acquisition of cultural capital. The French state intended to intervene in this process through a program of cultural democratization and cultural action.

Following the uprisings of 1968 and the presidential election of 1969, the government’s engagement with the arts took on a more direct character. Just six months after being elected, President Georges Pompidou wrote a letter to the new Minister of Culture, Edmond Michelet, in which he affirmed the importance of cultural affairs in state politics and expressed his desire to build an art center and mount an ambitious exhibition of contemporary French art, both of which would be underway within months. Until his death in April 1972, Pompidou made numerous pronouncements on

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28 Some of his most notable students include Luc Boltanski, Nathalie Heinich, and Loïc Wacquant.
art, architecture, and culture, becoming widely recognized as a proponent of contemporary art. For instance, in a long article published in *Le Monde* in October 1972 under the title "Déclarations sur l'art et l'architecture" (Declarations on art and architecture), the President outlined three fundamental ideals guiding his presidency: free circulation, openness, and the democratization of culture.\(^{31}\) Through diverse efforts grouped under the policy of "action culturelle" ("cultural action"), Pompidou's administration endeavored to expand the French government's programs in the realm of culture, which had been formalized with the creation of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs in 1959 by Charles de Gaulle.\(^{32}\) A special commission, charged with formulating the Republic's cultural action policy, gained approval and funding in 1971 to carry out its multipart plan. As described by the newly appointed Minister of Culture, Jacques Duhamel, "With the VI plan the idea emerges of treating cultural action as a social action."\(^{33}\) The plan's broad conception of culture includes not only fine art but also

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\(^{32}\) The first minister of culture, André Malraux, served throughout the presidency of Charles de Gaulle until 1969 and contributed to the “démocratisation culturelle” by establishing *Maisons de la culture* in the provinces. These institutions exhibited fine art, theater, and music outside of Paris in order to edify these populations and decentralize cultural access. Malraux also founded the *Centre national de l'art contemporain* in 1967 to focus on the acquisition of contemporary art for France's national patrimony. See Olivier Donnat, “La Question de la démocratisation dans la politique culturelle française,” *Modern & Contemporary France* 11, no. 1 (2003): 9–20. Annette Michelson situates Pompidou's agenda in relation to the "prolonged and violent debate on the nature of culture itself" in France. See her article “Beaubourg: The Museum in the Era of Late Capitalism” *Artforum* (April 13, 1975): 62-67.

\(^{33}\) "Comme l’a dit jeudi soir M. Duhamel, ‘avec le VIe Plan se dégage l’idée de traiter l’action culturelle comme une action sociale’. Vis sous cet angle, la culture va au-delà des arts traditionnels, s’élargit à tout ce
historical monuments, urban development, music, the teaching of architecture and audio-visual media, and all that contributes to "the quality of life." The plan also entails the creation of various community cultural centers—Centres d'action culturelles (Centers of Cultural Action) and Etablissements culturels intégrés (Integrated Cultural Establishments) in the provinces that would be focused on animation of audiences rather than on artistic production. Explicitly wide-ranging, the new policy for "cultural action" dramatically reshaped the government's engagement with art as a conduit for broader social issues.

The most explicit and costly embodiment of the Pompidou's agenda was the conception and construction of Beaubourg (named Centre Georges Pompidou after the president’s death) as a new kind of museum, interconnected with its public and environment and serving multiple needs. In his excellent study of the development of Beaubourg, Le Cas Beaubourg, mécénat d'état et démocratisation de la culture (The Case of Beaubourg: State Sponsorship and the Democratization of Culture), the historian and sociologist Laurent Fleury writes, “The creation of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs in 1959 put an end to the divorce between art and the state. The intention of the founders of


34 Ibid.
35 The plan conceives of these centers as smaller and more agile than Malraux's Maisons de la Culture.
36 The law (n. 75-1) passed by the National Assembly on January 3, 1975, that approved the creation of the Centre Georges Pompidou and stipulated its structure, described the Center in this way: "Cet établissement public favorise la création des œuvres de l'art et de l'esprit: il contribue à l'enrichissement du patrimoine culturel de la nation, à l'information et à la formation du public, à la diffusion de la création artistique et à la communication sociale." “Lettre d'information,” n. 1 (January 1975), archived in "Centre Georges Pompidou 1975-1976 / La Construction du Centre Pompidou, BVC TOF cgp 5," Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Paris. The construction of the Centre Georges Pompidou consumed 15% of the national operating budget for culture beginning in 1975.
the Centre, in 1969, was to put an end to the divorce between art and society." The building, site, and programming of the Centre Georges Pompidou conveyed this new agenda. The building's unusual "inside out" design by the architectural team of Renzo Piano (large, brightly-colored pipes and ducts carrying water, electrical wires, and air and usually obscured from view traverse the building's exterior) and its glassy interior and exterior walls convey a sense of candidness, transparency, and penetrability.

Furthermore, Pompidou conceived the Center as a hub of diverse activities rather than as a keeper of the past that would serve multiple social and culture functions, attracting a more diverse public than traditional art museums. Following Pompidou's death, Pontus Hulten, the first director of the Center from 1974 to 1981, stressed the President's vision of the Center, describing the bars, bookstores, cinemas, terraces, and spaces that would serve as social sites within the museum; the "spirit of research" that infuses the Center's programming; and the potential for art to occupy a "gray zone where art, science, and information technology converge." In another text titled "Beaubourg, un musée où

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38 See the numerous bulletins ("lettre d'information") published beginning in January 1975 by the Centre Georges Pompidou's exterior relations office located on Boulevard de Sébastopol. The second letter of April-May 1975 is dedicated to the "very new architectural conception" of the building, and the third letter of September-October 1975 describes the preoccupations of the Center's program as the "décloisonnant des activités culturelles," "constitution d'un pôle d'innovation culturelle," and "service du public." These documents are conserved in "Centre Georges Pompidou 1975-1976 / La Construction du Centre Pompidou, BVC TOF cgp 5," Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Paris.

39 From the very beginning, Pompidou insisted upon the Center's multidisciplinarity. See, for instance, a portion of his 1969 letter reprinted in press materials for the Centre Georges Pompidou: "Le Centre devra comprendre non seulement un vaste musée de peinture et de sculpture, mais des installations spéciales pour la musique, le disque, et éventuellement le cinéma et la recherche théâtrale." "Centre National d'art et de culture Georges Pompidou, Quelques dates..." archived in "Centre Georges Pompidou 1975-1976 / La Construction du Centre Pompidou, BVC TOF cgp 5," Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Paris.

40 Hulten, who had been the director of the Moderna Museet of Stockholm, was personally recommended for the post of director by President Pompidou in 1973. Hulten's article, written in Le Monde in May 1974, was, in part, a response to a suite of criticisms against Beaubourg that came on the heels of Pompidou's death. Multiple exemplary passages convey the nature of discourses around the Center Georges Pompidou.
"Beaubourg, c’est d’abord un effort sans précédent pour abattre des cloisons. C’est la première fois qu’on essaie d’une façon lucide de casser les habitudes qui écartent la musique de la littérature, les arts plastique de cinéma ou de la poésies qu’on nous donne le moyen de concevoir notre environnement." He envisions a "musée-village" with a series of spaces that respect the diversity of experiences, interests, and itineraries of visitors. The "lieu vivant, pas un monument funéraire" could, in a sense, be remade by each visitor who marks out his/her own path. Pontus Hulten, “Beaubourg, un musée où explosera la vie” Realités (February 1974), 21.

41. "Beaubourg, it is above all an unprecedented effort to bring down partitions" between disciplines, individuals, and the spheres of art and life. In the effusive discourses surrounding the Centre Georges Pompidou, the topic of "Art" only rarely appears, overwhelmed perhaps by attention to the Center's architecture and its social, pedagogical, and leisure activities, which were rapidly becoming intertwined with artistic activity.

When the Center opened to the public in 1977, with a record million visitors in the first two months, it included Paris’s first public library, industrial design laboratories, theaters, cafes, bookstores, a museum of modern and contemporary art, and a large public square. A flood of articles following the Center's opening reaffirmed the inauguration of a new museological model. One article highlights the Center's hands-on and participatory pedagogical experiences with the paradoxical admonishment "Forbidden not to touch," and a fashion spread in Elle conveys an image of freedom with models clad in colorful and casual tee-shirt dresses jumping, flying, and hanging freely from the building’s exterior beams and braces. In an Artforum article published in April 1975 (a sign in and of itself of the international interest in the French state's undertaking), Annette Michelson


incisively describes Beaubourg as "the supreme museological instance of the imagination of late capitalism." Writing about the architectural competition, she states, "The scale and complexity of this project required the same rationalization and flexibility which international capital uses for its expansion." Indeed, as the Center developed in subsequent years, it increasingly embodied and performed many fundamental aspects of late capitalism: flexibility, transparency, and confusion of inside and outside; the seamless integration of work, leisure, education, entertainment, and commerce; the solicitation and marketing of critique; and an interdisciplinary and global purview. Fundamental to the Center's image of openness and experimentation was the acceptance, even cultivation, of critique. It eventually adopted a telling quotation by Pompidou—"Art must debate, must contest, must protest"—as a marketing campaign. [Fig. 1] The “new museum” mirrored what the French sociologists Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello have described as the “new spirit of capitalism.” According to authors, this new spirit emerged after May 1968, when companies abandoned the hierarchical Fordist work structure for network-based ones, which privileged flexibility, autonomy, and employee initiative. They fed off critique for their own adaptation, expansion, and strengthening. Boltanski and Chiapello pinpoint the origin of this relationship between capitalism and critique to the period after May '68, to the very moment of the state's expanding engagements with contemporary cultural production.

44 Ibid., 65. In 1975, only a skeletal structure had been completed and basic components of programming discussed.
The state's reclamation and insertion of contemporary art and artistic critique into the logic of technocracy and late capitalism was at the heart of fierce debates and protests surrounding, and at times engulfing, the Centre Georges Pompidou from its inception.\textsuperscript{46} Many viewed the Center as an attempt to control artists (subtly and through invitation) following their visible participation in the uprisings of May '68.\textsuperscript{47} Weeks before the Center's opening, a gathering of artists—perhaps the largest since the protests in 1968—took place at Créteil to meet with representatives of the Centre Georges Pompidou, who attempted to assuage the artists' fears by promising support for artistic creation.\textsuperscript{48} While criticisms of Beaubourg never subsided, artists' direct-action largely died down following the Center's grand opening, perhaps absorbed by, as Jean Baudrillard characterized the Center, "an incinerator absorbing cultural energy and devouring it."\textsuperscript{49} In his 1977 text *L'effet-Beaubourg: implosion et dissuasion* (*The Beaubourg Effect: Implosion and Deterrence*), Baudrillard locates the very processes and effects of postmodernism in Beaubourg:

Beaubourg, the "hypermarket of culture," is already the model of all future forms of controlled "socialization": the retotalization of all the dispersed functions of the body and of social life (work, leisure, media, culture) within a single, homogeneous space-time; it is the retranscription of all contradictory movements

\textsuperscript{46} Two artist-organized groups, in particular—The Salon de la Jeune Peinture and Front des artistes plasticiens (FAP)—led campaigns and petitions against Beaubourg in the early 1970s. I discuss both groups more fully in chapter two.

\textsuperscript{47} During the protests, students occupied the Odeon Theater and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, converting the latter into the Atelier Populaire, where they produced hundreds of posters in support of the protests.

\textsuperscript{48} The widely publicized meeting took place on January 2, 1977.

\textsuperscript{49} Jean Baudrillard, *L'effet-Beaubourg: implosion et dissuasion* (Paris: Editions Galilée, 1977). An excerpt of this text was translated into English by Rosalind Krauss and Annette Michelson and published as "The Beaubourg-Effect: Implosion and Deterrence" *October* 20 (Spring 1982), 3-13. Fred Forest remains one of the staunchest critics of the Centre Georges Pompidou, and in the 1990s, filed a civil suit against the museum to force its disclosure of the acquisition price of a work by Hans Haacke (a suit he initially won and then lost upon retrial). I discuss Forest's actions against the Centre Georges Pompidou in chapter three.
in terms of integrated circuits. It is the space-time of the whole operational simulation of social life.50

In this machine of "cultural fission, political deterrence," representation, distance, reflection, history, and individuals are reduced to a massive barrage of superficial surface effects continually recirculated as if brand new.51 Forest succinctly summarized Beaubourg when he wrote in 1977: "Le monstre, finalement, absorbe tout." (The monster, finally, absorbs all.)52 Viewed from the vantage point of today, the Centre Georges Pompidou epitomizes at an early date the museum as service-provider and experience-maker, an identity that has become central to plans to reform and reinvigorate art museums since the 1990s.53

In what might seem like a remarkably ironic contortion, Bourdieu, his team, and his methods became central to the advancement of the state's cultural endeavors in the 1970s. Indeed, the sociology of art—and especially its criticisms of the hermetic and bourgeois cultural apparatus—served in many respects as the model, data provider, and justification for the state's policy of "cultural action."54 Bourdieu embodied a critical and objective approach to art, museums, and their functions and publics, one that, in its opposition to older models based on elite patronage, specialized knowledge, and rarified

51 Ibid., 3.
54 The art critic Catherine Millet drew a direct comparison between the two, writing in 1978, "Dans ces approches 'sociologisantes' de Beaubourg, on fait souvent référence au travail de Pierre Bourdieu, auteur d'une enquête célèbre sur les musées, l'Amour de l'art, et qui s'est vu confier, par le Centre Georges Pompidou lui-même, une nouvelle enquête auprès de son public." Catherine Millet, "Un point de vue sur Beaubourg," Le Monde, January 26, 1978. As I discuss in chapter two, the state modeled its own first national survey of French cultural practices on Bourdieu's work, and the Centre Georges Pompidou hired Bourdieu and his team to carry out dozens of studies of its public beginning in 1977.
objects, purported to herald a democratic opening of culture. A 1973 television program entitled simply "The Museum" dramatizes the clash between the old and new cultural models while capturing the complexities of the transitional period. The first part of the program juxtaposes "la vieille dame et le sociologue" (the older lady and the sociologist). An unnamed gray-haired woman wearing a dress with a brocade collar serves as a caricature of the old cultural guard. Sitting against a black backdrop and occasionally bringing opera glasses to her face, she dramatically announces art's mystique with such pronouncements as "l'art, c'est indéfinissable" and "l'art est difficile" ("art, it is indefinable" and "art is difficult"). This character (or caricature) is opposed to Bourdieu, who, dressed in a suit, sits at a table in a plain room and responds "objectively, as a sociologist" to the interviewer's questions. Intent to demystify the function of art and museums, he states, "The museum is a place where someone goes to patronize sacred things and to sanctify one's self by the fact of patronizing sacred things." Extending the numerous distinctions (visual, ideological, symbolic) between these divergent viewpoints on culture, the second half of the program focuses on three types of cultural events: a visit to the Louvre, the opening of a Claude Monet exhibition at the Marmottan Museum, and a temporary exhibition erected outside of a Renault factory in Argenteuil by the Centre d'Action Culturelle of Sartrouville (founded as part of Pompidou's policy of cultural action). Once again, the latter event instantiates a break with the classes, knowledge, objects, dress, and behavior associated with the first two. The pop-up exhibition, entitled "L'art et le moyen de s'en servir" (Art and the Way to Use

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55 The hour-long segment "Le musée" was directed by Paul Seban and Bernard Rothstein and aired on January 14, 1973 on channel two as part of the program "Vivre aujourd'hui." Inathèque, Paris.

56 He goes on to discuss how art operates as a means of social distinction, illustrated by the fact that even as museum audiences have increased, the presence of the working classes has not.
It), features photographic, poster-size reproductions of art attached to the cloth sides of a tent, and it includes footage of factory workers, clad in identical jumpsuits, gathered in groups looking at and discussing the reproductions on view. One worker recounts how he has never visited a museum ("never had time; I've been working since I was 14") and another states his aesthetic preference for nineteenth-century art: "The light in Monet," he says, "makes me feel something." As much as the television program contrasts cultural perceptions and behaviors, it also records their uneasy coexistence, embodied flawlessly by the government-funded art exhibition mounted in the cradle of Impressionism for workers at a factory that had been directly involved in the strikes of May '68.\(^{57}\)

When compared to sociology's critical turn against quantitative methods and against the field's lip service to government and enterprise, Bourdieu's research, often undertaken for the state, might appear conservative, but within the realm of art, his conclusions were, in fact, viewed as anything but. Bourdieu associates many fundamental assumptions about art—its aesthetic value, its beauty, its capacity for enlightenment, its universality—not with objects themselves but with the social contexts and processes that produce these assumptions, and he links art's aura to class domination. Parallel to these transformations in sociology, the social history of art was also gaining traction through the scholarship of Francis Haskell, Arnold Hauser, and, perhaps most famous in Anglo-American art history circles, T.J. Clark.\(^{58}\) These scholars sought to identify, to quote Clark in 1973, “connecting links between artistic form [. . . ] and more general historical

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\(^{57}\) For more about the involvement of auto workers during May '68, see Michael Seidman, "Workers in a Repressive Society of Seductions: Parisian Metallurgists in May-June 1968," French Historical Studies 18, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 255-278.

\(^{58}\) Cf., Arnold Hauser, The Social History of Art (1951) and The Sociology of Art (1974); Francis Haskell, Patrons and Painters: A Study in the Relations between Italian Art and Society in the Age of the Baroque (1963); and Timothy Clark, Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution (1973).
structures and processes,” a methodology that has become dominant in the subsequent four decades. The simultaneous evolution of the sociology of art and of social art history in the mid-1960s to the late 1970s and their development of methodologies that engage the study of art with the study of society should be understood in relation to a much broader intellectual expansion. This includes the extraordinary profusion of research in the human and social sciences (especially in the fields of psychoanalysis and anthropology) and the emergence of cultural studies (generally traced back to a mix of leftist sociology and literary activism in 1960s Britain and to such figures as Stuart Hall and Raymond Williams). While attending to the disciplinary and intellectual histories of these companion fields is beyond the scope of this project, it is valuable to recognize certain trends shared among them: there was, for instance, a dehierarchization of forms, including new academic interest in popular culture, comic books, and folk art; a fascination with the "marginal," subcultures, and practices outside of dominant representations; and a dissolution (real and imaginary) of divisions among fields, exemplified by the unending refrain of inter-, multi-, and pluri-disciplinarity. While admittedly set forth here in broad strokes, this intellectual armature subtended the "cultural turn" in the social sciences and the "social turn" in the arts and art history. These political and intellectual changes—specifically the ways in which they interrelate—provide the historical framework within and against which sociological art emerged.

Although the Sociological Art Collective repudiated many of the ideals outlined in Pompidou's plan of cultural action and incarnated by Beaubourg, it also aligned itself

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60 For a brief sketch of these relations since the 1950s, see Victoria E. Bonnell and Lynn Hunt, "Introduction," *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture*, esp. 5-7.
with them, was a product of them. Some of the terms used to describe the Centre Georges Pompidou—“place of meeting,” “site of animation,” “a ‘parallel school’”—are the very same terms that would crop up in the Collective's texts about its own project to found and run the Ecole Sociological Interrogative in 1976. The Collective pointedly proposed this "anti-institution institution" and "parodic school" against the Centre Georges Pompidou, the French University, and other state-sanctioned institutions, and yet its founding discourses of participation, interdisciplinarity, and critical questioning echo Pompidou's cultural agenda. The question of whether or not this mirroring implies that the Collective replicated the systems it intended to criticize (a complaint the artists themselves frequently launched against Pierre Bourdieu, Hans Haacke, and eventually themselves) leads to a rather unproductive cul-de-sac. Distinctions between resistance and collusion seem to grow ever more inchoate during the waning radicalism of the late 1970s.  

Seeking to avert (or perhaps simply accept) the age-old impasse of getting "outside" of a system of which one is inherently a part, this account endeavors to draw attention to the historical specificity of this dilemma of criticality. As I have introduced above and will develop throughout this project, state politics, the social sciences, and the arts intersected deeply and fractiously at this particular moment in France, setting the conditions that made possible sociological art as well as its criticisms and inconsistencies.

The Collective has received its most extensive study from within the field of sociology rather than art history. Blaise Galland, a Swiss sociologist, completed his

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61 Various authors have noted the gradual eradication of radical politics during the 1970s. For instance, Terry Eagleton describes the late 1970s as "post-radical" in "Afterword," *Literary Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008, originally published in 1983), 190-195.

62 Because the Collective did not produce objects *per se* and admonished the sale of work, the representation of the group and its members in museums is negligible, which has contributed to the absence of sociological art in the history of art.
doctoral thesis on sociological art and published it as *Art Sociologique: Méthode pour une sociologie esthétique* (Sociological Art: Method for an Aesthetic Sociology) in 1987.\(^{63}\) Galland's text, written in part as a journalistic account of his own research process, focuses on how the theory of sociological art answers to "the crisis of science"—that is, the critique of positivism and objectivity—by proposing a more reflexive model. While he draws extensively on texts by the artists and sociologists close to the Collective, especially Edgar Morin and Jean Duvignaud, he pays little attention to the artistic quotient of the Collective's theory and projects. Nonetheless, Galland’s text is the most important documentation of the Sociological Art Collective and its history. Texts on post-war French art only occasionally mention the Collective and sociological art and rarely discuss the Collective's collaborative projects, tending to concentrate on the artists individually. For instance, the art critic Catherine Millet, a contemporary of the Collective, briefly summarizes sociological art as having "pedagogical leanings," a reference to working on the level of ethics rather than form, in her survey *L'art contemporain en France* (*Contemporary Art in France*). While she notes the formation of the Collective, she discusses the three members' work separately without mentioning their collaborative projects.\(^{64}\) The reference book *Groupes, mouvements, tendances de l’art contemporain depuis 1945* (*Groups, Movements, Tendencies in Contemporary Art Since 1945*) gives a primarily factual account of "sociological art," including a list of the associated artists, critics, and key exhibitions, but concludes with Forest's conception of an "aesthetic of communication," thereby confusing this later independent path with


sociological art. The only published, English-language survey that includes a discussion of sociological art is the resource book *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*. One of the book's authors, the art historian Kristine Stiles, participated in some of Fischer's collaborative artistic projects in the late 1970s and, thus, includes a cursory summary of the group (largely informed by Fischer's viewpoint) as well as a selection of short texts on sociological art written by Fischer. Since the group's disbanding, its members have received varying degrees of attention. The exhibitions, articles, catalogues, blog posts, and biographies devoted to them customarily mention the artists' involvement with sociological art, but they never plumb further into this hazy history (a hesitancy that the individual artists also share). It is my hope that this dissertation goes beyond these summary accounts in order to elucidate the conception and practice of sociological art and situated them socio-historically.

67 All three artists have also independently published books about their artistic practices and theories. The complete list of books is included in the bibliography, and the artists' innumerable articles are listed on their individual websites. Drafts and manuscripts for the following books especially influenced or synthesized the Collective's ideas: Hervé Fischer, *Art et communication marginale: tampons d'artistes* (Paris: Balland, 1974); Hervé Fischer, *Théorie de l'art sociologique* (Tournai: Casterman, 1977); Hervé Fischer, *L'histoire de l'art est terminée* (Paris: Ballard, 1981); Fred Forest, *Art Sociologique: Dossier* (Paris: Union générale d'éditions, 1977); Jean-Paul Thenot, *Cent lectures de Marcel Duchamp: visualisation d'une intervention sociologique réalisée en 1974* (Crisnée, Belgium: Yellow Now, 1978); and Jean-Paul Thenot, *Vidéothérapie: l'image qui fait renaitre* (Paris: Greco, 1989). Compared to Thenot and Fischer, Forest has received more scholarly attention in the arts, owing to the fact that he has more actively carried on and promoted his artistic career and made himself available to researchers. When Forest donated all of his videos and a large portion of his paper archives to Inathèque in 2008, Isabelle Lassignardie created a catalogue raisonné of Forest's work as her Ph.D. thesis. Stéphanie Jeanjean also wrote a chapter about Forest's participatory video work in her Ph.D. dissertation *Spectatorship and the Screen as Interface: French Art Using Television, Video, and the Projected Image from the Late 1960s to the Present*, Ph.D. dissertation, The City University of New York, 2012. Forest has had numerous survey exhibitions, including *Art and Society: The Work of Fred Forest* at the Slought Foundation, Philadelphia, in 2007, and *L'Homme-média* at the CDA d'Enghien-les-bains in 2013. Fischer had an important retrospective exhibition, entitled *Nouvelle nature* and accompanied by a catalogue, at the Musée d'art moderne in Céret in 2010.
There has been a notable effort in recent years to expand histories of 1960s and 70s art beyond the field's myopic focus on New York. While this trend has led to a blossoming of scholarship on art of the American West, Latin America, and Eastern Europe, there remains a relative dearth of research about experimental practices in France. Nonetheless, some of the best research on sociological art can be found in the handful of studies about 1970s French performance art, especially on the work of Gina Pane and Michel Journiac. Authors such as Janig Bégoc, Frédérique Baumgartner, and Sylvia Mohktari often discuss sociological art as a corollary movement but usually in order to distinguish performance art's engagement with the psyche and subjectivity in contradistinction to the rationality and objectivity of sociological art, an assessment that tends to collapse sociological art with conceptual art without considering its affective dimensions. An important exception is the final chapter of Lily Woodruff's unpublished

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68 In part an effect of the exponential growth of "contemporary art history" as an area of specialization. For an overview of the emergence of "contemporary art history," see Alexander Dumbadze and Suzanne Hudson, Contemporary Art: 1989 to the Present (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013). In 2006, Dumbadze, Hudson, and Joshua Shannon co-founded the Society of Contemporary Art Historians (SCAH), an affiliate of the College Art Association, to focus on the peculiarities of this rapidly expanding niche. To get a sense of the emerging tendency to focus on non-US contemporary art topics, one need only glance through the annual listing of in-process and finished Ph.D. dissertations published by the College Art Association. For more on this global imperative in contemporary art, see Hans Belting, Andrea Buddensieg, and Peter Weibel, The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013).


Ph.D. dissertation, *Disordering the Establishment: Art, Display, and Participation in France, 1958-1981* (Northwestern University, 2012), which she dedicates to the Sociological Art Collective, analyzing the group's continuation of participatory models pioneered by the *Groupe de recherche d'art visuel* (GRAV) in the 1960s. None of these authors, however, undertook significant archival research about sociological art, nor attempts an interdisciplinary approach.

My own interest in sociological art came out of the recent theorization and institutional endorsement of contemporary social art practices. Since the mid-1990s, numerous curators, critics, and art historians have described various “turns” in recent art—from “relational” to “social” to "ethnographic" to “educational”–and noted the associated proliferation of new artistic forms–from shared meals to performative lectures. Scholarship and exhibitions on what has come to be called "social practice," however, have centered largely on art after 1990 and failed to articulate historical lineages. Indicative of this ahistorical institutionalization is the important survey exhibition, catalogue, and accompanying on-line archive *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991-2011* presented by Nato Thompson and Creative Time in 2011. Claire Bishop is the only contributing author to the *Living as Form* catalogue who attempts to articulate a "history" before 1990. Her essay "Participation and Spectacle: Where Are We Now?", like her recent book *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*

71 Woodruff's dissertation is not yet available for reading, but drawing on discussions with the author, I understand her primary argument to be that the Collective lost the affective dimensions of participation, leading to a less successful artistic practice that the prior models she addresses.

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(2012), tackles the topic of participation and the ways in which the ethos of participation
dubiously marries late capitalist economics and political discourses of social inclusion.
However, she does not account for the role of the social sciences in conceiving "the social." Many artists, critics, and curators evoke the fields and methods of the social sciences in discussing contemporary social practice, but they do not seek to historicize this motivating intellectual-artistic relationship.

Hal Foster's seminal essay "The Artist as Ethnographer," published in 1996 at the start of contemporary art's "social turn," presents a key exception. Foster criticizes the power dynamics maintained in many "social practice" projects, which he summarizes as importing artists with institutionally-sanctioned authority into communities to engage local inhabitants. "The quasi-anthropological role set up for the artist," he cautions, "can promote a presuming as much as a questioning of ethnographic authority, an evasion as often as an extension of institutional critique." In addition to criticizing the maintenance of power structures within the social sciences, he describes a pathological longing on the part of artists to be social scientists and on the part of social scientists to be artists, citing numerous examples from the 1970s, including works by Pierre Bourdieu, Dan Graham, Hans Haacke, and Martha Rosler. Yet these artistic practices remain safely ensconced within the history of conceptual art, analyzed according to their ideational and formal characteristics rather than through the kinds of social relations they imaged and

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74 At a few moments in Bishop's useful book, she points to the ways that a sociological framing of social inclusion/exclusion promotes the ideal that social participation might lead to increased equality, but she never, to my knowledge, addresses the ways in which the social sciences (and their intellectual changes during the period under consideration) served political and artistic ends, which were at times queerly opposed and linked. Claire Bishop, Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship (London: Verso, 2012), especially 38, 106-107.


76 Ibid., 197.
engendered. Art historical categories of 1970s artistic practice–conceptual, performance, body, video, and site-specific art–do not accommodate the activities of the Sociological Art Collective, which look much closer to the information campaigns, schools and community centers, mapping initiatives, and so forth that have constituted "social practice" in the last two decades. By offering the first history of sociological art, this dissertation endeavors to elucidate some interrelations among artistic practice and the social sciences in the 1970s and, through this, to offer a history (among the many yet to be written) of social practice as well as new means of discussing social practice seriously in the field of art history.

The structure of this dissertation derives from the Collective’s conception of its practice, specifically what the group describes as its "primary methods of animation, inquiry, and pedagogy." Each method is associated with the formation and approach of a specific member: Thenot, who was trained in psychology and gained his livelihood working as a psychotherapist, focused on acts of questioning, most often through surveys and interactive interviews; Forest, who initially worked for a telephone company and eventually received a Ph.D. in communication, utilized video and new media to incite social animation through interactive and participatory situations; and Fischer, who studied philosophy and taught university courses, conceived his artistic practice as pedagogy and teaching. The enumeration of these three methods–each associated with an individual identity and practice–hints at a persistent tension between the three individuals and the Collective. At the same time, however, the artists saw in one another a shared

77 "Le Collectif d'art sociologique [. . .] recourt aux méthodes de l'animation, de l'enquête et de la pédagogie." Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, Jean-Paul Thenot, "Collectif d’art sociologique, manifeste 1," October 1974. The group frequently reiterated these three methods throughout its tenure.
 ethic, and their independent approaches necessarily shaped the formation, practice, and history of the Collective and sociological art more generally. I have thus structured the four chapters of this dissertation around four key activities: organizing, questioning, animating, and teaching. The first chapter focuses on the formation of the Collective and the latter three on the artists' individual and collective practices. Through this arrangement, I endeavor to elaborate the individual and group work of the artists, while also connecting artistic practice to broader social, political, and intellectual frames.

Organizing, questioning, animating, and teaching were, at once, activist, bureaucratic, and artistic strategies that enlisted multiple visual and material supports, from photography, video, and printmaking to stamps, books, and street signs. These activities also provide a means to expand art historical interpretation beyond the objects produced to the processes initiated.78

“Organizing” refers to the establishment of “sociological art” as an artistic movement as well as the formation of the Collective and its publication and curatorial ventures. Sociological art developed organically among a community of critics and artists in Paris following May 1968, and then, between 1974 and 1976, the Collective advanced and promoted sociological art internationally by publishing four manifestos and organizing exhibitions that included artists such as Hans Haacke, Adrian Piper, Antonio Muntadas, Guerilla Art Action Group, and many others. This chapter considers how the artist collective and artist-curated exhibition challenged conventional notions of authorship, inverted power hierarchies in the art world, and redefined artistic labor. It

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78 In using the gerund form, I aim to exploit the verbal and nominal features of the words and to ask how organizing, questioning, animating, and teaching might function as both object and action of sociological art.
analyzes the Collective’s immense organizational efforts in connection with the widespread espousal of “autogestion”—“self or collective management”—as both a leftist alternative to state rule and capitalism and as part of the emerging service and information economies.

“Questioning” addresses the use of questionnaires and interviews by artists, sociologists, politicians, and museums to initiate exchanges between people and to provoke reflections about existing conditions. In one of his “interactive surveys,” for instance, Thenot asked respondents what a certain color evoked by stating the name and then by holding up a colored piece of paper. Combining his interest in psychology, sociology, linguistics, and art, Thenot’s project analyzed the relationship between language and visual perception, a critical issue due to the international explosion of conceptual art, which refuted visuality as the primary vehicle of art. This chapter situates the Collective’s numerous inquiry projects in relation to the emergence of the “culture questionnaire” as a popular research tool and as an important means of state formation in France beginning in the mid-1960s. Whether employed as a strategy of artistic innovation, political contestation, police interrogation, democratic ideology, or scientific inquiry, questioning constituted a major emerging field of interdisciplinary study and application.

“Animating” focuses on community and urban interventions by the artists and, specifically, their use of video, mass media, and workshops to generate participatory structures among disenfranchised populations. For example, Fred Forest set up a video production studio in a senior citizen home and helped residents to make “collaborative video portraits” about their lives, and the Collective organized a multi-week study and
animation of inhabitants in the French town of Perpignan. While remarkably diverse, these projects embodied democratic participation, ethnographic observation, and therapeutic objectives, and the resulting footage exhibited aesthetic and political qualities similar to films by Jean Rouch, Edgar Morin, Chris Marker, and Jean-Luc Godard. This chapter traces the swelling demand for “social animation” and considers how artists, filmmakers, and social scientists invented novel strategies of representation and social engagement.

“Teaching” explores pedagogy as a politically-motivated artistic practice as well as the figure of the "artist as pedagogue." It centers on the Collective’s final project, the creation of the Ecole Interrogative Sociologique in Fischer’s apartment in 1977 as a place to cultivate exchanges between disciplines and to test the lecture and the teach-in as works of art. Derived from Fischer's theorization of pedagogy as artistic practice, the school hosted over sixty presentations by numerous well-known figures such as Henri Lefebvre and Paul Virilio. This chapter situates the school in relation to reforms of the rigid French university system and to radical pedagogical approaches by such contemporaries as Joseph Beuys, Robert Filliou, and Paulo Freire. Ultimately, the school, coupled with financial stress and management struggles, caused the Collective to fall apart around 1980, but it prefigured the blossoming of artist-run schools in recent decades.

These four chapters lead readers chronologically through the history of sociological art, seeking, at each turn, to account for its complexities by interrelating art's histories with intellectual, political, and economic ones. By focusing on actions rather than objects or mediums, each chapter navigates many media, disciplines, and domains of
research usually kept apart. Evidently, actions manifest themselves through materials, leaving traces necessary to their retrieval. As the first historian to comprehensively study the Collective, I conducted significant archival research throughout France: in the archives of Hervé Fischer at the Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Centre Georges Pompidou; of Fred Forest at the Inathèque, Bibliothèque nationale of France; of Jean-Paul Thenot at his private residence in Juoy; and of critics Pierre Restany and François Pluchart at the Archives de la critique d'art contemporain, Rennes. A selection of primary source documents is included in the appendix. Although the artists eschewed the materialization of their projects owing to the threat of commercialization, these archives abound with physical materials, especially photographs, documents, texts, and videos. While sifting through these materials, I sensed an emerging tension between, on the one hand, the seeming shapelessness of the Collective’s art as it traversed disparate zones of symbolic production and, on the other hand, the repetition of certain supports and forms, such as circled chairs, chain letters, response cards, and community bulletin boards. I came to understand these "forms" not as static entities but as social patterns and structures that developed to stimulate relations between individuals or groups and that are intrinsically and radically oriented to others. "Social" comes from the Latin word "sociālis," meaning of or involving a partner or partners, and "form" comes from the Latin work "forma," meaning shape or arrangement of parts. A "social form" is thus a configuration of individual units that privileges their interrelatedness.

The sociologist Georg Simmel introduced the term "social form" in the early twentieth century to refer to modes of interaction among individuals. As he outlines in his text *Individuality and Social Forms* (1908), sociology is the science of the forms, not the
content, of interactions, and the sociologist must discern the patterns through which people interact.\(^{79}\) He describes lectures, political protests, and so forth as "social forms," as visual manifestations and materializations of social interaction or sociality. The components of social forms are generative and intrinsically interrelated, so that the movement of one element necessarily affects the other; social forms evolve over time and space. The sociologist Bruno Latour has recently reconceived of "the social" in a comparable way. In his text *Re-Assembling the Social* (2008), Latour disputes the idea of the social as analogous to any type of stable material but rather considers it associations in flux and formation, as movement: "The social is not a type of thing either visible or to be postulated. It is visible only by the traces it leaves (under trials) when a new association is being produced between elements which themselves are in no way 'social'."\(^{80}\) While Latour does not utilize the term "social form," he does reiterate Simmel's basic argument about sociology as the study of "a type of momentary association which is characterized by the way it gathers together into new shapes."\(^{81}\) Within the field of art history, where the primary methods of social history and formal analysis are so often pitted against one another, a theory of "social form" offers novel ways of suturing together these methodologies. The art historian might assess the "new shapes" described by Latour through the visual and material ways they imply the constitution, critique, and invention of social relations. In other words, the piecemeal, bricolé quality of a "social form" speaks to the actions that compel its assemblage. I thus


\(^{81}\) Ibid., 64-65.
return to the structure of my dissertation, to the actions–both ideal and real–that led the artists and myself to "assemble social forms," as the title of my dissertation asserts. It is my hope that structure and methodology will bolster one another throughout this dissertation to provide new insights into the history of art and intellectual production from the 1970s to today.
CHAPTER 1: Organizing

"All life, all culture, all art is only one vast learning process. The technique and the ability of organization constantly transforms the means of production, the capabilities of communication, the habits of work, the conditions of creation and life."


Introduction

Sociological art preceded and exceeded the Sociological Art Collective, but it was only through the formation of the Collective and its activities that the “movement”—or perhaps tendency—gained a degree of visibility and recognition. Without the formal constitution of the Sociological Art Collective, the experimental and ephemeral practices associated with sociological art may have been largely forgotten. The administration, promotion, and documentation of the Collective generated a surfeit of materials—manifestos, proposals, budgets, letters, photographs, and videos—that make historical work about sociological art possible. This organizational labor participated in a general shift from an industrial to a postindustrial economy in many developed countries after World War II. Rather than producing products, workers—and increasingly artists—tended to manage, arrange, and implement services and information, leading to the valuation of a different set of skills and the emergence of white-collar artistic labor.

In their influential book Empire, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri trace the metamorphosis from productive to immaterial labor, citing the increasing predominance

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82 "Toute vie, toute culture, tout art n'est qu'un seul et vaste processus d'apprentissage. La technique et la faculté d'organisation transforment sans cesse les moyens de production, les possibilités de communication, les habitudes de travail, les conditions de création et de vie." Fonds Fred Forest, Inathèque, Paris.

83 Michèle Thériault and Vincent Bonin analyze the archival and documentary tasks involved in collective artworks in Documentary Protocols (Montréal: Galerie Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery, 2010).
of affective and creative work. Various art historians, most notably Helen Molesworth and Julia Bryan-Wilson, have connected these economic transformations to changes in artistic labor in the 1960s and 70s. Molesworth writes, “Many artists (like their working and professional counterparts) no longer felt compelled to offer a discrete object produced by hand. Rather, they explored ways of producing art that were analogous to other forms of labor.” In Molesworth's exhibition Work Ethic, she examined artists as workers, managers, and experience makers, connecting instances of novel artistic labor—erasing a drawing, commissioning a painting, drinking beer, or playing Ping-Pong—with the broader deskilling (or rather reskilling) of Western work forces. Bryan-Wilson addresses such changes in connection with two New York-based groups, the Art Workers’ Coalition and the New York Art Strike Against Racism, War, and Repression, that emerged in 1969-70 to agitate for political causes. While her chapters focus on the development of the “art worker” as a new political and artistic identity through individual case studies of Carl Andre, Robert Morris, Lucy Lippard, and Hans Haacke, she also traces how artists worked together to organize demonstrations, campaigns, and exhibitions, and how this activity became an integral part of their artistic practices. By the early 1970s, organizing crisscrossed economic, political, and artistic spheres, merging immaterial labor and leftist conceptions of autogestion (self or collective management) with conceptual, participatory, and event-based art practices.

The formation of the Sociological Art Collective in 1970s France is an instance of the trends described by such scholars as Molesworth and Bryan-Wilson. The group’s formation was a process punctuated by several crucial events. On the one hand, “sociological art,” understood broadly as a spectrum of social and aesthetic commitments, emerged gradually within a community of friends in Paris in the years after the upheavals of May and June 1968. Specifically, Pierre Restany, François Pluchart, Otto Hahn, and Bernard Teyssèdre began to identify “sociological” (sociologique) attributes in the activities of a wide range of artists, including the body artists Gina Pane and Michel Journiac, the Nouveau réaliste sculptor César, and the conceptual painter Daniel Buren. Through their work as critics, curators, and editors, Restany, Pluchart, Hahn, and Teyssèdre gave “sociological art” a degree of visibility that was fundamental to the formation of the Collective. On the other hand, a number of singular events demarcate this history, such as the Collective’s publication of its founding manifesto in October 1974, the first exhibition organized by the Collective in January 1975, and the Collective's representation of France at the 37th Venice Biennale in July 1976. During their eight years of collaboration until 1981, Fischer, Forest, and Thenot published four manifestos, initiated book projects, and arranged numerous group exhibitions featuring international artists. Through these activities, the artists practiced, theorized, and promoted sociological art. Rather than produce objects for others to display and write about, the artists tended to take on the tasks of curators and art critics, thereby modifying the power dynamics that structure the art world.

In the post-May '68 environment, many artists undertook activities that correlated with the political action of self-management. They set up alternative modes of producing...
and distributing art through small-scale publishing endeavors, the postal system, and participatory public events. They also forged institutional identities as collectives, which modified artistic labor, operated as a means of self-promotion, and embodied tensions between the individual and the group. While centered on the Sociological Art Collective, this chapter also points to the local communities and international networks of artists, critics, and collaborators that were also committed to artistic practices of autogestion and constituted the specific contexts in which the Collective emerged, worked, and disbanded. Such a broader picture reveals sociological art as an ethic and set of interests that traversed national borders, media, and practices in the 1970s but that received its name in Paris.

I. Milieu and Formation of the Sociological Art Collective

“Sociological Art”

References to sociology and the formulation “sociological art” begin to appear regularly in the writing of Pierre Restany and François Pluchart following the events of May ’68, marking a radical change in the critics' thinking. In the late 1960s, Restany

87 Pierre Restany (French, b. 1930, d. 2003) wrote art criticism for a wide range of magazines, including Libre propos, Combat, Cimaise, and Domus, and curated exhibitions throughout Europe from the mid-1950s until his death. During his life, Restany tended to launch artistic movements by identifying commonalities among the work of contemporary artists to form a group and then authoring manifestos and organizing exhibitions in that group’s name. In 1956, he designated “Espaces Imaginaires” in connection with lyric or gestural abstraction in the work of Claude Bellegarde, Gianni Bertini, Peter Brüning, Sacha Halpern, and Delahaye. In 1960, he wrote the first manifesto of “Nouveau réalisme” and founded the related group of artists based on their appropriation of industrial and post-war consumer reality. The group included Yves Klein, Jean Tinguely, Raymond Hains, Arman (Armand Pierre Fernandez), François Dufrène, Jacques de la Villeglé, and later César, Mimmo Rotella, and Nikki de Saint Phalle. In 1965, he declared the movement of “Mechanical art” (or "Mec'Art") with a manifesto and exhibition (Hommage à Niéphore Niepce at Galerie J) that featured artists using photomechanical and industrial processes, including Serge Béquier, Gianni Bertini, Pol Bury, Alain Jacquet, Yehuda Neiman, Nikos and Mimmo Rotella. In the 1970s, he focused on body art and sociological art and was central to the constitution of “sociological art,” perhaps the last “movement” that he brought into being (the subject of this chapter). From the late 1970s and on, he continued his collaborations with and support for Fred Forest, and he turned his attention toward nature and environmental movements and theories of postmodernism. See Restany's account of his life in Une vie dans l'art: entretiens avec Jean-François Bory (Paris: Neuchatel, 1983).
and Pluchart wrote for the leftist journal *Combat* and published articles calling for the transformation of the cultural sphere through the work of art, artists, and critics. During the contestations of May '68, sympathies between the two critics increased, and they became actively involved in political agitation. On May 18, Restany and Pluchart published an article entitled "Une autre Bastille à abattre: le Musée d’art moderne" (Another Bastille to Destroy: The Museum of Modern Art), in which they requested the resignation of the Minister of Culture André Malraux and announced the occupation of the *Musée d’art moderne* in order to combat the Fifth Republic’s technocratic administration of culture. “The student revolt,” they wrote, "opens our eyes. All cultural sectors are in solidarity. We must denounce power’s ‘new-look’ culture, the false and promotional politics.” No longer the “marginal maker of ‘beautiful products,’” artists must realize their “new social function that will shape the future society.”

François Pluchart (French, b. 1937, d. 1988) began writing art criticism in 1959 for the journal *Combat* and in its pages criticized the late surrealist and lyrical abstraction of the Ecole de Paris and praised figures from Jean Dubuffet to Jean Piaubert, artists associated with Pop art and *Nouveau réalisme*, and artists associated with more marginal and political production. He also wrote on decorative art for *ABC Décor*, on art sales for *La Côte des Antiquités*, and on contemporary art for *Flash Art* among other international magazines. In the 1970s, he founded and ran the magazine *artitudes* (1971-1977) and opened *Space 640* in Saint-Jeannet. He is known as the most important early supporter of body art in France. See a selection of Pluchart’s writings with commentary in Sylvie Mokhtari, ed., *L’art: un acte de participation au monde, François Pluchart* (Nîmes: CNAP and Editions Jacquiline Chambon, 2002).


day, Restany and Pluchart led, with the critic Otto Hahn, about 200 artists to occupy and temporarily close the museum, an action in solidarity with the May 16th occupation of the Odéon theater and the May 13th occupation and transformation of the École des Beaux-Arts into the Atelier Populaire. The critics’ joint action and participation in the protests of May and June changed their thinking about art and their work as critics.

Restany and Pluchart had both written about the “social dimensions” of artists, from Armand Pierre Fernandez (Arman) to Jean Dubuffet, and had supported, or even launched, various neo-realisms of the 1960s, including Pop art, Nouveau réalisme, and Figuration narrative, but the language and content of their writing shifted after May ’68. The everyday subject matter and industrial processes that Restany and Pluchart had celebrated in the 1960s seemed no longer to suffice; they began to insist that engaging reality occur beyond the material borders of an artwork. The critics pinpointed May ’68

91 See Pluchart’s overview of the events in “Les Hyènes du musée d’art moderne,” Combat, May 27, 1968, 10. This action built upon the model of the Odéon theater, which the Comité d’action révolutionnaire occupied on May 16 in order to turn the cultural site into a place of meeting between artists, students, workers, and so forth. Along with the Sorbonne and Censier, the Odéon became a kind of headquarters in Paris following the “Movement of March 22” at Nanterre. For more information about the Odéon in May, see Alfred Simon and William F. Panici, “The Theatre in May,” Yale French Studies, no. 46 (1971): 139-148.

as the turning point." Restany wrote in his 1969 book *Livre Blanc – Livre Objet*,
“has left the salon and the museum for the factory and the street: it is a departure without
return.” The “fundamental motivation” of art “no longer corresponds to the escape or
refusal of the world, but to the ever-increasing participation in authentic contemporary
reality.”

Everything seemed to be changing, or in desperate need of change. All art
instruction, production, exhibition, distribution, and criticism had to work toward
envisaging an “authentically democratic culture,” which entailed the abolition of
bourgeois values such as beauty, skill, and material worth, and the introduction of new
values based on social and political engagement. “The entire cultural system is to be
questioned,” wrote Pluchart on May 27, 1968.

In the months just after May, Restany and Pluchart envisioned a radical overhaul
of the art world that included reforming art education, abolishing the art market, re-

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imaging galleries and museums, and redefining their own roles as critics. They also
turned their attention to a loose network of little-known Parisian artists working with
their bodies, performance, mass media, video, and expanded forms of event- and concept-
based practices. In conjunction with the critics’ shifting investments, their critical lexicon
began to change as they assessed art according to its utility, accessibility, and
acknowledgement of its physical, social, and economic environments. "Sociologique"
(most often in its adjectival form) began to populate their writing about art, and although
neither critic had studied sociology, the field became a recurring touchstone.

Simultaneously, the discipline of sociology was undergoing significant changes of its
own, including the formation of multiple sub-specializations—in visual art, music, and
urban studies—and an emerging significant public role in shaping governmental policy.
Furthermore, new radio and television shows as well as newspaper columns featuring
sociologists expanded its popular appeal. This escalating interest in sociology reinforced
a widespread understanding of the arts, architecture, and culture as intricately enmeshed
with socio-economic forces. In concert with these changes, the critics adopted the term
“sociological” to identify artists and artworks that interrogated social structures and
institutions.

While the events of May '68 propelled the critics' swing toward sociology,
precedents existed, particularly in the writing and engagements of Restany. The most

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96 By Pluchart, see “Les Flics de l’art moderne,” Combat, May 21, 1968, 7; “Le système des galeries est à
and “Les Derniers points chauds rendus au pouvoir,” Combat, July 8, 1969, 10. See a summary of
Restany’s writing during this time in Rosemary Buteault, “L’Activité critique de Pierre Restany” (master's
97 The question of whether theory or practice came first is difficult, if not impossible, to answer. I would
say that practices, concerns, and theories co-existed and that Pluchart's and Restany’s writing concretized
an ethic that may have otherwise remained generalizable.
prominent example is the first manifesto of *Nouveau réalisme*, authored by Restany in April 1960. He used “sociologique” to articulate the connectivity and integration with modern society that defined the perceptual and material approaches of the titular group of artists, which included Arman, Yves Klein, Daniel Spoerri, Jean Tinguely, and Jacques de la Villeglé. Rather than an imaginative transcription of everyday reality, the expressivity of “new realism” came from the introduction of a “sociological relay” (*relais sociologique*) at the basic level of communication. Ripping a street poster, collecting trash, or fixing the remnants of a meal produced works of art that presented (rather than represented) “sociological reality”—“the common activity of all people, the broad republic of our social exchange, of our commerce in society.”

After the events of May, however, Restany began to question *Nouveau réalisme* for its political neutrality and market success, both of which Restany was largely responsible for propelling. He began searching for new artists and practices that embodied the changed environment and actively contested institutions such as the state and the market. According to Restany, it was the dawning of the “anti-career period” (*époque anti-carrière*), when artists presented “unsellable pieces, unrealistic projects, barely materialized ideas.”

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99 *The New Realism* exhibition curated by Pierre Restany in 1962 at Sidney Janis Gallery in New York City exemplifies the ways that Restany both introduced many of these artists to US markets and characterized the movement as an apolitical engagement with modern industrial society.

100 “Avant 1968, en effet, 'les artistes faisaient une carrière sous la tutelle des bourgeois et selon des étapes clairement articulées,’ alors que, désormais, ‘ils font une anti-carrière tout aussi clairement désarticulée’ en
Restany and other critics attempted to account for and assess the value of art, artists, and critics after May ’68, a language infused with sociology emerged, generating a ground upon which the theories and practices of diverse cultural workers would take shape in the early 1970s.

In the first weeks of June 1968, Restany and Pluchart carried out two conversations between themselves and two young artists, Alain Jacquet and Jean-Pierre Raynaud, and published portions of the transcripts in *Combat*. The discussions concerned the future of art after the “detonation” of May, targeting the institutions that had shaped the art world since at least the mid-nineteenth century. In the first article, entitled "L’Artiste dans la société d’aujourd’hui" (The Artist in Society Today), they addressed the failed system of education for curators and artists.101 Echoing calls for educational reform from May, Jacquet denounced “The School of Fine Arts with its professors [. . .] who relate to absolutely nothing.” And Reynaud exclaimed, “The fine arts are useless.”102

In order for art schools to become effective, Restany and Pluchart speculated that they needed to offer artists “polyvalent training” and put them “in contact with different disciplines.” Restany advised:

We need to create a department of applied sociology and to develop applied sociological studies. What will be interesting tomorrow will be to define the qualities of industrial and technological language that permit us to better sense our being together, to affectively

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recharge our mutual contact. This will constitute in some way the social function of artists tomorrow.\textsuperscript{103}

Through training in sociology, artists might develop means to engage social entities and, thus, become relevant in society.\textsuperscript{104} The second conversation focused on the re-invention of the art museum. Rather than a static conserver of patrimony, the museum became, according to Restany, a “center of information and promotion, a living laboratory of current art” that would serve the public by widely exhibiting and distributing information about art of the period.\textsuperscript{105} To accomplish these tasks, the “living and total museum” would necessitate, as he later elaborated, “fewer curators in the classic sense of the word than versatile animators, promoters of artistic production, sociologists of contemporary art.”\textsuperscript{106}

Restany's appeals to bring sociologists into art museums and departments of applied sociology into art schools would be realized in the subsequent years through the involvement of sociologists in the Centre George Pompidou (discussed in chapter two)

\textsuperscript{103} Restany stated, “Le problème qui se posera de plus en plus sera de trouver cet élément de poésie, de créativité et de communication pure qu’on appelle encore l’art dans la structure technologique et industrielle du monde de demain. Et alors je pense que c’est du ressort de la sociologie. Nous avons besoin de créer tout un département de sociologie appliquée et de développer les études de sociologie appliquée. Ce qui sera intéressant demain, ce sera de définir les qualités du langage industriel et technologique qui nous permettront de nous sentir mieux en étant ensemble, de nous recharger affectivement au contact mutuel et qui constitueront en quelque sorte la fonction sociale des artistes de demain.” “L’Artiste dans la société d’aujourd’hui: une libre conversation au magnétophone entre deux artistes: Alain Jacquet, Jean-Pierre Raymond et deux critiques: François Pluchart and Pierre Restany,” \textit{Combat} (June 3, 1968): 8-9. The title of the article states that the conversation was recorded (“au magnétophone”), possibly to emphasize the directness and veracity of the transcription.

\textsuperscript{104} For Restany, “La fonction sociale des artistes [est] définir les qualités du langage industriel et technologique qui nous permettront de nous sentir mieux en étant ensemble, de nous recharger affectivement au contact mutuel.” \textit{Ibid}.


\textsuperscript{106} “Pour assumer ses tâches, le musée vivant exige de nombreux moyens en hommes: beaucoup moins des conservateurs au sens classique du mot que des animateurs polyvalents, des promoteurs de la production artistique, des sociologues de l’art contemporain.” Pierre Restany, \textit{Livre blanc--objet blanc}, 95.
and the overhaul of the French university system (discussed in chapter four). For these critics, sociology was the perfect accomplice to carry out the “work” of May.

Restany and Pluchart also integrated references to sociology into their discussions of artists’ work. While “sociologique” signified inconsistently, it gradually became aligned with the critics’ swelling support for and admiration of body art, which was just emerging on the Parisian art scene in the late summer and fall of 1968 through the work of Michel Journiac and Gina Pane. Restany, the older and more established of the two critics, made early contact with both artists and introduced them to Pluchart. In a supportive essay for the catalogue of Pane’s first major solo exhibition in Paris in 1970, *Aqua Alta / Pali / Venezia*, an installation about the uncertain future of Venice due to rising water and environmental degradation, Restany championed Pane’s attention to immediate ecological and political issues, writing “Very little contemporary work achieves such an intelligent level in selecting and distributing information.” “I am happy,” he continued, “to accelerate the active introduction of such an approach in the sociological reality of our time.”

107 Gina Pane graduated from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Paris in 1966, and her first action, *Pierres déplacées*, took place in July 1968, marking the young artist’s shift toward event-based supports. Journiac studied theology at the Institut Catholique and then aesthetics at the Sorbonne. In 1964, he had a painting exhibition but considered it a failure and did not include it in his biography. His first installation and action *Parcours – Piège du sang* took place in October 1968.


to modify “reality” or “the world” so as to signify human relations and institutions that structure life, Pluchart took this a step further to articulate defining features of the works themselves. Although Pluchart was initially uncertain of Pane's work, his support for Journiac was immediate and unswerving. In May 1970, he summarized the power of Journiac’s work by writing, “The essential and indisputable force of Journiac lies in the sociological character of his work.”

On the occasion of the Journiac's second major performance, *La Lessive* (The Cleaning), which took place in March 1969 at the Galerie Daniel Templon in Paris, Pluchart identified three aspects that constituted the work’s “sociological character” and would reappear in his texts on Journiac: the artwork as “constat” (document, observation, or report), the critical interrogation of art and society, and collective production. For this piece, Journiac cleaned clothing in buckets and hung it to dry on clotheslines crisscrossing the gallery space. The buckets, soap, and remnants of the event stayed in the gallery for the duration of the exhibition, testifying to the occurrence of an event by conjoining its documentation with the display of the utilized physical materials. For 1970 essay by Restany entitled “La réalité sociologique de Gina Pane,” but no trace of such an article exists in his archives at the Archives de le critique d’art, Rennes. Anne Troche lists it in her bibliography, *Gina Pane: actions* (Fall Edition, Paris, 1997), and Bégoc writes that it is the title for Restany’s catalogue essay on Pane (*L’art corporel et sa réception en France: Chronique 1968-1979*, 182), but the essay in the catalogue is untitled. Pane expressed her gratitude to Restany in a letter dated May 3, 1970: “Cher Ami, Après avoir vu mon œuvre dans le cadre de ‘Donner à Voir’, Jean Lacarde m’a contactée et sans votre intermédiaire je n’aurais pas pu provoquer cette rencontre. Je tiens à vous en exprimer toute ma gratitude. Devant me manifester dans sa galerie le 10 juin 1970, inutile de vous dire comme j’apprécierais votre collaboration et vous en remercie par avance. A bientôt et veuillez recevoir mes meilleurs amitiés que vous voudrez bien transmettre également à Madame Restany. Gina Pane” FR ACA PREST/ART 265 (1), Archives de la critique d’art, Rennes.


Pluchart, Journiac took up and surpassed the *Nouveau Réaliste* gesture of collecting detritus as well as the role of the document (image or text) in performance art. The work records and observes (*constater*) the mundane and symbolic action of cleaning aimed at ridding art (here, embodied in the cloth/canvas of painting) of all marks and history. It is the old avant-garde act of zeroing out painting, or declaring its end, incarnated in the quotidian act of doing laundry. By merging the gallery space with the domestic, gendered, and even classed space of a laundry room, Journiac also interrogated artistic and societal institutions. “The work of art,” Pluchart wrote, “stops being a gallery phenomenon [. . . ] to become a gesture of total societal integration by the most efficacious means.”

He concludes the article by describing how Journiac actualized the transition from a solitary artist making objects of contemplation and fetishism to an artist working at the heart of a new collectivity. It was not that Journiac collaborated with other artists but rather that his work involved a common and shared activity. In the actions, performances, and body art of Journiac from the fall of 1968 forward, Pluchart found “the basic lexicon of the new age that is taking place,” including the transformation of the bourgeois art object, the critical interrogation of art and its context, and socially engaged artistic practices, all of which he signaled with “sociologique.”

In the following years,

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113 “Pour lui [Journiac], l’œuvre d’art a cessé d’être un phénomène de galerie et, lorsqu’il a été bien élevé, de musée, pour devenir un geste d’intégration totale à la société par les moyens les plus efficaces possibles quels que soient leur nom.” François Pluchart, “Le Coup de Journiac,” *Combat*, March 10, 1969, 8-9.

114 “La Lessive telle qu’elle a été assumée par Michel Journiac contient en puissance le lexique de base de l’époque nouvelle qui est en train de prendre place.” François Pluchart, “Le Coup de Journiac,” *Combat*, March 10, 1969, 8-9. Pluchart wrote fifteen articles about the artist’s work between 1968 and 1972 (when he founded *artitudes*, discussed further on). In addition to those already noted, he uses “sociologique” in “Attitudes critiques de Journiac,” February 15, 1971, and “La crucifixion de Journiac,” June 26, 1971. These lists (as well as those in the next footnote) were derived from François Pluchart’s collected writings for *Combat* from 1968-1971 compiled by the Archives de la critique d’art, Rennes. When a page number is not indicated, it is because the available photocopy did not include the page number.
he would write about Pane, Buren, George Segal, Tania Mouraud, Fischer, Forest, and Thenot, as well as a handful of other artists under this rubric.  

By presenting alternative models for art schools and museums, promoting emerging artists, and developing new terminology, Restany and Pluchart sought to transform their roles as art critics. On October 14, 1968, Pluchart dedicated part of his *Combat* column “Le tour d’expositions” (The Tour of Exhibitions) to considering the role of the art critic in society and published contributions by Restany and Pierre Cabanne. Restany forcefully declared the new responsibilities of critics in an article titled “Pour l’avenir: un réseau parallèle” (For the Future: A Parallel Network):

From these contestations, we must draw another lesson, which is the generalization of a new critical responsibility. Before questioning the traditional circuits of diffusion and production of works of art, the critic must entirely rethink the terms of his/her own action, which must now focus on the structural sociology of the life of contemporary art rather than on the aesthetic foundations. [...] Before the bankruptcy of an anachronistic cultural circuit and the increasing socialization of art, the art critic will successfully play the role of promoting new ideas and forms.

The “structural sociology of the life of contemporary art” accounts for, among other things, the physical and social environment of the gallery, forms of spectatorship, economics and labor, and collective dimensions of artistic authorship. By drawing

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116 François Pluchart, “Où en est la critique d’art aujourd’hui ?” *Combat*, October 14, 1968, 8. The occasion was the 20th *Assemblée Générale de l’Association Internationale des Critiques d’Art* (AICA), which had just taken place in Bourdeaux.

attention to such aspects and proffering terms for their assessment, art critics could engender a novel set of values distinct from traditional ones of beauty, skill, and material worth. Of course, such frequently-cited "bourgeois values" had long been discredited by the avant-garde, which since the early twentieth century had prioritized innovation and subversiveness. Restany and Pluchart retained these avant-garde priorities but shifted their orientation away from aesthetic and formal manipulation to social, economic, and political considerations (an emphasis registered by their appeals to sociology). The origin of sociological art resides in this particular combination of post-May ‘68 conditions as they manifested themselves in the activities and writing of Restany and Pluchart.

A Parallel Network

The art critic’s work, however, did not end in the verbal register. In his October 1968 article, Restany also called for critics to set up “a new circuit of diffusion and production intended for the largest number” and to organize “a parallel network of contacts and exchanges, of information and promotion.” The future of experimental and resistant art resided in these alternative systems operating parallel to existing ones. Taking these calls to heart, Pluchart founded the experimental art magazine arTitudes in the fall of 1971 and then opened Espace 640, a small gallery in Saint-Jeannet outside of

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118 Of course, aesthetics are interrelated with social, economic, or political values (e.g. the integration of mass culture elements like newspapers into the picture plane), but I am suggesting that the emphasis in sociological art shifts almost entirely to those aspects normally referred to as "contextual."

Nice, in May 1972. The magazine and gallery would become key platforms for the emergence of body art and sociological art in France.\textsuperscript{120}

*Artitudes* was part of a worldwide blossoming of small-scale magazines devoted to art. In her study *Artists' Magazines: An Alternative Space for Art*, Gwen Allen details how magazines became sites ideally suited to the process-based and conceptual interests of a generation of artists. Inexpensive, accessible, and ephemeral, “the magazine,” she writes, “mirrored art’s heightened sense of its own contingency in the 1960s and 1970s.” She also argues for the magazine’s “radical possibilities as an alternative form of distribution that might replace the privileged space of the museum with a more direct and democratic experience.”\textsuperscript{121} In France, the explosion of magazines in the period from 1967 to the end of the 1970s, when many journals ceased publication, extended the counter-institutional discourses and activities of May ‘68.\textsuperscript{122} Sylvie Mokhtari lists the following journals and dates in her excellent study of French art magazines from this period: *Opus international* (1967-1995), *Robho* (1967-1969), *Chroniques de l’art vivant* (1968-1975), *L’Humidité* (1970-1977), *VH 101* (1970-1972), *arTitudes* (1971-1977), *Peinture Cahiers théoriques* (1971-1985), and *Art Press* (1973).\textsuperscript{123} The critics and artists who founded these journals hoped to modify the fields of art and art criticism by distancing them from the market, giving artists room for unencumbered expression, focusing on marginal movements, and forging novel critical approaches. Throughout the 1970s, these journals provided important spaces to formulate and test a variety of art practices and discourses.

\textsuperscript{120} For an overview of *arTitudes*, see Jean Forneris, *Artitudes de François Pluchart: une revue international à Nice* (Nice: Galerie d’art contemporain des musées, 1978).
\textsuperscript{122} See Kristin Ross’s discussion of radical and grassroots journalism following May ‘68. *May ‘68 and Its Afterlives*, especially 114, 133-137.
In the first issues of many French journals, the editors and editorial teams expressed their desires to nurture interdisciplinary discourses about contemporary art. Such an approach, they reasoned, was essential because so many contemporary artists drew on diverse fields—from cybernetics to linguistics, anthropology, and psychology—in their artwork. In the inaugural issue of *Opus International* in April 1967, the editors wrote, "We are committed to increase the links between different languages in the fields of art and humanities as in the human sciences. There is a necessity to do so: never have the means of creation and communication been more intersected; never have they exchanged their spirit, their methods and even their materials more than now." The editors offered the example of painting, which “is inconceivable without many more references to cinema, advertising, fiction, photography, and linguistics.”

One of the most frequent intersections in the 1960s and 70s was that between the arts and sciences, where the "objectivity" of the latter was envisioned to renew the former. For instance, in the first issue of *Art Press* in the winter of 1973, the critic Catherine Millet listed the journal’s first objective as “the destruction of artistic compartmentalization.”

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124 The initial editorial team consisted of Jean-Clarence Lambert (as chief editor), Gérald Gassiot-Talabot, Alain Jouffroy, Jean-Jacques Lévêque, and Raoul-Jean Moulin. This group of characters had already signaled the experimental and avant-garde nature of the magazines due to their critical and curatorial activities. Gassiot-Talabot coined the term “narrative figuration” in his important exhibition *Mythologies quotidiennes* (1964). Jouffroy was central to producing with Jean-Jacques Lebel Fluxus-inspired events and to introducing pop art to France. Politically-engaged critics and curators like Pierre Gaudibert and Anne Tronche would also serve on the editorial board. Lambert extended his reflections on art’s interdisciplinarity in a chapter titled “L'Attitude artistique devant la science et la technique” in *Le Dépassement de l’art* (Paris: Editions Anthropos, 1974). “Nous sommes convenues de multiplier les liaisons entre les différents langages, dans le domaine des arts et des lettres comme dans celui des science humaines. Il y a là une nécessité: jamais en effet les moyens de création et de communication ne se sont mieux croisés; jamais ils n’ont plus échangés leurs esprits, leurs méthodes, leurs matériaux mêmes. La peinture, pour prendre en exemple l’un de nos sujets centraux, ne se conçoit plus guère sans références au cinéma, à la publicité, au roman, à la photographie, à la linguistique.” *Opus* 1 (April 1967): 5.

125 In the 1960s, the sciences tended to be on the side of engineering or technology. For instance, cybernetics was incredibly important to the French collective GRAV, to such seminal exhibitions as *Information* (1969), and to such experimental displays as E.A.T. (Experiments in Art and Technology) (1967). Beginning in the early 1970s, references to the social sciences seemed to become more predominant, perhaps due to the immense social and political agitation that accompanied the Vietnam War.
contradistinction to the exclusivity and separation of the “traditional art critic,” she intended to “objectify the artistic problematic by drawing on other realities, scientific and social.” “Artistic movements are not isolated phenomena" she wrote, "and cannot be judged by themselves.”

These appeals toward interdisciplinarity were clearly attacks on high modernist criticism aimed at analyzing works of art on their own internal and medium-specific structures, but they also held political implications. May ’68 was largely motivated by demands to abolish hierarchies and divisions in government, among classes, and within the French university system. The utopian alliances envisioned and built between workers and students and between different university departments corresponded to the intellectual affinities described by the editors. In addition to generating alternative spaces of exhibition and systems of distribution, these art magazines cultivated novel methodologies and critical discourses about art. They thereby constituted, to quote Nancy Fraser, “parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs.”

Multiple, inexpensive, and small in scale, these magazines were key sites for the realization of values and actions associated with May

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127 Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” Social Text, no. 25/26 (1990): 67. Gwen Allen analyzes the art magazine’s relationship to theories of the public sphere by Habermas, Kluge and Negt, and Fraser, see Artists’ Magazines: An Alternative Space for Art, 16-40.
'68, including the decentralization of power, the dehierarchization of jobs and media, and exchanges between the arts and social sciences.

Gradually most magazines became aligned with particular strains of contemporary artistic production favored by their small editorial boards. The first issue of *ArTitudes*, titled “Le Corps, materiel d’art” (The Body, Material of Art), evidenced Pluchart’s intense interest in body art, which he declared to be the most recent manifestation of artists using new domains to sow the germs of revolt. Body art, he wrote, “connects ethical interrogation with social critique [and] the analysis of sociological characteristics to lived provocation.”

Pluchart endeavored not only to analyze the ethical, political, societal, and personal implications of the body as a medium of art but also to nurture the nascent movement and to publicize it to a broader audience. A lack of suitable venues for body art in France had inspired his publishing venture in the first place. The magazine became a key channel of exchange and community formation for a handful of artists and critics located around Paris and then around Nice once Pluchart relocated the magazine in the spring of 1972 (when he opened *Espace 640*). Pluchart may have derived inspiration from the model of *Avalanche*, founded in 1968 by

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129 Pluchart positioned French body art as connected with the broader international (primarily American) trend of artists using their bodies. The first issue discussed American artists Vito Acconci, Dennis Oppenheim, and Dan Graham (all three of whom were represented by the Sonnabend Gallery in Paris and exhibited in the 1971 Biennale de Paris) alongside the lesser-known French counterparts of Journiac, Pane and Sarkis (none of whom had regular gallery representation at the time). He also printed his editorials in French and in English and, in the second issue, launched a report on the goings-on in New York titled “New York Miscellaneous.” Despite these endeavors to expand the reach of the magazine, its circulation remained limited.

130 When *ArTitudes* became *ArTitudes International* and changed from its oversized format to a smaller and more easily mailed and archived one in October 1972, Pluchart tempered the magazine’s manifesto-like tone and expanded its coverage beyond body art.
Willoughby Sharp and Liza Bear in close connection with the SoHo alternative art scene, which included artists such as Vito Acconci and Dennis Oppenheim.\textsuperscript{131} As Allen argues, the texts in \textit{Avalanche} (lengthy profiles and interviews) captured the intimacy and humanity of the social setting and contributed to what she terms the magazine’s “anti-criticism”: “an alternative mode of critical commentary, one that rejected the authority of the critic and offered a more direct line of communication to the public.”\textsuperscript{132} This relationship between the production of an art magazine and the creation of a community was fundamental to Pluchart’s conception of \textit{ArTitudes} as a “parallel network.” In addition to reviewing exhibitions, Pluchart invited artists to create works within the magazine and introduced a detachable, fold-out poster for artists to exhibit single works. He also staged conversations that brought artists and critics together, building alliances that went far beyond the confines of the monthly journal.

\textit{Espace 640} operated in concert with \textit{ArTitudes} and offered many artists a venue for their first exhibitions. Pluchart’s decision to locate the gallery just outside of Nice was practical as well as risky and ideological. While less expensive than Paris, Nice had a long history as a destination for artists and was closely associated with the so-called “Ecole de Nice,” a group of artists promoted by Restany that included Arman and Yves Klein.\textsuperscript{133} Perhaps most important, its location was a political decision aligned with the polemical decentralization of art away from Paris to the provinces.\textsuperscript{134} Pluchart maintained a web of supports and contacts with Parisian institutions, especially with Galerie Stadler,

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{134} The gallery’s location outside of Paris has contributed to its marginalization in history.
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the primary exhibition space for body art in Paris, and the journal *Humidité. ArTitudes* regularly reviewed exhibitions at Stadler, and *Humidité* often wrote about the shows and artists of *Espace 640*. Through his journal and gallery, Pluchart erected an important alternative network, furnishing the sites where sociological art would form.

**Community Relations**

By the summer of 1972, Pluchart was acquainted with Fischer, Forest, and Thenot, and the work or writing of all three artists would figure among the pages of *ArTitudes* by October 1972. Of the three artists, Thenot was the first to meet Pluchart via the introduction of the artist Jean-Pierre Raynaud in October 1969 at the opening of César's exhibition at Galerie Mathias Fels, the gallery where Thenot would have many of his exhibitions in the early 1970s. When Thenot carried out his mail art project *Constats d’existence* in the summer of 1970, Pluchart lauded the artist’s “brilliant entry” into the art world in a positive review in *Combat*, and he would host many of Thenot's questionnaire projects in the pages of *ArTitudes*.135 Forest met Pluchart around 1970 at *Combat*, where Forest worked as a cartoonist and Pluchart wrote art criticism.136 Forest would also use the pages of *ArTitudes* to carry out an iteration of his *Space-media* in the summer of 1972 by reproducing the front page of the magazine with the content removed and inviting readers to fill in the black space with their own information.137 Fischer met Pluchart via Journiac and Bernard Teyssèdre sometime in the summer of 1972. Teyssèdre was an art critic at *Nouvel Observateur* and a professor at the Sorbonne where he founded an important interdisciplinary arts program in the early 1970s, where Fischer occasionally

taught. As part of his critical analysis of the political function of art, Fischer published a manifesto-like statement entitled "Pour une pratique artistique socio-pédagogique" ("For a socio-pedagogical artistic practice") as a foldout poster in the first issue of *ArTitudes International* in October/November 1972. Therefore, the three artists who would form the Sociological Art Collective were part of the tight circle around Pluchart’s magazine. Like the magazine, *Espace 640* reaffirmed connections among artists, featuring exhibitions by Journiac (January-February), Fischer (March-April), Pane (April), Maccheroni (May), and Thenot (July) in its first six months.

Through his myriad objectives—to build a community and movement, to garner attention for contemporary French artists, and, undoubtedly, to promote his own publishing and curatorial endeavors—Pluchart sought to formalize a “socio-corporeal group” of artists. He initiated the idea by organizing a conversation between Journiac, Fischer, Pane, and Thenot that took place on November 18, 1973 at the apartment of Pane and was published in *ArTitudes*. During the conversation, the artists agreed on the social orientation and critical function of their approaches and on the elimination of traditional artistic language, and they frequently employed the collective “nous” (“we”) to convey their affinity. Pane stated, for instance, “The term ‘aesthetic,’ the term ‘plastic,’ the term ‘beauty,’ have been eliminated from my practice and, I think, from yours. [. . .] We do the work of a sociologist but empirically by passing from experiences at a personal level to extrapolate them in relation to a group.” Fischer continued, “We aim

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138 The program, founded in 1971, was called “Arts plastiques, d'esthétique et des sciences de l'art” and aimed to bring together theory and practice. Artists such as Bernard Rancillac, Henri Cueco, Michel Journiac, Lygia Clark and Léa Lublin taught in the program.
140 “Le terme ‘esthétique,’ le terme ‘plastique,’ le terme ‘beau’ ont été éliminés de ma pratique et, je pense, des vôtres. [. . .] Nous faisons un travail de sociologue, mais de façon empirique, en passant par des
to achieve a communication that bypasses the traditional gallery or framed painting. We have something to say that is critical. [. . .] We all aim to transform society.”¹⁴¹ They shared a desire to determine an alternative language for art connected with society and distinct from the formal language of “critical painting” associated with Supports/Surfaces artists such as Louis Cane, Marc Devade, Daniel Dezeuze, and Claude Viallat. Their interests resided in finding ulterior means and identities outside of the art world and modern tradition. “What I am doing right now,” Thenot confirmed, “does not directly concern the artistic milieu.”¹⁴² Journiac positively described this marginality from the art world as what united the group: “We make the work that we make because we are situated on the margin, and it is this idea of the margin that right now seems to be the most important.”¹⁴³ Opposition to aesthetic and formal qualities and commitment to questions served as points of contact for these four artists.

The artists' positions diverged, however, according to the methods employed. A rift emerged between the rationality of “art sociologique” associated with Fischer and Thenot and the subjectivity of “art corporel” associated with Pane and Journiac. Fischer summarized the differences: “Gina Pane and Michel Journiac criticize the language that they are trying to surpass at the level of the suffering of the body, at the level of the cry, at the level of the lived thing. Me, I critique the artistic imaginary, subjectivity, experiences à un niveau personnel pour les extrapolier par rapport à un groupe.” The term "plastic" refers in English and French to the physical manipulation of arts materials, such as modeling in clay or carving in stone, and thus emphasizes craft and the act of making. Ibid., 9.

¹⁴¹ “Nous avons le souci d’arriver à une communication qui court-circuite le cadre de la galerie traditionnelle et de la peinture encadrée. Nous avons quelque chose à dire qui est critique. [. . .] Nous visons tous à transformer la société: c’est un point qui nous est commun de façon plus ou moins lointaine.” Ibid., 10–11.

¹⁴² “Ceux que j’effectue actuellement n’intéressent pas directement le milieu artistique, qui n’est informé que lorsque le travail a eu lieu.” Ibid., 7.

¹⁴³ “Nous faisons le travail que nous faisons parce que nous sommes situés en marge, et c’est cette notion de marge qui, à l’heure actuelle, me paraît la plus importante.” Ibid., 9.
sentimentality, and the domain of the irrational through a reduction to the level of rational analyses.”

According to Fischer, the body, nature, and what one assumes is “spontaneous, violent, and outside of language and of the social order” was always already ideologically determined, and the artist should work on these social, political, and economic determinations rather than on individual experience. Pointing to a narcissistic element of some of the extreme events that Pane and Journiac put their bodies through, Thenot asks, “What of the outside world does killing oneself change?” Pane and Journiac responded by rejecting the rational, objective, and neutral ambitions of Fischer and Thenot, which, they stated, diminished human experience and reaffirmed dominant paradigms. Journiac called rationality “the trap of a society that wants to reduce man to a framework to be able to domesticate him as quickly as possible.”

Echoing this sense of constriction, Pane said to Fischer, “You approve an entire given system of organization of human function, which is that of the relation of capital predetermining the needs of man. In a certain way, this imposes a slavery in relation to what one gives him.”

Rational sociological art, according to Journiac and Pane, did not make room for the polyvalence of human experience, including the joyous, traumatic, and singular events. They argued that experiences at an individual level affect larger social aggregates and must be recognized as socially and politically important. Throughout the long

144 Gine Pane and Michel Journiac s’attaquent au langage, qu’ils essaient de surmonter au niveau de la souffrance du corps, au niveau du cri, au niveau de la chose vécue. Moi, je m’attaque à l’imaginaire artistique, à la subjectivité, à la sentimentalité, au domaine de l’irrationnel par une réduction au niveau d’analyses rationnelles.” Ibid., 6.
145 “En quoi change-t-on le monde extérieur en se suicidant?” Ibid., 16.
146 “La rationalité me paraît être le piège d’une société qui veut réduire l’homme à un cadre, de façon à pouvoir le domestiquer le plus rapidement possible. Elle n’a pas réussi à la châtrer, donc elle l’éduque sexuellement. C’est une manière de la châtrer autrement.” Ibid., 7.
147 “Si tu n’es pas d’accord avec moi, tu approuves tout un système donné d’organisation de la fonction humaine qui est celui du rapport de capitaux en préjugéant un besoin de l’homme qui, d’une certaine façon, implique un esclavage par rapport à ce qu’on lui donne.” Ibid., 14.
conversation, a tension persisted between, on one side, a common ethic and set of concerns about art’s relationship in society and, on the other side, divergent approaches and conceptions of the individual’s and the psyche's role. Although Pluchart failed to cohere a socio-corporel group, he fostered relationships and discussions among these artists.

The following summer, Journiac started to convene meetings at his apartment on rue Le Regrattier on Ile Saint-Louis. The first meeting took place in the beginning of July and was followed by meetings on September 16 and October 11, 1974. In addition to the five participants of the ArTitudes discussion, the group included Forest, the Spanish-born video artist Joan Rabascall, text artist Jean-François Bory, sculptors Thierry Agullo and Bertrand Lavier, as well as Serge Oldenbourg, Jocelyne Hervé, and Teyssèdre. The meetings (signs in and of themselves of a shared desire to determine new working relations among artists) focused on the French trajectory of what had become a global phenomenon of socially engaged art. Several contemporary European exhibitions explored the social practice of artists. Harald Szeemann’s Documenta 5 (June–October 1972), entitled 100 Days of Inquiry into Reality and discussed in chapter two, juxtaposed art objects with media images to situate fine art within its social and political contexts. The exhibition Kunst im Politischen Kampf (Art in the Political Struggle), first shown in 1973 at the Kunstverein Hanover, was re-exhibited as Art into Society, Society into Art at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London from October to December 1974. It included

148 The first meeting in early July brought together Jean François Bory, Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, Jocelyne Hervé, Michel Journiac, Gina Pane, and Jean-Paul Thenot. The second on September 16 included Thierry Agullo, Jean François Bory, Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, Jocelyne Hervé, Michel Journiac, Bertrand Lavier, Gina Pane, Jean-Paul Thenot, and François Pluchart. The third took place on October 11 and included Thierry Agullo, Jean François Bory, Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, Jocelyne Hervé, Michel Journiac, Bertrand Lavier, Serge Oldenbourg, Gina Pane, Joan Rabascal, Jean-Paul Thenot, and Bernard Teyssèdre (whom the Collective met for the first time).
a visitor poll by Hans Haacke and daily public discussions with Joseph Beuys. Similarly, the group of Paris-based artists and critics hoped to foment a French movement of socially-committed work and plan a series of related exhibitions. The only remaining documentation of these meetings are seating diagrams made by Thenot acting as secretary. [IMAGE] These diagrams evince the physical proximity of Fischer, Forest, and Thenot, who over the course of the summer grew frustrated by the group's theoretical divergences and began to forge alliances with each other.

Sometime in late September 1974, the trio of Fischer, Forest, and Thenot decided to form a collective and coordinated the publication of their founding manifesto to coincide with the next group meeting. The artists arrived at the October 11 meeting with a copy of the previous day’s *Le Monde* newspaper in their hands. On page twenty-one of the *Arts et spectacles* section, they had published a manifesto declaring the formation of the "Collectif d’art sociologique" (Sociological Art Collective).149 [Fig. 2] Through the declarative stance of the manifesto, Forest, Fischer, and Thenot set out the principles of their socially-engaged art. And even if those principles remained relatively vague, the exclusion of certain approaches, especially “art corporel” and conceptual art, demarcated divisions between the trio and the other artists who had been meeting since July. Rabascall described the manifesto as the “mini coup d’état of Forest-Fischer-Thenot.” “We were all aware that sociological art existed,” he wrote; “it was simply a reality that necessitated being rendered evident.”150 Sociological art’s formalization marked a turning point in a long process that began sometime after May ’68 through Pluchart's and

149 Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, Jean-Paul Thenot, “Collectif d’art sociologique, manifeste 1,” October 10, 1974.
Restany's work as critics and curators. The Collective emerged from and against this alternative arts milieu, fracturing the larger community and sparking six years of collaboration.

**Open and Closed**

The manifesto begins, “[We] have decided to constitute a Collective of Sociological Art that can operate as a refuge and a working group for all whose research and artistic practice concern social facts and the link between art and society.” It goes on to describe the Collective’s intent to use the theory and methods of sociology to develop an active practice of inquiry, animation, and pedagogy. By announcing the Sociological Art Collective, the manifesto formalized existing allegiances, but it also revealed a deep tension between the Collective as an open versus closed entity, especially as it related to the immediate Parisian community. While the first paragraph conveys a receptive spirit (the authors describe the collective as a “structure d’accueil,” literally a “structure of reception”), the subsequent paragraphs outline the group’s agenda to elaborate "a sociological theory of art” through recourse to the "theory and methods of the social sciences.”

In a short text written weeks after publishing the manifesto, the members of the Collective sought to remedy this indeterminacy by declaring the group's inclusion of artists ("especially foreign") working in the direction of sociological art. The "working cell" ("cellule de travail," a description often used in the sciences), the artists explain, is

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151 "Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, et Jean-Paul Thénot ont décidé de constituer un *collectif d’art sociologique* qui puisse fonctionner comme une structure d’accueil et de travail pour tous ceux dont la recherche et la pratique artistique ont pour thème fondamental le fait sociologique et le lien entre l’art et la société.” Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, Jean-Paul Thenot, “Collectif d’art sociologique, manifeste 1,” October 11, 1974.

"destined to rapidly grow on the basis of a shared theory that privileges sociological research." To build this "super-group," the Collective announces its request to Bernard Teyssèdre to "take charge of the constitution and animation of a platform for multiple tendencies," which the critic undertakes immediately by planning group exhibitions and editing a number of the journal *Opus* dedicated to sociological art.153 This model of multiple, individual tendencies united by theoretical allegiances and grouped under an overarching conception of sociological art had motivated the Collective's formation from the beginning. In the same text, the artists describe "a mutual appreciation of our respective and singular but apparently complementary work" and declare themselves "once again fundamentally attached to the term sociological art to the exclusion of all others."154 These early documents evidence the artists' aspirations to identify a common orientation and ethic called sociological art and to strengthen the identity of the Collective, all the while preserving their individual approaches. As will become evident, frictions between these two levels (the individual and the group as well as the Collective and a broader movement) ultimately eroded the Collective's exterior relationships and interior cohesion.

Following the initial manifesto, the artists published three group manifestoes: “Manifeste II de l’art sociologique” in May 1975; “Manifeste III de l’art sociologique: Méthodologie et stratégie” in March 1976 (this text was reprinted in the Venice Biennale catalogue in June 1976); and “Manifeste IV de l’art sociologique: Art et économie” in

153 "Cette cellule de travail [. . .] est donc destinée à s'élargir rapidement sur les bases d’un consensus théorique où la recherche spécifiquement sociologique reste privilégiée.” “[N]ous lui demandons de prendre en main la constitution et l'animation de cette plate-forme aux tendances multiples.” See manuscript "Individual/Group Text" (Fall 1974), Fonds Fred Forest, Inathèque, Paris.
February 1977. These texts are among the few documents bearing the names of all three artists and communicate a unity often absent in their artistic work. During the Collective’s eight years of existence, the artists undertook a handful of truly collaborative artistic projects that had identities distinct from the members’ individual work. These include the intervention in the town Perpignan in 1976 (discussed in chapter three) and the creation of the Ecole Sociologique Interrogative in 1977 (discussed in chapter four). More often, however, the Collective served as a mechanism to encourage the artists’ independent pursuits and a framework to refocus them. Thenot continued to conduct his questionnaires and interviews, developing an extended practice in concert with his concept of “arthèrapie” ("art therapy"). Forest concentrated on mass media interventions and the creation of participatory video environments. Fischer persisted with his Hygiène de l’art campaign by physically destroying works of art and then developed his Pharmacie project to address social concerns. The artists envisioned their individual projects as part of the corpus of “sociological art,” even retroactively labeling their work as such. The artists, however, spent a considerable amount of time writing manifestos and organizing exhibitions, activities that entailed significant collaboration and negotiation and served to solidify and promote the Collective's identity. This labor of fostering a movement of sociological art went hand in hand with the kinds of alternative, socially engaged, and discursive art practices that the artists advocated as well as the political movement of self-management.

155 Manifestoes one through three addressed the practice and theory of sociological art, and the fourth manifesto was a general condemnation of art's relationship to capitalist interests. According to the artists, they usually wrote the manifestos together by drawing on each other’s individual texts and debating ideas in person. The text of all are available in Appendix B.
II. Collective Artistic Labor

Association, Autogestion, and the Collective Subject

The group’s formation occurred amid a frenzy of new collective models that accompanied the break-up of the French Communist Party and subsequent growth of smaller leftist groups—or groupuscules.\(^{156}\) When the Collective officially incorporated on November 13, 1974, under France’s association law of 1901, it was one of about 24,000 groups created in that year alone as compared to 20,000 created in the 69 years before.\(^{157}\)

[Fig. 3] In her influential book *May ’68 and Its Afterlives*, Kristin Ross suggests that the proliferation of small-scale collective endeavors in politics, publishing, and journalism after May ‘68 attests to the impact of the uprising on social organization.\(^{158}\) Ross calls the events of May and June “political experiments in declassification”: “in students ceasing to function as students, workers as workers, and farmers as farmers.”\(^{159}\) The protests, according to Ross, "swept away categorical territories and social definitions, and achieved unforeseen alliances and synchronicities *between* social sectors and between


\(^{158}\) Ross is combating the strongly dismissive character of many readings of May ’68, specifically the idea that the events of May didn’t change anything politically. Kristin Ross, *May ’68 and Its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

very diverse people working together to conduct their affairs collectively.\footnote{Ibid., 6-7.} Countless meetings took place around a common set of aspirations, and divisions between directors and subordinates were challenged, if not eradicated. This "participation in a social collective" produced a post-May ’68 relationnel political subjectivity "built around a polemics of equality."\footnote{Ibid., 11. According to Ross, this relationnel political subjectivity proved extremely difficult to represent because it disavowed given conceptions of the social, specifically the hierarchical collection of distinct constituencies formulated by sociologists. The art collective offers an interesting counterpoint given its multiple means of self-representation.}

Ross's account, however, does not include small-scale art collectives among the afterlives of May ’68, despite the numerous groups that emerged and redefined artistic production and authorship at this time. A partial list of collectives includes:


Such an inventory makes clear the fertile period between 1968 and the early 1980s,
during which more than a dozen artist groups formed and disbanded. The curators of the 1969 Paris Biennale devoted it to art collectives. "Today," they wrote, "there is a natural movement that pushes artists to group together, to complement each other, or to contradict each other in order to move beyond the expression of individual sentiments and to encounter the collective demands of a new society in formation." In France, the blossoming of artist collectives and groups in the late 1960s and early 1970s intersected with a number of specific yet rarely acknowledged historical changes: autogestion—self or collective management—became a popular labor, economic, and political model for the left; the right of individuals to forms associations became constitutional; and French philosophers articulated novel conceptions of authorship and production. The Sociological Art Collective's decision and capacity to form stemmed from the artists' direct and indirect relationships with these changes, all of which contributed to the group's conception of artistic labor.

Between the founding of the journal Autogestion in December 1966 and the election of Mitterrand in 1981, autogestion became indispensable to leftist re-imaginings of France and modern life. Labor groups, political parties, newspapers, journals, factory workers, and activists throughout France in the 1970s discussed autogestion as an

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164 "Aujourd'hui, c’est un mouvement naturel qui pousse les artistes à se grouper entre eux, à se compléter ou se contredire pour dépasser l’expression de sentiments individuels et rencontrer les exigences collectives d’une nouvelle société qui se forge." The exhibition featured over twenty groups from more than thirty countries. Jacques Lassaigne, ed., Sixième biennale de Paris, manifestation biennale et internationale des jeunes artistes du 2 octobre au 2 novembre 1969 (Paris, Musée d’art moderne de la ville de Paris, 1969), 11.
165 A very complete bibliography on autogestion with mostly French sources can be downloaded from www.acratie.eu/FTPUTOP/UTO-AUTO.DOC.
alternative to capitalist society. According to the French historian Franck Georgi, the term "autogestion" first appeared in France in the 1950s via Yugoslavia, which unlike other Eastern Bloc countries and in accordance with Josip Broz Tito's economic plan, became a model of socialist self-management (samoupravljanje) and profit sharing. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Algerian independence movement employed the term to convey a sovereign and liberated land, and in 1964, the secular labor group Confédération française démocratique du travail (CFDT) (having broken from the Confédération française des travailleurs chrétiens [CFTC]) advocated autogestion as a platform of socialist and democratic governance. These powerful political examples inspired many leftist intellectuals beginning in the mid-1960s.

In the first issue of the journal Autogestion in 1966, Henri Lefebvre offered the following definition: "The concept of self-management [autogestion] today is the opening into the possible. It is the way and the outcome, the force that can raise the colossal weight that weighs down and burdens society. It shows the practical path to change life, which is the watchword, the goal, and the sense of revolution." By the mid-1960s, autogestion was the tactical response to alienation in modern capitalist society, and its possibilities seemed infinite. Journals such as Arguments, Socialisme ou

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166 Lucien Goldmann and Serge Mallet discuss the breadth of interest in autogestion in "Débat sur l'autogestion," Autogestion 7 (December 1968): 57-75.
Barbarie, Internationale situationniste, and Cause commune explored and championed models of autogestion, as did a number of influential sociologists, including Edgar Morin, Alain Touraine, and Jean Duvignaud. The thriving discourse of autogestion fueled the demands of dissatisfied workers and frustrated students to demand greater control over the institutions that governed their lives.¹⁷⁰ According to the historian Pierre Rosanvallon, May '68 marked the dawn of "l'âge de l'autogestion" (the age of self-management).¹⁷¹ "Autogestion," Rosanvallon later wrote, "traversed the French political sky like a meteor in the 1970s."¹⁷²

If autogestion reached its apogee during the 1970s, it also underwent significant changes that ultimately led to its disappearance from prominent political discussions by the early 1980s, a period of time that paralleled the rise and fall of many art collectives. In the early 1970s, a number of major international conferences increased the profile of autogestion, including the First International Sociological Conference on Participation and Self-Management held in Dubrovnik, Croatia, in December 1972, and a CFDT congress dedicated to workers' participation in determining working conditions in May and June 1973. Just after the CFDT meeting, the union leader Charles Piaget led the influential worker occupation of the LIP watch factory in Besançon.¹⁷³ Cries to take control of the means of production increased alongside an economic slowdown. At the

¹⁷⁰ Touraine and Lefebvre protested alongside students at Nanterre and CFDT came out in strong support of the protests (in contrast to the French Communist Party and CFTC).
same time, a liberalization of the idea of autogestion took place as demands for reform went beyond labor into ecology, lifestyle, school, justice, and women's rights. In what Georgi calls “autogestion generalisée” (generalized self-management), references to California, the counter-culture, Ivan Illich, and cybernetics replaced citations of Yugoslavia, political parties, Marx and Proudhon, and workers revolution. Somewhat watered down, autogestion morphed into a broad-based call for liberalization. The election of the socialist Mitterrand in May 1981 solidified this shift as his presidency installed what has been termed "participatory democracy," which entailed government decentralization and new rights for workers. Changes to the title of the journal Autogestion reflect this evolution. Amidst the initial explosion of interest in autogestion, the editors added “et socialisme” in 1970 to make more precise the journal's political position, and then, in 1980, they removed “et socialisme” and added an "s" for the new title Autogestions, which mirrored the leftist pluralism of Mitterrand's era.

The dramatic increase in the association of groups in the early 1970s paralleled the expansion of discourses around alternative management and governing structures. In France, the freedom of individuals to form groups without royal or governmental authorization was made a law in 1901 ("Loi d'association de 1901") and made a constitutional right in 1971. The original decree read, "Association is an agreement by which two or more people share, committedly, their knowledge or activity for a purpose other than sharing profits. It is governed, as to its validity, by the general principles of...

law applicable to contracts and obligations.\textsuperscript{177} It was part of a suite of laws enacted during the Third Republic that assured the basic rights of man including the liberty of the press (July 29, 1881), right to divorce (July 29, 1882), and separation of church and state (December 9, 1905).\textsuperscript{178} The law stipulated that groups had to have two or more members and a non-profit agenda, and by officially submitting notice of their formation, they received recognition and tax exemption. The oppositional zeal for alternative institutions after May '68 led to a flood of declarations of small-scale, radical political groups, which did not go unnoticed by government officials. In 1970, the Minister of the Interior, Raymond Marcellin (retained by Pompidou from De Gaulle's cabinet), attempted to stem the proliferation of groups by modifying the law to require administrative authorization.\textsuperscript{179} These changes led to the outlawing of the \textit{Gauche Prolétarienne} (GP, Proletarian Left) on May 27, 1970, a Maoist-inspired, far-left workers association formed in September 1968 by militants from Nanterre and authors of the paper \textit{La Cause de peuple}. Eleven days after the dissolution of GP, Jean-Paul Sartre, Michel Leiris, and Simone de Beauvoir deposited a request for an association called "Les Amis de la Cause du Peuple" that Marcellin intervened to deny. The dispute was ultimately brought before the National Assembly, and on July 16, 1971, the constitutional council declared the \textit{Loi d'association} a constitutional right. Detractors of the constitutional change warned that "tomorrow, the government will have to approve groups proposing to encourage drug

\textsuperscript{177} "L'association est la convention par laquelle deux ou plusieurs personnes mettent en commun, d'une façon permanente, leurs connaissances ou leur activité dans un but autre que de partager des bénéfices. Elle est régie, quant à sa validité, par les principes généraux du droit applicable aux contrats et obligations." The decree is reproduced in Jean-Claude Bardout, \textit{L'Histoire étonnante de la loi 1901: le droit d'association en France avant et après Waldeck-Rousseau} (Lyon: Edition Juris-Service, 2000).

\textsuperscript{178} \textit{Ibid.}, 145-146.

\textsuperscript{179} \textit{Ibid.}, 211-219.
addiction, promote homosexuality, or simply overturn the Republic." This episode in the early 1970s illustrates the perceived threats that such small-scale groups posed to controlling bodies, but the unequivocal affirmation of the right to associate fostered the ongoing formation of groups.

Concurrent with this upsurge in collectivization, numerous French philosophers and intellectuals, including Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida, were critically interrogating authorship. The best-known example is Barthes' 1967 essay "The Death of the Author," in which he argues against fixing meaning and interpreting a text based on the author's identity or intent. In Barthes' formulation, the death of the author portends the birth of the reader who, through the act of reading, produces his or her own meanings. With the author dislocated from a privileged position and textual signification collectively produced, attention in literary theory turned to issues of reception. Concomitant with these concerns, other prominent philosophers such as Gilles Deleuze, Julia Kristeva, and Jean-Luc Nancy carried forward the subject's destabilization by envisioning subjectivity as something in process rather than static. Subjectivity, according to these thinkers, is relational and reactive to others. These broad currents of thought—variously labeled post-structuralism, post-modernism, and deconstruction—drew upon models of collectivity to redefine the author and subject in France beginning in the late 1960s. Collectivity, however, was not only a theoretical and philosophical

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181 The essay's first English-language publication was in the American journal Aspen, no. 5-6 (1967); the French debut was in the magazine Manteia, no. 5 (1968).
182 Rudely summarized here but widely addressed by other scholars, "French theory" greatly influenced academics in the United States beginning in the 1980s. See François Cusset, French Theory: How
proposition but also a way of working for many of these authors at a moment in France's history when the compulsion to collectivize was a powerful political expression. Foucault was one of three founders of the *Groupe d'information sur les prisons* (GIP) (an association declared on February 8, 1971), and Deleuze and Félix Guattari's collaborative writing embodied the foldings and becomings described throughout their books.\(^{183}\)

Philosophical desubjugation problematizes the "self" of "self-management" by envisioning subjects not as whole, sovereign entities but as enmeshed with others. The ideal and practice of a collective, however, embraces this inherent multiplicity of the self (the artist and the author); indeed, collectives make this multiplicity the basis of creation.

Determining relationships between these economic, political, and philosophical conditions and the arts has taken many forms, but none has sufficiently accounted for the ways that these broader conditions intersected with the formation of artist collectives in France in the 1970s, and specifically how these collectives modified artistic labor. For instance, in her important book *The Visual World of French Theory: Figurations* (2010), Sarah Wilson traces "encounters" between French intellectuals (Althusser, Bourdieu, Deleuze, Guattari, Lyotard, and Derrida) and painters associated with *Figuration Narrative* (Lapoujade, Cremonini, Rancillac, Fanti, Monory, and Adami) to argue that a generation of well-known (to the English-speaking academic audience) philosophers formulated "the new postmodern mindset" via their contacts with practically unknown (to

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the same audience) contemporary artists.\textsuperscript{184} Her chapters identify particular points of contact, usually a philosopher writing an essay for an artist's exhibition, and then go on to analyze the content and sometimes the production of the figurative, pop-influenced, "realist critical painting" of \textit{Figuration Narrative}.\textsuperscript{185} She briefly mentions two important artist collectives of the late 1960s and early 1970s: \textit{Collectif d'antifasciste} and \textit{Salon de la jeune peinture}, which Arroyo and other \textit{Figuration Narrative} artists took over in 1965. Both groups consisted primarily of politicized painters, and perhaps because of the members' traditional formal means and realist style, Wilson focuses her attention on the content of the paintings and exhibitions rather than on the artists' labor of organization. For instance, she describes the politically charged iconography of the four-by-five meter \textit{Grand Tableau Antifasciste} ("Large Antifascist Painting") made by Jean-Jacques Lebel, Enrico Baj, Erro, Roberto Crippa, Gianni Dova, and Antonio Recalcati in 1960. Similarly, concerning the \textit{Salon Rouge pour le Vietnam} ("Red Room for Vietnam"), an exhibition organized by the \textit{Salon de la jeune peinture} artist Pierre Burgalio in 1968, she narrates the contents of Lucio Fanti's romantic and stoic depictions of Vietnamese families and Henri Cueco's Delacroix-inspired conflation of May '68 barricade protests with the rising up of the Vietnamese against the US-led invasion.\textsuperscript{186}

\textsuperscript{184} Sarah Wilson, \textit{The Visual World of French Theory: Figurations} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).
\textsuperscript{185} For instance, Bourdieu writes a text entitled "L'Image de l'image" ("The Image of the Image") for Rancillac's 1967 exhibition at Galerie Mommaton in Paris that addresses Rancillac's appropriation of photographic images from the press and his purposeful doubling of the images through painting as a way of harnessing and questioning photography's claims of objective verisimilitude. It is indicative, Wilson suggests, of Bourdieu's and Rancillac's relationship to communism—desiring to submit to it and to disavow it. \textit{Ibid.}, 35.
\textsuperscript{186} \textit{Ibid.} About the \textit{Collectif d'antifasciste}, see p. 37-38, and about the \textit{Salon Rouge pour le Vietnam}, see p. 102-104.
Wilson does not address how these group endeavors changed artists' expenditures of time and labor because she keeps organization separate from the more traditional artistic labor of painting. However, the coordination of the *Salon Rouge pour le Vietnam*, which after opening at A.R.C. toured factories and youth clubs in the provinces, seems as important, if not more important, than the straightforward political themes repeated across the canvases. By analyzing organization as an activity intertwined with artistic and political intentions, Wilson might have resolved the apparent gap between the artists' advanced agendas and retrograde forms. In a review of Wilson's book, Nuit Banai identifies this seeming disjunction: "The trouble with Narrative Figuration, to put it mildly, has been the apparent dissonance between the artists' formal means and political ends when the prevalent assumption is that critical political art must be advanced in form."187

Planning meetings, distributing tracts, and drawing an organizational chart were, at once, the results of administering a group, conceptualizing an idea, and plotting a revolution. Such tasks increasingly occupied artists' time, especially in the case of artist collectives, and replaced (or became) their "artworks." Distinctions between artistic and non-artistic labor had already been diminished by Fluxus, minimalism, and conceptual art in the 1950s and 60s, but the constitution of groups further changed artistic labor and the types of artistic projects undertaken. Even the physical manifestations of organization–typed pages, meetings and events, installations, photographs, and recordings–closely paralleled the material manifestations of conceptual, performance, and video art. Many research-intensive and community-based artworks would not have been physically or

intellectually possible without the work of a group. The coordination between multiple people and parts also altered the "form" of the artwork, which tended to unfold over time and multiple points in space. Attending to the organizational labor of artists offers a key re-assessment of French art of the late 1960s and 70s by highlighting its connections with the concurrent debates about the association law and autogestion.

Although undoubtedly part of this broad impulse to self-organize, the Collective did not directly identify its own formation with politically-inflected autogestion, but the group often described its sociological art practice through the concept of autogestion. In the third manifesto, "Méthodologie et stratégie" (Methodology and Strategy), the Collective uses the phrase "autogestion de la pensée" ("self-management of thought") to describe the intended effect of art sociologique on an individual. "This practice," the artists write, "reveals the operation of real social relations between social categories, modes of exploitation, the political logic of the dominant value systems [...] so that each person can critically exercise his/her judgment and freedom in relation to the social order, which presents itself as natural and necessary." This description implies that sociological art provokes unconstrained and liberated thought at the level of the individual, which leads to the reassessment of conventional categories. The artists likely drew inspiration from the sociologist Jean Duvignaud's essay "L'autogestion de l'imagination" (Imaginary Self-management), published in November 1972 in Cause.

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188 “Cette pratique [...] révèle le fonctionnement des rapports sociaux réels entre les catégories sociales, les modes d’exploitation, la logique politique des systèmes de valeurs dominant [...], permettant ainsi à chacun un exercice critique de son jugement et de sa liberté par rapport à un ordre social qui se présente faussement comme naturel et nécessaire. Cette autogestion de la pensée peut être obtenue grâce à l’effet multiplié de différentes techniques.” Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, Jean-Paul Thenot, "Manifeste III de l’art sociologique: Méthodologie et stratégie,” (March 1976).
Commune, where Forest worked as an illustrator. Duvignaud elaborates on art and sociology as practices of "awakening" and "animation":

What we call the self-management of the imaginary is of the same nature as social (if not political) self-management: it means a collective action whose expression [...] reveals itself in diverse ways: the invention of new relations between men and women, parents and children, the communal organization of decisions, but also symbolic innovations using elements like cooking, dance and love gestures, tattoos.189

To carry out this work, Duvignaud describes "a man of a new genre, who is neither anthropologist, nor psychologist, nor sociologist, nor artist, but who has traits of all these without having dogmatic suppositions."190 The Collective envisioned itself as such a character and set out to generate theories and actions that encouraged people to seize control over their thoughts and imagination and thereby create new ways of beings together. To appreciate the artists' practice, it is helpful to turn to a project conceived as an "experience of autogestion."191

For one week in October 1978 in the neighborhood Jordann in Amsterdam, Fischer carried out a project called Jordaners, maak uw krant (Inhabitants of Jordaan, Write your own journal). He convinced the daily newspaper Het Parool to set aside one page where residents could contribute their own content (a model with direct links to Forest's Space-Media project discussed in chapter three). With the help of the artist Alain Snyers, the De Appel Foundation, which funded the project, and a host of local

189 "Ce que nous appelons l’auto-gestion de l’imaginaire est de même nature que l’auto-gestion sociale (sinon politique): il s’agit d’une action collective dont l’expression peut, mais pas nécessairement, être individuelle et qui se révèle à elle-même et aux autres par des manifestations diverses: invention des relations inédites entre hommes et femmes, parents et enfants, organisation de décisions commune, mais aussi innovations symboliques utilisant certains éléments comme la cuisine, la gestuelle dansée ou amoureuse, les tatouages, les rêves ou les contes et souvent même la formalisation picturale, musicale, ou littéraire.” Jean Duvignaud, “L’autogestion de l’imaginaire” Cause Commune 4 (November 1972): 51.
190 “[...] un homme d’un genre nouveau, qui ne soit ni anthropologue, ni psychanalyste, ni sociologue, ni artiste, qui ait des traits de tous sans en avoir les présupposés dogmatiques.” Ibid.
participants, Fischer prepared a physical space and meetings ("séances d'autogestion") for the project as well as systems to accept contributions, make edits and layouts, and send the page to the publisher. In his evaluation of the project, Fischer concluded that it showed residents that "self-management was possible": "It demonstrated that untrained neighborhood inhabitants—and especially the middle class, which was very active [. . .]– were capable of taking charge of such a project, to realize it with a high level of quality, to assure the pluralism of opinions." 192 But owing to the small number of participants and its limited duration and impact (one week and five pages of the journal), the project only "symbolically realized autogestion" rather than authentically. In his book L'Histoire de l'art est terminée (The History of Art is Finished), Fischer discusses the difficulty of rallying a broad-based and collective project in a society that "operates daily according to the principles of authority and the division of work" and that comprises a "juxtaposition of individuals." 193 Nonetheless, Jordaners, maak uw krant fulfilled a central vision of sociological art: to modify existing relationships, in this case between the producers and consumers of information, through the contributions of individuals working together. Such work, Fischer stated, is both essential to the practical execution of the project and "a desired principal that the methodological, mental, and interrogative process be discussed

192 "L'autogestion a été possible. La démonstration est faite que les habitants non préparés d'un quartier sont capables–et c'est surtout la classe moyenne qui a été active, les intellectuels dédaignant apparemment l'expérience–de prendre en charge un tel projet, de le réaliser à un bon niveau de qualité, d'assurer le pluralisme des opinions et cette sorte de 'contrôle social spontané' que peut espérer un rédacteur en chef prenant le risque d'une telle expérience." Ibid.
and analyzed collectively."¹⁹⁴ By bringing individual residents together to work on a project that empowered the temporary collective in relation to larger and abstract structures of power (in this case, information or the media), Fischer hoped to modify social, political, intellectual, psychological, and emotional arrangements between self/other, individual/group, and so forth, which seems fundamental to the utopian and engaged character of sociological art.

The possibility that enacting collective work and collaboration could counteract the alienating and divisive effects of modern society inspired countless activists, intellectuals, and artists to form groups in the 1970s. Rather than accumulating and privatizing capital and power, these collective efforts sought to distribute them. While tensions between individuals and factions marred many of these efforts, the sheer volume and tenacity of groups focused on self-management and self-organization—where the "self" is imagined as multiple–shaped the decade following 1968. Through its own formation, theory, and projects, the Sociological Art Collective activated experiences of autogestion on a small scale.

**Consolidation and Tension**

While the creation of the Collective incited tensions within its immediate community, the Collective also sparked new alliances. The critic Teyssèdre, who had participated in the final group meeting on October 11 and had grown sympathetic to the Collective's ideas, played a decisive early role in establishing a more public profile for the Collective. He organized the Collective's first exhibition, *L'Art contre l'idéologie* (Art

¹⁹⁴ "D'une part parce qu'un tel projet n'est pas physiquement et intellectuellement réalisable par une seule personne, d'autre part parce que c'est un principe souhaitable que le processus méthodologique, mental, interrogatif soit discuté, analysé collectivement." *Ibid.*, 178.
Against Ideology), which took place December 10, 1974, to January 4, 1975, at Galerie Rencontres in Paris, and also edited an issue of the journal *Opus* dedicated to sociological art, which was published in April 1975. The public venues of the exhibition and magazine increased the presence of sociological art and the notoriety of the Collective within Paris's small experimental arts scene. At every juncture, however, tensions erupted between, on the one hand, the breadth of practices, artists, and ideas being associated with the label "sociological art" and, on the other hand, the Collective's attempts to specify sociological art's methods and practices.

*L'Art contre l'idéologie* combined four kinds of objects: artworks by six artists who had participated in the group meetings; documents of projects by Hans Haacke, Group Rosario, and Guerilla Art Action Group that had been censored and become well-known cases in the arts to rally against excesses of power; a documentary film by a university group for immigrant rights; and the Collective's questionnaire project. The impressive range of materials presented reaffirmed that conceptual or ideological concerns were paramount to formal or stylistic ones. Teyssèdre described the work on view as revealing the truth about art’s relationships to its ideological, socio-economic, and political contexts and thereby perturbing the systems in place. The exhibition included Jean-François Bory, Collectif d’art Sociologique, Groupe de Rosario, Guerilla Art Action Group (Jon Hendricks, Jean Toche), Haacke, Journiac, Maccheroni, Serge Oldenberg.

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195 Teyssèdre also worked intensively to organize a major exhibition titled "Art sociologique, art socio-critique" at A.R.C. for the fall of 1975. Teyssèdre envisioned five sections, each coordinated by a different person: "métodes sociologiques d'animation et d'enquête" by Jean-Marc Ponsot, "le corps sociologique, stratégies de rencontre et d'échange, animation" by François Pluchart, "art et contre-information dans les pays anglo-saxon" by David Medalla, "ironie et détournement, image critique" by Soulillou. However, this event was ultimately canceled a couple months prior to its intended opening by A.R.C. head curator Dany Bloch, who cited the lack of sufficient preparations, the prior representation of sociological art through the Collective's exhibition at Musée Galliera and project at Neuenkirchen, and the lack of a necessary budget. Had the exhibition moved forward, it is interesting to consider the potential impact it might have had on the legacy of sociological art, specifically the visibility a major exhibition may have brought to the Collective. See letters conserved in the private archives of Bernard Teyssèdre, Paris, France.

196 The exhibition included Jean-François Bory, Collectif d’art Sociologique, Groupe de Rosario, Guerilla Art Action Group (Jon Hendricks, Jean Toche), Haacke, Journiac, Maccheroni, Serge Oldenberg.
largely ignored distinctions concerning medium, style, or discipline and rather created
alliances between works (and artists or artist groups) according to Teyssèdre's curatorial
logic. Thematic exhibitions with strong curatorial visions that rejected traditional
museological or art historical frames became important yet contested forums at this time.
Harald Szeemann's pioneering exhibitions, especially *When Attitudes Become Forms*
(1969) and *Documenta 5* (1972), are often cited as origin points of what Paul O'Neill
calls "curatorial criticism," when "the space of exhibition [is] given critical precedence
over that of the objects of art."\(^{197}\) Many artists rejected the fragmentary and illustrative
function of artists' work in exhibitions that were themselves quasi-artworks. In a 1972
text entitled "Exhibition of an Exhibition," the French artist Daniel Buren criticized
Szeemann's approach: "More and more, the subject of an exhibition tends not to be the
display of artworks, but the exhibition of the exhibition as a work of art."\(^{198}\) The
exhibition became an artistic medium aligned with conceptual and research-based
practices and with partisan intentions at times unrelated to those of the exhibiting
artists.\(^{199}\) Teyssèdre's *L'Art contre l'idéologie* fell within these 1970s shifts in curatorial
labor and exhibition design, and the exhibition, which has never been described or

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Galerie Rencontres, 1974), n.p. The text of the catalogue was reprinted in *ArTitudes*, no. 18/20 (January–

Rugg and Michèle Sedgwick, eds. (Bristol, UK: Intellect, 2007), 13.

\(^{198}\) Daniel Buren, "Where are the Artists?" *The Next Documenta Should Be Curated by an Artist*, Jens
curator Jen Hoffmann's proposal that the next Documenta should be curated by an artist, by reprinting his
1972 text "Exhibition of an Exhibition" written in February 1972.

\(^{199}\) About the theorization of the exhibition, see Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube* (Berkeley:
University of California Press, 2000) (these essays first appeared in *Artnet* in 1976); and, more recently,
Jens Hoffman, ed. *The Next Documenta Should Be Curated by an Artist* (New York: e-flux/Revolver,
2003). Artists for whom the exhibition as medium is important include Marcel Broodthaers, Group
Material, Louise Lawler, and Fred Wilson.
studied, established an initial representation of sociological art, shaped by Teyssèdre's liberal conception of art and political investments.

Even among the fine art objects presented by self-described artists, the sculptures, photographs, and television-based pieces proffered diverse societal critiques. Journiac’s guillotine sculpture (*Piège pour une exécution capitale*, 1971) and Maccheroni’s series of jars filled with blood (*Cadeau pour les partisans de la peine de mort*, 1972) addressed the issue of capital punishment. [Fig. 4] Opposition to capital punishment and to the poor treatment of prisoners was already growing in the early 1970s, and the execution by guillotine of Claude Buffet and Roger Bontems (both of similar age to many of the artists) on November 28, 1972, galvanized resistance. In late November or early December 1972, Journiac's two-meter high guillotine sculpture, which he had made and exhibited a year earlier as part of *Peintures et objets* (Paintings and Objects) at Musée Galliera, was used as part of a group action protesting the execution of Buffet and Bontems near the buildings of the *Unité d'enseignement et de recherché* (Unit of Teaching and Research, UER) on Saint-Charles Street in Paris. Maccheroni's jars filled with blood-red paint, tied with a tri-color ribbon, and labeled with initials of the executed men presented, as the title suggests, a grotesque offering to supporters of the death penalty. Both works directly responded to pressing contemporary political and ethical

200 Claude Buffet (who had been imprisoned for murder) and Roger Bontems (who had been imprisoned for stealing) had attempted to flee prison by taking hostage three people in the prison infirmary, and following the 24-hour standoff with police, an event rapaciously followed on television, two of the hostages were discovered dead with their throats cut, an action attributed to Buffet but that led both men to be condemned to death by guillotine. President Pompidou refused the appeals of the men's lawyers, and it was the first execution during Pompidou's presidency and the last to take place in Paris. See Robert Badinter, *L'Exécution* (Paris: Editions Grasset and Fasquelle), 1973. Badinter was one of the lawyers for Botems, and Mitterand appointed him the Minister of Justice in 1981, after which the death penalty was eliminated.

debates, and they illustrated the kind of critical engagement and demystification that Teyssèdre promoted. The other works, however, proffered less clearly delineated critiques. Serge Oldenbourg covered posters from the Commune of Paris with barbed wire as an expression of the inaccessibility of leftist political change, and Sonso obliterated the image on a television monitor by electronically inserting a black square. Joan Rabascall created a massive, wall-length collage of high culture and pornography images to investigate relationships between the two. And, in perhaps the least ideologically clear work, Louis Chavignier and Teyssèdre presented a three by two meter sculptural book out of metal that they had used to critically draw attention to the market of art books during a fine art book fair (Livres en folie). While the targets of criticism were diverse, from capital punishment to mass media's uni-directional communication, the operative tactic in all the exhibited works was, first, appropriation from the realm of mass media or non-art objects and, second, manipulation (juxtaposition for Rabascall, veiling for Oldenbourg and Sonso, and enlargement for Chavignier and Teyssèdre).

Documentation of three censored international projects made up another section of the show. [Fig. 5] This part displayed a combination of photocopied texts, photographs, and pages from international art journals and newspapers that showcased the following works and their suppression: Hans Haacke’s Shapolsky et al. (1970), which had been refused by the Guggenheim museum in April 1971; the Argentinian group Rosario’s Tucuman Arde (Tucuman Burns) (1968), the exhibition of which the police closed in November 1968; and the Guerilla Art Action Group’s demonstrations against

202 Clara Plasencia and Joan Rabascall, Rabascall: Producció 1964-1982 (Barcelona: Museu d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2009), 47. You can see Rabascall’s work on display in this video at 1 min. 35 sec.: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XGU6xw8VajM
the Vietnam war and, in particular, GAAG leader Jean Toche’s recent arrest for the distribution of flyers critical of the bourgeois and exclusive practices of museums and galleries. All of these works depended upon the reproduction and transfer of information and materials, especially texts and photographs, from systems and events perceived of as outside the art world (New York real estate, rural sugar plantations, the Vietnam War) to locations within it (museums, galleries, and art magazines). Assembling copies of copies–often third, fourth, or fifth generation copies taken from magazines or mailed bulletins–Teyssèdre's exhibition extended this logic of reproduction and dissemination through the duplication and display of the materials that had been banned from art world spaces within an art gallery.

For example, the Rosario collective sought to bring attention to the miserable conditions of workers laid off from sugar refineries in Argentina through a creative strategy the artists called an “excess informational circuit.” As Jacqueline Barnitz writes, "The project had three phases: first putting up posters with 'Tucuman' printed on them in the towns of Rosario and Santa Fe, then putting up posters reading 'Tucuman burns,' and finally a trip to Tucuman for the group to collect documentation on the conditions of the unemployed workers, including films, slides, interviews." The artists then collected and assembled this material, including posters, photographs, films, and


204 All of these artists also produced and widely disseminated tracts, bulletins, cards, and posters in connection with their projects.


documentation of their public poster campaign and trip to Tucuman, for exhibitions hosted by the Argentine General Confederation of Labor's (C.G.T.) space in Rosario and then in Buenos Aires in November 1969. In the exhibitions, a riot of tacked-up paper materials and photographs covered the gallery walls, and presenters used a mimeograph to produce copies of a short tract entitled "Tucuman Arde" written by Rosario members María Teresa Gramuglio and Nicolás Rosa. Although the police shut down the exhibition in Buenos Aires, closing off part of the "informational circuit," Tucuman Arde popularized a model of socially-engaged art practice that rippled throughout the art world via channels such as Teyssèdre's show in Paris.

The third component of L'Art contre l'idéologie was a Super-8 film titled Mohamed Diab: pourquoi et comment on tue un travailleur immigré (Mohamed Diab: Why and How Does One Kill an Immigrant Worker) made in 1974 by a group of anonymous university researchers working under the name Agence populaire images.


208 For a contemporary review of the events, see Ariel Bignami, "'Tucumán Arde': una experiencia de la vanguardia plástica," Cuadernos de Cultura 11 (May-June 1969), 101-105. See also Miguel A. López, "How Do We Know What Latin American Conceptualism Looks Like?" Afterall 23 (Spring 2010), accessed http://www.afterall.org/journal/issue.23/how.do.we.know.what.latin.american.conceptualism.looks.likemiguela.lopez.

209 Teyssèdre was aware of contemporary art activities through the Argentinian curator Jorge Glusberg. He had organized Hacia un Perfil del Arte Latinamerico (Towards a Profile of Latin American Art), an exhibition created in an edition of ten that opened at Centro de Arte y Communicacion (CAYC) in Buenos Aires in June 1972 and then traveled around Latin America and Europe, included the following artists, a number of which showed up in the Collective's later exhibitions: Marcel Alocco, Juan Navarro Baldeweg, Jacques Bedel, Luis Benedit, Juan Bercetche, Guillermo Deisler, Agnes Denes, Juan Downey, Gregorio Dujovny, Ken Friedman, GAAG - Guerrilla Art Action Group, Jochen Gerz, Carlos Ginzburg, Jorge Gonzalez Mir, Jorge Glusberg, Victor Grippo, Klaus Groh, Dick Higgins, Richard Kostelanetz, Uzi Kotler, Auro Lecci, Oscar Maxera, Vincente Marotta, Marie Orensanz, Luis Pazos, Alberto Pellegrino, Alfredo Portillos, Osvaldo Romberg, Juan Carlos Romero, Julio Teich, Clorindo Testa, Enrique Torroja, Horst Tress, Jiri Valoch, and Horacio Zabala. There are references to two exhibitions (Towards a Profile of Latin American Art and Art Systems in Latin America) by Glusberg traveling to Espace Cardin in Paris in 1974 and 1974.
cinématographiques (Popular Agency of Cinematographic Images, A.P.I.C.). Projected in a dark room beneath the ground floor gallery space, the film came from an intellectual and activist realm not frequently represented in French art spaces at the time. The film addressed the killing of Mohamed Diab, an Algerian immigrant, by a policeman in Versailles in 1973. But rather than focus on the death itself, it undertook an extensive analysis of the events leading up to the death, revealing the systemic inequalities at the root of Diab's (and other immigrants') persecution. A short review of the film published in *L'Ecran* in February 1974 described it as a "police film...in reverse because it is the police and the pillars of bourgeois order (specifically, the press, the police, and the doctor) that are accused." These institutions ("Ideological State Apparatuses" in Althusser's vocabulary), the film intimates, set the conditions for the division and mistreatment of the population. Teyssèdre probably selected this film because it was blocked from wide release by the government censorship committee (*Commission de contrôle*). The film's inclusion and projection was thus a defiant act in the face of censorship, but it also affirmed art spaces as key sites for "parallel" or "underground" production.

In coordinating *L'Art contre l'idéologie*, Teyssèdre sought to continue the unfinished work of the prior summer's meetings: to build alliances between artists in an attempt to forge a more broad-based movement of socially-engaged art. He also aimed to

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210 "Mohamed Diab: pourquoi et comment on tue un travailleur immigré," APIC, 6, rue des Canettes, Paris, 80 minutes, Super 8, Color.
211 Unable to locate a copy of this film, I have relied on the description offered here: http://cineoeil.free.fr/manifeste/3.html.
213 M.M. "La Censure" *L'Ecran* 29 (October 1974): 9. This article reports on the loosening of censorship laws by the government and yet despite this two important films from 1974 were censored from wide release: Mohamed Diab and *Histoire d'A* about abortion.
re-envision the art exhibition as a space where contemporary, critical, artistic, and
discursive media ecologies interact and inform one another. His mixing of reproduced
pages from afar with local material objects influenced the Sociological Art Collective's
treatment of exhibitions as spaces of research. While committed to the idea of art
combating ideology, the Collective was skeptical of Teyssèdre's intentions and the
exhibition's promulgation of relatively narrow political viewpoints. For its participation,
the Collective carried out what it called a study ("enquête"). During the opening reception
and periodically throughout the exhibition's run, the artists performatively posed open-
ended questions to gallery visitors, engaging them in discussions about the exhibition and
objects on view (discussed at length in chapter two). The Collective hoped to distinguish
its approach from those on view and to stimulate a critical and dynamic model of
spectatorship, one that consciously assesses ideologies underlying exhibitions, artworks,
and viewers' presence and participation.

Following the organization of *L'Art contre l'idéologie*, Teyssèdre began to prepare
an issue of *Opus International* dedicated to sociological art. [Fig. 6] *Opus*, part of the
"parallel network" mentioned above, supported art practices that existed in the gaps
between the developing categories "minimal," "conceptual," and "performance." In
coordinating the issue, Teyssèdre maintained very open boundaries, describing
sociological art as "a shared attitude toward art" regardless of the "means through which
this attitude becomes concrete as an artistic practice (objects, the body, environment,

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214 The very first advertisement in the issue announces two exhibitions at the Galerie Gerald Piltzer, Roger
Welch's *Interviews with Elderly Parisians* and Stanley Milgram's *Paris Psychologique*; both these projects
directly integrated the social sciences and the arts and could have easily been part of the dossier on
sociological art that followed.
Yet, he also attempted to specify how this attitude manifests itself by outlining four contemporary trajectories encompassed in the umbrella term "sociological art": "from conceptual to sociological," "the sociological body," "hygiene of art," and "mass media and marginal communication." "From conceptual to sociological" outlined the shift toward "institutional critique" (before that term had come into use), that is, idea-based art that not only replaced the objects with an idea (conceptual art) but also revealed the ideological, social, and economic structures informing the idea. In this category, Teyssèdre listed artists from Joseph Kosuth, Art & Language, Hans Haacke, Eleanor Antin, and David Lamelas to the lesser-known French artists Alain Kirili, Jacques Pineau, and Thenot. "The sociological body" was essentially body art that emphasized how the body negotiates society, addressing identity and gender (Journiac and Acconci) and troubling distinctions between inside and outside (Pane and Lygia Clark). "Hygiene of art" (a phrase taken from Fischer's work) covered the tendency to destroy and strike from the art world as a way of revealing its operations, and his examples ranged from John Latham's mastication of Greenberg's *Art and Culture* (1966) and Artist Placement Group's occupations of industry to alternative uses of galleries and museums (Acconci forwarding his mail to MOMA or Robert Barry closing Gallery Lambert). Teyssèdre's last category, "mass media and marginal communication," included artists' uses of video, mail art, community cable stations, and Xerox to record minor and everyday experiences, from Ruscha's documentation of gas stations to Ray

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215 "L’art sociologique, s’il désigne une certaine communauté d’attitude envers l’art, ne fait aucune référence aux moyens très divers par lesquels cette attitude peut se concrétiser comme pratique artistique (les objets, le corps, l’environnement, l’écriture, la photo, le film super-8, la vidéo, etc.)." Bernard Teyssèdre, "L’art sociologique" *Opus International* 55 (April 1975): 16.
Johnson's postcards to Nam June Paik's films from a taxi window. Through this wandering account of sociological art, Teyssèdre located practices and concerns that sit somewhat askew to the strategies or categories now recognizable in art history, such as minimalism, conceptual art, and performance. Through the lens of a sociological imaginary, he aimed to unite artists who "resituate artistic practice in social practice."\(^{216}\)

Teyssèdre's selection of artists for the dossier focused on those living in France, many of whom had participated in the meetings the previous summer at Journiac's apartment and in *L'Art contre l'idéologie*. He included the work of Fischer, Forest, Thenot, Sonso, Pane, Journiac, Rabascall, Jean-François Bory, Serge Oldenbourg, Thierry Agullo, Jacques Pineau, Gino Giner, Michel Bertrand, Tomek, Jocelyne Hervé, and Jean Mazeaufroid. These artists' projects consisted of texts, diagrams, ephemera, and photographs of events, performances, or interventions—materials that were particularly suitable to the magazine format. Through the issue of *Opus*, Teyssèdre sought to identify and document a shared ethic that traversed national boundaries and yet has remained closely tied to New York-based histories and artists. His mention of non-French artists, especially better-known figures like Kosuth and Haacke, and elaboration of potential connections between their practices and those of the lesser-known French artists are clear attempts to bring contemporary French art more recognition. As a portable and multiple exhibition, the magazine promised to amplify and export sociological art beyond the confines of the Parisian art world.

In a preface to the *Opus* issue, Gérald Gassiot-Talabot, an editor of the magazine as well as the curator of the important exhibition *Mythologies quotidiennes* (Quotidian

\(^{216}\) *Ibid.*
Mythologies) in 1964, which had cohered *Narrative figuration* into an artistic movement, noted the vitality of sociological art as well as the discord already present in the movement. In order to emphasize and embody this critical and antagonistic spirit, the editors of *Opus* decided to insert "le point de vue d'Opus" (the point of view of *Opus*): critical responses located in columns of text separated by thick black lines on almost every page of the issue. Gassiot-Talabot described the editors' contributions as means to "dialogue" with the texts and documents furnished by "Teyssèdre and his friends."

Although at times "vive" (lively or sharp), Gassiot-Talabot reasoned that the "reflexion en commun" (reflection in common) will contribute to a better understanding of art by bringing out contradictions and divergences. The editors, which, in addition to Gassiot-Talabot, included Alain Jouffroy, Jean-Clarence Lambert, and Michel Troche, sparred with Teyssèdre's texts and the artists' work throughout the issue. In one "point of view," Jouffroy declared "art sociologique" fundamentally contradictory due to an inherent opposition between the subjectivity of art and the science of sociology, while also noting that all art possessed a sociological interest. He also pressed against the parameters of sociological art, inquiring about the absence of Didier Bay's photographs of everyday interiors and asking where the subway photographs of A. Brody, who considers himself neither an artist nor sociologist, would fall.217 Despite the editors' criticisms, they recognized the nascent movement's significance and contributed to its cohesion and identity by giving the space of *Opus* to Teyssèdre. Jouffroy's comments prefigured criticisms that the Collective would receive throughout its tenure. In later exchanges, the

group responded that the oppositional tension between art and sociology motivated the marriage in the first place and that while all art exhibited the marks of its socio-economic and cultural context, very little art made this context its primary sphere of action and practice. Disagreement on the question of what does and does not qualify as sociological art rapidly divided the Collective from its supporters.

During the winter of 1975, relations between Teyssèdre and the Collective soured. The Collective rejected the breadth of Teyssèdre's conception of sociological art, as manifested in *L'Art contre l'idéologie* and the issue of *Opus*. The artists also resisted what they saw as his attempt to insert himself and his artwork into sociological art and sensed that his involvement was self-interested. As Forest would later detail in an interview with the critic Otto Hahn, "Teyssèdre is an academic and a critic who wanted to support us but by diluting the notion of sociological art as we had formulated it." On February 21, 1975, the Collective sent a telegram to Teyssèdre to "definitively clarify relations between Teyssèdre and the Collective." The group posed two questions: Does Teyssèdre "accept as initially agreed [. . .] to bring his disinterested support to the collective and to pursue the collaborations underway?" and "Is this support today dependent on his obligatory participation in exhibitions organized by the group for the promotion of his

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218 Tensions first arose over Teyssèdre's contribution of his metal book sculpture to *L'Art contre l'idéologie* and then intensified during the Collective's organization of thematic exhibitions dedicated to sociological art in the winter and spring of 1975. The artists felt that this work did not fit their view of sociological art but also wanted to retain Teyssèdre's support as a critic. Both Jean-Paul Thenot and Fred Forest described these tensions with Teyssèdre in interviews with the author, December 2010, April 2011, and June 2012.

own artistic production?" Although Teyssèdre had done a great deal to increase the profile of the Collective, the group felt his actions were self-seeking. Teyssèdre responded that same day, "[I] intend to continue supporting and participating in sociological art without the restraints of an alleged collective co-opted by three people." Calling the Collective "a Saint Trinity," he decried the group's controlling and exclusive claims and stated, "By staying out of the collective, [I] believe I can more effectively defend the other sociological artists that the collective is constantly attempting to oust."

The Collective blamed Teyssèdre for using sociological art for personal gain, while Teyssèdre lambasted the Collective for its controlling agenda. Ego and ownership led to this fiery exchange that fractured the fragile network of support for sociological art even further.

An analogous falling out took place between Pluchart and the Collective. The "socio-corporel" group that Pluchart had initially envisioned was broken when the Collective formed and published its manifesto. On October 14, 1974, just three days after the last group meeting, Fischer wrote a short text accusing Pluchart of putting pressure on Galerie Stadler to cancel a sociological art exhibition planned for January and February 1975 and announcing his cancellation of his own personal exhibition planned for Stadler.

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220 "Bernard Teyssèdre universitaire et critique d'art accepte-t-il comme convenu initialement pour sa compétence reconnue dans ces domaines spécifiques d'apporter son soutien désintéressé et de poursuivre à ce titre la collaboration amorcée avec le collective stop deuxième question en rupture avec les engagements initiaux fondés sur ces bases Bernard Teyssèdre conditionne-t-il ce soutien aujourd'hui à la contrepartie de sa participation obligatoire aux expositions organisées par le collectif dans le but de promouvoir par ce canal sa propre production artistique." Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, and Jean-Paul Thenot to Bernard Teyssèdre, February 21, 1975.

221 "Bernard Teyssèdre [. . .] entend continuer soutien et participation à l'art sociologique sans les restreindre à un prétendu Collectif de trois personnes cooptées. [. . .] En restant hors du Collectif Bernard Teyssèdre estime pouvoir plus efficacement défendre les autres artistes d'art sociologique que ce Collectif s'efforce en permanence d'évincer." Bernard Teyssèdre to Collectif d'art sociologique, February 21, 1975.
in late spring 1975.\textsuperscript{222} Pluchart responded by shifting his energies fully toward body art. On December 20, 1974, he wrote a manifesto of body art entitled "L'art corporel / Ce qu'il est / Ce qu'il n'est pas" (Body Art / What It Is / What It Is Not), and on January 16, 1975, just eleven days after the opening of the Collective's first group exhibition, he opened the exhibition \textit{Art Corporel} at Galerie Stadler.\textsuperscript{223} As Janig Bégoc argues, the formation of the Sociological Art Collective and its program of activities engendered "an urgent situation on the part of body art," and Pluchart responded by carrying out a similar program to promote French body artists.\textsuperscript{224} By the spring of 1975, the Collective had pushed away two of its most ardent early supporters—Pluchart and Teyssèdre—whose involvement had helped to establish sociological art on account of the critics' perceived self-interests at odds with the Collective's. These ruptures circle back to the originary moment of forming a threesome in the midst of a group of ten or eleven artists. The Collective never fully resolved its desire to be an open network (as declared in its first manifesto) and to gain recognition as pioneers and leaders. In the subsequent months, however, the artists turned to the exhibition as a structure to develop relations among themselves and as a public forum to consolidate the Collective's identity and practice.

\section*{III. Collective as Institution}

\textbf{Artist-Curated Exhibitions}

As a tool to signal opposition and wrest power from forces within the art world, the artist-curated exhibition has a long history, especially in France. Most famously, in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{222} "Alors que j’étais le premier concerné dans cette galerie par une telle manifestation, la galerie Stadler, se croyant sans doute encore aux temps où les marchands disposaient des artistiques à leur gré, n’a pas cru devoir m’entretenue au préalable, ni même m’avertit de cette décision prise en secret. J’annule donc mon exposition personnel prévue dans cette galerie au printemps 1975." Hervé Fischer letter to François Pluchart, October 14, 1974, FPLUC.XR006/27, Archives de la critique d'art contemporain, Rennes, France.
\item \textsuperscript{223} François Pluchart, \textit{L'art corporel} (Paris: R. Stadler, 1975).
\item \textsuperscript{224} Janig Bégoc, \textit{L’art corporel et sa réception en France}, \textit{Chronique 1968-1979}, 434.
\end{itemize}
1855, Gustave Courbet erected a temporary exhibition space—designated the "pavillon du Réalisme" (pavilion of Realism)—just outside the grounds of the *Exposition Universelle* after some of his canvases were rejected by the jury. In this "contre-exposition," he defiantly displayed some forty paintings, including the unwanted *L'Atelier du peintre, allégorie réelle déterminant une phase de sept années de ma vie artistique* (*The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory Summing Up a Seven-Year Phase of My Artistic Life*, 1984-85). He also wrote a text entitled "Le Réalisme" as the preface to the exhibition brochure, in which he opposed the "pointless goal of 'art for art's sake'" to "living art." He stated simply, "To know in order to be able to do, that was my idea." ("Savoir pour pouvoir, telle fut ma pensée").

Courbet's oppositional exhibition space and his writing, activities that might be considered extra-artistic, corresponded to his intent to engage with contemporary social and political issues through his painting. While the nineteenth-century artist would probably have distinguished artistic and non-artistic labor, in the late twentieth century the prominence of expanded and conceptual artistic practices eroded the threshold dividing them.

Curatorial practice, the arrangement and rearrangement of pre-existing content, became a recognized creative strategy and artistic practice in the 1970s. As already mentioned, "star" curators like Szeemann mounted eclectic and thematic exhibitions that conveyed a strong sense of the curator's individual mark. At the same time, through the work of artists such as Marcel Broodthaers, the artist-created museum and artist-curated exhibition emerged as critical and expressive mediums (a trend that continued into the

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1980s and 90s with New York-based collectives such as CoLab and Group Material and artists like Fred Wilson, Mark Dion, and so forth). Artists closely associated with the emergence of institutional critique used museums, galleries, and systems of display and explanation such as vitrines and labels as platforms for their work. In France, the model of the "artist-curatorial" attracted artists who felt dispossessed by an art system that was still strongly hierarchical despite recent efforts toward more horizontal or egalitarian arrangements. By taking over the role of curator (and critic), artists could subsume the powerful role of judge and arbiter of taste and, in so doing, change the nature of curatorial practice and exhibitions.

Between January 1975 and June 1976, the Collective conceived, organized, and implemented three thematic sociological art exhibitions and two solo exhibitions.\textsuperscript{226} Through these exhibitions, the Collective concretized its own understanding and practice of sociological art. The first exhibition, \textit{Art et ses structures socio-économiques} (Arts and Its Socio-Economic Structures, January 9–28, 1975, Gallery Germain, Paris), brought together documents, videos, and performances by thirteen artists who considered art's relationships to finance, valuation, and the art market.\textsuperscript{227} The second exhibition, \textit{Problèmes et méthodes de l'art sociologique} (Problems and Methods of Sociological Art, March 5–22, 1975, Gallery Mattias Fels, Paris), assembled work by seventeen artists, many of whom were included in the first exhibition, including Art & Language, Hans Haacke, Les Levine, and Léa Lublin in addition to the Collective, and aimed to catalogue

\textsuperscript{226} The catalogues of all three exhibitions are reproduced in Appendix B.

\textsuperscript{227} The artists were Art & Language, Willy Bongard, Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, Hans Haacke, John Latharn, Les Levine, Léa Lublin, Jacques Pineau, Adrian Piper, Klaus Staeck, Bernard Teyssèdre, and Jean-Paul Thenot.

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possible strategies of sociological art. Such openness soon narrowed as the Collective focused its curatorial projects on the work and theories of Fischer, Forest, and Thenot. From remaining documentation and accounts, it seems that the third exhibition, *Art et communication* (Art and Communication, May 6–31, 1975, Institut Français, Cologne), presented only the Collective artists’ work. The catalogue for *Art et communication* does not include a checklist of artists or documents (as the first two catalogues had) but rather prints three individual texts written by Fischer, Forest, and Thenot. Although initially the Collective solicited contributions from outside critics—Teyssèdre wrote the catalogue essay for the first exhibition (before the break with the Collective) and Otto Hahn conducted an interview with Fischer, Forest, and Thenot for the second exhibition catalogue—subsequent catalogues concentrated on the writing and manifestos of the group. By late spring and early summer of 1975, the Collective shifted its energy away from thematic group presentations to solo exhibitions, organizing shows at the International Cultural Centrum (ICC), Anvers, Belgium, in April 1975 and Musée Galliera, Paris, in June 1975. The initial thematic exhibitions functioned as spaces of research for the Collective as the artists investigated issues and searched out artists they perceived as interrelated with sociological art. Once the Collective had strengthened its bonds, working methods, and profile, exhibitions became platforms for sociological art practice and promotion.

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228 The artists were Art & Language, Jean-François Bory, Jacques Charlier, Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, Hans Haacke, Les Lévine, Léa Lublin, Antonio Muntadas, Joan Rabascali, Maurice Roquet, Jean Roualdes, Jean-Michel Sanejouand, Sacha Sosno, Jean-Paul Thénot, Tomek Kawiak, and Horacio Zabala.
Spaces of Research

Although difficult to reconstruct, the processes by which the Collective located, selected, and presented the artworks reiterates the informational functions of the exhibition. In addition to the micro-milieu of French artists with whom the Collective was already familiar, the members actively researched artists from other countries, discovering them by word-of-mouth, magazines, mail art, and other exhibitions. The Collective ultimately constructed the displays through its investigative process. Adrian Piper, for instance, had exhibited as a very young artist in the 1971 Paris Biennale, and the Collective included Piper's statement about no longer attending art world events (Withdrawal Statement, 1970) in Art et ses structures socio-économiques. The latter exhibition does not figure on her curriculum vitae, suggesting that Piper may or may not have known of her inclusion in the exhibition and probably did not directly provide the work. A copy of her statement may have been copied from Lucy Lippard's 1973 book Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object (New York: Praeger, 1973). Although not translated into French, the book had an immediate and international following because

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229 All of the participating French artists were part of a micro-milieu of twenty- and thirty-something artists in Paris actively engaged in expanding art's practices yet little-known today. More widely-recognized French artists of the same generation such as Daniel Buren and Christian Boltanski, whose practices shared an interest in moving outside of gallery spaces and using everyday experiences and materials, are notably absent from sociological art exhibitions. By 1975, both Buren and Boltanski were garnering attention from major art institutions, such as the Guggenheim Museum (where Buren's work had been censored in 1971) and Centre National d'Art Contemporain (CNAC) (which acquired a number of works by Boltanski in 1974 and '75 to be exhibited at the Centre Georges Pompidou when it opened in 1977). The activities and exhibitions of a marginal French group probably did not interest Buren and Boltanski. The list of non-French artists featured in these early exhibitions includes many names familiar to art historians today, including Art & Language, Hans Haacke, John Latham, Adrian Piper, and Antonio Muntadas.

230 Piper was included in the "Concept" section of the Biennale, and she contributed an instruction piece ("Paris Proposal for Biennale et International") to be performed during the course of the exhibition. She proposed that twelve volunteers make physical alterations to their bodies and then go about their everyday activities. The alterations, both of which Piper had herself undertaken in New York City, were to "stuff as much cloth as possible into cheeks" and "tie large pillows around hips, stomach, thighs, calves under street clothes." Georges Boudaille, ed. Septième Biennale de Paris, Manifestation biennale et internationale des jeunes artistes du 24 septembre au 1er novembre 1971, Parc Floral de Paris, Bois de Vincennes (Paris: A. Lerouge, 1971): 58.
Lippard and John Chandler had published any essay by the same name (the starting point of the book) in *Art International* in February 1968.\(^{231}\) After securing a copy of the recently published book, the Collective could have produced an enlarged version at a local copy shop and to this reproduction attached a short explanatory text to create the exhibition panel.\(^{232}\) As for Wolf Vostell, a German Fluxus artist known for his happenings and environments, the artists probably knew of his work before his first major retrospective at A.R.C. from December 17, 1974 to January 27, 1975, a show that both Fischer and Forest saw.\(^{233}\) The Collective corresponded intermittently with Vostell, who was active in European mail art and sympathetic to the idea of sociological art, as evidenced by his response to Forest's 1976 questionnaire published in *Art Sociologique*.\(^{234}\) For the January exhibition, Vostell may have sent the group a copy of his photomontage *Drive-in Museum* (1970) or possibly brought a copy with him on a visit to Paris. Such procedures of procurement, enlargement, and preparation took place for every object or document displayed in the Collective's exhibitions.

Although none of the display panels of these early exhibitions have been conserved, a few installation photographs as well as the remaining panels from the Collective's solo exhibition at Musée Galliera convey a sense of the rudimentary arrangements and unadorned aesthetic of the shows. Gray cardstock panels of about four

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\(^{231}\) Lucy Lippard and John Chandler, "The Dematerialization of Art," *Art International* 12, no. 2 (February 1968): 31-36.

\(^{232}\) These are my speculations based on photographs of the exhibition panels. For the most part, the artists do not recall how they acquired the works by non-French artists. Beginning in the early 1970s, Xerox machines were present in France.

\(^{233}\) I assume the artists saw his exhibition based on the fact that the card announcing the exhibition is located in the archives of both Forest and Fischer. For more information on Vostell's work throughout Europe, see Rolf Wedewer, ed. *Vostell. Ausstellungen, Bonn, Köln, Leverkusen, Mannheim, Mülheim an Der Ruhr* (Heidelberg: Braus, 1992).

feet by three feet covered with black and white photographs, texts, and diagrams lined the walls. [Fig. 8] Additional documents, pamphlets, and books were laid out in an orderly fashion on tables in the center of the space, and although not pictured in any of the remaining installation shots, a smattering of small-scale monitors placed on pedestals or directly on the floor transmitted artists' videos. The visual poverty of the objects coincided with their informational richness; content and didacticism overpowered pleasure and aestheticism. The young Collective organized these group exhibitions as provisional explorations of sociological art, as study materials to be digested and then disposed, and the exhibitions had a direct impact on the group's nascent conception and practice of sociological art. Through the presentations, the artists made invaluable contacts and constructed a toolbox of possible strategies, many of which would re-emerge in the Collective's subsequent projects. In order to clarify the relationship between these early exhibitions and the Collective's subsequent work, I will reconstruct, for the first time, the content of the Collective's first two exhibitions.

_Art et ses structures socio-économiques_ (January 9–28, 1975, Gallery Germain, Paris) addressed the topic of art as a vehicle of speculation and investment, and through the amassed documents and objects, numerous common concerns and strategies surfaced. Discursive and research-based artistic approaches were especially prevalent. The Collective showed some of the German art critic Willi Bongard's recent lists of the investment potential of artists assembled based on data from magazines, galleries, and the art press. Thenot displayed the results of an interactive questionnaire entitled _La cote des oeuvres_ (The Value of Artworks, 1973), in which he solicited viewers' reactions to

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Bongard began his annual _Kunstcompass_ lists in 1969.
the prices recently paid at auction for nineteenth and twentieth century paintings.

Teyssèdre (his last exhibition with the Collective) contributed a multi-layered project based on his own academic study of the late seventeenth-century art critic Roger de Piles' last published work, *Cours de peinture par principes avec un balance de peintres* (1708).236 De Piles ranked a list of 58 artists of his own time according to aesthetic considerations of composition, drawing, color, and expression. In a manner marrying Francastel with Bourdieu, Teyssèdre analyzed de Piles' aesthetic ranking by considering such factors as geography and class in de Piles' own epoch, a methodology that he summarized in a poster for the exhibition.237 The Collective also included Hans Haacke's *Manet-Projekt '74*, which entailed Haacke's research into the provenance of Manet's *Botte d'asperges* (1880) and revelation of the work's history in Nazi collections. Haacke produced the work on the occasion of his own exhibition at the Museum Ludwig, to which the painting had recently been donated. Artistic practice as research would be vitally important to the Collective's sociological art practice.

A number of artists included in the exhibition reflected on the economic repercussions of their involvement in the art world. Posters made by the New York branch of Art & Language (comprised of Mel Ramsden, Andrew Menard, Ian Burn, and Michael Corris) announced the group's plans to hold on-site discussions about cultural imperialism, specifically the implications of exporting art from the "center" (New York specifically) to the "periphery," at exhibitions to which the group was invited in Argentina, Australia, and Yugoslavia in 1974 and 1975. Another panel juxtaposed John

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237 For the display, Teyssèdre visually elaborated his research methodology, which was clearly influenced by the sociology of art.
Latham's contribution to Lucy Lippard's landmark 1969 exhibition '557,087'/'955,000' (a description typed on a note card of the infamous incident when Latham led his art students at St. Martin's to chew up and spit out the library's copy of Greenberg's *Art and Culture*) with Latham's simple statement, "I am systematically not paid for my work." Latham's statement, which possibly referred to his dismissal from St. Martin's or, more likely, to his uncompensated participation in art shows, pinpoints the difficult financial position of exhibiting artists. Art & Language and Latham thus harnessed their participation in exhibitions to criticize the economics underlying those venues, a tactic the Collective utilized frequently. The included works also evidenced a ludic and performative aspect. Les Levine challenged the value of art by producing cheaply priced sculptures out of vacuum-formed Styrofoam plastic. Called *Disposables*, the sculptures were intended to be thrown out after "use." In another piece, Wolf Vostell's *Drive-in Museum* (1970), a photo-collage maquette of an imaginary museum, pictured the total integration of cultural institutions with spectacle culture. The "museum," located at the intersection of four highways and constructed from two giant television monitors, housed a hotel, library, cinema, and other amenities, a model not far from the Centre Georges Pompidou.

The Collective's own contribution to the exhibition integrated many aspects present in the exhibition. The threesome initiated the "deposit" of "Musée Beaubourg" in a safe rented at the Banque de France, and included documentation of the performance in the exhibition. As a bulletin made after the action details, on January 10, 1975, the three

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239 Rolf Wedewer, ed. *Vostell*, 88. Thanks to Erin Hanas for this reference and information about this work.
artists collected recent official documents related to the creation of the Centre Georges Pompidou (Musée Beaubourg), including documentation of the debate and vote in the National Assembly and Senate (December 3–4, 1974) to proceed with the construction of the museum as well as the recently adopted (December 28, 1974) annual operating budget. [Fig. 9] They then deposited these documents decreeing the state's immense investment in Beaubourg, and thus symbolizing the institution's projected economic value, into a safe at the state bank. Surreptitiously documented by the artists shooting pictures from their hips, the performance conflated the vault and the museum as conservative protectors of value, while underscoring the economic and cultural impact of recent political decisions. By the conclusion of *Art et ses structures socio-économiques* at the end of January, the Collective had spent a month with an array of art projects that spanned diverse media, movements, and national contexts and that embodied the kinds of questions and tactics of interest to the group. The artists then shifted their focus to identifying the most suitable sociological art methods, the topic of the Collective's next exhibition.

The catalogue of the second exhibition, *Problèmes et méthodes de l'art sociologique* (March 5–22, 1975, Gallery Mattias Fels, Paris), evinces the members still wrestling with how to conceive and describe their own methodology (or methodologies) to accomplish the admittedly indefinite but frequently repeated task of "intervening in the social field to transform it." In an interview with Otto Hahn that prefaced the catalogue, Fischer, the oft-proclaimed theorist of the group, stated quite plainly:

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240 See documentation in "Depot du Musée Beaubourg à la Banque de France," *+–0 (Plus Minus Zero)*, no. 8 (March 1975): 12.
Our methodology is not yet definitive because relating the theory and methods of sociology with art is an extremely difficult thing. But the fact of turning to the theory of the sociology of art is already important. To deny that the sociology of art interferes in the field of artistic practice is as unjustifiable as to declare that medical and economic theory should have no effect on medical and economic practice.\textsuperscript{241} 

All three members ceaselessly asserted the untrodden territory of their collective endeavor and the embryonic state of what they set out to do. Forest described a tactical approach: "We must invent a method for our artistic practice while we are engaged in experiences. We do not seek to integrate an academic methodology with an artistic approach, and for me, I do not know any preexisting method that I can take up. I must find one, invent one."\textsuperscript{242} Both Fischer and Forest allude to the three artists' preferred tools and approaches, which were rapidly defining their identities within the Collective: for Thenot, the survey and questioning; for Forest, mass media, video, and participation; and for Fischer, pedagogy and materialist interventions. But all of the artists conclude, often speaking in the future tense, that unknown methods and approaches remained to be discovered.

The seventeen artists and projects showcased in \textit{Problèmes et méthodes de l'art sociologique}, which from all accounts resembled in execution and form the first exhibition, presented seventeen different procedures "to intervene in the social field."

Sharing the intention to bring greater awareness to the forces that shape lived experience,

\textsuperscript{241} "Ce travail est en cours. Je veux dire que notre méthodologie n'est pas encore définitive, parce que cette mise en relation de la théorie et des méthodes sociologiques avec l'art est une chose extrêmement difficile. Mais le fait de recourir à la théorie sociologique de l'art est déjà important. Refuser que le théorie sociologique de l'art interfère dans le champ de la pratique artistique, c'est aussi injustifiable que de déclarer que la théorie médicale ou économique ne doit avoir aucune conséquence sur la pratique médicale ou économique!" Sociological Art Collective, "Méthodologie de l'art sociologique: Interview with Otto Hahn," \textit{Problèmes et méthodes de l'art sociologique}, 3.

\textsuperscript{242} "En fait, nous sommes contraints d'inventer une méthode pour notre pratique socio-artistique, au fur et à mesure des expériences dans lesquelles nous nous engageons. Nous ne cherchons pas à intégrer une méthodologie de type universitaire à la démarche artistique; et en ce qui me concerne personnellement, je ne trouve nulle part de méthode déjà élaborée que je puisse reprendre. Je suis contraint d'en chercher une, de l'inventer." \textit{Ibid.}, 4.
the projects fall loosely into three general approaches: to nurture active and interpersonal engagement on the part of the viewers or involved publics, to détourné mass media and technology, and to modify built and natural environments. Fischer, Forest, and Thenot were already working in all of these directions and included their independent projects in the presentation. The exhibition thus served to reaffirm the artists' independent paths, unite them under the umbrella of sociological art, and also launch novel avenues of exploration.

The texts and actions centered on participation highlighted themes of exchange and reciprocity. In addition to Art & Language's *Draft for an Anti-Text Book* (September 1974) and Les Levine's *Camera Art* (1975), two works that re-envisioned the text book and camera as interfaces rather than unidirectional media, the Polish-born artist Tomek (at the time studying with the *Nouveau réaliste* sculptor César in Paris) set up a physical *Troc-art* stand. The French noun *troc* means a barter or swap, and his project entailed an exchange of objects with people encountered by the artist (or the facilitation of an exchange between two people). Sometimes traded for a handshake or material entity, each interaction included a receipt or contract that underscored the shared responsibility of the transfer. Thenot exhibited one of his "interactive questionnaires," which hinged on the ideal of open and cooperative communication between interviewer and interviewee. As Thenot clarifies in the catalogue, in contrast to the closed and directed questions of conventional questionnaires, his questionnaire projects employ open-ended questions and non-directive interviews "to permit the maximum expression of each person" and "to
provoke a process of ongoing self-exploration." As discussed in chapter two, Thenot would develop out of his questionnaire projects cooperative models of therapy based on mutual participation.

Numerous projects entailed the modification of mass media, especially magazines, newspapers, and television, in order to draw attention to content and framing devices that usually go unremarked. Some of the works shown in Teyssèdre's *L'Art contre l'idéologie* reappeared in the Collective's second exhibition: Sonso again exhibited his "sonsoblit" box, which obliterated television images by inserting a black square (possibly a reference to Kasimir Malevich's *Black Square* [1915]) into the visual field and which he sought to make available to every household, and Rabascall showed his mass media collages. Antonio Muntadas contributed documentation of his *Cadaqués Canal Local* (July 1974), a media event that took place in the Catalan town of Cadaqués to draw attention to sanctioned and unsanctioned mass media. It consisted of Muntadas playing his own television program of interviews and politically critical reports on a monitor in local bars and casinos, where other monitors broadcast the single official television channel controlled by Franco's regime, thereby juxtaposing official and unofficial versions of current events. Forest was already well known for his interventionist media strategies, beginning with his insertion of blank or silent spaces into newspapers and broadcast television (*Space-media*, 1972). In the exhibition, Forest included an edited version of the videos made by senior citizens through his project *Vidéo troisième âge*.

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243 "L'utilisation de questions ouvertes (où la seule contrainte est celle qu'impose la question) permet au maximum l'expression de l'opinion de chacun (en fonction de lui-même et de son groupe d'appartenance), des entretiens non directifs, axés sur une attitude non évaluatrice sont destinés à provoquer une auto-exploration continue de la personne interviewée." Jean-Paul Thenot, "A propos de quelques méthodes," *Problèmes et méthodes de l'art sociologique*, 15.
(1973). As discussed in chapter three, Forest constructed an on-site video studio in a government-funded home for retirees in order to enable residents to produce films, countering societal assumptions about the residents as passive, non-productive, and isolated.

The third type of projects addressed the ways that built space and the rapid industrialization of European towns in the 1970s was affecting everyday life. The Belgian artist Jacques Charlier, a member of the Fluxus Group Total, worked in Liège's urban planning department, which oversaw the region's industrial transformation. In the mid-1970s, he started taking official documents and photographs from the bureaucratic sphere and re-contextualizing these "non-artistic spaces and proposals" within the idioms of minimalism and land art, as if to suggest that urban planners already did contemporary art better than minimal and land artists. In addition to making photo documents, Charlier led and filmed a number of satirical tours of the town's peripheral and industrial areas ("zones absolues") and also proposed the dumping of concrete over public sculptures and roadways. Such proposals parodied and deconstructed the actions of well-known American artists and the aestheticization of industrial materials in contemporary art.

The French artist Jean-Michael Sanejouand also occupied the role of renegade urban planner with his study of the re-organization of the Valley of the Seine (Schéma 246)

244 Just before the exhibition, in February 1975, Forest as well as Fischer participated in the "Second Open Encounter on Video" coordinated by the curator Jorge Glusberg of the Center of Art and Communication (CAYC, Buenos Aires) and featuring many of video art's most important practitioners and theorists, including Nam June Paik and Gérald Minkoff.

245 As an example of his urban planning work, see Jacques Charlier, Ports et régions françaises: une analyse macrogéographique (Louvain-la-Neuve: Institut de géographie, Université catholique de Louvain, 1983).

246 While difficult to determine exact references, it seems reasonable that Charlier's proposal to dump concrete over older forms of public sculpture ironically recapitulates Robert Smithson's Asphalt Rundown (1969) in Rome.
which included carefully rendered and highly abstract maps and planning documents.\textsuperscript{247} Fischer had also intervened in urban spaces by pasting over road signs with new paper signs that asked questions relevant to the specific sites, such as "Art, qu'avez vous à declarer?" (Art, what do you have to say?) in the gallery district of Paris. As discussed in chapter four, beginning in the late 1970s, Fischer would undertake a series of urban projects that sought to engage residents in remaking public space.

The three primary trajectories that emerge in \textit{Problèmes et méthodes de l'art sociologique}—participation, socially-engaged media, and urban intervention—would come together to form the basis of the Collective's most significant subsequent projects, including the group's work in the towns and communities of Neuenkirchen (July 1975) and Perpignan (September 1976), its proposal for the Venice Biennale (June 1976), and its formation of the \textit{Ecole Interrogative Sociologique} (May 1976) (all discussed in later chapters). Although the Collective's exhibitions did not garner much of a reaction in the art press, they put the artists in touch with an international network of like-minded artists, they spread word of this marginal artistic movement afoot in Paris through the distribution of cheaply produced catalogues, and they endowed the Collective with a stronger conception of sociological art.\textsuperscript{248} By late spring 1975, the Collective shifted its attention to promoting sociological art and to strengthening the image and institution of

\textsuperscript{247} Catherine Millet, "Jean-Michel Sanejouand, Projet d'organisation des espaces de la vallée de la Seine," \textit{Art Press} 3, (March/April 1973): 22-24. Sanejouand had exhibited these documents at the \textit{Centre national d'art contemporain} (CNAC) in the spring of 1973.

\textsuperscript{248} The artists carried on correspondence with numerous artists, such as John Latham, Art & Language, and Les Levine, included in these early exhibitions. See "Correspondences" in Fonds Hervé Fischer, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Paris, and "Correspondence 1970–1979" in Fonds Fred Forest, Inathèque, Paris. The group mailed the cheaply-produced catalogues to museums, libraries, and artists throughout the world artists. See, for example, the "Artist Files" for Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, and Jean-Paul Thenot at the Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.
the Collective. Rather than an open arena of research, sociological art became a domain to defend.

**Defining and Displaying the Sociological Art Collective**

In early May 1975, having closed its first two group exhibitions, the Collective issued its second manifesto. "Alone to defend sociological art a few months ago [. . .]," the manifesto begins. "It is time to reaffirm the sense that we have always given to the concept of sociological art." The group endeavored to distinguish sociological art from political art and critical sociology, with which it was often confounded. Much of the confusion stems from the Collective's own dialectical definition of sociological art as operating between the sociology of art and art to negate both and produce a third term. According to the second manifesto, sociological art is based on a "return to the sociology of art against art itself." Sociological research and theories (e.g. surveys and concepts of socio-economic determination and so forth) replaced, in the Collective's description, traditional media and aesthetic values. Political painting, as important as it was at a certain stage, was too conventional in its medium and far too easily subsumed by "the system." At the same time, sociological artists did not intend to "manage the real" but rather to perturb, question, and provoke realizations ("prises de conscience") that did not necessarily fit within the proscribed categories of sociology. Rather than predetermined and fixed, the methods of sociological art must be reactive in the field of practice. The second manifesto is the Collective's unified response to detractors and an attempt to

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249 "L'art sociologique, que nous étions seuls encore à défendre il y a quelques mois, suscite des engouements divers, qui tentent de l'entraîner dans le confusionnisme. Il est donc temps de faire quelques rappels et de réaffirmer le sens que nous avons toujours donné au concept de l'art sociologique." Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, and Jean-Paul Thenot, "Manifeste II de l'art sociologique," (May 1975).

250 "L'art sociologique est une pratique qui se fonde sur le retournement de la sociologie de l'art contre l'art lui-même, et qui prend en compte la sociologie de la société qui produit cet art." *Ibid.*
define sociological art in reaction to the wide latitude of the early exhibitions. At the same time, the three artists enumerated their individual approaches—"pedagogical practice of animation, of questioning, and of the perturbation of communication channels."251

In late May, the Collective received and accepted an invitation from the *Office franco-allemand pour la jeunesse* (French-German Youth Office, OFAJ) to participate in a three-week symposium *Photo-Film-Video* hosted by Gallery Falazik from May 31 to June 21, 1975, in the small town of Neuenkirchen in northern Germany. Created in the mid-1960s to encourage interaction and mutual comprehension between French and German youth, OFAJ had undergone a major re-structuring after the European economic crisis of 1973, and the new director Pierre Gril set out two guiding principles for the 1975 budget: encounter and cooperation.252 The symposium was OFAJ's debut project with artists and brought together 28 German and French artists working in photography, film, and video to stage, in the words of Gril, “a socio-ecological experience that consisted above all else in the confrontation of the village of Neuenkirchen with young artists working with new media."253 OFAJ's proposition evinces the degree to which expanded art practices had permeated spaces beyond the confines of art world institutions.

Upon arriving in Neuenkirchen for the Collective's first group project, the artists wandered around the town casually speaking to passersby, collecting postcards, scouting locations, and carrying out an initial observational study. As the group later wrote, “We

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realized rather quickly that, for the most part, the inhabitants of Neuenkirchen declared they do not have any problems and live very happily. This pronouncement of principle reflected a very conscious desire to want to inhabit Neuenkirchen as a refuge, sheltered from the problems of the world.”

From this initial period of observation, the artists decided to carry out independent projects but with the involvement and support of one another. Donning matching handmade tee-shirts with "Collectif Art Sociologique" emblazoned on their chests, Fischer, Forest, and Thenot worked together to undertake three inquiry-based sociological art interventions under the institutional identity of the Collective. [Fig. 10]

In response to the idyllic pastoral scenes reproduced on postcards and initial conversations, Forest determined the central question for his "video-gazette action de dynamisation sociale" (video-gazette action of social dynamization): “Is Neuenkirchen a paradise?” With one person holding the camera, one person holding the microphone, and one person asking the question, the threesome set off into the town, posing the partly anodyne, partly provocative question to anyone they came across over the course of a couple days. Forest recalled, “We interviewed a mechanic, baker, pastor, some youth in the street, elderly men and women in their private gardens, people going to church or to the café, people shopping at a supermarket, et cetera. They spoke to us about their lives, they asked us about ourselves. Sociological video is a video of encounter.”

254 “L’enquête menée par le collectif a fait apparaître assez rapidement que les habitants de Neuenkirchen déclaraient pour la plupart n’avoir pas de problème et vivre très heureux. Cette déclaration de principe reflétait en fait le désir très conscient de vouloir vivre à Neuenkirchen comme dans un refuge, à l’abri des problèmes du monde.” Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, Jean-Paul Thenot, “Mise au Point,” Ibid.
255 Fischer translated from German to French for Forest and Thenot, and Forest documented by video Fischer's and Thenot's encounters.
256 “Nous avons interviewé le garagiste, le boulanger, le pasteur, les jeunes dans la rue, les vieux et les vieilles dans leurs jardins privés, les personnes qui allaient à la messe ou au café, celles qui faisaient leurs
encounters ranged from a few seconds, a short yes or no, to longer discussions that surpassed the length of the 30-minute tape. [Fig. 11] On the afternoon of June 8, the entire “video gazette,” many hours in length, was screened at Müller Cafe in the center of town to solicit reflections and provoke further conversation among inhabitants. As discussed in chapter three, this interactive style of video interviewing merged a cinematic style popularized by Jean Rouch, Chris Marker, and Jean-Luc Godard with contemporary performance and video art. Forest later recorded over all but one tape, a decision that reflects the high cost of tapes and also the importance of the ephemeral meetings over documentation and exhibition.

Fischer and Thenot also capitalized on face-to-face encounters in their interventions. On the morning of June 8 near the central church in Neuenkirchen, Fischer set up a "pharmacy" that consisted of a large banner reading "Pharmacie Fischer," a folding table, and some chairs. [Fig. 12] As part of his "Prophylactic campaign," Fischer had previously distributed pills to combat, with a notable degree of satire, everything from ideology to conceptual art. In Neuenkirchen, Fischer gave each participant a piece of paper titled "Interview" (Befragung) and asked him or her to write out a question. Dressed in a white coat, he discussed this question with the person and honed in on some aspect of his or her life that he would "treat" by giving the "patient" a box of non-descript white pills. Each box was annotated with a different descriptor: "mind pill," "change pill," "work pill," "vacation pill," "incredible pill" and so forth. The pills, made of a non-edible Styrofoam, symbolized a materialization of the psychic changes taking place through conversation. Thenot, who was actively seeking ways to combine his work as a...
psychotherapist and artist, also used conversation in his project *Contrat socio-therapeutique* (Socio-Therapeutic Contract). [Fig. 13] Thenot set up a three-part agreement that began with a participant providing a photo of him or herself and discussing what he or she saw in the self-portrait. Following this stage of self-analysis, the participant agreed that the photo could be displayed or published anonymously in other locations and used as the basis of discussions with other people. According to the typed agreement, Thenot promised to inform the pictured person of the places and dates of display and then to furnish the person with a summary of the reactions to his or her photo. The contract and subsequent steps of display set into motion processes of personal and public reflection, generating a multiplicity of views of the individual person.

At the conclusion of the "symposium," the Gallery Falazik hosted an exhibition entitled *Photo, Film, Vidéo* (September 1–October 17, 1975), which then traveled to A.R.C. in Paris (November 13–December 14, 1975). The exhibition presented documentation of the twenty-eight projects undertaken around Neuenkirchen. Videos, photographs, maps, and typed scores attested to the multifarious ways that contemporary artists integrated their artistic practices into the physical, social, and environmental structures of the town and surrounding community. The German artist Wolf Kahlen, for instance, laid out grain to spell “schafe” ("sheep" in German) and filmed sheep eating the grain and aligning their bodies to form the word. Another film showed Edmund Kuppel

walking across town to locate the exact sites where photographs had been taken.
Alongside video documents, maps and diagrams traced Roland Baladi's quotidian adventures around town, and photographs recorded Erika Magdalinski's shadow silhouette against dozens of backdrops. The majority of projects captured artists modifying or confronting the physical space of the town rather than seeking an exchange with its inhabitants. Artists associated with sociological art, including, in addition to the Collective, Lèa Lublin and Tomek, however, privileged direct encounter and exchange. Lublin hung one of her “Questions about art” banners outside a supermarket and placed a camera to film people’s responses, and Tomek set up a troc art stand. The Collective's three projects relied on some form of interviewing, through which the artists sought to learn about the local community and to stimulate respondents' self-reflection. In their joint essay published in the exhibition catalogue, Fischer, Forest, and Thenot explained that through the tactic of questioning, they hoped to generate interconnected webs of consciousness rather than simply isolated instances of communication. The experience at Neuenkirchen affirmed inquiry as a central sociological method. It also offered the artists an opportunity to navigate collective cooperation with the pursuit of independent trajectories, a balance the group continued to seek in the following months.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁸ In the catalogue published for the A.R.C. exhibition, Fischer, Forest, and Thenot submitted documentation of their individual projects as well as a collectively-signed text (the only text written by artists in the catalogue). It illustrates the ways that the Collective functioned as a powerful and protective front, behind which the individual artists rallied. The Collective's group essay, "Mise au point du collectif d'art sociologique" ("Clarification by the Sociological Art Collection"), is a response to the main catalogue essay written by Teyssèdre, who the A.R.C. curator Suzanne Pagé had invited to give an account of the multi-week symposium. Teyssèdre touched on the projects by the members of the Collective, dismissing Fischer's and Thenot's works as rehashed prior projects and criticizing Forest's video as a collection of "despotic but ephemeral appearances" ("quelques apparitions despotiques mais fugaces"). In the Collective's response, the artists called on artists to demand space to respond to critics, who possessed unequal power over artists. The Collective also declared the importance of having a "second job" so as to not be tied to critics' whim and to selling their work (perhaps, a response to Teyssèdre's thinly veiled suggestion that the artists did not work hard enough in Neuenkirchen). The Collective writes, “Il faut
Just after concluding the projects in Neuenkirchen, the Collective opened a major exhibition on the subject of sociological art at Musée Galliera on June 17, 1975. Once again, the project demonstrated the group's somewhat paradoxical intention to provide a coherent view of sociological art theory through three mini-retrospectives of the three artists' work, the sum of which supposedly equated the past, present, and future of sociological art. All three artists re-used panels and displays from previous exhibitions. Thenot, for instance, exhibited the framed results of his survey about the cost of artworks (Cote des oeuvres), which he had prepared for the January exhibition Art et ses structures socio-économiques, and Fischer and Forest displayed panels that had been part of the exhibition Art et communication at Institut Français in Cologne. The artists also assembled panels about their interventions in Neuenkirchen from just ten days earlier. [Fig. 14] Thenot used the Galliera exhibition to proceed to the next steps of his Socio-therapeutique contrat. He posted the photographic portraits from Neuenkirchen with a series of questions—"What does this face evoke for you?" "What is the profession of this person?" "If this person was sick, what would the sickness be?"—and invited viewers to respond. He collected and sent back responses to the participants in Neuenkirchen as the contract had stipulated. Rather than creating something new, the exhibition compiled the photographs, texts, videos, and documents associated with sociological art projects, thereby materializing a composite image of the Collective.

259 Fischer brought together photographic documentation of his altered traffic and street signs, and Forest photocopied pages of newspapers with his blank, white rectangle inserted (Space-media).
The only new work produced on the occasion of the exhibition was Forest's

*J'expose Madame Soleil en chair et en os* (I Exhibit Madame Soleil in Skin and Bones).

He arranged for the popular television personality and psychic Madame Soleil to come to the museum for an hour in the afternoon three days a week for the duration of the exhibition. In 1970, Soleil began a call-in astrology show on France's Channel 1 and gained a large, devoted following. In the museum, Forest exaggerated Madame Soleil's auratic quality by seating her on a podium with red velvet fabrics and hanging newspaper articles as well as pieces of her clothing and accessories on the walls around her. People streamed into the museum to interact with her, gathering around the small stage each afternoon to await her prognostications and astral readings. Forest recorded one afternoon of encounters; the video shows Soleil seated on high selecting individuals from the crowd one by one to receive her intimate yet generic projections about lives, families, jobs, and love. The captivated crowd hangs on every word. By displacing a media icon from popular culture into the museum, Forest toyed with the very idea of aura and subverted the division between mass and high culture. Furthermore, he transformed a section of the gallery into the display of both a mediatized cultural phenomenon and a real person "in skin and bones," thus highlighting the actual people behind the most unreal media personalities. While visually distinct from the black and white panels, small-scale monitors, and didactic vitrines lining the walls, Forest's performative piece reappropriated the space of the gallery as a space for active (at times even rowdy) communication.

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260 "J'expose Madame Soleil en chair et en os" (1975), DO T 20030713 DIV 017.001, Fonds Fred Forest, Inathèque, Paris.
In concert with the exhibition, the Collective published a substantial 76-page catalogue that includes the Collective's manifestos, theoretical texts by the individual artists, and short essays by an illustrious set of authors, including Jean Duvignaud, Pierre Restany, René Berger, Vilem Flusser, Marshall McLuhan, and Edgar Morin. The artists also assembled four chronological lists for the catalogue: "Formation, evolution, and action of the Collective," "Chronology of a concept," "Chronology of sociological practice," and "Bibliographic citations." These lists, all of which begin prior to the Collective's 1974 founding manifesto, served as means of crafting a history and legacy for sociological art and the Collective.261 The first "practice of sociological art" is listed as Forest’s 1969 multimedia installation piece at Tours and the Collective's beginning as February 1972, when the artists first met. Perhaps a response to the gradual and accumulative creative process, this ante-dating also asserted the artists as pioneers of an emerging and expanding trend in contemporary art—the "nouvelle vague socio," in Restany's words.262 As ethical considerations replace aesthetic ones and behaviors replace artworks, Restany writes in the exhibition catalogue, a "compensatory phenomenon of objective recuperation takes place at the level of the recording of the action and of the method of reading the conceptual proposition."263 The Collective's exhibition and catalogue were part of this "compensatory phenomenon," wherein documentation and

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263 Ibid. "Au fur et à mesure que l'art contemporain perdait une composante esthétique traditionnelle (œuvres) au profit d'une composante morale (comportements), un phénomène compensatoire de récupération objective se produisait au niveau de l'enregistrement de l'action ou de la méthode de lecture de la proposition conceptuelle."
interpretation are paramount to the original work, or even ingrained in the work's very structure. The Collective also coordinated a series of screenings and discussions to take place every Thursday at the Institut national de l’audiovisuel (INA). According to an announcement (the only remaining documentation), the events combined television broadcasts drawn from INA's own archives with lectures and round table discussions on a host of topics: media distribution and consumption in different countries, life before and after the purchase of a television, and so forth. Distinct from both the exhibition and the catalogue—the primary means through which the Collective was constructing a history and image of sociological art—this ancillary, pedagogical programming marked a novel venture for the Collective and a path that the group would pursue in the following months and years.

The series of exhibitions, publications, and projects between January and June 1975 fed into the group's evolution and maturation. If the first group exhibitions offered spaces of research, through which the Collective discerned key methods and made contact with other artists, the subsequent undertakings in Neuenkirchen and at Musée Galliera marked a shift in focus to the promotion of a Collective identity and to the affirmation of a working relationship among the three artists. These early efforts entailed an immense amount of self-organization and management. Maintaining internal relations among the threesome required cooperation and communication, much of which happened over the phone or in discussions that left no material trace. Gaining external recognition demanded public expressions such as exhibitions, manifestos, and actions. Managerial

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264 Rosalind Krauss first analyzed the relationship of repetition and originality in her foundational essay on the modernist grid. As an expansion of her argument, I am connecting repetition through documentation to the elemental structure of the Collective's project. The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986).
and curatorial labor—from planning meetings and conducting research to writing, editing, collecting, and arranging the texts and objects of sociological art—replaced traditional artistic labor. The Collective's central purpose in its first year was to establish and maintain itself as a Collective.

**Institutionality and the Venice Biennale**

The Collective's institutional identity coalesced sometime around the summer of 1976. By "institutional identity," I mean both that the "Sociological Art Collective" eclipsed the individual trajectories of the trio and that the group recognized its primary artistic labor as that of organization. Upon the invitation of Restany, the Collective represented France in the 37th Venice Biennale in 1976. This Biennale was the first full-scale Biennale to happen since protests in '68 had closed numerous pavilions and shut down the main exhibition. In the early 1970s, the Biennale committee overhauled the event's structure and charter in order to de-emphasize the prizes, to give the committee and director more autonomy from governmental influence, to broaden the kinds of art accepted, and to coordinate additional public programming. The group finally ratified a new charter in March of 1973. Carlo Ripa di Meana, then the President of the Venice Biennale, dedicated the entire 1974 Biennale to Chile as a response to the military coup that had led to the installation of Pinochet's dictatorship in 1973. This Biennale did not include national representation in the Giardini pavilions. The 1976 Biennale was, therefore, the first real manifestation of the reforms that had been initiated by the 1968

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265 He also invited Raymond Hains, Alain Jacquet, Bertrand Lavier, Jean-Pierre Raynaud, and Jean-Michel Sanejouand.
266 Entitled *Freedom to Chile*, the exhibition welcomed exiled Chilean mural artists to paint murals around the city, and Ripa di Meana invited Ortensia Allende, the widow of the assassinated Marxist president Salvador Allende, to give the inaugural address.
agitations and the first time nations had represented themselves since the tumultuous year.\textsuperscript{267} Planned by an international team that included Eduardo Arroyo, Enrico Crispolti, Raffaele De Grada, Pontus Hulten, and Tommaso Trini, the exhibition, Environment, Participation, Cultural Structures, embodied the Biennale's desire to present an expanded view of contemporary cultural production. Furthermore, for the first time, the Biennale included the field of architecture and had an accompanying program of films and lectures. The Collective, aware of these massive changes, planned an urban media intervention entitled Bombardo Venezia (Bombard Venice).

According to the Collective's notes, proposals, and letters, Bombardo Venezia consisted of a mobile high-powered projector that each night, for the first twelve nights of the Biennale, would project images and films onto the picturesque and historic facades of Venetian architecture. The Collective envisioned a series of juxtapositions, such as images of the industrial outskirts of Venice with scenes from inside the Biennale (merging quotidian Venetian life and sanctioned avant-garde culture). The artists also planned to draw images from recent international television broadcasts to consider the homogenization of mass media culture against the backdrop of Venetian patrimony. The Collective described the technological and pictorial combinations as a "cultural animation" that "will club [matraquera] the old facades."\textsuperscript{268} The Collective's violent, Futurist-inspired language continued in the Biennale catalogue: "This 'bludgeoning' carried out on such respectable facades will produce confrontations between the various


values, aesthetics, structure and themes pertaining to culture. In addition to challenging categories of high/low and art/life, these nightly media events would render the institution of the Biennale more porous by bringing scenes from inside the Giardini to public spaces and, conversely, by associating these events and their attendant information structures with "Art." Inside France's pavilion, the Collective hoped to house a central office, where the artists would use Telex machines and other technologies to collect and disseminate up-to-date information, and to mount panels and texts that explained the project's methodology.

Unfortunately, being selected to exhibit in the Biennale by Restany did not assure funding for the artists' project. In the months leading up to the July opening, the artists wrote letters to government offices, museums, private businesses, the Biennale, and many other outlets in search of financing to reach their relatively modest budget of 55,000 francs (about 8,300 euros today), but they did not secure sufficient funding and cancelled Bombardo Venezia a few days before the Biennale opened. The Collective, however, took the rejection as an opportunity to participate in a different way. The group still hung its panels about the proposed project inside the French pavilion, but on its steps, the artists launched an information campaign, displaying signs, interviewing passersby, and holding a series of public conversations. The discussions with artists, curators, and visitors spiraled around the circumstances that led to the cancellation of Bombardo Venezia, and videos of these conversations were replayed on a small monitor placed in

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270 Raising funds in France was particularly difficult compared to the United States or other western countries because private sector and foundation funding of the arts was, and continues to be, almost non-existent. To see the Collective's many requests, see "Art Sociologique et Collectif d'Art Sociologique, Dossier 6" in Fonds Fred Forest, Inathèque, Paris.
front of the pavilion. The Collective hoped to draw attention to its position of representing France without any financial support from the nation. Among the many exchanges that took place, Fischer spoke with Gaston Diehl, the official from the *Ministère des affaires étrangères* responsible for the French pavilion. When asked why the artists were left without "un centime de budget" ("a cent of budget"), Diehl listed the numerous demands on the ministry's small budget and explained that the budget was predicated on the transport and installation of works of art loaned by artists. Fischer, of course, protested, "But in our case, there are not works to transport because we work on site." Diehl responded, "Yes, yes. I know it is one of the new methods not yet accounted for by the financial controller. You must wait until it becomes customary. Right now, you do not operate on any budgetary line. It is not accounted for; it does not exist."

On-site, socially-engaged, and non-object-based projects had to thus await French bureaucracy's determination of an appropriate budgetary line.

The information campaign initiated by the Collective drew attention to the state of arts funding and, inevitably, promoted the Collective itself. Day to day, the artists sat around tables in front of the pavilion covered with Telex and tabletop reprography machines that they used to produce campaign materials and to send press releases of the failed project to newspapers. [Fig. 15] They would also give tours of the display inside the pavilion, especially to potentially sympathetic figures such as Joseph Beuys. [Fig. 16] In addition to the panels enumerating the Collective's methodology, the interior display included over forty letters rejecting the Collective's written requests for funding. Among

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these responses, Pontus Hulten, one of the organizers of the Biennale and the recently-appointed director of the Centre Georges Pompidou, wrote, "The interest and the novelty of the project that you proposed to the Biennale captured my attention, and it is definitely unfortunate that you are unable to realize this project." The presentation traced the development, research, attempted execution, and failure of an idea, revealing the innumerable ways that such work operates within institutional constraints and priorities. The Collective turned its participation into a self-reflexive examination of its actual situation and its organizational labor, and while leaning toward the solipsistic, the project also reflects the financial precariousness shared by many cultural workers as well as the distance between the ideals and the realities of the revamped 37th Biennale.

The Collective's actions in Venice culminated in barring entrance to the pavilion by blocking its door and holding a widely attended public debate on its steps. [Fig. 17] According to the group's notes and video documentation (unfortunately often lacking sound), about eighty to one hundred people gathered to discuss the Collective's actions and the position of artists within often inhospitable political and socio-economic climates. The participants included artists encountered at the Biennale (such as Jochen Gerz and Joseph Beuys), artists that had participated in the Collective's group exhibitions (such as Antonio Muntadas and Willi Bongard), sympathetic artist groups (such as Groupe Ecart from Geneva and Art & Language) and numerous others, including Eleanor Antin and Joseph Kosuth. Beuys, who represented Germany at the Biennale, stated that it

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272 "L'intérêt et la nouveauté du projet que vous aviez proposé à la Biennale n'a pas manqué de retenue mon attention, il serait bien évidemment malheureux que vous ne puissiez réaliser ce projet." Letter to Pontus Hulten from Fred Forest for Collectif d'Art Sociologique requesting funding and equipment, dated April 30, 1976, in "Correspondences," Fonds Fred Forest, Inathèque, Paris.
was up to the artist to find a method that allowed him or her to express and act within the
given socio-economic context. If an artist could not do so, he or she had chosen "a bad
strategy." In response to this apparent criticism of the Collective for its negative
campaign about what was not possible, Restany replied that the Collective's action was
among the most "humane, direct, and strong" in reaction to the "new face of the
Biennale." He continued:

The Collective's presentation was considered an organic element of the Biennale,
like a sort of organic critique of the institution itself. [. . .] The Collective
provided an example of 'democracy' by taking advantage of the very 'democratic'
opening that the Biennale conferred upon itself in 1976. [. . .] Through its
questioning, the Collective played its role in a more humane and free way than all
the officially planned debates and discussions.

Viewed thus as an innate outgrowth of a more liberal and open Biennale still struggling
to emerge, the Collective's actions marked a positive sign in the Biennale's evolution and
in artists' self-determination. In the course of a few days, the Collective erected a minor
institution within the larger institution of the Biennale, complete with a press office,
display, outreach, public events, and documentation.

This "institutionality" would not be complete without another manifesto, this one
titled "Sociological Art Manifesto No. 3: Methodology and Strategy" and published in
the Biennale catalogue. As compared to the prior two manifestoes, this manifesto
presented the most coherent and least defensive description of the Collective's key aim to
"exercise the dialectical power of critical questioning" and thereby to engender greater

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274 "Un artiste qui n'arrive pas à s'exprimer comme il le veut donc qui de laisse étouffer par le contexte,
socio-économique de son époque est un artiste qui adopte une mauvaise stratégie." Manuscript of video
interview, Fred Forest's personal archives, Paris.
275 "La présentation du collectif a été considéré comme un élément organique à l'institution elle-même.
Critique d'autant plus forte que la Biennale entendait en 1976 assumer un visage nouveau à partir d'une
définition et d'un statut renouvelés. Peut-être le collectif d'art sociologique a donné un exemple de
'démocratie' en se servant justement de l'ouverture 'démocratique' que la biennale entendait confier à sa
propre institution en 1976." Ibid.
awareness of the relationships that structure human existence. The Collective sought to reach this aim by appropriating sociological methods for analyzing society (interviews, surveys, focus groups, observation) and subverting or redirecting these methods so that rather than maintain the status quo (their critique of "official sociology") the group would challenge given categories and relations. In the hands of the Collective, the interview does more than extract information; it becomes a participatory and therapeutic process for the exchange of viewpoints. Or, the "facts" and documents assembled through research and presented in new "contexts" uncover contradictory and inopportune relationships.

The three artists coalesced around a set of agreed upon tenets that became the self-perpetuating mantra of the Collective as an institution. The group admitted that its institutional success depended centrally on its relationship with other such entities, from museums, Biennales, and magazines to unions, governments, and political parties. "It is a matter of seizing from existing institutions part of the power that they have vested in us [. . . ] in order to misdirect this power, if possible to outflank the neutralization of our action, [. . . ] and to redirect this power against the institutional system we wish to contest." By participating in the Venice Biennale, the Collective succeeded in drawing attention to its failure to participate in the way it had intended and, thus, to the numerous forces opposing its endeavor. Even more important, however, the Collective secured its presence within this preeminent venue of contemporary art.

277 "La stratégie de l'art sociologique vise à s'appuyer sur la permissivité des institutions artistiques, pour élargir son activité à une pratique sociologique beaucoup plus vaste que la catégorie d'art. Il s'agit de s'emparer du pouvoir des institutions en place soit en s'appuyant sur quelques-uns des hommes qui y exercent des responsabilités, soit grâce à la logique du pouvoir acquis, pour déborder les processus de neutralisation de notre action qu’opère en principe le cadrage institutionnel du micromilieu élitaire, et retourner ce pouvoir contre le système institutionnel que nous voulons questionner." Ibid., 69.
Around the time of the Biennale, the Collective had a rubber stamp made that read "COLLECTIF ART SOCIOLIGIQUE" and used it to mark all of its notices, manifestoes, and papers. The regularized logo replaced the written or typed signatures of the three artists, thereby substituting a brand identity for the individual artists. Concomitant with having this stamp made, the group also wrote a short text titled "Art sociologique: un art de l'organisation" ("Sociological Art: An Art of Organization"). The work of art, the Collective wrote, "is no longer an object, or an isolated event (performance) but an informational apparatus [un dispositif informationnel] programmed through its ongoing process." Envisioned as a device (or system) affected by and affecting surrounding devices (or systems), art was necessarily active and interrelated multiple spheres. In this scenario, the artist's role was to organize and set into motion these apparatuses. If Bombardo Venezia is taken as one such dispositif, the sheer heterogeneity and complexity of this kind of artwork quickly becomes apparent. From its inception as an idea, Bombardo Venezia triggered countless inquiries, letters, conversations, paperwork, expenditures of time and money, and materializations, all of which intersected with expanding spheres from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to the Biennale, to more abstract fields such as technology, finance, and urban planning. The Collective attempted to structure interactions among spheres in order to bring greater awareness to existing relationships between, for instance, the spaces of high culture and

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278 Artists' stamps had long intrigued Fischer, who published a study/archive entitled Art et communication marginale, Tampons d'artistes (Art and Communication, Artists' Stamps) in 1974.
279 "Cette affirmation, cette intention, et cette volonté de 'déclarer' art, désormais, non plus un 'objet', ou un événement isolé (performance) mais un dispositif informationnel programmé dans son processus à venir est un fait nouveau dans l'histoire de l'art." "Art sociologique: un art de l'organisation, c. 1976. While undated, the content of the text suggests it was around 1976. Fonds Fred Forest, Inathèque, Paris.
the working class industrial sections of Venice. Its success hinged somewhat on its capacity to maintain itself in the face of multiple and sometimes hostile reactions.

In his influential account of conceptual art, Benjamin Buchloh characterizes organizational artistic labor in the early to mid-1970s as the "aesthetics of administration." He argues that in correspondence with the postwar middle class, artists increasingly focused on the organization and presentation of information rather than the production of objects. Buchloh relates the representational forms of recent art—antihierarchical arrangements, geometric shapes, empiricist simplicity, and quantification, all defining attributes of conceptual art—as indicative of the socioeconomic reality of late capitalism. "Aesthetic identity," he writes, "is structured in much the same way as this class’s social identity is, namely, as one of merely administering labor and production (rather than producing) and of the distribution of commodities." For Buchloh, conceptual art’s duplicitous achievement was to dispel the specialized aesthetic sphere and to mirror the latest metamorphosis in the capitalist conditions of production. However, Buchloh’s account does not acknowledge the defiance that frequently underlined artists' organizational endeavors, especially as groups self-organized in an effort to resist dominant power structures.

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280 He opposes this approach to a traditional art-historical approach “based on the study of visual objects,” which he suggests is limited in considering artistic practices that insist “on being addressed outside of the parameters of the production of formally ordered, perceptual objects, and certainly outside of those of art history and criticism.” Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, “Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions,” October 55 (Winter 1990): 105.

281 Rather than specifically visual qualities, the aesthetic becomes a linguistic convention and function of an institutional discourse. “Conceptual Art was distinguished by its acute sense of discursive and institutional limitations, its self-imposed restrictions, its lack of totalizing vision, its critical devotion to the factual conditions of artistic production and reception without aspiring to overcome the mere facticity of these conditions.” Ibid., 141.

282 Ibid., 128.
In response to Buchloh, Chris Gilbert has insightfully proposed what he terms a "postwar institutional collectivity." Writing about Art & Language, a group founded in 1968 and in frequent contact with the Collective, Gilbert argues that while the group may replicate bureaucratic and administered culture (or in Buchloh's words "the operating logic of late capitalism and its positivist instrumentality"), it does so in order to achieve an oppositional self-sustaining freedom.283 "The group's key purpose," writes Gilbert about Art & Language, "was to assert its own institutional character as ongoing resistance to a larger sociality within which it would otherwise be, and was to a large extent, inscribed."284 Another group that mimed the institutional was the Artist Placement Group (APG). Started by John Latham and Barbara Stevini in 1966, APG negotiated contracts to place artists into businesses and corporations as paid "advisors" and thus operated primarily as an administrative intermediary. Latham and Stevini became friendly with Fischer in the mid-1970s and stayed at his home when they visited Paris.285 Friends of the Collective as well as models of artistic practice, Art & Language and APG exemplified what Gilbert calls the "impulse to self-determination" and a "methodology of resistant organizational form."286 Self-organization was, in a sense, an end in itself. Viewed in the context of Gilbert's argument, the Collective's organization of exhibitions, texts,

283 Chris Gilbert, "Art & Language and the Institutional Form in Anglo-American Collectivism," *Collectivism After Modernism: The Art of Social Imagination After 1945*, eds. Blake Stimson and Gregory Sholette (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 77-93. Gilbert writes, "What [Buchloh's] account does not seem to allow for, and would follow from the arguments above, is that appropriation of hegemonic bureaucratic or administrative methods was not simply a move against aesthetic transcendence. It remained, I have contended, an ethical move and a strategy that, while at times mimetic of the culture it opposed, was certainly also carried out in the name of and with a view toward forming a resistant self-determination" (89).


information campaigns, and so forth as means to carve out and promote its identity should be viewed as coterminous with rather than in opposition to the Collective's critical and socially-committed artistic practice.

**Conclusion**

The first stirrings to identify a movement of sociological art came on the heels of May '68 as a common project of a community of artists and critics in Paris. Inspired by the recent upheavals and by art's rapidly expanding field, this group sought to orient its artistic and critical practices towards social engagement. Cohesion gradually frayed as ideologies and personalities came into conflict, and from this morass of socially-engaged, marginal artists, the unit of Fischer, Forest, and Thenot emerged. In their distinct individual practices, the artists saw a common ethic that they defined as sociological art. Turning to sociology, the artists hoped to discover novel and less subjective artistic strategies that might offer more direct access to social constituencies, but the artists also sought to bring sociology into the realms of imagination, humor, and performance. They envisioned research-intensive and long-term community projects that, like almost all social science endeavors, necessitated the participation of multiple people. The formation of the Sociological Art Collective, part of a dramatic upsurge of art collectives in the 1970s, stemmed from this desire to forge a new kind of practice in concert with the widespread anti-capitalist and anti-statist *autogestion* movement.

From the point of view of the Collective's existence, its eight years can be divided into two basic phases: research and institution. The first phase passed quickly in the flurry of exhibitions and catalogues the Collective produced in the winter and spring of 1975, which brought together an array of local and international artists who privileged...
analytical thinking and research over subjective self-expression and who sought to critically engage with contemporary culture. Through the planning of these presentations, the Collective searched for what it meant by sociological art and what sociological art might do. In late spring 1975, having consolidated a general vision, expressed in the Collective's second manifesto, the group turned its attention to promoting and refining its ideas through a series of solo exhibitions and texts as well as its first public project in Neuenkirchen. The organization and execution of these events led the artists to begin to identify with particular approaches and to differentiate their roles within the Collective. The "failed" Bombardo Venezia was the first project that fully merged the identities of the three artists into the über-image of the Collective. After Venice, the Collective carried out its two most significant sociological art projects: Animation of Perpignan in 1976 (discussed in chapter three) and Ecole Sociological Interrogative from 1976 to 1980 (discussed in chapter four). The school constituted the ultimate afterlife of May '68 and the summit of the Collective's organizational abilities and institutional vision, but this very "institutionality" would lead to the breakdown of the fragile union between the three artists.
CHAPTER 2: Questioning

“It is no longer a question of the questionnaire but of questioning.”

– Jean-Paul Thenot

Introduction

The Sociological Art Collective’s third manifesto, “Methodology and Strategy,” describes its artistic practice of "questionnement critique" ("critical questioning") as a means to transform social relationships and reveal dominant ideological systems. For the artists, questioning most often occurred by way of text-based questionnaires and video interviews that became vehicles of both participation and critique. Through the basic mechanism of query and response, questioning sets up systems of relations between people and generates a space for reflection on underlying norms. This chapter considers the increasing prevalence of questionnaires from the mid-1960s forward in order to understand how the act of questioning and its material and visual supports operated politically and aesthetically at a time when relations between politics and aesthetics were under intense scrutiny. It identifies the emergence of the "culture questionnaire" as an attempt by the government, sociologists, and artists to study and transform relations between art and society.

Between the mid-1960s, when the first major sociological studies of art appeared, and the late 1970s, when the Centre Georges Pompidou began conducting regular

287 "Il n’est plus question de questionnaire mais de questionnement. Les questionnements sont une méthode pour connaître le phénomène perceptif et conceptuel du questionnaire. Ils ne sont pas une contestation de l’opinion qui s’y manifeste, pour la remplacer par une autre, mais une mise en question du phénomène. Il s’agit de changer les questionnaires.” Jean-Paul Thenot, Cent lectures de Marcel Duchamp (Crisnée, Belgium: Yellow Now, 1978), 29-30.

sociological studies of its visitors, questionnaires played a fundamental role in advancing state initiatives and strengthening the sociology of art. At the same time, artists and curators associated with Fluxus, conceptual art, performance, and institutional critique, such as Groupe de recherche d’art visuel (GRAV), Hans Haacke, Stephen Willats, and the art historian and curator Jean-Marc Poinsot, undertook inquiry-based projects. This widespread convergence on questionnaires in the 1960s revealed contradictory agendas. On the one hand, questionnaires constituted key zones of interaction between academic inquiry and the growth of government and industry. Private and public entities increasingly relied on questionnaires and statistics to guide development, and to meet this demand, polling institutes proliferated and university programs included more training in statistics. On the other hand, questionnaires typified the expanded practices and physical traces that accompanied art’s purported “dematerialization.”

Envisioned as progressive artistic objects, questionnaires often served as means to conduct critical research and as directives to incite linguistic and performative exchanges. Whether exploited by the democratic and capitalist fifth Republic or by forces opposed to the state’s neo-liberal trajectory, questionnaires were both statist and activist. A material object, research method, and communication strategy, the questionnaire offers a complex and rich form with which to explore the recent history of France.

SAC grew its practice of questioning within this historical milieu, and its questionnaires offer means to draw together and pry apart political, intellectual, and artistic histories. According to the Collective in its third manifesto, “official sociology

merely aims to take note of—and to manage and manipulate—the attitudes of the electors,” and this “bureaucratic methodology” helps to maintain the power of the “governmental and economic bodies that finance the social surveys.” “Only by carrying out critical questioning,” the Collective explained, “can we make use of these methods—through misdirecting them.” Questionnement critique constituted a hybrid practice that engaged and détourned predominant methods. It also prefigured the intersection of quantitative and qualitative methods in French sociology by at least a decade. I argue that rather than fix an image of the social, as in many state and sociological uses of questionnaires, artists in the Collective tended to disrupt the representational operations of questionnaires in order to involve individuals and to voice dissent. While I consider the Collective’s work within a network of artists and artistic tendencies, I also aim to release the questionnaire from its narrow treatment in art history as a corollary of language-based conceptual art by analyzing its expanded and performative applications.

I. Culture Questionnaires and State Formation

“The Golden Age of Surveys”

By the mid-1960s, questionnaires, surveys, and opinion polls had become prominent tools used by the press, marketing firms, and politicians to assess and influence public opinion. In 1963, Pierre Weill established SOFRES (Société française d'enquêtes par sondage) to carry out marketing and public opinion polls in France. SOFRES joined France’s two other agencies: IFOP (Institut français d'opinion publique), which Jean Stoetzel founded in 1938 after meeting George Gallup (who first developed

the opinion poll in America in the 1930s), and INSEE (Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques), which was founded in 1946 and responsible for national census statistics.\footnote{See Michel Brulé, \textit{L’Empire des sondages: Transparence ou manipulation?} (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1988).} On the occasion of SOFRES’s founding, the journalist Brigitte Gros wrote an article entitled “L’âge d’or des sondages” (The golden age of surveys) about the growing industry of polling. Drawing attention to connections between the growing industry and the government, she noted that the government constituted 30% of the industry’s revenue and was so dependent on polls that “administrators don’t make any important decisions without a prior study.” “Today,” she wrote, “2,000 French suffice to translate the sentiments of 45 million.”\footnote{Brigitte Gros, “L’âge d’or des sondages,” \textit{L’Express}, October 3, 1963, 14. Polling was an expensive commodity with a single question costing, according to Gros, 800 francs (about 593 euros in 1963).} In other words, state reliance on surveys reduced the French population to a statistically significant sample size, hitching public will to the booming industry of polling.

Echoing Gros, the historian Loïc Blondiaux described Charles de Gaulle’s re-election in 1965 as a turning point in the history of polling. The widespread use of polls as predictors of de Gaulle’s victory leading up to the election replaced the fragmented political voices of the fourth Republic with the statistically unified body politic of the fifth Republic.\footnote{He writes, “A l’opinion publique fragmentée, délocalisée et impuissante de la IVe République s’est substituée une courbe sur papier millimétré. Le sondage devient la toise et l’aune de la popularité politique, un élément central du nouveau jeu politique, un point de repère fixe qui sert à la compréhension et à l’interprétation de l’ensemble du système par ses acteurs. La France gaullienne prend corps.” Loïc Blondiaux, \textit{La Fabrique de l’opinion: une histoire sociale des sondages} (Paris: Seuil, 1998), 521.} In this new historical situation, quantitative results printed in newspapers and broadcast on radio and television constructed and falsely unified public opinion. A 1967 photomontage in \textit{L’Express} visualized this new political
configuration. It depicts the then-prime minister Georges Pompidou adjusting the dial on a television set displaying the percentile results of a recent IFOP survey about commercials on television, a contentious issue under debate by the constitutional council. In this image, the survey results transmitted by television function as the major point of contact between the political official and the French population. Surveys and questionnaires became, as a 1964 article in *Le Monde* stated, “the stethoscope of the twentieth century.”

The pervasiveness and profitability of quantitative studies spurred pedagogical changes in the field of sociology. While associated with Emile Durkheim’s foundational use of statistics in his 1897 book *Suicide*, quantitative methods in sociology did not become widely taught in France until after the introduction of the license in sociology in 1958. This shift toward professionalization coupled with increasing demands for sociological research by the government and industry precipitated an explosion of methodological courses and handbooks at the end of the 1960s. Programs in sociology sought to consolidate and systematize research methods in order to accommodate

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295 De Gaulle sought to allow for commercial advertising on the two state television channels in 1967, and the measure was challenged and brought before the constitutional council, which eventually approved the measure. On October 1, 1968, the first commercial advertisement was shown on French television. See Valérie Sacriste, “La Publicité à la télévision, instrument de liberté ou de servitude?” *Le Temps des médias* 16 (January 2011): 188-201.
demands for empirical research. At the same time, growing anti-positivist sentiments expressed by sociologists Edgar Morin, René Lourau, Henri Lefebvre, and Max Weber (whose work began to be widely translated into French in the 1960s) led many to question sociology’s empirical and scientific basis.²⁹⁹

Even Pierre Bourdieu, who had become well-known for his use of quantitative methods through such seminal works as *L’Amour de l’art: Les musées d’art européens et leur public* (1966) (*The Love of Art: European Art Museums and Their Public*), began to voice caution about quantitative methods, specifically uncritical uses of questionnaires. In 1964, the same year he began research for *L’Amour de l’art*, Bourdieu got his first teaching job at the École pratique des hautes études and began co-teaching a methodology seminar with his colleagues Jean-Claude Passeron and Jean-Claude Chamboredon (an indication of the field’s professionalization). Drawing on their notes and teaching experiences, the three sociologists published a 75-page methodological treatise titled *Le Métier de sociologue* (*The Craft of Sociology*) in 1968.³⁰⁰ Critical of what they saw as a blind faith in quantitative methods, they recommend that scientists consider the impact of selected methods on a study’s objects and outcomes.

They address, in particular, the questionnaire, the most widely used quantitative tool, in order to demarcate its epistemological limits, which are so often concealed by its

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scientific and objective apparatus. “Far from constituting the most neutral and most controlled way of establishing data,” the authors state, “the questionnaire presupposes a whole set of exclusions, the most pernicious of which are unconscious.”

The authors express doubt about the extrapolation of expressed attitudes, opinions, and behaviors from their enunciated contexts (often artificial research situations). Furthermore, questionnaires impose pre-constructed linguistic categories in order to code and measure responses for analysis, thereby delimiting responses and linguistic diversity from the outset. The authors iterate these and other factors to dispel the questionnaire’s presumed transparency and, moreover, to suggest that sociologists dialectically engage with context, structure, and language to responsibly employ questionnaires. *Le Métier de sociologue* encourages sociologists, like any craftsperson, to build questionnaires by attentively observing the form’s priorities, values, errata, and lacunae and to recognize their participation in the formation of results. To construct the questionnaire was to construct the object of study. This self-consciousness of Bourdieu et al.’s handbook—its blending of quantitative with qualitative approaches—set it apart from the dozens of others published at the time, and it likewise marked an attempt to resolve Bourdieu’s committed anti-positivism with his reliance on, and belief in, empirical methods.

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302 They write, “One has to be aware that every distinctively scientific object is consciously and methodically constructed, in order to know how to construct the object and to know what it is that one has constructed; and all this has to be known in order to reflect on the techniques for constructing the questions to be put to the object.” *Ibid.*, 49.
303 Bourdieu locates the origin of his desire to bridge sociology with anthropology and ethnology in his early work in Algeria. Sent as a national servant in 1955 during the French colony’s struggle for independence, he worked closely with statisticians from INSEE and realized how important rigorous quantitative methods were for sociology as well as the qualitative implications of statistical coding. Bourdieu, Chamboredon, and Passeron, *The Craft of Sociology*, 258. He also amassed a significant ethnographic archive by taking hundreds of photographs of everyday life, which illustrated his first book *Sociologie de l’Algérie* (Paris: PUF, 1958). Bourdieu published a study on the social uses of photography titled *Un art moyen* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1965). For more on Bourdieu's work in Algeria and the
Between Bourdieu’s use of questionnaires in *L’Amour de l’art* (1966) and his elaboration of their immanent contradictions in *Le Métier de sociologue* (1968), Bourdieu published a translation of Erwin Panofsky’s *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*. In a 34-page postscript to the translation, he first references his central concept of *habitus*, which, I believe, was key to his identification of the questionnaire’s limitations.\(^{304}\) While a seemingly odd endeavor, Bourdieu’s translation project demonstrates his profound interest in art and art history, and the influence of Panofsky is evident throughout Bourdieu’s thinking.\(^{305}\) Panofsky negotiates between subjectivity and objectivity as well as individuality and collectivity by elaborating the medieval “habit of mind,” which connects scholastic philosophy and Gothic architecture, or rather accounts for unconscious relations among a body of thought, architectural details, and medieval builders. Panofsky writes, “The connection which I have in mind is a genuine cause-and-effect relation; but in contrast to an individual influence, this cause-and-effect relation comes about by diffusion rather than by direct impact. It comes about by the spreading of influence of this work on his thought, see Jane E. Goodman, Paul A. Silverstein, and Patricia Fogarty, *Bourdieu in Algeria: Colonial Politics, Ethnographic Practices, Theoretical Developments* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2009); and Craig Calhoun, “Pierre Bourdieu and Social Transformation Lessons from Algeria,” *Development and Change* 37, no. 6 (2006): 1403-1415. In a review of Bourdieu’s work, Paul DiMaggio wrote, “[Bourdieu’s] use of statistical data and empirical investigation is courageous in the antipositivist climate of French critical sociology.” “On Pierre Bourdieu,” *American Journal of Sociology* 84, no. 6 (May 1, 1979): 1466.


\(^{305}\) In addition to offering the first English translation of Panofsky’s postscript, Holsinger discusses the influence of Panofsky on Bourdieu's conception of *habitus* but does not then connect this with his contemporaneous analysis of the questionnaire. Bruce W. Holsinger, *The Premodern Condition: Medievalism and the Making of Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 94–113.
what may be called, for want of a better term, a mental habit.” In his analysis of the questionnaire in *Le Métier de sociologue*, Bourdieu derives at least two central ideas from Panofsky’s thought: first, that individual responses or facts are meaningless unless situated within cultural contexts, and, second, that a questionnaire is shaped by and reveals the *habitus*—“a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions”—of the society that produced it.

Looking back on *Le Métier de sociologue* in a 1988 interview, Bourdieu stated:

> You have to question the questionnaire (in fact, questionnaires should always be questioned…). The people who asked the questions put into them unconscious categories of thought (such as: pine is dark, gloomy, the wood used for coffins, associated with death, and so on), and they then got the respondents to apply equally unconscious categories which happened to be roughly the same. There was communication of unconsciousness.

With the phrase “unconscious categories of thought,” Bourdieu references the deeply ingrained structures— the “habit of mind” or *habitus*—that shape questionnaires just as they did gothic architecture, and, thus, he overturns the positivist conception of the research tool. Bourdieu ends both his postscript of 1967 and his methodological treatise of 1968

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306 As quoted in Bruce W. Holsinger, *The Premodern Condition*, 100, and also in the excerpt of Panofsky’s text included in the appendix of Bourdieu, Chamboredon, and Passeron, *The Craft of Sociology*, 191.

307 Pierre Bourdieu first discusses *habitus* in *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 83 (originally published as *Esquisse d’une théorie de la pratique* [Genève; Paris: Droz, 1972]). To argue against the perceived value of individual responses, Bourdieu quotes directly from Panofsky’s *Iconology and Iconography*: “Whether we deal with historical or natural phenomena, the individual observation assumes the character of a ‘fact’ only when it can be related to other, analogous observations in such a way that the whole series ‘makes sense’” (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, and Passeron, *The Craft of Sociology*, 64–65). In other words, a response solicited by a questionnaire is “a scrap of evidence” (to quote Panofsky) that derives its value from its relations to other responses and to the systems that construct it. Claude Lévi-Strauss’s study of myth reveals a similar tension between empirical study and the construction of categories that allow “bundles of relations” between terms to generate meanings. “The Structural Study of Myth,” *Structural Anthropology*, trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoef (New York: Basic Books), 206-231 (originally published in French in 1955).


309 Bourdieu’s phrase “unconscious categories of thought” also recalls Lévi-Strauss. In *The Craft of Sociology*, Bourdieu et al. include Lévi-Strauss’s introduction to the work of Marcel Mauss in the section “constructing the object” in order to address language’s preconstructions. Lévi-Strauss suggests that by
by insisting upon methodological self-consciousness. After quoting Panofsky’s statement in *Iconography and Iconology*—“The art historian differs from the ‘naïve’ spectator in that he is conscious of what he does”—Bourdieu lauds Panofsky who, he writes, “reveals here, in a striking manner, that he can do what he does only on the condition that, at any given moment, he should know what he is doing and what it takes to be doing it.”310 Panofsky’s model self-consciousness inspired Bourdieu’s proposals for and criticisms of the field of sociology.311

In the early 1970s, Bourdieu became one of the most outspoken critics of the public opinion polls and surveys, which were skyrocketing in popularity, due to their perceived lack of self-consciousness. In a talk titled “L’opinion publique n’existe pas” (Public opinion does not exist), which he gave at a conference in Arras in January 1971 and published two years later in *Les Temps modernes*, he condemned public opinion polls as distorting sociological methods for political ends.312 He disputed three assumptions underlying polls: equality of respondents, representativity of opinion, and neutrality of questions. Polls, he suggested, perpetuate a sense of equal access and neutrality despite inequalities among respondents, and they represent the concerns of pollsters rather than respondents and thus reify the control and views of those in power. They become

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310 The quotation continues “[...] because both the most humble and the most noble scientific operations are worth the full value of the theoretical and epistemological conscience that accompanies these operations.” As quoted in Holsinger, *The Premodern Condition: Medievalism and the Making of Theory*, 108.

311 It is important to note here that Bourdieu reverses his opinion on Panofsky by his 1972 text *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, in which, to quote Holsinger, “Panofsky has been reduced to a whipping-boy for art-worshipping empiricism.” Holsinger surmises that Bourdieu’s baffling about-face may have been a reaction to the perceived misuse of Bourdieu's theory and methodology by his critics and followers. *Ibid.*, 109–113.

instruments of political action rather than political knowledge, and their widespread use reduces other forms of collective expression, such as demonstrations or petitions, whose egalitarian logic the polls ostensibly imitate. The validity of this critique and also the continued popularity of public opinion polls might be measured by the July 19, 1977, parliamentary law that prohibited carrying out surveys and publishing their results before elections due to the threat posed to universal suffrage. As much as Bourdieu’s censure of polling agencies exposed their dubious intentions, it also reaffirmed the scientific rigor of his own methodology. Academic research, he argued, maintained a greater distance from political demands in formulating methods and topics of interrogation. By the early 1970s, Bourdieu was a foremost academic researcher, highly sought-after for state and industry studies, and a strident advocate of anti-positivist, quantitative sociology. Yet, in the many studies he carried out in the 1970s and 80s, he still relied entirely on questionnaires and cites his "liberation from positivism" as not taking place until the 1990s, specifically through the qualitative methods of his 1993 study, La Misère du monde (1993, not yet translated into English). As much as questionnaires evidenced

313 Bourdieu writes, “Le sondage d'opinion est, dans l'état actuel, un instrument d'action politique; sa fonction la plus importante consiste peut-être à imposer l'illusion qu'il existe une opinion publique comme sommation purement additive d'opinions individuelles; à imposer l'idée qu'il existe quelque chose qui serait comme la moyenne des opinions ou l'opinion moyenne.” Ibid.
314 Blondiaux, La Fabrique de l'opinion, 556–557.
315 Of course, academic research has never been disconnected from the influence of politics or industry, including in Bourdieu’s work. In his discourse against polling agencies, Bourdieu pointed disapprovingly to the rise of public opinion polls around concerns of May 1968. He noted, for instance, that since May 1968 more than 200 questions had been posed about teaching compared to less than twenty between 1960 and 1968. Only once issues had become political problems did polling agencies formulate polling questions. However, political “interest” in the education system and museum after 1968 also abetted Bourdieu’s own successful career. Admittedly, Bourdieu began his work on the university and museum before the events of May 1968 with Les héritiers (1964) and L’Amour de l’art (1966), but this work, in addition to Bourdieu’s leftist politics, situated him squarely in the center of national, post-'68 reforms of the university and of the museum.
the opposing interests of sociology, industry, and the state since the 1960s, they have remained powerful, quotidian fixtures in French society, especially in the study of culture.  

**The State’s Culture Questionnaires**

Number crunching in the realm of culture also became an important and contested means of state formation. In 1963 (the same year that SOFRES was established), the government added a research department to the Ministry called Le Service des études et recherches (Service of Study and Research) to address “development problems from the angle of cultural politics and through recourse to statistics, economics, and the social sciences.” In addition to collecting quantitative data about the Ministry of Culture’s programs, the Service tracked and funded studies about the arts by university researchers. Attesting to the explosion of such studies, an information bulletin published in June 1972 lists 400 projects carried out between 1964 and 1971. The bulletin does not include results, but it makes clear the pervasiveness of quantitative sociological studies addressing public access to and uses of culture, which, it should be noted, the Ministry actively encouraged.

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317 Numerous magazines have also utilized questionnaires to elicit readers’ engagement, a topic beyond the scope of this dissertation. See, for instance, the surveys of the year's films in *Cahiers du cinéma*. For more on the history of questionnaires and surveys in avant-garde literary and art magazines, see Lori Cole, "What is the Avant-Garde? The Questionnaire as Historiography," *Journal of Art Historiography* 5 (December 2011); Lori Cole, "What is the Avant-Garde?": Questionnaires as Communities in Print, Ph.D. Dissertation, New York University, 2012.

318 I envision culture and state formation in dialectical suspension rather than one or the other being prior or dependent. As George Steinmetz argues, the influence of culture on the state should not be “framed as a kind of specialized elite case,” nor “allowed to play an explanatory role [. . .] as a timeless national essence.” *State/Culture: State-Formation after the Cultural Turn* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 12–17.

The list includes Bourdieu and Alain Darbel’s foundational study of museum audiences first published in 1966 as *L’Amour de l’art: Les musées d’art européens et leur public* (*The Love of Art: European Art Museums and Their Public*) and partially financed by the Service.\(^{320}\) Bourdieu and his team collected 9,226 questionnaires in eleven different French museums, which revealed a direct link between education level and museum attendance and behavior.\(^{321}\) According to the authors, subjects acquire the cultural competence (“cultural capital”) fundamental to aesthetic experience during schooling.\(^{322}\) By exposing who possess this capital and who does not, museums reveal their "true function": “to reinforce for some the feeling of belonging and for others the feeling of exclusion.”\(^{323}\) This condemnation of museums bolstered the government’s appeals to democratize culture and to reinvent museums for the edification of a broad public. The study also included lengthy descriptions of its quantitative methodology and

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\(^{322}\) In response to the suspicion that sociologists set out to dispute “the authenticity and sincerity of aesthetic pleasure,” Bourdieu explains, “The sociologist does not intend to refuse Kant’s phrase that ‘the beautiful is that which pleases without concept,’ but rather he or she sets out to define the social conditions which make possible both this experience and the people for whom it is possible (art lovers or ‘people of taste’) and thence to determine the limits within which it can exist.” Bourdieu and Darbel, *The Love of Art*, 109. Bourdieu elaborates on his conception of aesthetic experience as being divided into two levels of enjoyment: the first is phenomenal and sensorial and belongs to everyday experience, and the second is literary and operates in the realm of signifiers. See Pierre Bourdieu, “Outline of a sociological theory of art perception,” *International Social Science Journal* 20 (Winter 1968): 589-621, republished in Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. Randall Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 215–237.

\(^{323}\) Bourdieu and Darbel, *The Love of Art*, 112.
a forty-page appendix compiling the questionnaires, statistical equations, graphs, and tables. It thus became a methodological model for future studies in the sociology of art.\footnote{For a general overview of Bourdieu’s writing on art, see Michael Grenfell and Cheryl Hardy, \textit{Art Rules: Pierre Bourdieu and the Visual Arts} (New York: Berg, 2007).} The Ministry of Culture (later renamed the Ministry of Cultural Affairs) initiated the first national survey of the arts to “comprehend the cultural life of the nation” in 1973 and continues to carry it out to this day.\footnote{Augustin Girard, “Avant-Propos,” \textit{Pratiques culturelles des Français} (Paris: La Documentation française, 1974), 1–2. The survey was carried out in 1973 and published in 1974.} Titled \textit{Pratiques culturelles des Français} (Cultural practices of the French) and modeled on Bourdieu’s \textit{L’Amour de l’art}, the study gathered information about diverse cultural and leisure activities. In the study’s introduction, Augustin Girard, head of the Ministry’s Service of Study and Research, described the centrality of “cultural affairs” in state politics and wrote of clarifying the indistinct term “culture” through the objectivity and rationality of numbers rather than the subjectivity of aesthetic discourses.\footnote{Ibid.} By presenting a broad conception of culture through concrete measures, the state demarcated its expanding domain of investment and governance.

Girard distinguished \textit{Pratiques culturelles des Français} from other studies by the profile of participants, the diversity of cultural practices, and the analysis of results, all of which promoted ideals of democratization and dehierarchization. Rather than focus on a specific public, such as that of the museum, this study established a representative sample of the French population, and as opposed to narrow studies of cinema or theater, it covered the broadest range of practices possible.\footnote{By asserting the study’s “faithful reflection” of the French population, Girard underscores the study’s representation of the entire French population rather than of just the privileged classes. He acknowledges,} The twenty-page questionnaire asked...
about listening to the radio, attending films, reading art magazines, hunting, and many more activities. Its 111 questions ranged from the very general—how many times have you visited a museum in the past year and do you own a camera—to the more specific—what type of television programs are most interesting, how are the books in your house organized, and what is a fair price for an original lithograph by a contemporary artist. To analyze the collected data, the Service proposed a typology of the French population and plotted multiple factors to discern relationships, the same approaches used in *L’Amour de l’art*. For the former, narrative vignettes combined socio-economic data and cultural behavior to describe seven “types,” such as “Les Héritiers” (the name from Bourdieu’s famous study), who engage actively with all cultural practices except television and, on the other end of the spectrum, “La France de Guy Lux” (after the popular television personality and game show host in France in the 1960s and 70s), who tend to be older and less educated and rarely engage with any cultural practices except watching television. Although such a typology conformed to class assumptions about cultivated versus uncultivated activities, its multiplicity nuanced binary class constructions.\(^{328}\) For the factorial analysis, the authors plotted diverse practices graphically along the axes of prevalence and class. When mapped in this way, visiting a museum falls closest to attending a pre-electoral meeting, implying affinities between cultural and political involvement.\(^{329}\) While antithetical to traditional notions of fine art, the study’s portrayal of culture and its publics complemented the state’s emerging projects.

\(^{328}\) Ibid., 135–139.

The study’s authors were not ignorant of the limits of quantitative analysis. In addition to paraphrasing Bourdieu’s major arguments about the artificial scenario of inquiry, the issue of non-responses, and the ideological priorities of questionnaires, Girard included a postscript by Michel de Certeau to “trace the contours of what an investigation cannot say.” At the time, de Certeau was working as the “Director of Studies,” and while his work at the Service and its influence on his writing are rarely mentioned in scholarship on de Certeau, his ideas in *La Culture au pluriel* (1974) (*Culture in the Plural*) and *L’Invention du quotidien* (1980) (*The Practice of Everyday Life*) are obviously indebted to his work there. In de Certeau’s essay, which is entitled “Des espaces et des pratiques” (Spaces and Practices), culture is the soft element that averts being structured and controlled by the hard grasp of urban planning or statistics through its daily, intimate, and elusive transformations:

This soft region is silently being exploited by its opposite, the *hard*. Culture is the terrain of a new colonialism; it is the colonized of the twentieth century. Contemporary technocracies install whole empires on it, in the same way that European nations militarily occupied disarmed continents in the nineteenth century.

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330 Girard also states that recordings of the questionnaire interviews (I assume audio recordings because of his use of “bandes”) were made and are available to other researchers, but I was unable to locate these recordings. *Pratiques culturelles des Français*, 5.
331 Michel de Certeau, *La Culture au pluriel* (Paris: Union Générale d’Editions, 1974). Translated as *Culture in the Plural*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997). This book is a collection of essays written between 1968 and 1973 (the years following de Certeau’s publication of his reflections on May 1968 in *La Prise de parole*). The only study that I have found that discusses de Certeau's work at the Service is Christián Delacroix and Alain Boureau, *Michel de Certeau: les chemins d’histoire* (Paris: Editions Complexe, 2002). Like many social scientists, de Certeau straddled government (or industry) and academic work. During the 1970s, de Certeau also taught at the *Institut Catholique de Paris* and at University of Paris VIII, and, in 1984, he was elected the director of EHESS.
332 “En fait, cette région molle est silencieusement exploitée par son contraire, le dur. La culture est le terrain d’un néo-colonialisme; c’est le colonisé du XXe siècle. La technocratie contemporaine y installe des empires, comme les nations européennes du XIXe siècle occupaient militairement des continents désarmés.” Michel de Certeau, “Des espaces et des pratiques,” *Pratiques culturelles des Français*, 170. This essay is also the last chapter of *Culture in the Plural*. This essay’s poetic and elusive tone diverges significantly from the preceding dry, straightforward text, a contrast that corresponds with de Certeau’s critical message.
This passage invokes a striking analogy between the military colonization of the third world and technocracy’s conquest of culture, an analogy that de Certeau carries out over many pages, recounting attempts to cohere culture’s living and marginal synchronies into measurable data and charts. This damning critique of the very operations behind Pratiques culturelles des Français begs the question of its inclusion and of de Certeau’s involvement with the Service. De Certeau’s final point in the essay, however, is that “cultural trajectories” always grow, transform, and evade the grasp of research and control: “In this way, a cultural tactic becomes possible. It apportions to quantifiable gives[n] an unquantifiable risk—that of existing, which no ideology of ‘values’ or of ‘Man’ could ever be able to cover.” With this conclusion, de Certeau declares the persistence of plural cultural practices despite notable counter-forces, which corroborated the image of a vigorous culture nourished, or “ministered,” by the Ministry of Culture.

L’Amour de l’art and Pratiques culturelles des Français exemplify how the analysis of culture—notably, the relationship between public(s) and culture(s)—constituted a common yet evolving ground between the French state and sociology. If Bourdieu’s study differentiated publics according to access to “high” culture (the questionnaires inquire uniquely about the medium of painting) in museums that conserve national patrimony and class inequality, then the Ministry’s study eight years later differentiated publics through plural cultural practices (the questionnaires intermingle fine art, mass

333 De Certeau’s analogy echoes a general “third-worldism” that erupted among European left-wing activists and intellectuals in the late 1960s and 70s. For more on “Third-Worldism” and specifically in France, see Robert Malley, The Call from Algeria: Third Worldism, Revolution, and the Turn to Islam (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996).

334 The targets of de Certeau’s critique remain generic: bourgeois ideology, technocracy, corporate trusts (i.e. capitalist enterprises), and so forth.

media, quotidian activities, and so forth) in spaces that portend new models for museums. The state's questionnaire portends its evolving program of cultural action, especially its re-imagination of the museum as an active pedagogue for "the people" rather than as a passive archive of elite self-affirmation, a vision embodied in the most significant cultural project of the 1970s: the development of the Centre Georges Pompidou.336

**Questioning and Constructing Beaubourg’s Public**

From his 1969 letter to his frequent and unprecedented pronouncements on art, architecture, and culture until his death in 1974, President Pompidou imagined Beaubourg (named Centre Georges Pompidou after the president’s death) as a space radically oriented toward its visitors and the cultivation of new publics for culture.337 As recalled by François Lombard, who managed the call for architectural proposals for the museum, visitors—often referred to as “users”—were at the heart of early discussions: “We imagined a totally new concept of the cultural center which starts from the aspirations of the users and not from the aggregation of existing cultural institutions. [. . .] Our interrogations addressed first the needs of the visitor, the user, about the type of structures that the Center would make available.”338 If the public of museums was already a pressing subject among sociologists and government officials, it became an obsession with Beaubourg. As early as February 1971, six years before the Center would open,

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336 Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel hint at the evolution of museums when they inquire, for instance, about museum signage. They conclude that while such interpretive aids do not “make up for a lack of education,” they “proclaim, simply by existing, the right of uninformed people to be there.” *The Love of Art*, 49.
studies projected the composition of its future public. One study, drawing on statistics from other cultural institutions, estimated 10,000 visitors per day in the best-case scenario, and another advised canvassing the public in order to assure the “opening of the Center to the largest number and most varied publics.” These anticipatory studies functioned as means of self-imagination and justification for the state's immense and controversial investment, and, through statistics, they gave form to a yet unreal public body.

When the Centre Georges Pompidou opened on January 31, 1977, the actual attendance far surpassed even the highest estimates, reaching a record million visitors in the first two months and averaging 20,000 visitors per day in its first year, numbers greater than the Louvre or Eiffel Tower had ever attained. After years of anticipation, the initial turnout, four-hour waits, lines circling the building, and circus-like atmosphere brought to life the “phenomenon Beaubourg.”

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340 The press also participated in these projections, imagining future visitors of the Centre Georges Pompidou and projecting their reactions. In 1975, Le quotidien du Médecin published an "interview" with two future visitors of the Center. The "inhabitant of the neighborhood" responds that she had never visited a museum and comes to the Center frequently for distraction and fun, and a "doctor and art enthusiast" exclaims, "When I go to Beaubourg, I do not have the sense of going to a museum." "Deux visiteurs imaginaires," Le quotidien du Médecin, January 18, 1975, Centre Georges Pompidou 1975-1976, La Construction du Centre Pompidou, BVC TOF egg 5, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Paris.

341 The sections composing Beaubourg were the Bibliothèque publique d’information (BPI), Musée national d’art moderne (MNAM), Centre de création industrielle (CCI), and IRCAM. See Nathalie Heinich, “The Pompidou Centre and its Public: The Limits of a Utopian Site,” The Museum Time Machine, ed., Robert Lumley (London: Routledge, 1988), 197-210.

342 A number of historical texts address the “phenomenon Beaubourg.” See Claude Mollard, Le Centre national d’art et de culture Georges-Pompidou: Ou, l’innovation culturelle sur le Plateau Beaubourg (Lyon: Deswarte-Garnier, 1975); Gustave Affeulpin, La Soi-disant utopie du Centre Beaubourg (Paris:
Fleury describes Beaubourg as a political oeuvre founded on the ideal of openness to the French public. “The public of Beaubourg,” Fleury writes, “became the object of a political and sociological discourse, the object of the actualization of a myth that at the same time was becoming a category of public action [. . . and] a space of collective identification.” The articulation of the Centre Georges Pompidou as a new kind of museum depended on the attraction of a new public for art. Just as the Centre Pompidou’s flexible, transparent, and contemporary architecture contrasted with the classical stone facade of the traditional museum, and the Center’s activity-based programming diverged from the museum’s conservation of cultural patrimony, the Center intended to disrupt the process of class reaffirmation by courting a more diverse museum public. The analysis and representation of its public, therefore, was key to its self-realization.

On the first Sunday after the opening, Jean-Louis Fabiani and Pierre-Michel Menger, both of whom worked within Bourdieu’s research group at the Centre de sociologie européenne, surveyed the Center’s visitors. In their initial report, effusive and journalistic in tone, the authors portray the day as an “extraordinary situation” for sociology because the inauguration “would attract a large and atypical public for an establishment dedicated to contemporary art.” “The goal,” they write, “was to collect the initial impressions of visitors brutally confronted by aesthetic content with which they are not necessarily familiar.” This peculiar research situation necessitated setting aside the


344 “Le premier dimanche après son inauguration officielle, le Centre Georges Pompidou offrait à l’observation sociologique une situation extraordinaire; tout laissait supposer en effet que l’événement attirerait au Centre un public nombreux et inhabituel pour un établissement voué à l’art contemporain.
traditional long questionnaires for shorter surveys and semi-directed interviews in order to capture the immediacy and color of the disparate reactions. The Centre Georges Pompidou’s archives include only the sociologists’ reports and not visitors’ responses, but these reports evidence the sociologists’ complex investments in the publics of Beaubourg. Fabiani and Menger define the “utopia of Beaubourg” as “the instantaneous conversation of a non-public with culture and contemporary art, the spectacle reassuring and edifying the commonality of publics in a ‘welcoming’ and ‘accessible’ place.”

Such an exchange—brutal confrontation—between unaccustomed public and contemporary art was in many ways both the founding agenda and myth of Beaubourg.

As reported in the press in June 1977, Fabiani and Menger found that Beaubourg’s public was inverse to that of traditional museums, with fewer visitors from the upper classes than from the middle classes, suggesting that Beaubourg had succeeded in its cultivation of a more popular museum public. The sociologists, however, problematize

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346 The published numbers were 29% of visitors from the upper classes, 66% from the middle classes, and 5% from the working classes. This article cites the Bibliothèque publique d’information (BPI) as a key attraction for middle and lower classes and mentions that BPI has a young sociologist named Alain-Marie Bassy associated with it. Gilles Pudlowski, “L’événement Beaubourg va bien, merci” Nouvelles littéraires,
this vision somewhat by dividing the indistinct “flux” of public consumption according to three types of cultural objects: the most legitimate (the works in the Musée national d’art moderne), the least sacralized (the periodical and everyday objects at the Centre de création industriel), and the most scandalous (the French conceptual artist Ben and Edward Kienholz exhibition in the contemporary art galleries). As expected, those with the greatest cultural capital (and they cite Bourdieu’s *L’Amour de l’art* knowingly) are associated with the most legitimate and least popular forms, and, thus, despite the attraction of large and more economically diverse crowds and the unification of multiple cultural practices within a single structure, the visitors and their activities are “in strict relation to the socio-professional structure of the public.”

Following this initial study, questionnaires were conducted during seven of the first eleven months of the Centre Georges Pompidou’s being open. They became the chief mode of analyzing the center’s public and, thus, of understanding its mission. In 1977, 1978, 1979, and 1981, Bourdieu carried out questionnaires three times each year with his research group and then in 1983 handed the task over to his student, and now well-known sociologist of art, Nathalie Heinich. Bourdieu’s reports are indebted to his conclusions

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349 In addition to Bourdieu’s questionnaires, other questionnaires were conducted by the membership, budget, and education departments on the Centre Georges Pompidou, often in conjunction with individual exhibitions, such as F. Bauer’s study of the exhibition *Paris-Moscow* in 1979. The archives also include some studies carried out by the Ministry’s Service of Study and Research. For instance, in “Enquête sur les chances d’épanouissement de la créativité enfantine et adolescente” (1978), Jeanne Delais de Fréminville analyzes art education for children and discusses the Center’s *Atelier des enfants*. She writes, “Beaubourg se devait de miser sur les enfants puisqu’ils représentent ‘le grand public de demain’” (emphasis added, 92009, Archives du Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris). Documents associated with these studies are archived in the following files at the Archives du Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris: RAP 930009, RAP 152
in *L’Amour de l’art*, which he references frequently, and to his contemporaneous research concerning how those in power define taste, published in 1979 as *La Distinction: Critique sociale du jugement* (*Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*).

Like Menger and Fabiani, Bourdieu associated different spaces with different publics and forms of capital: younger people and more popular classes use the library, whereas highly educated people frequent the museum (cultural capital) and middle classes and entrepreneurs visit the temporary gallery exhibitions (social capital). Each year, Bourdieu compared the current statistics to those of past years, noting minor modifications, such as increasing visits by people under 25 and by women. While Bourdieu acknowledges that the Center’s multiple spaces create new conditions for visitors and the possibility of mixing, the gist of his reports remains consistent with ideas first formulated in 1966: that art reifies social and economic disparities. In a cover letter accompanying one of Bourdieu’s reports, Jean Millier, the President of the Centre Georges Pompidou, signaled its confidential nature and the potentially damaging uses of the statistical findings:

> "Disons, très schématiquement, que l’accumulation du capital académique induit l’effort, la concentration, la précision d’objectif en matière de consommation culturelle. Alors que, on peut le conjecturer, le capital social, au fur et à mesure de son accumulation, i.e. de l’élévation dans l’échelle sociale, rend ces efforts de plus en plus dispensables." Pierre Bourdieu, “Introduction,” 1978, RAP 2010001, p. 48, Archives du Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. One of the very few semi-direct references to his work at Beaubourg occurs in *La Distinction* when he describes the difficulty the working classes have judging formal innovation in modern art: “However, television, which brings certain performances of ‘high’ art into the home, or certain cultural institutions (such as the Beaubourg Centre or the Maisons de la culture), which briefly bring a working-class public into contact with high art and sometimes avant-garde works, create what are virtually experimental situations, neither more nor less artificial or unreal than those necessarily produced by any survey on legitimate culture in a working class milieu. One then observes the confusion, sometimes almost a sort of panic mingled with revolt, that is induced by some exhibits—I am thinking of Ben’s heap of coal, on view at Beaubourg shortly after it opened—whose parodic intention, entirely defined in terms of an artistic field and its relatively autonomous history, is seen as a sort of aggression, an affront to common sense and sensible people” (Bourdieu, *La Distinction*, 33).
You will find attached the report on the study done last June by a team of sociologists led by M. Pierre Bourdieu. I draw your attention to the relatively confidential character that should be attached to this type of report: separated from their context and the necessary balances, numbers coming from sociological studies often tend toward, as you know, abusive extrapolations.351

Despite the potential threat of such extrapolations, the Centre Georges Pompidou continued to hire Bourdieu and his team to quantify and represent its publics to the institution itself.

The data collected through these studies rarely surfaced for public consumption but rather guided institutional understanding, programming, and outreach. One exception was the exhibition Le Visiteur et son double (The Visitor and His Double) organized by Jean-François Barbier-Bouvet, a sociologist who directed the small research group within the Bibliothèque publique d’information (BPI). The exhibition, which ran from February to March 1987, presented the Center’s public to itself through displays of statistics and a typology of visitors.352 In the exhibition’s accompanying text, “La Naissance d’un public” (The Birth of a Public), Barbier-Bouvet argues that the Center participated in a double and contradictory movement in relation to the public: at once intensifying the privilege of those who already possess cultural capital and enlarging art’s public by

351 “Vous voudriez bien trouver, ci-joint, le rapport sur l’enquête effectuée en juin dernier par une équipe de sociologues dirigés par M. Pierre BOURDIEU. J’attire votre attention sur le caractère relativement confidentiel qui doit s’attacher à ce genre de rapport: séparés de leur contexte, et des nécessaires pondérations, les chiffres issus des études sociologiques se prêtent souvent, comme vous le savez, à des extrapolations abusives.” Cover letter from Jean Millier, January 24, 1978, RAP 930011, Archives du Centre George Pompidou, Paris.

352 Barbier-Bouvet described five types of visitors according to motivations and uses of the Center: “walker” (promeneur), “bulimic” (boulimique), “sedentary” (sédentaire), “eclectic enthusiast” (amateur éclectique), and “ecstatic enthusiast” (amateur extatique). He accompanies these types with narrative vignettes describing behavior. The “walker” is attracted by the architecture or city views and does not penetrate the institutional spaces of the museum or library, the “bulimic” wants to insure that he does not miss anything and visits every space, and the “sedentary” comes for a specific reason and often maintains a regular schedule, using the Center in the exact same way. Jean-François Barbier-Bouvet and Martine Poulain, Publics à l’œuvre. Pratiques culturelles à la Bibliothèque publique d’information du Centre Pompidou (Paris: Documentation française, 1986). Fleury mentions this study (Le Cas Beaubourg, 218).
attracting people less familiar with it. “In a way,” he writes, “the Centre Pompidou tends simultaneously to deepen and diminish the gap that it did not create.”

Beginning in the mid-1960s, the cultural questionnaire came to justify the existence and pertinence of the very organs responsible for its creation, analysis, and dissemination, that is, the sociology of art and the state program of cultural development. The French government’s fiscal investment in surveys buoyed the emerging field of the sociology of art, and sociologists’ findings contributed to the state’s assessments of its cultural policies and investments. In the exact same period, many artists, including members of the Sociological Art Collective, began creating questionnaires to engage spectators and to interrogate cultural institutions. The remarkable, though unacknowledged, connections among these intellectual, institutional, and artistic uses of questionnaires generated a platform for new means of research and artistic forms.

Members of the Collective seized the fraught platform of the questionnaire to contest the status quo and form new liaisons and communities.

II. Questioning as Artistic Practice

Artists’ Questionnaires

The Collective was not alone in employing questionnaires. Numerous artists, artist groups, and art magazines associated with Fluxus, conceptual art, performance art, and institutional critique turned to questionnaires in the 1960s and 70s. They used questionnaires to redefine artistic labor and objects and, most important, to alter relations

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between artist, spectator, artwork, and institution. Closely related to Fluxus instruction-based pieces and interactive games, the earliest examples of questionnaires include Dick Higgins’ “Employment Questionnaire” (1963) and Benjamin Patterson’s contribution to George Maciunas’ *Flux Year Box 2* (c. 1968) of a small card with the text “please answer this question carefully” printed above two boxes to check “yes” or “no.”

Questionnaires suited Fluxus artists' interest in scripted participation and in text-based works, two trajectories that took root in the 1970s through performance art and conceptual art. While these projects may have been familiar to the artists in SAC, questionnaires created by the Situationists, the Galerie de l’art socio-expérimental (Gallery of socio-experimental art), and the artists collective Groupe de recherche d’art visuel (GRAV) in France in the 1960s were more important precedents for the Collective, less for the fact of having come first than for the issues encountered through the inquiry projects.

In August 1964, the Internationale situationniste (Situationist International, SI) published two questionnaires that inquired about the role of art and artists in social and political revolution in the ninth issue of its journal by the same name. The texts, which included SI’s responses, were an alternative literary form used to put forward SI’s views on the subjects at hand. The first questionnaire, entitled “Art and Society,” had been formulated by Suzanne Bernard. Bernard was the founder (with Claude Laloum) of the Galerie de l’art socio-expérimental in Paris (spring of 1962) and of the Maoist journal

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Opposition Artistique (late 1962). During its one-year run, the gallery exhibited work by many avant-garde artists, including the Situationist Michèle Bernstein, the Lettriste Isidore Isou, GRAV, and Daniel Spoerri, among others. Sometime in the fall of 1963, Bernard distributed the questionnaire to inquire about art and class, artists’ political participation, and the possible organization of an association for artists, all of which immediately concerned the gallery’s mission. At the same time, she invited twelve artist groups or individuals representative of “key tendencies” to submit works of art along with their responses to the questionnaire in order to counterpoise practice and theory. SI re-printed its response to Bernard’s questionnaire (“Réponse à une enquête du Centre d’Art Socio-Expérimental”) in addition to composing and answering a second questionnaire in the ninth issue of Internationale Situationniste. SI’s answers reiterated the group’s condemnation of capitalist spectacle and its guarded endorsement of disruptive critiques.

For the purposes of considering SI’s “Questionnaire,” I want to focus on the last question that SI posed to itself: “What value can you attribute to a questionnaire? To this

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358 André Breton delegated José Pierre and Adrien Dax to cover surrealist painting, and the Situationist International sent Michèle Bernstein’s Victoire de la bande à Bonnot. The exhibition also included works by GRAV, Groupe Mu, Groupe Lettriste, Georges Patrix (l’Atelier d’esthétique industrielle), Bernard Lassus (l’Association française des coloristes-conseils and Centre de recherche d’ambiance), Henry Tronquoy (movement “Phalène”), Agam, Arroyo, Fougeron, and Spoerri. Ibid., 135.

one?” Common to the group’s *modus operandi*, SI wholly discounted questionnaires in the context of its own questionnaire. The group wrote that the questionnaire offered only a “pseudo-dialogue,” which “is becoming obsessively used in all the psychotechniques of integration into the spectacle so as to elicit people’s happy acceptance of passivity under the crude guise of ‘participation’ and pseudo-activity.”

The questionnaire’s invitation of involvement was simply another means of circulating the insidious pseudo-freedom associated with the spectacle. According to SI, “real dialogue” existed only in the potential of responses to the questionnaire’s false and reified questions to provoke further inquiry. The group’s responses to its own questions, therefore, tended toward deconstruction. For instance, in answering a question about whether SI was a “political movement,” SI interrogated the word “movement” for its artificial collective equality.

Critical of the way questionnaires and other open forms inculcated a false sense of participation, SI nevertheless suggested that they retain a potentially liberating effect in the stimulation of further questions.

Contemporaneous with Galerie de l’art socio-expérimental’s and SI’s questionnaires, the artist group GRAV, which was formed in 1960 by the artists Horacio Garcia Rossi, Julio Le Parc, François Morellet, Francisco Sobrino, Joëlle Stein, and Yvaral, used questionnaires to encourage spectator involvement in interactive situations. Perhaps

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359 In the original French: “Quelle valeur pouvez-vous attribuer à un questionnaire? À celui-ci?
Il s’agit manifestement d’une forme de dialogue factice, devenant aujourd’hui obsessionnelle avec toutes les psychotechniques de l’intégration au spectacle (la passivité joyeusement assumée sous un déguisement grossier de « participation », d’activité en peau de lapin). Mais nous, nous pouvons soutenir, à partir d’une interrogation incohérente, réifiée, des positions exactes. En fait, ces positions ne « répondent » pas, en ceci qu’elles ne renvoient pas aux questions; elles renvoient les questions. Ce sont des réponses telles qu’elles devraient transformer les questions. Ainsi le véritable dialogue pourrait commencer après ces réponses. Dans le présent questionnaire, toutes les questions sont fausses; et nos réponses vraies cependant.” “Le Questionnaire,” *Internationale Situationniste*, 27.

360 In *Société du spectacle* (1967, published three years after the questionnaires), Debord analyzes how consumer choice in capitalist society engenders a false sense of freedom and how this pseudo-freedom is key to the acceptance and propagation of the spectacle.
the best example from GRAV’s collaborative oeuvre is *Journée dans la rue* (1966) (Day in the street), when, as one of a series of actions across Paris to activate relationships between viewer, author/artist, and artworks, the group positioned itself outside the entrance to the Chatêlet metro and passed out folded pamphlets with questionnaires about “modern art” and GRAV’s actions.  

“In your opinion,” one question read, “what is the character of this endeavor? Promotional, cultural, experimental, artistic, sociological, political, none.” Other actions included distributing balloons and straight pins on Boulevard Saint-German and setting up a giant kaleidoscope in the Tuileries. *Journée dans la rue* aimed to surpass the passivity of art's consumption, and GRAV’s questionnaire invited spectators to reflect on the possible meanings of the group's diverse activities.

Just as SI criticized the questionnaire for offering a pseudo-freedom wholly aligned with spectacle, SI largely rebuked interactive efforts in contemporary art. SI singled out GRAV, in particular, for ridicule in its response to Bernard’s questionnaire: “Through a veritable parody of the revolutionary theses on putting an end to the passivity of separated spectators through the construction of situations, this ‘Visual Art’ group strives to make the spectator participate in his own misery.” By producing a false sense of engagement (and, thus, ownership or control), GRAV’s participatory arrangements

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361 See Claire Bishop’s account of GRAV’s approach to participation and this project in *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012), 87-93.


363 GRAV exhibited widely during its eight years of collaboration and became known for installations and objects that combined light, movement, and color to create heightened sensory experiences.

conditioned viewers for passive induction into the dominant socioeconomic system. Perhaps written in response to GRAV’s synaesthetic installations, such as the one at the Third Paris Biennale (1963), SI may have also been thinking about GRAV’s use of questionnaires. For SI, the “pseudo-dialogue” of questionnaires and the “pseudo-participation” of contemporary art failed to retain critical distance, collapsing into the grip of technocracy.365

This constellation of examples reveals the questionnaire’s recurrence within a budding micro-culture of organized and socially engaged artists, curators, and philosophers during the mid-1960s in Paris’s experimental arts scene. The Sociological Art Collective (SAC) knew of GRAV and SI, and Fischer’s citation of SI’s response to Bernard’s questionnaires in his Histoire de l’art est terminée (The History of Art is Finished, 1981), as well as references to SI throughout texts by Fischer and Forest, indicates some familiarity with these specific questionnaire projects.366 That GRAV, Bernard, and SI migrated toward the questionnaire to solicit responses about art’s relationship with society and politics demonstrates the prevalence of the polling method and its debatably “participatory” and “democratic” attributes. The politics of the questionnaire’s quantitative operations signified inconsistently. If data gathered from different respondents had equal value, questionnaires conveyed a degree of democratic egalitarianism, but if this data was divided based on demography, then questionnaires

365 Bishop discusses SI’s disdain for GRAV and cites SI’s unsigned essay "L’avant-garde de la Presence," Internationale Situationniste 8 (January 1963): 16. But she does not cite this questionnaire by SI. For SI, GRAV’s interactive street events and kinetic installations “merely replicated the systematised control exercised over citizens in the society of the spectacle, which organises ‘participation in something where it’s impossible to participate’.” (Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship, 91).

submitted subjects to greater categorization and control (as Foucault suggests).\footnote{In Les mots et les choses (1966), Foucault argues that the human sciences are part of the empirico-transcendentalist modern episteme, and he rejects the invention of the category of “man” as a way of controlling and administering life. Foucault directs his critique of the human sciences squarely at sociology, but he does not take up questionnaires directly. Perhaps, his critique is more philosophical than practical. As part of his work with Le Groupe d'information sur les prisons (GIP) Foucault mobilized a group of sociologists to help draw up a questionnaire that was distributed to prisoners. The questionnaire was seen as a means to engage prisoners in a dialogue about their treatment and status despite harsh sanctions against communication. See Philippe Artières, Laurent Quéro, and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, Le Groupe d'information sur les prisons: Archives d'une lutte, 1970-1972 (Paris: IMEC, 2001).} Furthermore, the identification of groups via questionnaires contributed to the invention of abstract constructs (such as “the student movement”) and to the growth of identity-based, liberation movements such as feminism, gay rights, black power, and third-worldism, but they were also leveraged to imagine or to constitute ad-hoc communities.\footnote{Kristin Ross criticizes the use of such nomenclature as “youth” or “students” as controlling and delimiting thinking about May 1968. May ’68 and Its Afterlives (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 5-6.}

Closer to the Collective’s own time, Hans Haacke and Stephen Willats, among others, employed questionnaires extensively in their artistic practices.\footnote{Here, I will focus on Haacke, who figured in two SAC exhibitions. For his West London Social Resource Project (March 1972), Stephen Willats included open-ended questionnaires about the built and social environment in “manuals” that were distributed to willing inhabitants of west London. Responses were exhibited on boards in local libraries. See Stephen Willats, Art and Social Function: Three Projects (London: Latimer New Dimensions, 1976). Hervé Fischer’s archives include letters from Willats. A July 10, 1975 letter expressed interest in the Collective’s “sociological approach to art” and inquired about including some work in Control Magazine. A March 1976 letter discusses coordinating a trip to Paris. See Fonds Hervé Fischer, Correspondences, Boîte W, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Paris. Fred Forest’s archives include correspondences sent to Haacke, including a telegram from Teyssèdre asking about Haacke’s participation in Art contre idéologie (1974), Forest’s questionnaire for his book Art sociologique: Dossier (1978), and scattered references about a meeting between Haacke and Fischer sometime in 1975. Fonds Fred Forest Ecrits, Correspondences, Dossier 1, Inathèque, Paris.} Better known in art history, Haacke started employing social science and research-based methods in his 1969 Gallery-Goers’ Birthplace and Residence Profile (Howard Wise Gallery, NY), his 1970 MoMA-Poll (Museum of Modern Art, NY), and his 1971 questionnaire proposed for his canceled Guggenheim exhibition. These projects marked a move away from natural systems toward “real time” social and political ones and have become canonical
early works of institutional critique.\textsuperscript{370} Around this time, Haacke became more actively involved in opposing the Vietnam War, and he joined the Art Workers Coalition (AWC) to lobby against the art world’s complicit involvement with big business and war.\textsuperscript{371} Inquiry-based social science methods were pivotal in Haacke’s development of what would come to be called “institutional critique.” Using polls and questionnaires, Haacke set up scenarios in which visitors participated in making social and political issues visible. For example, the question of \textit{MoMA-Poll}, as is well known, asked about Nelson Rockefeller’s re-election as governor of New York state in the context of a rather awkwardly worded question: “Would the fact that Governor Rockefeller has not denounced President Nixon’s Indochina policy be a reason for you not to vote for him in November?” Museum visitors could respond “yes” or “no” by dropping ballots into clear boxes. The ballots were color-coded according to a visitor’s means of admission (member, full price ticket, and so forth) and thus realized a sort of sociological profile within the poll. The “yes” box located physically (and politically) on the left filled two-to-one in the affirmative. Rockefeller had been chair of the MoMA board and his brother David was acting chairman in 1970. The poll then implicated the museum in a global financial and political network behind, at least in part, the US invasion of Cambodia two months prior and the subsequent killing of four students at Kent State during an anti-


Vietnam war protest.\textsuperscript{372} The performance (or in Erving Goffman’s phrasing “presentation of the self”) that occurred every time a visitor approached the ballot box and cast his or her ballot was as important as the question. Through their participation, museum visitors made visible opposition to Nixon and his policies. Finally, the very fact that all of this took place within the entity targeted for critique increased the subversive qualities of Haacke’s poll. In an 1975 essay about the differences and similarities between Haacke’s work and the social sciences, the sociologists Howard Becker and John Walton concluded that the visibility and strength of Haacke’s work, as compared to that of social scientists, resided in his “intimate involvement” with the contemporary art world, in other words, his insider status to the world he endeavored to expose.\textsuperscript{373}

Haacke’s questionnaires and polls have received significant attention by art historians, who tend, as in the case of Benjamin Buchloh and Alexander Alberro, to position them as pivotal links in the movement from conceptual art to institutional critique.\textsuperscript{374} Employing the materials, aesthetics, and emphases of conceptual art, Haacke’s questionnaires shifted focus off the page to the ideological conditions that define art. Buchloh separates Haacke’s oeuvre at the moment he begins using polls into earlier projects that emphasized “physiological, physical, and biological processes” and “mature—i.e., political—works”: “The final departure of Haacke’s work from the limitations of a systems-aesthetic approach really occurs in 1969 when—beginning with his Polls—he transfers his interests from biological and physical systems to social

\textsuperscript{372} Hans Haacke, “Landmark Exhibitions, Lessons Learned,” \textit{Tate Papers} 12 (Autumn 2009).
systems that implicate the spectator in an immediate interaction.”

While any clean rupture is contestable, around 1969/1970, a time when many artists turned to political work, Haacke began using inquiry-based social science methods to make visible ideological conflicts endemic to the art world. For Buchloh, this critical posture salvages Haacke's “bureaucratic vigor and deadpan devotion to the statistic collection of factual information” from total collapse into the service of late capitalism. And yet neither Buchloh nor Alberro expand their investigations of questionnaires to consider contemporary applications by sociologists, museums, and governments—that is to address institutional uses of the quantitative inquiry methods while lauding artists’ critical uses of them.

This set of relationships between art, sociology, and politics is impossible to ignore in France in the late 1960s and 70s, and the Collective's questionnaire projects bring these relations into sharper focus. While questionnaires by SAC artists may align formally with an administrative or bureaucratic aesthetic, they did not operate in the same way as Bourdieu’s or the Ministry of Culture’s. Rather than depict art’s publics, the Collective’s questionnaires sought to create communities and public spheres alternative to those offered by official culture, thereby offering a novel approach to the questionnaire as an artistic strategy.

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376 The conflicts were between, on the one hand, the artists and public, and, on the other hand, between the smaller elite that supports the whole system. Becker and Walton make this point in “Social Science and the World of Hans Haacke,” Framing and Being Framed: 7 Works, 1970-75, 149-150.
The Questionnaire as Para-Institutional Critique

Thenot was the first artist in the Collective to devise questionnaires as a means of opening the cloistered world of art, contesting systems of power, and initiating encounters. Thenot had received a doctorate in clinical psychology under the guidance of Jean-François Lyotard, and his work as a psychotherapist likely inclined the young artist toward inquiry-based artistic approaches. Beginning in 1968, Thenot incrementally developed his interdisciplinary art practice with works like *Interventions dans la rue* (Interventions in the Street) (1969)—a series of scaled sculpture of everyday objects set up in a public space such as a sidewalk or park—and *Constats d’existence* (Reports of Existence) (1970)—a language-based piece that described Thenot in relation to dozens of contemporary artists and was mailed to individuals around the world.  

Thenot was fascinated by the reactions of different viewers, from estrangement in confronting enlarged quotidian objects to humor, befuddlement, or disdain in receiving descriptions of work by contemporary artists. His first direct response piece asked visitors of the 1971 Paris Biennale and random passersby on the street to describe on a

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Each *Interventions dans la rue* consisted of a series of four or five scaled sculptures of everyday objects (such as a mousetrap or hanger) that proceeded from actual size to many times larger. Interested in progression as a formal and psychological principle, he used the sculptures to initiate encounters with passersby and to ascertain (largely through discussion) whether or not people would mirror the formal progression from the actual to atypical in psychological terms. Thenot’s *Constats d’existence* defined his practice by comparison to unnamed contemporary artists. For instance, his thinly veiled reference to Daniel Buren read “Je certifie: N’avoir jamais affiché de bandes vertes et blanches verticalement alternées dans certaines villes européennes.” (I certify to have never posted green and white vertical stripes in certain European cities.) The typeset page was mailed to collectors, gallerists, critics, and other art world people as well as to 300 randomly selected people. Although Thenot did not provide space for recipients to respond, he was interested by how the statements would signify differently depending upon the recipients. The “constats” attracted the attention of the critic François Pluchart, who lauded the young and unknown Thenot for his “brilliant entry” into the art world in the pages of *Combat*: “Cet exercice critique pulvérise les petits jeux des conceptualistes parce qu’il est en même temps un constat et l’amorce d’un système qui définit aussitôt son intrusion sociologique.” (This critical exercise pulverized the little games of the conceptualists because it is both an observation and the beginning of a system that immediately defines its sociological intrusion.) François Pluchart, “Par retour de courrier” *Combat* (July 13, 1970). Pluchart’s use of “sociological” signals the critical and self-reflexive aspects of Thenot’s mailing, which appropriates the language, form, and distribution channels of much conceptual art to set his practice apart from it.
piece of paper any type of progression—from natural or mechanical to formal or psychological. He cited, for instance, “the progression of atmospheric pressure according to altitude” and “the progression of the population of the globe.” The action, entitled *Premier Concours des progressions* (First Contest of Progressions), concluded with a contest to determine the “best” progression. [Fig. 21] As much as these early projects prepared the ground for Thenot’s turn to questionnaires in 1972, they also set into place key characteristics that distinguished his questionnaires from those of contemporaries like Haacke.

Thenot prioritized public intervention and thus tended to work outside of, or even in opposition to, exhibitions, museums, and major urban centers. Rather than relying on specific audiences, Thenot contacted people randomly on the street, through his existing contacts, or by relying on publicly available information. He eventually began using statistics furnished by INSEE to determine representative samples of 200 to 300 individuals for his surveys. Thenot also mailed results back to respondents so that they might situate themselves in relation to larger aggregates and continue the process of reflection.

All of these aspects—public intervention, statistically representative samples, documents, and the like—prepared the ground for Thenot’s turn to questionnaires in 1972. He eventually began using statistics furnished by INSEE to determine representative samples of 200 to 300 individuals for his surveys. Thenot also mailed results back to respondents so that they might situate themselves in relation to larger aggregates and continue the process of reflection.

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379 “La progression de la pression atmosphérique selon l’altitude.” “La progression de la population du globe.” Thenot’s Constat Numéro 3 (September 1971).

380 The jury, comprised of Jacques Caumont, Jean-Michel Janin, Jean-Marc Poinsot, Daniel Pype and Raphaël Sorin, selected a young male waiter who described smoking a cigarette and was photographed and pictured along with a complete list of participants in *arTitudes*. “Premier concours des progressions organisé par Jean-Paul Thénot,” *arTitudes*, no. 3 (December 1971–January 1972): 11-12.


382 Haacke’s projects frequently involved a public performance of some sort in a museum or gallery—dropping one’s vote into a box (*MoMA-Poll*) or pinning the location of one’s domicile on a gallery map (*Visitor’s Profile*)—and his displays changed due to the ongoing presentation of results. Thenot’s projects tended to separate inquiry and analysis so that his exhibitions consisted of either the distribution of questionnaires or the summary of findings through charts and texts but rarely both at once. Reading and responding to his questionnaires tended to take place either individually in the privacy of one’s home or during person-to-person interviews rather than in large public settings. In later projects, interpersonal

The physical “sondage-concours” (“survey-contest”) of *La création artistique en France 1960-1972* was a simple, black and white page that included a five-point explanation of the project and an area for respondents to fill out and then mail back to the artist.  

[Fig. 22] Thenot asked participants to list, in order of importance, the most representative French artists of the designated period without a limit as to number, and he explained that the person whose submitted list was closest to the final averaged list after tallying results would be declared the honorary curator of a public exhibition opening that May. With this project, Thenot critically engaged the extremely controversial exhibition *Douze ans d’art contemporain en France* (Twelve Years of Contemporary Art in France), which was the first public manifestation of Pompidou’s sponsorship of contemporary art when it opened in May 1972 at the Grand Palais. By appropriating the exhibition’s stated goal to represent French art and yet modifying the processes of selection, Thenot exposed the state exhibition’s contradictory promotion of inclusive and democratic ideals and dependence on an exclusive and subjective selection by a group of experts. Exploiting the structure of the questionnaire, he mounted a counter-exhibition of information modeled on democratic representation and collective participation.

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exchanges and qualitative methods such as interviews and small group discussions became increasingly important.

383 He distributed the questionnaires by handing them out at art events, mailing them to hundreds of addresses, and publishing a copy in the experimental art journal *arTitudes*.

384 Pompidou announced his intention to mount this exhibition in his 1969 letter to the Minister of Culture Edmond Michelet. Works purchased from this exhibition formed the basis of the collection of the Centre Georges Pompidou.
Pompidou intended an ambitious survey exhibition of contemporary French art:

“A large exhibition bringing together a selection of work by all the living painters and sculptors who live and work in France.”

Keeping in mind France’s postwar decline in the world art market, Pompidou’s proposal ostensibly aimed to benefit both artists and the nation. In the invitation letter to artists, the lead curator François Mathey reiterates France’s relegated position in soliciting artists’ participation: “The importance of Paris as an art center is widely contested. [. . .] It also seems that a significant exhibition based on the period 60-72 is an occasion to introduce artists of this generation to a large public.”

Commonly referred to as “Expo 72” or “Exposition Pompidou,” the exhibition elicited fierce protests—“La guerre de 72,” as one headline read—and became the symbol of an increasingly strained relationship between politically engaged artists and an artistically inclined state. Commenting on these tensions, Rebecca DeRoo writes:

Many artists believed that “Expo 72” marked a return to the systems they had opposed in 1968: a selection process in which they had no voice, the construction of a hierarchy based on traditional notions of talent, the co-option of artists in the

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386 Malraux’s founding of the Paris Biennale in 1959 was an initial attempt to stem France’s “decline.” Furthermore, discussions about Expo 72 often cited major US exhibitions that thematized contemporary American art, such as *New York Painting and Sculpture 1940-1970*, which was held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art from October 18, 1969, to February 1, 1970, and which displaced some nineteenth century French art galleries. On the changing position of France in the post-World War II art world, see also Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).


service of those in power, and the display of work in a traditional art exhibition format, focused on unique objects created by individuals.\textsuperscript{389}

The controversies reveal competing conceptions of politics and aesthetics, specifically how democratic ideals of inclusiveness, participation, and multiple collectivities interact with aesthetic ideals of exclusivity, expertise, and individuals. The very idea of what would be considered “representative” came under fire owing to the exhibition’s subjective organization yet authoritative tone.

Thenot used quantitative methods to redistribute aesthetic choice to diverse publics and to address the issues of representation and participation at stake in Pompidou’s original mandate to survey contemporary French art. In designing his project, he aimed to avoid the subjectivity of curatorial selection by using questionnaires and statistical analysis to assemble a list of artists and to designate a curator. He distributed the questionnaires by hand at exhibition openings, through the post, and via the magazine \textit{arTitudes}, and he received approximately 200 responses. Thenot hired a trained sociologist, Maryvonne Lebriez, to analyze the completed questionnaires. Lebriez weighted the responses using demographic data of age, gender, and region so that the survey sample reflected as close as possible the composition of France’s population aged twenty-one and older despite the small sample size.\textsuperscript{390} On the final ranked list of artists, each percentage indicates the portion of the French population preferring that artist. [Fig.


\textsuperscript{390} Weighting survey responses helps to remove bias from a sample and to make results better project the target population. For instance, let’s say that of the 200 surveys received by Thenot 125 surveys were from men and 75 surveys from women (Thenot no longer knows the exact numbers). If the actual composition of the French population was 50/50, then each man’s survey would be weighted at 0.8 and each woman’s survey at 1.33333 in order to balance the appropriate value responses. A similar process was carried out for age and location. The weights were then integrated to come up with the final rankings. Thenot and Lebriez used demographic data about France’s population provided by INSEE.
This approach envisages a certain representational equivalence between the final list of artists and the will of the French public. If, as Bourdieu writes in *L’Amour de l’art*, “the French museum public is almost exactly the inverse of their proportion in the total population,” then Thenot reverses this relationship by forging a public for an immaterial exhibition demographically equivalent to the total population.  

In re-imagining the process of selection, Thenot also redefined the role of the curator. Whereas conventionally curators wield power through individual, aesthetic discernment, in Thenot’s scheme, the person whose proposed list most closely matched the averaged results—that is, the best representative of public will—won the symbolic title. To demote the curator from a specialized to non-specialized position was an attack on associated values and prestige. Writing for the magazine *Combat* about Thenot’s project, François Pluchart stated, “Thenot engaged in a dialogue with the public. He [...] emphasized the fundamental non-representativity of the selection committee [...]” Through the questionnaire, Thenot initiated a kind of para-institutional critique, one that occurred beside rather than within the institutional structures of the state exhibition.

When Thenot first started to distribute his questionnaire in February 1972, the controversy surrounding “Expo 72” was already growing. In January 1972, the Front des artistes plasticiens (Front of Visual Artists, hereafter, F.A.P.) and Salon de la jeune peinture (Salon of Young Painting) published tracts denouncing the exhibition as taking advantage of artists for the state’s own ends: “The government shows once again its

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391 Bourdieu and Darbel *The Love of Art*, 15.
inability to put into practice its famous policy of participation and its willingness to use artists rather than to serve them.” Excluded from state decisions about art while used to convey values of liberty, artists must, the groups implored, refuse to take part in the exhibition and band together to organize a truly representative counter-exhibition. On February 6, 1972, Mathey sent invitations to 72 artists or artist groups on behalf of the "Expo 72" curatorial team. A third of the recipients refused to participate, and many of these refusals came in the form of open letters published in newspapers and journals. For instance, a joint refusal letter to Mathey from Bernard Borgeaud, Michel Journiac, and Gina Pane appeared in the pages of *Les Lettres françaises* on March 11, 1972. The artists cited, among other aberrations, the “arbitrary selection” and “authoritarianism of the organizing committee.”

Many of these artists continued their reproach of the exhibition’s curators in the March 1972 issue of *artTitudes*. For this issue, titled “Panique au Grand Palais” (Panic at the exhibition), Jean Clair, one of the exhibition curators, invited F.A.P. and Salon de la Jeune Peinture to a conversation with the rest of the curatorial team about “the problems raised by this exhibition.” Rather than resolve problems, the discussion reaffirmed rifts between F.A.P. and Mathey, who declared artists to be producers and not judges of works and rejected the organizing efforts of artist groups. The dialogue was published as “Remous d’une exposition, Table Ronde,” *Chroniques de l’art vivant*, no. 27 (February 1972): 13–16.

The curatorial team was composed of young and connected men in the French art world. Jean Clair was a recognized critic and curator and also chief editor of the art journal *Chroniques de l’art vivant*, where the round table discussion was published. Daniel Cordier was a collector who had represented artists like Dubuffet in his commercial gallery until it folded in 1964. Serge Lemoine was a professor. Maurice Eschapasse and Alfred Pacquement worked for *le Centre national d’art contemporain*. From 1974-1987, Pacquement was the curator of contemporary art at Centre Georges Pompidou, and then in 2002, he was appointed the director of the museum. See Alfred Pacquement, “1960-1972 Douze ans de l’art contemporain en France,” in *Georges Pompidou, Homme de la culture* (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1996), 69-70.

the Grand Palais), the editor François Pluchart organized a round table discussion between F.A.P. leader Julio Le Parc, two artists who refused to participate in “Expo 72” (Pane and Support/Surface painter Olivier Mosset), and two artists who accepted (the outspoken Fluxus artist Ben Vautier and the Figuration narrative painter Hervé Télémaque). Pane argued that the reduction of artists made the exhibition insupportably narrow and non-representative, while Vautier claimed that no number would have quelled discontent. Le Parc described an alternative model, what he called a “public referendum exhibition.” According to Le Parc’s scheme, any interested artist would be given a square meter to display his or her work. Critics, curators, government officials, other artists, and unaffiliated visitors would freely enter the space, examine the artists’ displays, and vote about which artists to include in an exhibition. F.A.P. never put Le Parc's plan into action. These responses, however, demonstrate how the intertwined issues of representativity and curatorial selection were at the core of the escalating controversy.

Thenot, who was neither invited to exhibit in “Expo 72” nor joined one of the opposition groups, published his questionnaire in the same issue of arTitudes. Thenot’s questionnaire extended the very issues under debate to the magazine’s readers, and while not acknowledged in the round table discussion, it came the closest to the public referendum exhibition envisioned by Le Parc. Small-scale magazines like arTitudes gave rise to an alternative means of exhibition and distribution in the late 1960s and 70s. Thenot exploited the magazine’s fundamental structure—its multiplicity, distribution, and material form—and trafficked in the magazine’s ultimate medium of information. He

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encouraged readers to pull apart the magazine’s pages, fill in information, and then send the printed page back through the mail. Thenot enacted an alternative system of selection and exhibition to “Expo 72” that drew on the input of magazine readers and other publics rather than on the private decisions of a selected few.

Just days before the opening of “Expo 72,” Le Parc and other F.A.P. members issued a tract entitled “Ce que cache l’Exposition Pompidou” (What the Exhibition Pompidou Hides) that decried the exhibition as a facade to obscure the state’s aggression against artists. The tract called for massive protests at the opening and included the signatures of Michel Foucault, Hélène Cixous, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, Jean-Luc Godard, Philippe Sollers, Julia Kristeva, Jean-Paul Sartre, and many others.399 On the afternoon of May 16, 1972, an estimated 250 people assembled on the front steps of the Grand Palais, where police cars had been stationed for days. F.A.P. unfurled two banners that read “Non à l’Exposition Pompidou” (No to the Pompidou Exhibition) and “Expo Pompidou: 72 artistes au service du pouvoir” (Pompidou Exhibit: 72 Artists in the service of power). The banners listed the names of artists who had refused and who had accepted to exhibit. The group also created stickers reminiscent of May 68 posters with the words “Expo-flic” (Expo-cop) and “Expo-fric” (Expo-cash) surrounding an angry looking policeman brandishing a club to symbolize the exhibition’s authoritarian and capitalist agenda.400 Protestors blocked the entrance to the museum, and the police “charged” and “dispersed” the protestors with swinging clubs. Henri Cartier-Bresson, a F.A.P.

400 Images of these stickers are reproduced in François Derivery, L’exposition 72-72 (2001).
sympathizer, captured the brute chaos of two forces pushing against one another in a remarkable photograph published the following day in *Le Monde*.\(^{401}\) Television footage also recorded the confusion and brutality of these clashes. One clip showed the F.A.P. banners getting ripped to shreds and a bowtie-adorned Mathey being hurried away from an interview when a voice announces, “Les flics prennent l’assaut…” (“The cops are storming...”).\(^{402}\)

The police violence instigated immediate reactions by many exhibitors. Artists turned around their paintings in protest and, most famously, the Cooperative des Malassis (Cueco, Fleury, Latil, Parré, and Tisserand) removed their 214-foot-long painting entitled *12 Years of History in France* (or, *Le Grand méchoui*) (1972), a critical depiction of the domestic policy of the Fifth Republic that mixed political iconography with direct references to recent events.\(^{403}\) The politically-oriented group, formed in 1970, had come under fire for their acceptance to exhibit. In an editorial defense, published in *Le Figaro* on March 14, 1972, the group wrote of testing the limits of the system: “We want to see up to what point the power in question is strong, vulnerable, and at what point it is forced to concede.”\(^{404}\) The tipping point evidently reached, the five artists took their paintings off the wall. Photographs of the artists exiting the Grand Palais with their panels held as

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\(^{401}\) Henri Cartier-Bresson’s photograph is available to view on the Magnum Photos website.

\(^{402}\) Intervention of artists at the opening of *Douze ans d’art contemporain en France*, broadcast May 17, 1972, ORTF, Inathèque, Paris.


shields against the police have become iconic symbols of the opening’s unrest.\textsuperscript{405} When the opening event ended at eight o’clock, police cars blocked the Grand Palais and the exhibition did not re-open until May 24.\textsuperscript{406}

One day after the tumultuous opening, Thenot opened his exhibition of survey results at the Yvon Lambert Gallery, an important space for conceptual and minimal art in Paris’s Latin Quarter. The exhibition consisted of six black and white panels printed with the names of 102 artists, a list that included a handful of lesser-known artists but generally diverged very little from the official list of invited artists. In fact, all of the most-cited artists (Klein: 37%, Arman: 34%, Ben, Tinguely: 31%, Saint Phalle: 25%, Buren, César, Le Gac, Raynaud, Raysse, Stampfli: 22% . . .) had been invited to “Expo 72,” and the top five cited names had participated in the exhibition. The contest winner, and thus curator, was the Paris gallerist Jean Lacarde, who represented many artists featured at the top of the survey results, including Klein, Arman, and Raynaud. The results of Thenot’s survey, therefore, did not significantly diverge from Mathey and the curatorial team’s selection, and Lacarde, the proclaimed curator, was already centrally associated with the commercial art world. Furthermore, Thenot’s exhibition took place in a prominent Parisian gallery. The artist was even awarded the “Prix de Peinture du Dôme” (The Dome’s Painting Prize) for his survey project, receiving 5,000 francs and joining the ranks of other prize recipients such as Picasso and Modigliani.\textsuperscript{407} In many respects, the results and exhibition of Thenot’s survey reaffirmed the specialized and

\textsuperscript{405} This critical décrochage has become more important than the painting’s own critical content.
capitalized realm of art. The processes that he enacted, however, changed the character of public participation and representation in the realm of art, issues at the heart of the state’s contradictory promulgation of democratic ideals and dependence on exclusive selection.

Thenot’s questionnaire turned “Expo 72” into an open question and received many responses, including refusals to answer and criticisms of the question, but it also became an engine for further reflection and action. The final survey analysis states that eighteen percent of those solicited refused to participate and fourteen percent critiqued the survey. One criticism came from the French art historian and curator Jean-Marc Poinsot who wrote at the end of his multi-page response: “By proposing that each person make a selection, Thenot has everyone let off steam but forgets that the principal problem is that of the question and not the response.” Critical of any attempt to represent twelve years of French art, especially a period as tumultuous as 1960 to 1972, Poinsot advocates exhibition as tools for action. In mid-July, when Poinsot, as well as the other 200 or so respondents, received his completed questionnaire back along with the final results, Thenot’s project became not simply a repository of results but an inspiring model for future exhibitions. In a letter dated August 20, 1972, Poinsot wrote to the director of the upcoming Paris Biennale, Georges Boudaille, to express his hope that the Biennale could be a “place of meeting, exchange, and information with the public.” He also underlined the importance of the Biennale not defining itself in relation to the government’s policy.

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408 He also published the survey results in the July/August/September 1972 issue of *artitudes*. Just one page after the results, Forest placed one of his Space Media works, a series begun in 1972. Forest replicated the front-page of *artitudes*, replaced Pluchart’s name with his own, listed the price as zero, and invited viewers to create their own front-page. In a neighboring text, he outlined a system of circulating these secondary journals to create “a parallel circuit of information.” Fred Forest, “Space Media,” *artitudes*, no. 7 (July/August/September 1972): 26.

409 Response of Jean-Marc Poinsot, located in the private archives of Jean-Paul Thenot, Juoy, France.
of "cultural action." On September 5, Poinsot made a presentation to the Biennale's organizing commission, in which he proposed to carry out an international survey about art. He described his plan to mail hundreds of questionnaires all over the world in order to collect information about the structures of the contemporary art world, including schools, press outlets, exhibition spaces, and government programs and funding. He planned to make this information available to the public through a publication and display at the eighth Paris Biennale, slated to open September 14, 1973, at the Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris. According to Poinsot, the survey was a way to avert the problems of "Expo 72" and to reinvent the Biennale as a place to learn about how artists live in society. The commission agreed, and Boudaille committed a significant portion of his small budget to Poinsot’s Enquête sur l'activité artistique (Survey of artistic activity).

Neither Poinsot nor Boudaille had previously conducted a sociological study, but they had both encountered the questionnaire as a critical, artistic form in the recent work of Thenot and Haacke. Boudaille noted coming across Haacke’s visitor poll at Harald Szeemann’s Documenta 5, entitled 100 Days of Inquiry into Reality, in a suite of articles he wrote in praise of the exhibition. Documenta 5, which took place in the summer of 1972, greatly inspired Boudaille’s thinking about art and exhibitions. “There are two

411 The questionnaires sought self-reporting on a nation’s “artistic activity,” divided into four broad areas: governmental programs; artistic organizations, including art schools, universities, and museums; press; and other. In addition to receiving responses from Austria, Great Britain, Japan, Norway, Panama, Poland, Switzerland, and the U.S.A., Poinsot collected information about France’s cultural program by drawing on studies by Bourdieu, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, and the sociologist Raymonde Moulin.
categories of art critics,” Boudaille wrote in the catalogue for the Biennale, “those who saw Documenta and those who did not see it.” What attracted Boudaille was Szeemann’s “sociological approach” to the display of art. To the outrage of many artists, Szeemann paired art objects with non-art images in order to consider fine art’s expanded social and political contexts. A group of US-based artists, including Carl Andre, Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, Richard Serra, Robert Smithson, Fred Sandback, and Hans Haacke, placed an ad condemning Documenta 5 in the June 1972 issue of Artforum, and Robert Morris published an outraged letter in Flash Art in May–June 1972 that stated: “I do not want to have my work used to illustrate misguided sociological principles or outmoded art historical categories.” Haacke evidently acquiesced and conducted his Documenta Besucher Profil (Documenta Visitor Profile), amassing 41,810 completed surveys to create a profile of Documenta’s visitors. Despite the contestations, Boudaille’s experience at Documenta 5 inspired his vision for the eighth Biennale, which Poinsot’s Enquête sur l'activité artistique was central to helping to realize.

In the preface to the final published results of the enquête, Poinsot wrote: “The study comes less from sociology (I am not a sociologist) than from a specific approach internal to the art milieu.” In the published findings, he included the results of two other surveys: Thenot’s La création artistique en France 1960-72 and Haacke’s

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413 Georges Boudaille, 8e Biennale de Paris, 7.
414 Szeemann, the well-known Swiss curator who had curated the breakthrough conceptual art exhibition When Attitudes Become Form in 1969, also responded to Thenot's questionnaire. In his response, he crossed out all references to representative and objective elements on his bulletin. He listed his own profession as “an organizer of very subjective exhibits,” a response perhaps in reaction to the harsh criticism he was receiving for 100 Days of Inquiry Into Reality.
415 I learned of these contestations in David Platzker’s exhibition Documenta 5, Specific Object, New York, June 30–October 8, 2007. See his text at http://www.specificobject.com/projects/documenta_5/
Documenta Besucher Profil. These “enquête d’artistes,” which Boudaille and Poinsot had encountered in the spring or summer of 1972, were their models for the Biennale’s reinvention via the questionnaire. Although different in the kinds of questions posed and representations offered, both Thenot’s and Haacke's surveys generated information that reflected on the associated exhibitions, their institutional affiliations and purviews, and this very act of reflection through information possessed a critical capacity.  

“Information,” Poinsot stated, “is always necessary for any critical project. [. . .] Contestation must find its own practice with knowledge.” The impulse to assemble information did not conclude with the publication of Poinsot’s results in a 210-page, double volume tome that Biennale visitors could purchase for 150 francs. Poinsot and two associates carried out a small study of the exhibition’s visitors when the Biennale opened in the fall of 1973. While acknowledging the seemingly nonstop solicitation of the public with surveys, the authors of the study justified their endeavor by the sheer difficulty of “knowing the public.” This inscrutability had become exacerbated by the recent increase of visitors to contemporary art exhibitions as well as the lack of personnel to interact with visitors. Through acts of questioning, the organizers of the Biennale hoped to generate new relationships between artists, visitors, art institutions, and nation states through the exchange of information, and this included reflecting on the Biennale’s own financial dependence on the French state, which came out through Poinsot's

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418 Haacke's survey ultimately formed a representation of Documenta's visitors, the composition of which might have indicated certain socio-economic information and biases. Thenot's survey offered a representation of an expanded public's engagement with the objective of Expo 72, thereby offering an alternative mechanism for the public to participate in the specialized realm of art.

419 Ibid.

questionnaire. The authors hoped that the “results of the study would convince the most reserved” that the Biennale was worth saving.421

Thenot’s survey about “Expo 72,” Haacke’s visitor profile of Documenta, and Poinsot’s study on behalf of the Biennale were attempts to incite new and more self-conscious relationships between art, institutions, artists, and public audiences. All three men harnessed existing institutional structures in order to undertake an analysis of those structures and potentially to modify them. Their projects, however, traded in the same economies of information that supplied the lifeblood of the state’s and Beaubourg’s culture questionnaires, including their courting of critique. Compared to the other two, Thenot's project uniquely endeavored to engage an expanded set of participants in responding to the specialized and institutional questions and aims at the heart of the state's exhibition, thereby contradicting conventional wisdom about the autonomy of artworks, individuality of artists, and privileged purview of experts. Through his questionnaires, Thenot was not simply after information but sought to engender a different kind of relationship, a more self-conscious one, between individual and institution, questioner and respondent. In his subsequent projects, Thenot developed this aspect of questionnaires, forging a truly novel methodology that moved the act of questioning off the page into interviews, group discussions, and social spaces, a step that greatly influenced the Collective’s work.

421 “La contestation des grandes expositions, les remous causés par certaines grandes manifestations d’art contemporain et leurs récupérations sur le droit de la Biennale à survivre justifiaient cette démarche. Il n’a pas toujours été porté à la connaissance du grand nombre au prix de quelques difficultés et de quels efforts la Biennale a pu avoir une 8e édition. Il faut donc espérer que certains résultats de l’enquête sauront convaincre les plus réservés.” Jean-Marc Poinsot, “Préface,” Enquête sur l’art contemporain, 8e Biennale de Paris, 1.
Experimental Methodology

In the ensuing years, Thenot carried out numerous questionnaire projects, forging an experimental methodology that merged psychology, sociology, linguistics, art history, and conceptual art. He inquired about categories of identification (*Catégories d’identifications*, 1972, Galerie Space 640, St. Jeannet), the cost of artworks (*La cote des œuvres*, 1975, Galerie Germain, Paris), and perceptions of colors and materials (*La couleur*, 1974; *Les matériaux*, 1975, Galerie Mathias Fels, Paris). He exhibited the results of these “enquêtes interactives” (interactive surveys) in the Collective’s exhibitions. [Fig. 24] In one experiment, for instance, Thenot asked what a certain color evoked for respondents, first stating the name—yellow, red, and so forth—and then holding up a piece of paper of that color. Through this simple experiment carried out with about 100 people, Thenot inquired about the differences and similarities between semantics and visual perception, a pressing art world issue as conceptual artists refuted visuality as the primary basis of art. If responses to words and colors diverged, then the criteria by which one consumed and judged art did also. As Benjamin Buchloh wrote of conceptual art, “In the absence of any specifically visual qualities and due to the manifest lack of any (artistic) manual competence as a criterion of distinction, all the traditional criteria of aesthetic judgment—of taste and of connoisseurship—have been programmatically voided.” For *La Cote des œuvres*, he solicited reactions to the perceived value and sale price of art objects and concluded by asking what people would do with the quantity of money.

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(2,640,000 francs in the case of one Cézanne landscape). Thenot used questionnaires to explore pressing psychological, economic, and aesthetic issues through the simple act of questioning.

Except for his reportedly “strict” adherence to guidelines regarding demography and statistics, as modeled by INSEE, Thenot did not follow established methodologies or protocols but rather increasingly sampled from various fields, merging quantitative and qualitative approaches. The very particularity of his “sociological” art practice sets it apart from the large-scale studies of Bourdieu and other “authorities.” Notably, Thenot emphasized the exchange in the interviewing process as much as, if not more than, the final results. The utility of these questionnaires lay less in the information obtained than in the processes of inquiry, reflection, and expression sparked. Whereas in the social sciences, interviews usually function as methods to gather data, in psychoanalysis, interviews operate as therapeutic methods for patients and analysts to talk toward treatment. Thenot maneuvered between these approaches. He employed questionnaires and interviews to gather statistical results and to initiate processes of mutual reflection between respondent and questioner–analysand and analyst. By sending results back to participants, Thenot sought to engender ongoing reflection and to render visible processes of interpellation: “After tabulation,” he wrote, “the raw results were communicated individually to each person, enabling, by informing, a new awareness. They show that reactions to a word, image or thing are not only subjective, but register, among others, in the social field.”

With the results of the study in hand, a respondent could consider his

424 “Les résultats bruts, communiqués individuellement à chaque personne, après dépouillement, permettent, en informant, une nouvelle prise de conscience. Ils montrent que les réactions à propos de tel mot, image ou chose ne sont pas uniquement subjectives, mais s’inscrivent, parmi d’autres, dans le champ...”
or her views in relation to the study’s representation of collective views. Drawing on his work as a psychotherapist, Thenot aimed to engender accompanied exchange and self-analysis rather than to secure social determinants or explain behavior. His experimental methodology sought to instigate inquisitiveness about one’s relationship to others and to broader structures, including but not limited to the contemporary art world.

Exemplary of his evolving methodology, Thenot conducted a re-reading of Marcel Duchamp via what he called “psycho-social questionnaires” with 100 people in French provincial towns in the spring of 1974. The results were published as *Cent lectures de Marcel Duchamp* (100 Readings of Marcel Duchamp) in 1978. [Fig. 25] During hour-long interviews, he posed open-ended questions and presented participants with words, photographs, and titles associated with Duchamp’s work, recording their responses and reactions. [Fig. 26] At a moment when Duchamp had catapulted to the center stage of the western contemporary art world and many cited him as the progenitor of such movements as conceptual art and institutional critique, Thenot enlarged the reception of his work by engaging a non-art public outside of Paris, thereby gaining the very distance to Duchamp’s work that Duchamp himself had performed. In the book’s introduction, Thenot wrote, “Must we speak of Duchamp again? Speak about Duchamp, next to Duchamp, even as so many things have already been written and said about or not

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425 Jean-Paul Thenot, “Pratiques artistiques et interventions sociologiques,” in *Art et communication* (Cologne: Institut Français de Cologne), May 6–31, 1975, n.p. See Appendix B.

426 Jean-Paul Thenot, *Cent lectures de Marcel Duchamp* (Crisnée, Belgium: Yellow Now, 1978). This text was written sometime after the interviews (probably around 1976-77) and reflects many of the elements and ideas of the Sociological Art Collective, which is referenced throughout the footnotes. In 2006, Yellow Now re-published the book, and in the more recent edition, Thenot includes an edited and expanded chronology that goes until Duchamp’s death. *Cent lectures de Marcel Duchamp* (Liege, Belgium: Yellow Now, 2006). All references are to the 1978 edition unless otherwise noted.

427 Thenot’s focus on the provinces is related to his interest in engaging a “non-art” or “popular” going back to his very first projects that took place in the street.
about his oeuvre or his absence of an oeuvre? Through “psycho-social questionnaires,” Thenot sought a different kind of speaking and writing, a collective form outside the domain of art criticism, history, or the specialist. By using Duchamp’s own procedures, specifically his play with linguistic and visual structures, his use of assemblage, and his famed pronouncement that the viewer makes the work of art, Thenot connected Duchamp’s oeuvre to non-art trajectories, and he opened Duchamp to an uninitiated public’s readings and projections. Through his questionnaires, Thenot redistributed the terrain of the art expert and even displaced the recently consecrated figurehead of contemporary art himself.

Thenot began his book with Man Ray’s 1917 portrait of Duchamp behind his Glider Containing a Water Mill in Neighboring Metals positioned above a short text that reads: “Pasteur just treated Joseph Meister, bitten by a dog with rabies. Sigmund Freud is only 31 and addressing the problems of hysteria. As for Karl Marx, he had been dead for five years.” Only on the next page does the reader understand the connection: “We are in 1887: Marcel Duchamp is born.” By situating Duchamp’s birth in relation to the death of Marx, the advancement of science, and the exploration of psychology, Thenot intersected Duchamp’s biography with contextual events and figures, a key tactic throughout the project. He also related Duchamp to Thenot’s own intellectual commitments, which informed his writing of the imaginative and discursive biography. Thenot attempted a similar operation on himself by collecting headlines and facts from

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428 “Faut-il encore parler de Duchamp? Parler sur Duchamp, à côté de Duchamp, alors que tant de choses ont déjà été écrites et dites à propos ou hors de propos, sur son œuvre ou son absence d’œuvre?” Thenot, Cent lectures de Marcel Duchamp (1978), 17.
newspapers from mid-May 1974, when he carried out the project. While the assemblage of news about conflicts in Iraq, oil crises, and European paranoia about America offered a somewhat superficial frame for viewing Thenot’s project, it permitted explicit and implicit relations between current events and his project to co-exist. Thenot intended to re-read Duchamp by generating constellations of biographical, historical, and contemporary references rather than simply locating one element within another (Duchamp in his historical context). His approach is comparable to Walter Benjamin’s in *The Arcades Project* (*Passagenwerk*, 1927–1940). For the unfinished project, Benjamin assembled a multitude of notes and fragments that described Parisian city life in the nineteenth century through a series of relations rather than linear arguments. Through the association of multiple events, times, and people, he sought a dynamic model of history. He devised the dialectical image of the constellation as an alternative form of historical understanding: “What has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation.”

For Benjamin, it was through the unexpected and unplanned convergences that historical and political consciousness happened. Thenot conceives of his project in terms similar to Benjamin's, but he extends his scope beyond printed material into the realm of conversation.

Thenot began the interviews by inquiring about three dates: 1915, 1946, and 1968. He had identified these dates, which were obviously charged in France’s history, as important in Duchamp’s life, and, therefore, by asking what they evoked for the respondents, he set Duchamp’s biography in relation to the large and small events that

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marked the lives of respondents. In 1915, when Duchamp emigrated to the United States at the start of World War I, others recalled the lack of bread, gas masks, and a first communion. The assembly of responses and non-responses listed individually and as percentages, located points of confluence between Duchamp and respondents. Thenot radically expanded the idea of biography and opened up Duchamp as a site of popular projection and participation. In a short essay in the published book, Thenot asks, “Must we read between the lines, substitute a discourse of Duchamp for another discourse, masking and unmasking the first?”

The interview served as Thenot’s key modality of displacing any singular expression of a subject, or artist. The word interview comes from two French words: “entre” meaning “between” and “voir” meaning “to see.” Therefore, “interview” is literally “to see between,” and it became Thenot’s means to relate the visible and invisible, said and unsaid, conscious and unconscious as well as Duchamp, Thenot, and the participants.

In another set of interview questions, Thenot channeled Duchamp’s own procedures and asked what the titles and photographic reproductions of the works evoked for respondents. For instance, the title “The Large Glass” elicited for many respondents the idea of thirst or something to quench thirst, including the humorous “it’s better than a small glass,” all interesting if unintentional commentaries on the work’s sexual references. He then asked respondents what a photographic reproduction of The Large Glass brought to mind, followed by a further request to locate the part that had caused this reaction. Published results indicate that a reproduction of the chocolate grinder, for example, led respondents to describe the work as “a machine, battery, grinder, sounds of

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432 “Faut-il lire entre les lignes, substituer au discours de Duchamp un autre discours, masquant et démasquant le premier?” Jean-Paul Thenot, *Cent lectures de Marcel Duchamp* (1978), 17.
jazz percussion instruments, oil drill, and a collapsing spiral.” [Fig. 27] Through this series of questions, Thenot submitted Duchamp’s frequent verbal play and his straddling of representation and abstraction to further processes of association and deconstruction.

For Thenot, the “psycho-social questionnaire” was not a means to install pre-established systems of belief or to propose conclusions, as often happened with conventional questionnaires. He sought to expand discussions about Duchamp’s oeuvre via the individual and collective reactions of 100 participants. The interviews made literal Duchamp’s 1957 statement that “the creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering its inner qualification.”

While admittedly a degree of organization and thus bias went into the structure of the psych-social questionnaires and encounters, Thenot rejected analysis or conclusion. “What is important,” he wrote, “is the invested and disinvested energy, the mental processes that underlie materialization at the moment of realization.” In a sense, then, the questionnaire and Duchamp were vehicles to spark mental and social processes (“reflection,” “questioning,” and “intersubjective dialogue”) that would lead all involved parties to novel realizations and changes in behavior. “It is no longer a question of the questionnaire,” Thenot wrote, “but of questioning. Questionings are a method to determine the perceptual and conceptual phenomenon of the questionnaires. They are not

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434 One way this resistance to analysis manifests itself is in Thenot’s decision to publish responses as lists. While minimally categorized, the lists of disparate associations tend to multiply rather than concentrate possible meanings.
435 “L’important c’est l’énergie investie et désinvestie et le processus mental qui en sous-tend la matérialisation, au moment où elle a été réalisée, ainsi que la prise de conscience de chacun, au niveau de ses attitudes, et une réévaluation de son comportement.” Jean-Paul Thenot, Cent lectures de Marcel Duchamp (1978), 80–81.
a contestation which is manifested, to replace one with another, but a questionnaire of the
phenomenon. It is to change questionnaires.\textsuperscript{436}

In previous projects, Thenot had sought to engender active engagement by
sending the results of questionnaires back to participants, and he had critiqued the
classical procedures of the interview for perpetuating power imbalances and restricting
responses. With \textit{Cent lectures}, however, his discussion of dynamic, inter-subjective, and
egalitarian acts of questioning and self-reflection intensified. Such acts embodied, Thenot
hoped, radical potentialities to trigger awareness (“prise de conscience”) of the processes
that link individual subjectivity and external determinations, namely ideology. This
awareness has the potential to reform relations between society and the individual,
outside and inside, questioner and questioned, and history and the present. Such utopian
language crops up throughout Thenot’s writing, but his insistence on transformation in
\textit{Cent lectures} signals, perhaps, personal dimensions and motivations in the project. I am
suggesting that Thenot developed his “psycho-social questionnaire” about Duchamp in
order to modify his own relationship with the 1970s contemporary art scene’s lauded
“forefather.”

In France, Duchamp’s rebirth from relative obscurity occurred somewhat
belatedly but with remarkable vigor following his retrospective at the \textit{Musée national
d’art moderne} in June-July 1967 and then his death in October 1968.\textsuperscript{437} In the early

\textsuperscript{436} “Il n’est plus question de questionnaire mais de questionnement. Les questionnements sont une méthode
pour connaître le phénomène perceptif et conceptuel du questionnaire. Ils ne sont pas une contestation de
l’opinion qui s’y manifeste, pour la remplacer par une autre, mais une mise en question du phénomène. Il
s’agit de changer les questionnaires.” \textit{Ibid.}, 29-30, footnote 18.

\textsuperscript{437} Duchamp’s acknowledgement came earlier in the United States, partly owing to the fact that since 1918
he had been living there. The exhibition at the \textit{Musée national d’art moderne} was entitled \textit{Duchamp-
Villon, Marcel Duchamp}. The museum had acquired an oil sketch of the chess players by Duchamp in
1954, which was the first work by Duchamp in a French public institution. The French exhibition was
1970s, a number of small-scale art magazines consecrated Duchamp as a new figurehead for contemporary practices. For instance, in a polemical article entitled “Cézanne, we don’t give a damn” written in the midst of the “Expo 72” upheavals, Pluchart rejected Cézanne as the origin of modern art and offered an alternative history beginning with two artists who “proceeded from the same volition of participating in the transformation of society”: Duchamp and Malevich. In terms that prefigured Peter Bürger’s *Theory of the Avant-Garde* by two years, Pluchart wrote, “Dada seeded the artistic revolution and transformed the practice of art into a tool laden with authentic and progressive political and social power.”

438 Pluchart’s conclusion, however, diverged from Bürger’s. Pluchart argued that sociological art and body art of the 1970s instantiated the regeneration and evolution of Duchampian radicalism rather than the evacuation and negation of avant-gardist intentions, as Bürger argued about the neo-avant-garde. 439 In a sense, therefore, Thenot was Duchamp’s son, a lineage that has been recalled and debated since the 1970s.

With Duchamp’s notoriety on the rise, the Centre Georges Pompidou mounted an exhibition of Duchamp’s work for its inauguration in 1977, surely an attempt to capitalize on his vanguard associations in the midst of its contentious opening. It was at this

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438 François Pluchart, “Cézanne, on s’en fout!” *arTitudes*, no. 6 (April–May 1972): 1.
moment of exploding popular interest in Duchamp that Thenot found a publisher for *Cents lectures*: the Belgium gallery and publishing house *Yellow Now* in Liège, a center for avant-garde filmmaking and video. Thenot’s position vis-à-vis Duchamp—whether progeny or beneficiary—undeniably shaped his choice to “see between” the artist’s biography, procedures, and oeuvre through interviews. As discussed above, *Cents lectures* engaged a broader and non-specialized audience in looking and thinking about Duchamp’s art. It was a research project that radically extended the very processes at work in Duchamp’s persona and artworks. However, another and more elusive aspect of *Cents lectures* compels consideration. In posing questions about Duchamp, does Thenot also question, as in contest, Duchamp?

Following Freud’s famous description of a boy’s desire to sexually possess his mother and to kill his father, a theory with which Thenot was well versed, particularly through his psychotherapy work with teenage boys, Thenot occupied an antagonistic—if also unconscious and repressed—position in relation to Duchamp. Thenot’s desire to conduct interviews about Duchamp is symptomatic of his position. The interviews in *Cents lectures* demarcated different ways of speaking and writing about Duchamp, and they proffered two outcomes: the dispersion, and thus passing, of Duchamp and his oeuvre into the chaos of a hundred people’s personal reactions and experiences and the

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440 In the 1980s, the binding of the “neo-avant-garde” of the 1970s to a Freudian model of repetition and repression became a frequent trope in European and American art history. Buchloh wrote, “I want to argue, against Burger, that the positing of a moment of historical originality in the relationship between the historical avant-garde and the neo-avant-garde does not allow for an adequate understanding of the complexity of that relationship, for we are confronted here with practices of repetition that cannot be discussed in terms of influences, imitation, and authenticity alone. A model of repetition that might better describe this relationship is the Freudian concept of repetition that originates in repression and disavowal.” “The Primary Colors for the Second Time: A Paradigm Repetition of the Neo-Avant-Garde.” *October* 37 (July 1, 1986): 43. Hal Foster picks up this theme and develops it in “What’s Neo about the Neo-Avant-Garde?” *October*, especially 22-23, 30-31.
curative transmutation of talking as treatment. With respondents and Duchamp as his “patients,” Thenot plays the role of analyst and artist, attempting to disengage himself from—or at least to articulate novel relationships with—the legacy to which he is tied. Like all of Thenot’s questionnaire projects leading up to the formation of the Collective in October of 1974, Cent lectures retains features of participation and contestation. He broadened engagement with Duchamp’s work, challenged the domain of the art expert, and potentially displaced the recently consecrated figurehead of contemporary art himself. However, Cent lectures also marked a shift in Thenot’s practice away from structured questionnaires toward more adaptive strategies, including small group discussions and video interviews, which he began to carry out collaboratively with the other members of SAC in late 1974.

III. Beyond Culture Questionnaires

A Study of “Art Against Ideology”

For the Collective’s initial group project, the artists drew on Thenot’s strategies and formulated a questionnaire about the first exhibition of sociological art. As discussed in chapter one, Bernard Teyssèdre, a critic and professor, organized the exhibition titled “Art Against Ideology” (L’Art contre idéologie) for the winter of 1974. The exhibition included two questionnaires: one written and carried out by the Collective (“Enquête sur l’Exposition ‘l’Art contre idéologie’”) and one created by Teyssèdre for the exhibition catalogue (“Catalogue en forme de questionnaire”). While the presence of the two questionnaires demonstrates the method’s traction, their divergences illustrate the distinctive approaches taken by the Collective and by Teyssèdre.
Both questionnaires inquired about the participating artists and exhibited works in *L’Art contre idéologie*, but the form and posture of the questions were markedly different. Teyssèdre’s questionnaire made up the bulk of the 15-page, unbound exhibition catalogue. He wrote short descriptions about the works of art and then followed these descriptions with related questions that, for the most part, allowed only for binary responses. The questions plumbed many key topics in circulation at the time: What class does art serve? Is there a rapport between the history of communards and the present? Is there a conflict in selling art and opposing capitalism? Can one defend oneself from the deleterious effects of mass media? What are the intentions of Galerie Rencontres in hosting such a critical exhibition? Must a sociological art intervention be neutral or is neutrality illusory? These questions were provocative and often slanted, and they led viewers to take sides on polemical issues at the core of the exhibited works and of the exhibition as a whole. For instance, after describing *Tucumán Arde* (Tucuman is Burning, 1968) by Group Rosario (a sociological study and media campaign about the plight of unemployed workers following the closure of sugar refineries in Argentina that concluded with a film and exhibition forced to close by the police), Teyssèdre asks:

Do you think that a group of artists, up until then approved by the official culture as part of the international avant-garde, has the right to denounce “a system built on hunger, on unemployment, with its vain and hypocritical cultural superstructure,” without necessarily losing all their artistic quality? Yes / No

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441 See catalogue reproduced in the Appendix B.
442 A completed version of Teyssèdre's questionnaire is preserved in Hervé Fischer's archives, and while it is unclear if the artist himself responded the questionnaire, the circled answers and occasional marginal comments demonstrate the questionnaire as a vehicle of further reflection. See Fred Forest, Jean-Paul Thenot 1962-1975, Fonds Hervé Fischer, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Paris.
443 “Estimez-vous qu’un groupe d’artistes, jusqu’alors approuvés par la Culture officielle comme participant à l’avant-garde internationale, ait le droit de dénoncer ‘un système bâti sur la faim, sur le chômage, avec sa superstructure culturelle hypocrite et vaine,’ sans que ses travaux aient nécessairement perdu toute qualité ‘artistique’? Oui, Non.” Ibid.
“Artistic quality,” the question implies, is so closely tied to inequality, that denouncing one might cancel out the other. Such a question relates to the perennial dilemma over opposing and participating in the contested system(s). The issue had particular relevance among many of the French artists due to their lack of recognition by “official culture.” Their marginal status seemed to elicit both pride and regret. Through his “questionnaire en forme de catalogue” (questionnaire in the form of a catalogue) Teyssèdre expressed some of the representational and ideological content of the exhibition and gestured for exhibition viewers to think about this content by responding to the questions. However, the polemics of the questions and the restriction of possible responses greatly circumscribed forms of engagement. Furthermore, the questionnaire tended to reaffirm rather than defy existing ideological communities, most clearly the sympathetic, artistic, and leftist community already brought together by the exhibition.

Possibly in reaction to Teyssèdre’s questionnaire, the Collective created its own questionnaire that it carried out in the gallery space over the course of the exhibition. [Fig. 28] The printed questionnaire listed ten open-ended questions that directly referenced works of art on view. Unlike Teyssèdre, however, the Collective did not describe the works and used less partial wording. About Group Rosario’s project, for example, the Collective asked “For you, what does the exhibition of a group of works

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444 This issue is particularly poignant in the case of Tucumán Arde because even while the economies of rural workers in Argentina and of the Western urban art world have remained starkly imbalanced, Group Rosario’s project has been widely celebrated in the art world. It was reportedly upon seeing this work that Lucy Lippard recalls being “born” as a feminist and political activist. See Julia Bryan-Wilson’s discussion of Lippard’s trip to Argentina in Art Workers, 132-138.

445 The exact chronology leading up to the conception and production of these two questionnaires is difficult to pin down. After communication with Forest, Thenot, and Teyssèdre, it is my conjecture that the "catalogue-questionnaire” began as a collaboration between Teyssèdre and the Collective, but the collaboration quickly deteriorated. The Collective ultimately opposed Teyssèdre’s closed questions and produced a separate open-ended questionnaire.
conducted in the working class population of Tucuman in Argentina, who have been reduced to unemployment and misery by the closing of sugar refineries, evoke?”

Thenot’s preferred interrogative phrase “Qu’évoque pour vous...” was used throughout the Collective’s questionnaire in lieu of Teyssèdre’s either/or phrasing. Rather than identify the ideological content of the exhibited works and ask viewers to choose a position, the Collective used the questionnaire as a starting place for a discussion.

At the opening, the artists positioned themselves throughout the gallery posing their questions to viewers. As captured by a grainy video recording, the Collective stimulated discussions about art and politics as well as the “visual interest” (or lack of) in political art, the attention demanded by research-based and didactic artworks such as Haacke’s *Shapolsky et al.* (1971), and the cliquish environment of the opening. The questioning exceeded the limits of the paper to become a performance that temporarily reshaped relations between art object, artist, and viewer. These relations went far beyond the options laid out by Teyssèdre’s questionnaire. After all, Teyssèdre posed the following question about the Art Workers’ Coalition’s well-known demonstration against the Vietnam War in front of Picasso’s *Guernica* at the Museum of Modern Art: “Do you think that the brains of Vietnamese children killed by the American army at Song Mi are worth more than 79 cents per pound? Less than 79 cents?”

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447 “Estimez-vous que les cervelles d’enfants Viêt-Namiens massacrés par l’armée Américaine à Song Mi valent plus de 79 Cents la livre? Moins de 79 Cents? Plus de 79 Cents / Moins de 79 Cents.” Bernard Teyssèdre, *L’Art contre idéologie*, n.p. It was in conjunction with this action that AWC (Art Workers Coalition) used their iconic poster featuring the U.S. combat photographer Ronald Haeberle’s image of the My Lai massacre with a quote from an exchange between Mike Wallace and a soldier named Paul Meadlo. The text reads: “Q. And babies? A. And babies.” For a thorough account of AWC’s production of this poster and demonstration, see Francis Frascina, *Art, Politics and Dissent: Aspects of the Art Left in Sixties America* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 160-199.
of an overt political statement about the lack of consideration for Vietnamese lives; only a resounding “more than 79 cents” could have imaginably been selected. The Collective posed its more open-ended question “For you, what does the presentation of photos of massacred children in front of Picasso’s Guernica evoke?” The terrain of possible responses is significantly wider, and from the minimal existing documentation and testimonies, discussions meandered topically and grew heated politically.

The two questionnaires produced for the first exhibition of sociological art display two divergent conceptions of how the standard sociological tool might be put to use. Teyssèdre’s questionnaire was actually a catalogue in the form of a questionnaire that he used to publicize his ideas about L’Art contre idéologie. His views were not simply promotional but also critical as he identified prevalent contradictions or tensions in the works and in art and society more generally. The Collective’s questionnaire was closer to an “enquête” (study) of the exhibition. It solicited audience reactions to the works on view through open-ended questions and activated communication. The “politics” of the piece had less to do with particular positions and more to do with evolving dynamics between viewers and works of art. The Collective hoped to inculcate a more conscious and critical spectatorship. While Teyssèdre’s questionnaire-catalogue is moderately interactive in its paper form, with possible responses laid out to be circled, the Collective’s questionnaire-interview engages aural, visual, and corporeal sensations as it transpires in the social space of the gallery.

In the end, neither questionnaire would probably qualify as a proper sociological method. Teyssèdre indicated as much in his final statement and question: “The present ‘questionnaire’ only pretends to be a questionnaire because most of the responses are
slanted by the very nature of the questions. Do you think it is wrong that a text about the exhibition ‘Art Against Ideology’ is itself against the dominant ideology and becomes, therefore, part of the exhibition? Yes or No.” The question hints at Teyssèdre’s intention to use the questionnaire as a way to raise issues about and to join in the first exhibition of sociological art. However, comparing Teyssèdre’s questionnaire with the Collective’s suggests some fundamental differences concerning the use of sociological methods to encourage respondents to express themselves rather than to supplant pre-existing thoughts and behavior onto them. The Collective’s sought to initiate critical dialogues about the sociological art through its “enquête.” Akin to Thenot’s “Expo 72” project, the Collective’s questionnaire embodied a kind of para-institutional critique, where “institution,” at least in the minds of the members, likely included the usual suspects such as the gallery space and its social codes, the monetized art world, and the individualized artist and viewer. It also encompassed Teyssèdre’s representation of “sociological art” through L'Art contre idéologie and his questionnaire, a representation that Collective would increasingly contest. Furthermore, and drawing on Thenot’s Cent lectures, the Collective used its open questionnaire to modify the gallery space and viewing experience, thus intervening in the social space of the exhibition. This first and only collaborative questionnaire produced and conducted by the Collective anticipated its transition toward less scripted discussions. Beginning around 1975, the group’s practice of critical questioning moved off the page into the streets through video interviews with

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passersby (discussed in chapter three) and into the classroom through performative lectures (discussed in chapter four).

“The survey that was not one”

Despite the Collective’s changing behavior, individual members occasionally conducted questionnaires in the subsequent years in concert with publications and large-scale public projects. Many of these projects invigorated or imagined a community. In her dissertation on questionnaires in early twentieth century literary magazines, Lori Cole describes the questionnaire as a “self-reflexive circuit that linked editor, contributor, and reader.” She writes, “By asking its members to identify the stakes of their own investment in a shared project and to recast their aesthetic contributions according to this larger vision, the questionnaire unites disparate voices and performs a community-building function.” SAC artists expanded beyond the confines of a journal, its readership, and its pages to involve individuals and micro-communities, such as the inhabitants of a neighborhood, as well as much larger and more inchoate social networks. By setting out to ask questions, the artists endeavored to bring together and to bring into conversation the respondents.

In 1975, as discussed in the introduction, Forest carried out a large questionnaire while preparing a book about his video art. He envisioned the project as an “oeuvre-

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450 In addition to Forest's questionnaire, I am thinking of numerous public engagement projects undertaken by Fischer beginning in the late 1970s, especially Jordaners, maak uw kraut (October 17–21, 1978, in Amsterdam), Citoyen/sculpteurs (Summer 1980, in Chicoutimi, Quebec), and ¿La Calle adónde llega? (Fall 1983, Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City).

451 Fred Forest, Art Sociologique: Dossier (Paris: Union générale d’Editions, 1977). Union générale d’Editions (UGE) was created in 1962 to publish pocket-sized books of philosophy, history, and fiction. In 1968, Christian Bourgois took over the 10/18 series, of which Forest's book was a part, and oriented the
action”: “Since I am not a writer,” he stated in the introduction, “this book is, in fact, for me: an action.”452 To create this “book that is not a book” but rather “a place of encounter,” he aimed to put in place an “open apparatus,” where diverse opinions could “cross, meet, and clash.”453 In addition to assembling an archive of essays by notable authors, he published responses to his questionnaire (“Enquête: Trois questions sur l’art sociologique”), which posed three questions about sociological art: “1. Does sociological art exist? 2. Do you consider yourself part of this tendency/trend? 3. What is your own definition of sociological art?”454 [Fig. 29] Forest also called for reader involvement at least twice in the book, entreating readers to send in their own responses to the questionnaire and finally “to close the pages of this book and start to talk.”455 For Forest, the final book Art Sociologique: Dossier, published in 1977, was a “reflection in common” and tool for future action and, therefore, as he underlines in his introduction, “never finished.”


453 “Il s’agit certes d’un document d’information et de réflexion, mais, dans mon esprit, il s’agissait surtout de mettre en place un dispositif ouvert où vient se croiser, se rencontrer, se heurter une grande diversité d’opinions. Cela dans le but que des notions encore floues mais présentes dans ‘l’air’ du temps se précisent ainsi. [. . . ] Cet ouvrage conçu comme une structure ouverte ne sera jamais terminé. [. . .] Il se veut simplement outil de travail. Lieu de rencontre.” Ibid., 21. Forest described the book with the word “dispositif,” which I have translated as “apparatus” following Giorgio Agamben’s insightful analysis of “dispositif” and “apparatus” in What Is an Apparatus?: And Other Essays (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009). Forest has acknowledged on numerous occasions the influence of Umberto Eco’s conception of the “open work” in The Open Work (originally published in 1962).

454 “1. L’art sociologique existe-t-il? 2. Estimez-vous appartenir à cette tendance? 3. Quelle est votre propre définition de l’art sociologique?” Fred Forest, Art Sociologique vidéo: Dossier, 235. The archive consisted of key texts about Sociological Art by sociologists Jean Duvignaud and Edgar Morin as well as critics Yann Pavie and Pierre Restany; manifestoes and texts by members of the collective; and a newly commissioned essay by Vilém Flusser that was quite critical of Forest’s work. If these texts, taken together, offered several viewpoints on Sociological Art, or on Forest’s own video projects more specifically, they also affirmed by the cultural and institutional capital of their authors the seriousness and importance of the movement.

455 “Si après lecture vous partagez avec nous ce sentiment, j’aurai atteint mon objectif. Alors nous pourrons passer à l’essentiel. Renfermer les pages de cet ouvrage et commencer à dialoguer…” Ibid., 25.
Forest's questionnaire constituted both an investigation and a community around the project of sociological art. The content of responses varied widely, reiterating many of the protestations against “sociological art,” including two polar reactions to “the existence of sociological art”: “art (or, and, Art) was and will always be sociological” (Didier Bay) and “art and science are in principle opposed to one another” (Sven Sanstrom). Between “all art is sociological” and “art and sociology are irreconcilable,” respondents plumbed the spectrum of art’s possible connections with social and scientific practices, expressing their personal, professional, and national viewpoints. Among the myriad responses, some—mostly disapproving or reticent—addressed the questionnaire in particular. It is to these examples that I turn because whether understood as a research method, literary genre, or artistic form, the questionnaire served as a key support for Forest’s “oeuvre-action.” Its reception, therefore, points to conflicting values embedded in the form and in the proposal of sociological art.

As Bourdieu et al. argues in Métier de sociologue, the questionnaire constructs the object of study, and numerous respondents pointed to this fact, arguing, as the French art historian François Cali affirmed, “‘sociological art’ exists from the moment that one poses the question.” Or, as the British artist and historian Kenneth Coutts Smith responded, “The fact that there exists a movement called ‘sociological art’ is evident by

456 “Il est bien évident que l’art (ou–et–Art) a toujours été et sera toujours ‘sociologique’.” Didier Bay, Ibid., 244. Albrecht D, Kenneth Coutts Smith, Jacek Drabik, Sergio Fiuza, Hansik Gebert, Klaus Groh, Fabio Magalhaes, and Tomas Straus, among others, stated comparable points of view. “Art et science sont en principe opposés l’un à l’autre car l’art est toujours intuitif, la science avant tout analytique et rétrospective.” Sven Sanstrom, Ibid., 337. Blaise Galland summarizes this last “classic” point of view as “L’art c’est l’art; la science c’est la science; les deux choses n’ont rien à voir entre elles.” Blaise Galland, Art Sociologique: Méthode Pour Une Sociologie Esthétique (Genève: Georg, 1987), 76.

the presence of this questionnaire.\textsuperscript{458} If the questionnaire by virtue of its existence substantiated sociological art as a “tendency or trend” (the word employed in the second question), then it also invited others to participate in this corroboration. By responding to the questionnaire, one accepted the legitimacy of its questions and thus of sociological art. Such an arrangement signaled the operative and promotional function of the questionnaire, which felt like a “trap” to a handful of respondents. The French artist Alexandre Bonnier pinpointed this most clearly when he wrote in an introductory note, which Forest included in entirety, “My dear Fred, I fall into your trap, in friendship, by answering this survey. Yet, it costs me a bit because responding, even negatively, contributes to the existence of the thing. It is in this sense that I spoke of a trap.” He goes on in a mocking tone to say that if sociological art existed then “you wouldn’t ask your friends to write a book for you that you could write if you knew what to say.”\textsuperscript{459} Another French artist, Jean-François Bory, began in a comparable way, “In receiving your paper, I said to myself, look it’s marketing! [. . .] Classic trap of the questionnaire, the questionnaire itself is booby-trapped everywhere . . . and if one attempted to evade the trap.”\textsuperscript{460} Bory, in cahoots with Joan Rabascall and Sonso (all three artists had exhibited in SAC exhibitions), identified a strategy of evasion: they submitted near identical

\textsuperscript{458} “Le fait qu’il existe un mouvement désigné comme ‘art sociologique’ est évident par l’existence de ce questionnaire.” \textit{Ibid.}, 263. Alain Snyers writes, “La question de savoir si l’art sociologique existe contient déjà une partie de la réponse. En parler, écrire à ce sujet, chercher à la définir, en est une reconnaissance.” ("The question to know if sociological art exists already contains a part of the response. By speaking, writing about this subject, searching to define it, it is known.") \textit{Ibid.}, 337.

\textsuperscript{459} “Je tombe bien amicalement dans ton piège en répondant à cette enquête. Il m’en coûte pourtant un peu car répondre, même négativement, est une contribution à l’existence de la chose. C’est en ce sens que je parlais d’un piège. [. . .] Surtout, tu ne demanderais pas à tes amis d’écrire pour toi un livre que tu pouvais écrire si tu avais su quoi dire.” \textit{Ibid.}, 249.

\textsuperscript{460} “\[E\]n recevant ton papier, je me suis dit tiens, c’est du marketing! [. . .] et je me dis piège classique du questionnaire, le questionnaire lui-même étant piégé partout...et si on tentait de déjouer le piège.” \textit{Ibid.}, 252.
responses to the questionnaire.\(^{461}\) The tone of many responses, whether favorable or unfavorable, signaled a certain intimacy, and respondents often employed the informal "tu" (you) to refer to Forest directly and mentioned previous collaborations. If such familiarity bespeaks the modesty of the project, it also distinguishes Forest’s questionnaire from the anonymity of Thenot’s. Forest did not intend for his sampling to be representative but rather opened his own address book (and those of his friends) in search of a community of artists and critics.

The less polemical and in some ways more thoughtful responses came from artists far from Paris’s contemporary art scene. These artists also tended, by the dozens, to more willingly align their artistic practices with SAC. In retrospect, the responses from Dan Graham, Albrecht D, Carlos Hernandez-Mor (of Grup de Treball), Les Levine, and Guerilla Art Action Group evidence how perspicacious Forest was in tracking down like-minded artists and how comparatively unknown SAC remains in art history. In answering the first question about the existence of sociological art, Dan Graham wrote:

> As far as a name or movement, I am not sure. As far as a general tendency in British art (thinking about Art and Language with Victor Burgin, John Steraker and Steve Willats) whose interest is combined with sociology of Frankfurt school thinking with semiotic theory of Hans Haacke and some others. I have a sense that this tendency emerges through all these examples: from artists such as Buren, Michael Asher, and even myself seem to be, or to have been, conscious of the public and social manifestation of the structure of art. I’m sorry but I don’t know much about the current developments in France.\(^{462}\)

Albrecht D mentioned Wolf Vostell, Joseph Beuys, Hans Haacke, and the two exhibitions *Art in Political Struggle (Kunst im politischen Kampf)*, Kunstverein,
Hannover, 1973) and *Art into Society, Society into Art* (ICA, London, 1974) as “working in this direction.” Hernandez-Mor identified his work with the important Catalan radical conceptual art Group de Treball, which was in the midst of dissolving after having emerged in the final years (1972-75) of Franco’s dictatorship, as aligned with sociological art. He noted, “We preferred the name ‘art of (and about) context.’” These and many other artists expounded upon what they took to be at the heart of the questionnaire, to paraphrase Les Levine’s response, the responsibility of art and the artist vis-à-vis society. Respondents discussed their own efforts to forge critical artistic practices and debated art as an instrument and as instrumentalized in campaigns for social change. For artists outside of the micro-milieu of Paris, “sociological art” denoted an art of social commitment opposed to the individual genius of the artist and the exceptional and rarified status of the art object. After tallying responses, SAC had at least a dozen new affiliates, including, in addition to those already listed, Roger Welch, Alain Snyers (of the collective Untel), Stano Filko, Michael Druks, Hansik Gebert, Klaus Groh, John Kearney, David Zack, and Maria Regina Rego Ramalho. Forest’s questionnaire, therefore, erected a network of relations between artists, a move that if self-promotional is also foundational to any effective movement.

There remains, however, a third way between research and marketing that Forest’s questionnaire performed. It was the Catalan-born painter Balbino Giner who recognized the questionnaire as “as a means of pushing the questionnaire towards another

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463 Ibid., 238.
464 “En tant que membre du ‘Group de Treball’, qui vient maintenant de s’autodissoudre, je pense que mon travail collectif du groupe, peut s’inscrire parfaitement dans la pratique de l’art sociologique que nous avons préféré nomme ‘art du (et sur) le contexte’.” Ibid., 290.
465 Ibid., 305.
thing.” Giner, who lived in France and participated with the Collective in the 1975 Photo-Film-Video project in Neuenkirchen, began his response with an excursus on the high percentage of non-responses (30 to 40%) to any sociological questionnaire and on the experiential and intellectual apparatus necessary to respond to Forest’s questionnaire. It follows, then, that Forest’s book is a “sampling of well-chosen concerned artists.” In focusing on this small and marginal community united not by geography, nationality, or class but by a certain perceived ethic, Forest’s “oeuvre-action” deflected art and sociology away from their traditional agendas toward “a larger awareness (anthropology) with fewer barriers and labels.” Giner understood Forest’s questionnaire as an exploration of a widely shared belief in art’s sociological basis and, thus, as a mechanism to invigorate practices attentive to art's social, economic, and institutional framings and productive of contextual re-framings. Other respondents, however, expressed apprehension toward the questionnaire. Didier Bay, a French photographer creating narrative and documentary meditations on his everyday life in the 1970s, described the omnipresence of “surveys, interviews, statistics, samplings, catalogues, and classifications” as a testament of “the infatuation with pseudo-scientism.” He declared “the artists calling themselves ‘sociological’” to be “victims” of a moment in history.

Among the approximate 120 addresses listed in Forest’s preparatory notes for the project, the following recipients of the questionnaire did not respond: Broodthaers, Frank Popper, Philip Glass, Walter de Maria, Edward Ruscha, Lucy Lippard, John Bladessari, Steve Reich, Brice Marden, Joseph Kosuth, Nam June Paik, Anthony McCall, Donald Judd, Vito Acconci, Eleanor Antin, Allan Sekula, MASS MOVING, Jan Dibbets, Henri Lefebvre, Daniel Buren, Bernar Venet, La Monte Young, Roy Lichtenstein, Germano Celant, John Cage, Liza Bear, Umberto Eco, and Jean Clair. Fonds Fred Forest Ecrits, Dossier 7, Inathèque, Paris.

“Ceci dit l’intention de Forest est subtilement subversive [. . .] dans la mesure où il donne la parole alors qu’il peut la garder pour lui [. . .]. Dans ce sens, ce questionnaire est une façon de faire glisser le questionnaire vers autre chose, de détourner le concept de l’art (sens historique) et la sociologie (sens universitaire) de son contenu étroit vers une conscience plus large (anthropologie) avec moins de barrières et d’étiquettes.” Fred Forest, Art Sociologique: Dossier, 277-278.
“while they think they are the masters.” For a number of French artists, including Bonnier, Bory, Rabascall, Sonso, and Bay, Forest’s questionnaire did not exceed its instrumentalization but rather folded seamlessly into the market-driven, technocratic world of art and the Fifth Republic, against which they were all aligned. Such responses signal the preponderance of culture questionnaires in France and the difficulty of taking what is dominant in culture to détourn it, or to use it otherwise.

Conclusion

“Critical questioning” is both too broad and too vague to constitute a “medium,” but it led the members of the Sociological Art Collective to search for intermediaries between artistic forms and social commitments. In the early 1970s, they did not have to look far in order to discover the questionnaire, which was cropping up in every corner of France’s cultural scene on account of the budding discipline of the sociology of art and the government’s expanding engagement with contemporary art. Beyond its propinquity, however, the questionnaire was easily adapted to artists’ inclination toward text-, idea-, and process-based practices and search for cheap production and alternative channels of distribution. It eschewed the dreaded expressionism and visual pleasure of modernism with the repetitive and prosaic stare of postmodernism. To the delight of artists, sociologists, and pollsters alike, the questionnaire’s simple black and white text beckoned for a response, for the recipient’s participation, and every response equaled capital, whether financial, social, intellectual, or cultural. While evidently disruptive in the realm

468 "Nous sommes en tout cas maintenant familiarisés avec le processus ‘scientifiques’ d’études de phénomènes (sondages, interviews, statistiques, échantillonnages, catalogues, étiquetages...) qui font partie d’une actualité, témoignant de l’engouement pour le pseudo-scientisme, qui fait fleurir les ‘....ies, ...iques, et ...ismes’ à tout propos. Les artistes se disant ‘sociologique’ sont donc en effet parfaitement représentatifs, identifiables à un moment de l’Histoire (victimes alors qu’ils pensent en être les ‘maîtres’) mais leur masturbation un peu trop appuyée, (auto satisfecit) est un peu... puérile, et, bien entendu, ‘sociologiquement’ symptomatique....” Ibid., 245-246.
of fine art, the questionnaire merged fluidly with the dawning information economy. At this crossroads of contradictory investments, the questionnaire, at once radical and corporate, drab and sleek, comes into view as the quintessential object of the 1970s, migrating between artistic, activist, bureaucratic, and academic spheres. Thenot, Forest, and Fischer appropriated this method of research and communication, but rather than pinning down the behavior or opinions of social groups, they used questionnaires to reveal the social as a system of ongoing and fluctuating associations and to spark new relations with unforeseen consequences.

In the context of 1970s French sociology, such a use of questionnaires was extremely uncommon. In the United States, certain “interactionist” sociologists such as Howard Becker and Erving Goffman proposed less structured and more interactive forms of sociological research, but their proposals largely fell on deaf ears in France until at least the mid-1980s. One of the very first attempts to develop more interactive methods was made by Alain Touraine, who spent time studying at Harvard. In his 1978 book The Voice and the Eye, he explained that since sociologists were not distant observers, they necessarily interfered with that which they studied and, therefore, had to act as intermediaries. He proposed the method of “sociological intervention,” wherein sociologists enter into the social movement being studied, discussing, interviewing, and learning from the subjects. “It is this new conception of the researcher,” he wrote, “as neither observer nor ideologist that most clearly distinguishes [sociological] intervention

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from other methods.¹⁴⁷⁰ Fifteen years later, in the last decade of his life, Bourdieu developed a comparable method in conjunction with his study *Misère du monde* (1993, not yet translated into English), which he announced as “provoked and accompanied self-analysis” taking place for both questioner and questioned.¹⁴⁷¹ The published study consists of dozens of chapters around single interviews related to aspects of suffering. The chapters include detailed observations about the circumstances in which the interviews took place, complete transcriptions of the interviews, and interpretations of the interviews. *Misère du monde* emphasizes individual responses and qualitative characteristics, a radical deviation in the oeuvre of Bourdieu.

SAC artists had already tested “sociological intervention” and “provoked and accompanied self-analysis” in their questionnaire projects, exploiting the inter-disciplinary, inter-medial, and inter-relational practice of questioning. Through questionnaires, the artists sought to engender increased awareness on the part of participants while inciting new relations between individuals and institutions. In the midst of the fallout from May 1968, when most artists were uncertain of the relevance and function of art, leftists were struggling to articulate what had just happened and to envision what should happen in the future, and the state sought to avoid another ’68 through novel technologies of control, the questionnaire was an attractive device to facilitate both participation and contestation. The relative ease with which it folded into artistic and bureaucratic spheres illustrates the slippery nature of the questionnaire as a critical form. Rather than static objects or receptacles for information, the questionnaires

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of sociological art became vehicles to stimulate acts of questioning, which surpassed the boundaries of the paper objects, the ephemerality of the encounters, and the capacity of historical retrieval.
CHAPTER 3: Animating

"Yesterday, objects were made, today, as an animator, I have no more objects but create situations and manage situations where they furnish information."

-Fred Forest, 1978

In a short essay from 1973 about the work of Fred Forest, the sociologist Edgar Morin associated Forest's "quasi sociological" practice with a new role for the artist in society:

I think that today there is a new function, a new need, a new reality that corresponds to what one can call 'animators.' [...] I think that the world today with its anonymity, its bureaucratisation, and all the tendencies that push it towards a sort of mechanicity, this world needs "ANIMATORS." That is people who save it, awaken it, and give it a soul... In this perspective Fred Forest incarnates the exact type of this rare race of animators who emerge today from different horizons and who will, in my view, play a very important role in our society.

The concept of an "animator" was being rapidly adopted at this time in the realms of social work, community programming, and contemporary art to characterize a person who actively engages publics, often for the improvement of society. Summer camp

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472 "Hier, on fabriquait des objets, aujourd'hui, en tant qu'animateur, je n'ai plus des objets mais crée des situations et gère des situations où ils fournit des informations." "Alfred Willener interroge Fred Forest," video interview, January 11, 1978, DO T 20030713 DIV 023.001, Fonds Fred Forest Vidéo, Inathèque, Paris. This interview took place at the Ninth World Congress of Sociology in Uppsala, Sweden, where Forest presented his work Le mètre carré artistique and was interviewed by Willener, a professor of sociology from the University of Lausanne.

473 "Je pense qu’il y a aujourd’hui une nouvelle fonction, un nouveau besoin, une nouvelle réalité qui correspond à ce qu’on peut appeler des ‘animateurs.’ J’emploie ce mot avec beaucoup de prudence car ce mot est très galvaudé, très ‘inflationné’, pris dans le sens d’animateur culturel devenu une sorte d’instituteur. Ce n’est pas du tout dans ce sens que j’entends. Je pense que le monde d’aujourd’hui dans son anonymat, sa bureaucratisation, et toutes ses tendances qui le poussent à une sorte de mécanique, ce monde a besoin ‘d’AMINATEURS’. C’est-à-dire de gens qui le secouent, qui le réveillent, qui lui donnent une âme... Dans cette perspective Fred Forest incarne le type même de cette race, trop rare, d'animateurs qui se lèvent aujourd’hui à des horizons différents et qui doivent, à mon avis, jouer un rôle très important dans notre société.” Edgar Morin, "Invitation à une réflexion quasi sociologique," Collectif art sociologique: théorie, pratique, critique (Paris: Musée Galliera, 1975), 48.
counselors, coaches, employees of the Maisons de la culture, and even the gallery guards at the Centre Georges Pompidou were all called "animators." As summarized in a 1977 article in *Le Figaro*, the government's various initiatives of cultural development since the late 1950s and immense investments in contemporary art since 1968 were aligned with "a new politic of animation" that hinged on "the participation of inhabitants." From the "ateliers de création" (workshops) throughout the city to the creation of a "lycée musicale" (music high school) to "théâtre de rue" (street theater) to activities planned for the large square in front of the Pompidou, these diverse cultural events, often situated within public spaces, aimed to engage and invigorate passersby.\textsuperscript{474} André Malraux had, in fact, attempted to form schools ("centres de formation") to train animators in order to staff the newly created Maisons de la culture in the late 1950s. His plan was not successful until 1970, when the Ministry of Cultural Affairs launched the first accredited program of "animation" to train admitted individuals "to create a communication between the oeuvre and the public."\textsuperscript{475} Morin acknowledges the ways in which the term "cultural animator" had come to signify a sort of institutional and bureaucratic figure ("instituteur"). However, like others writing about sociological art, such as Jean Duvignaud, Pierre Restany, Bernard Teyssèdre, and the members of the Collective, Morin positioned the idea of animation as central to the vision and practice of sociological art.


"Animate" comes from the Latin word *animāre*, meaning to give life to, to revive.

To describe an artist as an animator approximates the traditional model of the artist as a producer, as a giver of life, but rather than producing an object or environment to be viewed by another person, the artist-as-animator sets into a motion a process or structure that tends to involve others and that often has undetermined outcomes. It is an anarchic rather than a democratic model. Forest reiterates these points and notes the disruptive character of his practice:

"The beautiful job of painting" and "the expression of the self" disappear permanently to make room for a mode of action that intervenes directly in the fabric of institutions, the collection of instituted acts and ideas that individuals find in front of them each day and every second. My practice (artistic or?) consists of introducing a foreign "disruptive" or "energizing" element in the ongoing operation of these structures. The very substance of social reality is chosen as a material and field of experience.

It is this element of agitation and interference that the term "animate" points to and that the closely related and equally popular terms "participatory" and "interactive" often lack. All three terms counteract the timelessness, isolation, and restraint frequently

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476 "'Le beau métier de peindre' et 'l'expression du moi' disparaissent définitivement ici pour laisser place à un mode d'action qui intervient à vif dans le tissu des institutions, cet ensemble des actes et des idées toutes instituées que les individus retrouvent chaque jour à chaque seconde devant eux. Ma pratique (artistique ou ?) consiste à introduire un élément étranger "perturbateur" ou "dynamiseur" dans le jeu permanent de ces structures. La substance même de la réalité sociale est choisie comme matériau et champ d'expérience." Quoted in Hervé Fischer, *Théorie de l'art sociologique* (Paris: Casterman, 1977), 128.

477 Forest has not only fashioned himself an agitator through his artwork but also through a series of lawsuits he has brought against art institutions. The most famous of his lawsuits was brought against the Centre Pompidou for the institution's refusal to disclose the purchase price of Hans Haacke's iconic work of institutional critique, *Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings. A Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971* (1971). Forest argued that as a public institution funded by tax dollars, the prices of acquisitions should be publicly shared knowledge. The case was originally ruled in favor of Forest but then a higher court affirmed the Centre Pompidou's privacy, all of which Forest details in his book *Fonctionnement et dysfonctionnement de l'art contemporain: un procès pour l'exemple* (Paris: Harmattan, 2000). Forest's keen selection of Haacke's work levied a second critique at the collusion of artists supposedly opposed to institutions and the art market with those very entities. He posed this very dilemma to Haacke on the occasion of a public discussion at Jeu de Paume between the artist and the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu to celebrate their joint publication *Free Exchange* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995). In the video recording of Forest's piercing question put forward to two of the staunchest critics of the
associated with art objects and aesthetic contemplation, and they also signal the ideal of activation and liberation, often aligned with leftist political and social agendas.

Animation, however, suggests a more radical—almost mystical—transformation, a change or movement that permanently alters an individual's relationship to the world and perception of that world.\(^{478}\)

Beginning in the late 1960s, numerous artists, critics, and curators in France drew explicit connections between an ethic of emancipation and art's increasing mobility, open-endedness, and efforts to involve spectators. For instance, the collective GRAV (Groupe de recherche en art visuel), which created polysensorial environments, kinetic sculpture, and wearable and manipulable objects in the mid to late 1960s, placed participation at the center of its 1967 manifesto, writing that it aims "by direct appeal to active participation, by playing a game, or by creating an unexpected situation, to exert a direct influence on the public's behavior and to replace the work of art or the theatrical performance with a situation in evolution inviting the spectator's participation."\(^{479}\)

Frank Popper's book *Art–Action, Participation* (1975) directly associates participation with social equality, and he cites the work of kinetic artists for "lay[ing] the foundation of a..."
new art, a truly DEMOCRATIC ART.\textsuperscript{480} The Collective, however, discredited these contemporaneous forms and movements as still too closely linked with the object-based practices of the commercial art world. They rejected the temporary sensorial experiences on offer as mere distractions from the struggles of real life, claiming such practices gave a false sense of freedom while ultimately maintaining the status quo.\textsuperscript{481} The Collective hoped to go beyond existing models and forms of participation through an artistic and social practice of animation.

In his book \textit{Action culturelle: intégration et/ou subversion} (Cultural Action: Integration and/or Subversion) (originally published in 1972), the curator and critic Pierre Gaudibert identifies an emerging sphere of practice that bridges the two prevalent types of animation: cultural and socio-cultural. He distinguishes these two types based on their conceptions of culture.\textsuperscript{482} In the case of the "cultural animateur," culture constitutes a "delimited sphere of Fine Arts and Literature," and "[a]nimation [. . .] aims to facilitate artistic communication; it becomes at best an active pedagogical exercise generating an attentive and critical public for the reception of art; at worst it becomes simply a means of increasing quantitatively the public coming to consume art."\textsuperscript{483} Gaudibert speaks quite forcefully against this predominant method (that of the Maisons de la culture), which he

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{481} As Claire Bishop warns, "The binary active/passive is reductive and unproductive, because it serves only as an allegory of inequality." The suggestion that "social participation is particularly suited to the task of social inclusion" on the part of cultural funders, museums, and proponents of interactive, participatory, and collaborative art assumes a passivity and impotence in the involved and often disenfranchised publics, thereby reaffirming their disenfranchisement. Claire Bishop, \textit{Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship} (London: Verso, 2012), 38.
\item \textsuperscript{483} Pierre Gaudibert, "Cultural Action: Integration and/or subversion," \textit{French Cultural Policy Debates: A Reader}, 94.
\end{itemize}
declares "a standardizing imperialism characterizing individuals surfeited on cultivated culture." In the case of the "socio-cultural animateur," culture, as conceived in anthropology, "corresponds to the totality of the representations, values, modes of behavior, models (or patterns) and rules governing the vision and mode of life of a social group, and thereby of all the individuals that constitute it." Rather than the "diffusion of Creation," animation stimulates a "population to take charge of its own development, to govern and control its daily life; strictly speaking, once the initial impulse has been given, the animation as such should disappear, since self-management is the distinguishing characteristic of a population that 'animates itself.' These two modes of animation were generally separated from one another, housed in different ministries, and allocated unequal funds, but emerging between them Gaudibert describes the practice of "certain cultural animators (working in the areas of oral and written expression, film, audio-visual production, etc.)":

[These individuals] are making themselves available to groups of people to help them in their search to express themselves and their concern through speech and images. This reintroduced the sensory, imaginary and artistic dimension, against what would be simple an exercise in "consciousness-raising" or "politicization"—characteristic objectives of the "socio-educational" sector [. . .]; but this process through which the imaginary realm of social existence is endowed with form gives rise to acts of creative self-expression which are not to be confused with Works of Creation. This is an alternative model; it is neither an art educator engaging museum visitors in a discussion about a masterpiece nor a social worker laboring to identify and ameliorate a social problem. Rather these "new experiments" take many forms of exchange between 

484 Ibid., 92. 
485 Ibid., 93-94. Gaudibert cites May '68 as "the major force triggering off a vast movement at the level of collective sensibility, to which much of the current reflection on cultural pluralism belongs." 
486 Ibid., 96-97.
"artists' and the population of a particular area," from communal actions to workshops, but ultimately concern "letting people speak for themselves and working through in artistic form both the memory of social groups and their present struggles, together with their dreams, projects and utopias." This text seems worthwhile to cite at length because it describes, perhaps better than the Collective ever did, sociological art and the kind of animation the artists envisaged.

More than either Hervé Fischer or Jean-Paul Thenot, Forest defined himself and his practice through the ideal of animation understood through the parallel tasks of revival and disruption. Influenced by such thinkers as Marshall McLuhan, Forest believed that contemporary technologies were transforming society and social relations and that traditional artistic media such as painting and sculpture could no longer connect with the public. Throughout his career, he Forest employed a range of media from slide projectors, telephone, radio, and Minitel to video and the Internet, and he harnessed their capacities to connect individuals over space and time in his installations, actions, and moving image productions. In this chapter, I examine Forest's early work in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the period when Forest began to consider himself an artist and exhibit publicly and when video first became available to artists. Forest's conception of art as social animation largely developed by way of his engagement with the medium of

487 Leading up to this quotation, he writes, "This socially-committed art often means working together as a team and securing the participation of non-specialists; it is related to the agitprop art of the 1920s, though in general it aims to produce not so much ideological propaganda and immediate political mobilization, but rather support for collective self-expression, by letting people speak for themselves and working through in artistic form both the memory of social groups and their present struggles, together with their dreams, projects and utopias." Ibid., 99-100.

488 Gaudibert does not cite any specific artists in this 1977 postscript to the third edition of his 1972 book, which was written and published before the Collective was founded. By 1977, Gaudibert was, however, familiar with the Collective, and as I discuss in chapter four, he presented at the group's Ecole sociologique interrogative in 1977.
video. Drawing on video's photographic basis, mobility, and instant feedback, Forest discovered a means of involving others in the act of representation and thereby of being an artist by forging relationships with other people and between other people through artistic means. It was the potential for these relationships, however provisional and temporary, to restructure existing institutions and systems of power that endowed Forest with his reputation as an instigator, troublemaker, and animator.

I. Art as Animation

Constituting Community

In 1933, Forest (né Claude Fred Forest) was born into a middle-class French family in Mascara, Algeria, and he lived there until 1962 when, along with an estimated 800,000 other “pieds noirs,” he was expatriated to France following Algeria's independence from French colonial rule. Forest finished high school and never received advanced training in art or any other subject (although, incredibly, he managed to receive a doctorate from the Sorbonne in 1985). His grandmother, an amateur painter, introduced Forest to art, and by his late teens and early 20s, he had started to make paintings, tapestries, and drawings that ranged from surrealist-inspired scenes to colorful mechanomorphic forms. He began producing and exhibiting art in earnest after he relocated to Paris. The *catalogue raisonné* of Forest's work (completed in 2010 by Isabelle Lassignardie) lists numerous paintings and drawings dating from 1963, many of which are no longer extant, and includes documentation of a series of individual exhibitions beginning in 1967.\textsuperscript{489} At the time, authors related these early pieces to

\textsuperscript{489} Documents attest to exhibitions at the Centre culturel français in Algiers (February 13 to March 5, 1967), R. Tuffier Gallery in Les Andelys (May 27 to June 12, 1967), Hotel Hostalrich during the Musical Festival of Prades (July 1968), Conference of European Industries in Cannes (September 24–27, 1968), and
Taschisme (the postwar lyrical abstraction movement in France that corresponded to Abstract Expressionism in the United States) and noted their surrealist and futurist qualities.1 During this period of artistic production, Forest made his living by working in the postal and telecommunications service (Postes, Télégraphes et Téléphone [PTT]), first in Mascara from 1954 to 1962 and then in Paris until 1971. Forest often points to his work in telecommunications as instigating a key shift in his artistic practice in the late 1960s and early 70s away from the production of discrete objects and toward the use of technologies to connect individuals.2 This shift marked the beginning of his artistic practice of animation.

The trajectory of animation in Forest's oeuvre can be traced back to a project that he carried out in his apartment building between in 1972 entitled Portrait de famille (Family Portrait).3 When Forest arrived in Paris at the age of 29, he and his family found inexpensive housing in a large apartment building located in L'Haï-les-Roses, a southern suburb connected by the commuter rail (RER) to Paris. His building (Résidence Acacias) was one of the sixteen buildings (three 14-story buildings and thirteen 4-story buildings) that contributed to the exhibition Vision 68 at the Château de Fontainebleau.

See Fonds Fred Forest, Dossiers 8 and 13, Inathèque, Paris. As Isabelle Lassignardie notes, there are references to earlier exhibitions (e.g. at the Maison de la Culture, rue du Louvre in Paris in 1958, Gallery Primace in Oran, Algeria in 1962 [or 1959 according to other biographical documents]), but no documentation remains. Isabelle Lassignardie, “Fred Forest: Catalogue Raisonné (1963-2008)” (Ph.D. Thesis, Université de Picardie/Amiens, 2010), 35–68.

1 See the quotation by the art critic Robert Martin reproduced on the exhibition pamphlet for Forest's exhibition at the Galerie d'art R. Tuffier in Les Andelys: "Dans des figures, il a tendance à adopter une expression surréaliste par ses moyens techniques, taches et graffiti." Reproduced in Isabelle Lassignardie, “Fred Forest: Catalogue Raisonné (1963-2008),” 62.


3 In their recent theses on Forest's work, Isabelle Lassignardie and Stéphanie Jeanjean use 1967 as the year that Forest executed this project, a date that Forest confirms. In 1977, however, Forest published a description of Portrait de famille that lists its date as May 1972, which would better match the nature of his other artistic projects at the time. See Fred Forest, Art Sociologique: Vidéo (Paris: 10/18, 1977): 71-72. Furthermore, a flyer for the project located by the author in the Archives de la critique d’art in Rennes advertises the display on view until June 1972, See PREST.XT163, “Fred Forest” Dossier, Pierre Restany Archives, Archives de la critique d’art, Rennes.
buildings) that made up a development called "la Vallée aux Renards," accommodating an estimated 3,000 inhabitants. Beginning in the 1950s, the government constructed these inexpensive housing complexes (called HLM, Habitation à loyer modéré) to respond to the housing crisis that followed the end of World War II, a crisis precipitated by France's crumbling medieval infrastructure, an influx of immigrants from France's former colonies, and the nation's capitalist and political interests. Located in the newly defined "priority urbanization zones" (ZUP, Zones à urbaniser en priorité) on the outskirts of historic Paris and often accompanied by the construction of a commercial center, these "cités HLM," as they are often called, were immense undertakings of social housing.

HLM presented a number of interesting conditions that attracted the attention of sociologists, who by the mid-1960s were carrying out frequent studies of HLM populations. The new constructions offered many people improved physical living conditions with access to plumbing, consistent electricity, and larger spaces. HLM also mandated class quotas to assure a mixed socio-economic population and to encourage contact between classes (though most had majority lower and working classes). While a populist nostalgia for cohesive community underlined the HLM project in general and oriented the focus of sociologists to concepts like neighborhood and sociability,

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494 Between 1947 and 1971, 1,957,000 HLM lodgings were constructed, and, of these, the state helped to fund at least 79%. Manuel Castells, et al. Sociologie des mouvements sociaux urbains: enquête sur la Région Parisienne (Paris: Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1974), 175-181. Of these lodgings, many were constructed in the late 1960s and early 70s. One estimate put the annual number units built at 100,000 in 1953 as compared to 500,000 in 1970. And yet another stated that in 1954 there were less than 500,000 social lodgings, and by 1975 this number had multiplied by a factor of six to close to three million. François Tomas, Jean-Noël Blanc, and Mario Bonilla, Les grands ensembles: Une histoire qui continue... (Université de Saint-Etienne, 2003), 14.
sociological studies quickly discounted such utopian ideals. In addition to presenting a
litany of deleterious "effects," including increases in unemployment, alcoholism,
recidivism, and crime, studies noted the reification rather than eradication of class
distinctions. An important study conducted by Jean-Claude Chamboredon and Madeleine
Lemaire and published in 1970 as "Proximité spatiale et distance sociale. Les grandes
ensembles et leur peuplement" (Spatial Proximity and Social Distance. The Social
Developments and their Population) analyzed the paradoxical isolation of social classes
within the closely-packed and socially-mixed HLM environments. The popular press
became an echo chamber of such "findings," and by the early 1970s, a generalizable
condition of "anomie sociale" (social alienation) seemed to effuse perceptions of life (and
perhaps lived experiences) in HLM. One inhabitant described the degree of social
contact as "Bonjour-bonsoir et chacun chez soi; moins on en dit et plus on est sûr que ce
ne sera pas rapporté" (Good morning, good evening and each one goes home; the less one
says the more one is sure that it will not be reported).

Forest's project, Portrait de famille, took place among the inhabitants of la Vallée
aux Renards and was an attempt to intervene in the site's social conditions. According to
the little documentation that remains, Forest, in collaboration with the Cultural Center of

495 Jean-Claude Chamboredon and Madeleine Lemaire, "Proximité spatiale et distance sociale. Les grands
conditions de logement et de voisinage ne suffisent pas à transformer la position sociale" (p. 16). The
authors also note the utopian dimension underlying many sociological studies: "Il n'est pas jusqu'à
l'insistance théorique sur le 'voisinage' comme concept privilégié de la sociologie urbaine et sur la
sociabilité comme objet par excellence des enquêtes de sociologie urbaine qui ne s'explique par la nostalgie
typiquement populiste de la communauté villageoise idyllique (p. 17-18).
496 See Manuel Castells, Sociologie des mouvements sociaux urbains: enquête sur la région parisienne,
458-460.
497 Jean Claude Kaufmann and Monique Laigneau, La vie H.L.M.: usages et conflits (Paris: Editions
Économie et humanisme: Editions ouvrières, 1983), 19. These authors carried out a qualitative study by
conducting interviews with inhabitants in order to offer a different viewpoint from the generalized
stereotypes and statistics that characterized most sociological studies of HLM.
L’Haÿ-les-Roses, distributed about 700-1,000 notices titled "Voulez-vous jouer avec nous au portrait de famille?" (Do you want to play the game of family portrait with us?) in the mailboxes of residents inviting them to take part in the "action" by contributing a family photograph. Over the next three weeks, during the evenings, Forest went systematically door to door asking permission either to collect the photographs or to take a photograph of the inhabitants as they were. All of these portraits, he explained, would be displayed in the common spaces of the building, thus turning the hallways and foyers into a sort of family album. The assembly of portraits into a public album evokes the kinship, familiarity, and intimacy that was absent from many experiences of life in the HLM. Shored walls rarely breeched social barriers to engender convivial exchanges. By intervening in private spaces (mailboxes, apartments, and albums) and bringing these discrete spaces into contact with each other through photographs, Forest attempted to modify the distance and alienation that permeated interpersonal relations at HLM.

Whether or not the display engendered a common understanding or recognition among inhabitants, and how Forest and the participants construed a sense of "a common" remain open questions. Importantly, however, the approximately 150 photographs displayed both represented and were intended to be consumed by the same immediate social entity that was constituted by the HLM. Thus, as compared to the generic category of "man" communicated in a project like the Museum of Modern Art's Family of Man

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499 Many HLM had (and still have today) an associated "Centre culturel" responsible for organizing events such as performances and for undertaking projects, such as the creation of common spaces and communal gardens, that would bring residents together and potentially integrate social classes. See Manuel Castells, *Sociologie des mouvements sociaux urbains: enquête sur la région parisienne*, 459. But rarely did these endeavors bridge the artistic and social spaces, in order to span the gap between cultural and socio-cultural animation, as analyzed by Gaudibert in *Action culturelle: Intégration et/ou subversion* (1972).
exhibition (1955), Forest's *Portrait de famille* potentially made visible the particular conditions (social, economic, racial, psychic, and so forth) that shaped life at la Vallée aux Renards. The extant photographs (just two at the time of this writing) both support and undercut this reading.\(^{500}\) The first one depicts an extended family posing around a table for Christmas dinner, and the second shows an extended family gathered and grinning on the sunny banks of a body of water. [Fig. 31] The photographs, depicting two times of the year—holidays and vacations—when families gather and pose for group photographs, are, if anything, typical in their total observance of social and visual conventions, not to mention their racial homogeneity. They communicate the placid, inter-generational cohesion and unity expected of family portraits. What if, however, the families lived down the hall from each other and hailed from different social classes, and the pairing of portraits provoked a mutual recognition between the families. Such symbolic identifications would not change the social position or material circumstances of either family, but they might have generated a basis upon which news connections or comprehensions could form. None of the photographs that Forest took himself remain, and so we can only imagine what he might have captured of quotidian existence, what the unremarkable scene of a Wednesday evening might have looked like: a simple dinner of leftovers, a family posed in the disrepair of a midweek house, or a couple eating in silence in front of the television. Whatever the photographs did or did not show, Forest's ur-portrait was one of a (his) happenstance family of 3,000 that disclosed attendant social, economic, and political conditions, especially as they were shaping Forest's own

\(^{500}\) Most of the photographs were returned to participating residents.
assimilation into France as a pied-noir. Forest self-identified as a pied-noir in interviews throughout his life, and until the early 1970s, he was involved with various Algerian organizations. In 1969, he published an article that highlighted some of the other pied-noir painters living in France (Louis Nallard, Marcel Pouget, Maria Manton) and attempted to situate the "école algérienne" in relation to other European avant-garde modes of abstraction. Fred Forest, "Les Pieds-Noirs’ dans la peinture d’avant-garde," *Arts et Lettres, l’ Algérienne* 67 (January 1, 1969), n.p. Dossier 10, Fonds Fred Forest, Inathèque, Paris.

501 Portrait de famille confirmed the simple idea that that art could intervene in quotidian existence, that an artist could harness means of representation to stimulate the animation of a social body or, stated more idealistically, to stimulate a social body to animate itself, which became Forest's determining objective.

**Early Media Experiments**

Forest also adapted his painting practice to foster more explicit interaction with the environment and viewers and to become a time-based medium. In the late 1960s, he began projecting photographic slides, colors, and lights onto his paintings, portions of which were left blank to receive the projections (and, in a nod to Umberto Eco, leave the work open). He referred to these works as "tableaux écrans" (painting screens). The first public presentation of a tableau écran took place in the small gothic chapel Chapelle Saint Croix in Tours from May 17–28, 1969. Entitled *Interrogation 69. Les aspects les plus avancés de la recherche* (Interrogation 69. The most advanced aspects of the research), the multimedia installation included a selection of paintings by Forest, slide projections, flashing colored lights, and a synchronized audio track produced by the experimental composer Luc Ferrari, known for using ambient and found sounds. A number of institutes and businesses helped to realize the technological environment, including Cabasse Electro-Acoustique, Kodak Pathé, and the Centre national d'études spatiales (the French government space agency), which contributed at least one satellite for display in the exhibition. The team of collaborators envisioned the installation (and its
subsequent iterations in Osaka [1970] and in Paris [1971]) as a form of research to produce a new kind of visual language based on a dynamic relationship between art, technology, and the audience.\(^{502}\) Elaborating on this idea of art as an engaged means of research, Max du Bourg wrote in response to the 1969 installation at Tours: "Forest thinks that one should pursue through artistic creation an expansion of our consciousness, which will reinforce a feeling of existing at a more authentic level. Art is no longer practiced as a superficial game of an esthete but as the most intentionally engaged form of introducing knowledge."\(^{503}\) Reflecting on *Interrogation 69*, Forest wrote, "Since 1969, I made no more Art."\(^{504}\)

Over the next two years, the complexity of Forest's installations increased through the addition of more projectors and mechanisms for audience participation. It should be noted here that there is little to no evidence that any *tableau écran* installation included video, despite statements made by Forest (and reiterated by Lassignardie and Stéphanie Jeanjean in their dissertations) that the installation at Tours included a closed-circuit video installation.\(^{505}\) In fact, many documents suggest otherwise, including photographs.

\(^{502}\) Forest and Ferrari also presented their audiovisual environment at the Universal Fair in Osaka in January 1970, in the exhibition *Grands et jeunes d'aujourd'hui* in Paris in 1971, and at the second international *Salon d'audiovisuel et communication* at the Porte de Versailles in Paris in 1971.

\(^{503}\) "[Forest] considère que l'on doit poursuivre à travers la création artistique un élargissement de notre conscience qui renforcera notre sentiment d'exister à un niveau toujours plus authentique. L'art n'est plus exercé comme un jeu superficiel d'esthète mais comme la forme la plus délibérément engagée d'initiation à la connaissance." Max Du Bourg, "Une exposition pas comme les autres' avec Georges Elgozy, Luc Ferrari et Fred Forest," *L'Algérienne* (October 1, 1969), n.p. Another article signaled the installation's expanded and socially-engaged approach to painting: "Une peinture audio-visuelle une fonction sociale de l'artiste," Postes et Télécom, Paris, Ministère des P.T.T. no. 180 (December 1970): 14-15. In a short text written for the exhibition catalogue, Georges Elgozy described the installation as an attempt to generate a dynamic relationship between art and technology in an effort to regain humanism felt to be stripped by modern technology. See the reproduced exhibition catalogue in Isabelle Lassignardie, "Fred Forest: Catalogue Raisonné (1963-2008)," Vol. 1, 111.


\(^{505}\) Lassignardie, Jeanjean, and other authors likely relied on information provided by Forest who has endeavored to position himself as one of the first to access video. For instance, Lassignardie reproduces in Forest's *catalogue raisonné* an undated, handwritten text on some sort of letterhead with the exhibition title
of the installations in Osaka and Paris that show only slide projectors, an undated sketch by Forest, as well as Forest's application to patent *tableau écran* submitted in July 1971. [Fig. 32 and 33] In his four-page description of the arrangement's physical and technical aspects, Forest does not use "video" once but does list a plethora of other technological devices to project spotlights, generate sounds, synchronize image and sound, and ultimately create an "event, intervention, animation." Reviews of Forest's *tableau écran* installations describe a shifting visual and aural *mis-en-scène* that envelopes spectators. "The term 'exhibition' suggests something static," writes a reviewer of the installation at Tours, "Whereas, here, all is movement: images and sounds projected in the space. Cybernetic painting and 'psychedelia' are the weak words for expressing the type of vibrant web that envelops the visitor." The critic Catherine Juin wrote about the 1971 installation in Paris that is was "inundated with brutal impulses of colors and lights [. . . .] [and with] strong and anarchic sounds" and placed the spectator "in the middle of

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and dates at the top stating: "L'installation vidéo circuit fermé de télévision intègre visuellement le mouvement de participation des spectateurs à une 'sculpture' audiovisuelle animée par des projections de diapositives (images de manifestations mai 1968)." Isabelle Lassignardie, "Fred Forest: Catalogue Raisonné (1963-2008)," Vol. I, 110. Anne-Marie Duguet notes a closed circuit television monitor in her description: "Dans la nef de cette église désaffectée est installé un grand panneau blanc (7m/3m) percé de cinq écrans. L'un d'eux est un écran de télévision qui diffuse en direct l'image des diapositives qui reprennent l'univers plastique et graphique de quinze panneaux fluorescents exposés, avec des photos d'actualité, des fragments d'information intercalés dans le désordre." Anne-Marie Duguet, *Vidéo, la mémoire au poing*, 221. Stéphanie Jeanjean quotes an email from Forest in her dissertation: "A closed-circuit video installation 'simultaneously broadcast, in real-time on three television monitors, the image of the viewers participating in the action.'" Stéphanie Jeanjean, *Spectatorship and the Screen as Interface: French Art Using Television, Video, and the Projected Image from the Late 1960s to the Present* (Ph.D. Dissertation, City University of New York, 2012), 97. I have not found a single historical document about *Interrogation 69* from the late 1960s or early 1970s that mentions video.


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the action." Even without video, Forest succeeded in provoking experiences of motion and in staging an immersive environment built upon exchanges among spectator, technology, and artwork. The desire for video's moving images and circuit of interactive feedback was thus present in his installations from 1969, even if the technology had perhaps not yet arrived in Forest's hands. At the end of her article, Juin correctly predicts that Forest "will soon eliminate his initial 'little' painting and begin soon after with an ensemble of animated structures."509

As Forest's artwork evolved, so too did his job. In 1970, he left his post at the telephone company and began deriving his living by drawing cartoons for the journals Les Échos and Combat. Les Échos was considered politically center and focused on financial issues, tracking but never questioning capitalism's machinations, and Combat, which emerged as the clandestine newspaper of the French resistance movement during World War II, was decidedly leftist and strongly supported the revolts of May ’68. In his cartoon for the two journals, Forest, following a long tradition of the press cartoonist, crystallizes the overarching point(s) of the accompanying article through exaggerated and anecdotal linear drawings. While always closely tied to the editorial content—the "facts" of the current events—Forest's cartoons humorously inflate the story and characters in order to solicit reactions from the viewers. In one drawing related to an article about the controversial redevelopment of Les Halles initiated by Georges Pompidou in 1970, Forest

508 "Sous une voûte, inondée des couleurs et les lumières par impulsion brutales. Vibrant sons puissants et anarchiques, il attendait les réactions. [. . . ] Le spectateur est malgré lui placé au milieu de l'action; devant une partition visuel chargée de sensations et de sentiments divers." Catherine Juin, "Tableau écran par Fred Forest and Patrick Bernard," Photographie nouvelle 30 (May 1971), n.p. Patrick Bernard is the photographer who slides were projected onto the painting.
509 "Fred Forest vise à supprimer bientôt son 'petit' tableau de départ, et commencer tout de suite à partir d'un ensemble de structures animées qui receuilleraient des projections et donneraient immédiatement naissance à des créations vertigineuses...à un récréation." Catherine Juin, "Tableau écran par Fred Forest and Patrick Bernard," n.p.
depicts Pompidou and another official (possibly M. Diebolt, the prefect of Paris) pulling apart the late nineteenth century pavilions to make way for the installation of a new mall and transportation hub. A forlorn character in the lower right sits on a funereal-like structure labeled "regrets éternels" (eternal regrets) and holds a sign reading "hear stood the pavilions of Baltard." [Fig. 34] The reconstruction of Les Halles was one of many construction projects undertaken in the early 1970s as part of Pompidou's plan of urbanization and modernization that, like the nearby development of Beaubourg, permanently changed the structure and image of Paris. While an astute interpreter of the editorial content and voice of Les Échos and Combat, Forest never divulges his own political position in relationship to the stories or to the slightly different positions of the two journals. While perhaps more traditional in terms of medium, his work as a press cartoonist plunged the artist into the milieu of mass media, an arena that he would increasingly annex as an artist. It also contributed to Forest's characteristic detached iconoclasm—that is, his capacity to be an astute observer of culture and a committed, derisive, and anti-institutional figure. Finally, this work put Forest into contact with a network of influential intellectuals and journalists that would play important roles in Forest's emerging career. These contacts included the art critics François Pluchart and Pierre Restany, both of whom covered art for Combat, and the circle of social theorists around Cause Commune, including Jean Duvignaud, Michel de Certeau, Paul Virilio, and Edgar Morin, all of whom would be involved with Forest's work by either writing texts about it or presenting at the Ecole Sociologique Interrogative. Forest's immersion in the rich political and intellectual milieu of the leftist press further compelled him to create
socially and politically meaningful art that drew on the structures of mass media and technology to interact with social bodies.

Between 1970 and 1972, he gradually abandoned painting and drawing in exchange for more direct and interventionist means of animation, first the mass media and then video. His first major project following Tableau écran was entitled Space-média (Space-Media). In its inaugural form, Space-média consisted of Forest re-appropriating the rectangular spaces that he had been filling with cartoons in order to reverse the conventional direction of communication in the printed press. After lengthy negotiations with the editors of Le Monde newspaper, Forest printed a blank rectangle (titled "150 cm² de papier journal" ["150 cm² of newspaper"]) in the "Arts" section of the January 12, 1972, newspaper and invited readers to fill it in. [Fig. 35] A caption under the blank space described the project:

This is an experiment. An attempt at communication. The painter Fred Forest offers this white surface to you. [Let’s] seize it. By writing or drawing. Express yourself! The entire page of this newspaper will become a work of art. Yours. If you want, you can frame it. But Fred Forest encourages you to send it back to him (4 residence Acacias, L'Haÿ-les-Roses, 94). He will use it to conceive a "work of media art" in the framework of an exhibition of painting that will take place soon at the Grand Palais.

Forest received hundreds of responses (estimates range from 400 to 800) and exhibited them at numerous sites in the spring of 1972. On the invitation for an exhibition of the

512 Forest collected the submissions and presented them in various venues according to the chronological order in which the artist had received them. Presentations include at the Grand Palais during the Salon "Grands et jeunes d’aujourd’hui" (Today’s Great and Young) (1972), in the exhibition "Propos sur la
responses at the Centre Albertus Magnus in Paris, Forest wrote about the role of the artist in society: "Maybe the task of the artist is quite simply to create 'situations'–to create structures inside of which, and by which, exchange at the human level is newly rendered possible."513 While Forest still held onto references to painting and to himself as a painter (an effort, perhaps, to gain legitimacy), he was evidently forming a dramatically different conception of himself as an artist.

What began in *Le Monde* took place over the subsequent weeks and years in dozens of other newspapers and journals, including papers in Italy, Brazil, and Switzerland, and even spread to radio and television. On January 20, 1972, Forest interrupted the midday program "Télé Midi" on Antennae 2 (the second channel on French television) with *Action: 60 secondes de blanc* (Action: 60 Seconds of Blankness).514 In the preserved segment of the show, the television host, sitting kitty-corner from Forest, prepares his television audience for the impending "action"; then the screen goes white and Forest's voice announces, "Attention, attention, your television is not out of order." He invites spectators to use the space of time to "concentrate and try to imagine whatever you yourselves wish on the blank screen of the television." Forest's voice returns at the very end, methodically repeating "empty space, free space to invent" and gradually fading out.515 The host of "Télé Midi" re-appears and with a bemused

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513 "Peut-être la tâche de 'l'artiste' consiste-t-elle tout simplement alors, à créer des 'situations' à créer des structures à l'intérieur desquelles, et par lesquelles, l'échange est rendu à nouveau possible au niveau humain." Dossier 17a, Fonds Fred Forest, Inathèque, Paris.

514 French television had two channels (T.F.1 and Antennae 2) until December 1972 when the third channel, F.R.3, emerged as a public network of regional television services.

515 "Attention, votre téléviseur n'est pas en panne. [. . . ] Pendant ce quarante secondes, vous allez vous concentrer et essayer d'imager ce que vous avez envie d'exprimer vous-mêmes sur un écran blanc de la
expression invites viewers to send Forest, who sits nearby smiling, letters, pictures, or anything they would like to send in response to the "experience." The fundamental premise of Forest's Space-media project was to open up the mass media of the printed press, radio, and television by interrupting the steady flow of information and by inviting the recipients of information to become its producers. By emptying portions of newspaper pages and radio or television broadcasts of content and then calling attention to those blanks, Forest generated an interval within these media that disrupted their illusion of totality and authority as well as the expectations of readers and viewers. This Brechtian technique of temporal and spatial breaks drew explicit attention to the non-participation of mass media platforms.516

Forest's projects were part of a broad counter-information movement that had found a foothold in the May '68 uprisings and inspired such posters as "La police vous parle tous les soirs à 20 heures" (The police talk to you each night at 8 o'clock), "Attention la radio ment" (Be careful the radio lies), and "On vous intoxique!" (It intoxicates you!) with an image of a human body cut like meat into pieces labeled "television," "radio," and "sheep." Coupled with French texts such as Jean Baudrillard's Requiem pour les medias (Requiem for the Media) (1972) and the translation of Frankfurt theory authors into French, a critical wave opposing mass media inundated France in the 1970s.517 Space-média marked a key transition in Forest's life and practice because it


517 Key translations of Frankfurt school texts include Max Horkheimer, Théorie traditionnelle et théorie critique (Paris: Gallimard, 1974) and Theodor Adorno, Dialectique négative (Payot, 1978). See also Martin
combined the participatory model of *Portrait de famille* with the technological experimentation of *Tableau écran*. The project also garnered Forest attention, marking, in many respects, his entrance into Paris' artistic-intellectual scene. From this point until the early 1980s, Forest's artistic practice, his participatory ethos-cum-ideology, most often played out through his use of video, though video was generally coupled with an extensive apparatus comprising multiple collaborators, the press, publications, performances, displays, and various other supports.

**The Early Videos**

Forest's involvement with television was a key avenue to introducing the artist to the relatively new technology of the Sony Portapak video camera. As mentioned above, the exact year that Forest starting working with video is disputed. The artist has

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*Jay, L'imagination dialectique. Histoire de l'école de Francfort (1923-1950) (Paris: Payot, 1977).* All of these works post-date Forest's *Space-média*. One must likewise acknowledge the critique of media and capitalist consumption by the Internationale situationniste (the Situationist International), especially Guy Debord's *La Société du spectacle* (Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 1967), a text that was much less prominent in the 1970s than it appears in retrospect. Although Forest has stated that he was not familiar with Debord and his theory until the mid- to late 1970s (after *Space-média*), SI's statements and ideas were painted on walls and made into posters during the May '68 uprisings. For more on the prominence of SI during May '68, see John Gretton, *Students and Workers: An Analytical Account of Dissent* (London: Macdonald, 1969); René Vienet, *Enragés and Situationists in the Occupation Movement, France, May '68* (New York: Autonomedia, 1992); Raoul Vaneigem, Donald Nicholson-Smith, ed. and trans. *The Revolution of Everyday Life* (London: Rebel Press, 2001).

*518 This is the first time Forest appears in *Opus International* and *arTitudes*, two venues that would be vitally important for his artistic career, and in 1973, Vilém Flusser, Edgar Morin, René Berger, Pierre Restany, and Jean Duvignaud write texts about Forest's *Space-média*, texts that Forest would subsequently reprint throughout his life. See Yann Pavie, "Space-média," *Opus International*, no. 34 (April 1972); Yann Pavie, "Une expérience de création par les médias," *Cause commune*, no. 1 (May 1972); Dеноël-Gonthier, "Ça veut dire quoi Space-media (entretien avec Yann Pavie)," *Cause commune*, no. 2 (June 1972); "Space-média. Faites votre propre information," *arTitudes International*, no. 8 (July/August/September 1972), 25; Vilém Flusser, "L'expérience de Fred Forest," *Communication et langages*, no. 18 (1973), 81; and Edgar Morin, René Berger, Pierre Restany, and Jean Duvignaud, *Colóquio Artes*, Lisboa, Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian, no. 16 (February 1973).

maintained that he procured a Sony Portapak through the Sony company's France division in 1967, placing himself as one of the first to have access to the technology in France.\footnote{Beginning in the 1980s, Forest reiterated this claim in most of interviews and texts. Before this time, dating was less often a point of conversation. Stéphanie Jeanjean raises some questions about when Forest first began to use video: "Forest claims to be the first artist using video in France, as early as 1967. However, there are discrepancies in the dating of his earliest videos which were made either in 1967 (according to the artist) or, more convincingly, in 1969 (according to most documents on his early videos); the latter date is the one that will be preferred in this research – even though, there are dates 1973 (La cabine téléphonique) and 1974 (Le mur d’Arles) mentioned at the beginning of the copies kept in Forest’s archives at INA (National Institute for Audiovisual), which the artist claims were realized in 1967. Forest maintains that he obtained his first video camera before it was available on the French market in fall 1967, after negotiating a free camera and tapes from the management of Sony France, and in exchange for offering to experiment with it for the company." (Stéphanie Jeanjean, Spectatorship and the Screen as Interface: French Art Using Television, Video, and the Projected Image from the Late 1960s to the Present, 78-79).}

Forest was undoubtedly among the earliest practitioners of video art in France, but photographs of the artist with his Sony video camera depict a later model than the 1967 "Video Rover," most likely the 1969 Sony AV-3400.\footnote{Compare, for instance, the difference in the handles of the 1967 Rover and the AV-3400. Furthermore, the tape length increased from 20 minutes to 30 minutes between the two machines, and the duration of most of Forest's tapes run close to 30 minutes. The handle is the most defining feature of the AV-3400 as compared to the 1967 Rover. I saw but did not photograph Forest's video camera at his second home in Anserville in 2011 and can offer my visual confirmation that it was the AV-3400 with the distinctive blue and red colored plastic.} A number of other pieces of evidence point to a dating later than 1967. In 1968, Forest contributed paintings to numerous exhibitions, suggesting that he may have not yet had access to or interest in video technology or at least was still primarily working in the medium of painting.\footnote{According to existing archival sources, Forest contributed paintings to \textit{Reflets, Nostalgie, Couple}, Salon de Peinture, Montélimar (January 21–February 4, 1968); \textit{Coup d’œil}, the first Biennale d’art contemporain espagnol, Musée Galliera, Paris (March 1–17, 1968); and \textit{L’Amour des ectoplasmes}, painting section of the first Biennale International de Merignac (May 18–June 4, 1968). In the summer of 1968, he also exhibited textile works at the Festival Musical de Prades (July 27, 1968). See Dossier 15, "Garden Vernissage pour l’Exposition des Tapisseries de Claude Fred Forest," \textit{L’Indépendant}, August 6, 1968. Fonds Fred Forest, Inathèque, Paris.} In addition, few early videotapes remain owing either to their fugitive state or relatively high cost, characteristics that led many artists to re-use and record over tapes.\footnote{This possibility of re-recording set video apart from film' and may have shaped how artists used and conceived of video, encouraging more liberal and spontaneous shooting.}

Furthermore, Forest has written the majority of texts about his own work and even
curated most of his exhibitions, including the recent retrospective, fittingly named *Fred Forest, Homme-média no. 1* (Fred Forest, Media-Man No. 1) at the Centre des arts d'Enghien-les-Bains (January 25 - March 31, 2013), all of which complicates conducting historical research. Forest's insistence on the early date of 1967 likely stems from his deep desire for recognition in the face of institutional (both art historical and museological) disregard for his work. Such self-fashioning is frequently part of his artistic practice, underscoring the thin line between his critique of institutions and his institutional self-justification.

Considering all of the above in conjunction with the changes in Forest's life and existing archival resources, I would date his earliest videos to 1971-72, the same years that a number of artists in France gained the technologies, materials, and interest to make videos, and a pivotal time in Forest's personal and professional life. I hope that such a (re)dating does not diminish interest in his videos but rather invites serious analysis of the orientation of his work within a wider field. The years from 1971 to the formation of the Collective in 1974 were a notably prodigious period in Forest's production; he made at least a dozen video works. Among these projects, I've identified three primary categories to understand Forest's early uses of the video medium and, furthermore, to signal the strategies that would characterize his sociological video practice and become important to his work with the Collective. In all three categories, video functions primarily as a means of audio-visual research that corresponds more closely to practices in ethnography, anthropology, and sociology than to contemporaneous video art or guerilla video.

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524 As with most categorizations, not all projects fit neatly into these categories and many traits cross over multiple categories. But these categories provide a useful rubric to distinguish his video work as social animation.
The first category, "observation," includes his earliest videos such as *La cabine téléphonique* (The Telephone Booth) (c. 1971) and *Le mur d'Arles* (The Wall of Arles) (c. 1971). In these works, video—used as a transparent recording device—offers a means for intense observation of a given situation or behavior. Akin to early film actualities from the late nineteenth century, the camera is often fixed in place and the videos have little to no editing or dialogue. In *La cabine téléphonique*, Forest trained his camera out of his apartment window on a neighborhood phone booth in the HLM where he was still living. [Fig. 37] The booth becomes a nodal point as Forest pans to follow inhabitants' movements: a woman pushes a stroller on the sidewalk, a man enters the booth to make a phone call, another person crosses the street and turns the corner. Forest pans from the telephone booth up an adjacent tree whose branches reach like antennae toward the sky. Sounds from a radio originally provided the background audio to Forest's surveillance of interaction and communication, topics that had fascinated him since he began working for France's telephone company. The video concludes when the 30-minute tape exhausts itself. Forest frequently relied on the fixed length of the tape to determine the duration of his video projects, an economical decision but also one that corresponded to the non-edit as a tactic. By relying on video's given structures, Forest reduced the amount of selection and interference on the part of the practitioner. In these first videos, recording functions as means of witnessing the everyday environment and activities of people, a sphere that he would begin actively to penetrate.

La cabine téléphonique (DO T 20030713 DIV 025.001) and Le mur d'Arles (DO T 20030703 DIV 017.001) are conserved and available digitally in Fonds Fred Forest vidéo, Inathèque, Paris. Mur d'Arles records passersby as they peek through an opening in a barrier wall to a scene—obscured from our view—behind.
The second category, "installation," comprises *Archéologie du present/Autopsie de la rue Guénégau* (Archeology of the Present/Autopsy of Guénégau Road) (at the Galerie Germain on Rue Guénégau, May 1973), *Autopsie de la rue Augusta* (Autopsy of Augusta Road) (at the Galerie Portal, São Paulo, December 1973), and *Socio-analyse de la circulation parisienne* (Socio-analysis of Paris Traffic) (at the Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, ARC 2, November-December 1974).\(^{527}\) In these works, Forest utilized video's distinctive feature of immediate replay to create feedback loop installations. In all three, a camera placed outside of an art space transmitted a live image of a street adjacent to the museum or gallery into that space's interior, thus symbolically breaking down the barriers between interior and exterior, the popular and the elevated, or, simply, the street and the museum. In *Archéologie du present/Autopsie de la rue Guénégau*, Forest also placed a monitor in the gallery's front window with a direct feed of footage from the interior of the gallery, underscoring this installation's play between inside and outside.\(^{528}\) [Fig. 38] The use of "archeology," "autopsy," and "socio-analysis" in the titles signals Forest's increasingly investigative orientation. In addition to the real-time footage from the adjacent streets, the installations included other types of "information." *Archéologie du present* presented a large rectangular box of objects gathered from the refuse of inhabitants of the short Parisian street Guénégau, and *Autopsie de la rue Augusta* exhibited wares sold by nearby merchants in São Paolo on tables in the gallery space.

Forest's interest in the accumulations resided less in the display of profane objects within

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\(^{527}\) *Archéologie du present* (DO T 20030719 DIV 001.001) and *Socio-analyse de la circulation parisienne* (also referred to as *Socio-analyse de l'Avenue du President Wilson*) (DO T 20030714 DIV 005.001) are conserved and available digitally in Fonds Fred Forest vidéo, Inathèque, Paris. No video remains of *Autopsie de la rue Augusta*.

\(^{528}\) The viewing conditions of video—i.e. the possibility of using a monitor rather than relying on a projector in a dark room—made the medium more easily adaptable to multiple kinds of spaces.
a consecrated art space and more in the social behaviors (e.g. consumption and use) that the materials indexed.\(^{529}\) *Socio-analyse de la circulation parisienne* included a display of current statistics about traffic and automobile accidents culled from the local police department. Forest's video installations from the early 1970s attest to his integration of data from an expanding set of fields to approach social behaviors and environments.

Finally, the third category, "animation," includes works such as *Vidéo troisième âge* (Video Third Age) (1973) and *Promenade sociologique* (Sociological Walk) (1973) that employed video to create, invigorate, and modify social situations. A mobile video camera accompanied, or even led, Forest and other participants in their investigations and socio-cultural animations of a senior citizen home, a cafe, a neighborhood, and various other sites. These projects relied upon the involvement of subjects in the production and reception of the videos. As I discuss further below, this third category was crucial to Forest's formulation of "sociological video" and to the Collective's subsequent work, but it did not fit within the emerging categories of video art, thereby placing these works—in many respects Forest's most distinctive—in a hazy and often misconstrued position.

Video emerged slightly later in France than in the United States and other parts of Europe, especially Germany.\(^{530}\) This belatedness is often attributed to the technology market in France, which tends to receive commercial goods manufactured outside of

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\(^{529}\) Forest's collection of objects in *Archéologie du present* recall the Nouveau réaliste sculptor Arman's well-known accumulations of trash. Arman's accumulations, however, tended to shed the specificity of their origin points in preference for the objects' formal or aesthetic aspects and the capacity to pose a critique of fine art. Forest insisted that his collections of debris and objects were data and traces of a particular and determined social milieu, signaling the artist's sociological orientation.

\(^{530}\) It is widely cited in video literature that Wolf Vostell and Nam June Paik presented videos in March 1963 at the Gallery Parnass de Wupperal in the exhibition “Music-Electronic Television.” Gerry Schum inaugurates the first video gallery in Düsseldorf in 1969. Willoughby Sharp curated an exhibition of video works by Vito Acconci, Terry Fox, Dennis Oppenheim, William Wegman and others called *Body Works* at Tom Marioni's *Museum of Conceptual Art* in California in 1970, and in 1973, the Kitchen Center for Video, Music, and Dance opened in New York City.
France a couple years later than the United States and other industrial nations. 531 The first video art exhibition in France took place in 1974 at ARC 2 (Art, recherche, et communication) and was organized by the young curator Suzanne Pagé who had recently become the director of ARC and spearheaded an innovative program focused on emerging and under-recognized artists and practices. 532 One of Pagé first exhibitions, entitled Canada trajectoires (Canada Trajectories), took place in the summer of 1973 and showcased experimental artistic practices from Canada, presenting video alongside painting and sculpture. It also included a functioning video workshop based on models of guerilla television from Canada, where museum visitors could experiment with the technology and produce videos. Riding on the success of this exhibition and on the wave of French artists recently engaged with the medium of video, Pagé decided to organize the first survey exhibition dedicated to the medium of video in France.

To assist in arranging Art vidéo / confrontation 74, which took place November 8–December 8, 1974 at ARC 2, Pagé hired the young art historian Dany Bloch. The well-attended exhibition organized video works by over twenty-five contemporary artists into three sections according to the "orientation" of their work: "l'art/vidéo" (art/video)

532 Founded in 1966, ARC was the contemporary section of Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris. Pierre Gaudibert, one of the founders of ARC and its first director until 1971, connected ARC with ideas of "animation culturelle," i.e. pedagogical in orientation, participatory in ethos, and diverse in its publics. Described in early literature as a "musée-forum" to signal the diverse activities that would take place, including the exhibition of art, debates, round tables, performances, and concerts, ARC also presented media not routinely exhibited in large museums, including photography and new technologies such as neon, information art, and video art. In 1973, the young curator Suzanne Pagé took over Gaudibert's position, and the museum underwent a significant renovation that added an auditorium and a library, increased the flexibility of the spaces (prefiguring the forms and functions of the Centre Georges Pompidou), and led to its renaming as ARC 2. Pagé set out to give young or under-recognized artists their first exhibitions, producing to an innovative program of contemporary French art until the 1980s. See Annabelle Ténèze, Exposer l'art contemporain à Paris. L'exemple de l'ARC au Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, Master's Thesis (Paris: Ecole nationale des chartes, 2004).
focused on formal manipulations of the medium (Nam June Paik, Woody Valsuka, Les Levine, and others); "la vidéo et les artistes" (video and artists) comprised videos that recorded "artistic actions" (Vito Acconci, Gina Pane, Denis Oppenhiem, and others); and "environnements" (environments) introduced the notion of "video space" (Dan Graham, Frank Gillette, Kit Galloway, and others).*533* Forest's work *Vidéo troisième âge* (1973), which, as I will demonstrate below, is a key example of sociological video as animation, was included in the section "video and artists," a placement that inhibits the work's significance by aligning it with documentation. The exhibition also included a video workshop ("atelier de création ouvert") akin to the one in *Canada trajectoires* and a series of related talks and round tables, which examined diverse topics such as "community television" and "education and creativity." These practical and pedagogical components of *Art vidéo / confrontation 74* set it apart from a traditional approach to video as an artistic medium and highlighted video's close relationship with community television, activism, and social programs. However, the structure of the exhibition itself as well as the influential writing on video that followed it, especially by Dany Bloch who would become one of the first art historians and theorists of video art in France, hampered this initial breadth. In a manuscript of notes written in preparation for Bloch's doctoral thesis “Art vidéo, 1965-1980" (1980) at the Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, she writes that the film camera and video player take the place of paint tubes

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and brushes, proposing the "electronic apparatus" as "a new genre of painting and sculpture." While likely stemming from a desire to legitimize the novel medium of video, Bloch's discussion of video in medium-specific terms rather than in relation to its uses in the social sphere, typifies a trend in early texts on video art. In her recent research on the history of writing about video art in France, Stéphanie Jeanjean argues that the best-known authors, such as Bloch and Raymond Belloir, portrayed video art as "self-referential, medium-specific, formalist and theoretical" and, thereby, greatly confined the types of practices that became part of the institutional history of video in France.  

The first serious study of alternative video movements in France was Anne-Marie Duguet's *La Vidéo, mémoire au poing* (Video, Memory in Hand) (1981), which drew on Duguet's experience teaching courses in the sociology of television at the l'UER d'arts et plastiques program founded by Bernard Teyssère. Her text addresses the diverse protest movements that fomented and followed May '68, examining how individuals committed to workers' self-management, feminist rights, immigrant issues, and diverse local events (such as a campaign against the demolition of a neighborhood) discovered in the medium of video a powerful vehicle to intervene and to raise awareness. She writes, "Handheld video cameras in factories in Fin and Rhodia in 1968 and Alain Jacquier's video studio installed at Université de Paris 6 des Beaux-Arts in 1969. Jean-Marie Serreau also acquired equipment via a subvention from the Minister of Cultural Affairs in 1969 and set up the Atelier des techniques de communication (ACT). According to Duguet, “video art” really began around 1974. Anne-Marie Duguet, *Vidéo, La mémoire au poing* (Video, Memory in Hand) (1981), which drew on Duguet's experience teaching courses in the sociology of television at the l'UER d'arts et plastiques program founded by Bernard Teyssère. Her text addresses the diverse protest movements that fomented and followed May '68, examining how individuals committed to workers' self-management, feminist rights, immigrant issues, and diverse local events (such as a campaign against the demolition of a neighborhood) discovered in the medium of video a powerful vehicle to intervene and to raise awareness.  

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536 According to Duguet’s history, the very first videos in France were Godard’s placement of video cameras in factories in Fin and Rhodia in 1968 and Alain Jacquier’s video studio installed at Université de Paris 6 des Beaux-Arts in 1969. Jean-Marie Serreau also acquired equipment via a subvention from the Minister of Cultural Affairs in 1969 and set up the Atelier des techniques de communication (ACT). According to Duguet, “video art” really began around 1974. Anne-Marie Duguet, *Vidéo, La mémoire au poing* (Video, Memory in Hand) (1981), which drew on Duguet's experience teaching courses in the sociology of television at the l'UER d'arts et plastiques program founded by Bernard Teyssère. Her text addresses the diverse protest movements that fomented and followed May '68, examining how individuals committed to workers' self-management, feminist rights, immigrant issues, and diverse local events (such as a campaign against the demolition of a neighborhood) discovered in the medium of video a powerful vehicle to intervene and to raise awareness. She writes, "Handheld video cameras in factories in Fin and Rhodia in 1968 and Alain Jacquier’s video studio installed at Université de Paris 6 des Beaux-Arts in 1969. Jean-Marie Serreau also acquired equipment via a subvention from the Minister of Cultural Affairs in 1969 and set up the Atelier des techniques de communication (ACT). According to Duguet, “video art” really began around 1974. Anne-Marie Duguet, *Vidéo, La mémoire au poing* (Video, Memory in Hand) (1981), which drew on Duguet's experience teaching courses in the sociology of television at the l'UER d'arts et plastiques program founded by Bernard Teyssère. Her text addresses the diverse protest movements that fomented and followed May '68, examining how individuals committed to workers' self-management, feminist rights, immigrant issues, and diverse local events (such as a campaign against the demolition of a neighborhood) discovered in the medium of video a powerful vehicle to intervene and to raise awareness. She writes, "Handheld video cameras in factories in Fin and Rhodia in 1968 and Alain Jacquier’s video studio installed at Université de Paris 6 des Beaux-Arts in 1969. Jean-Marie Serreau also acquired equipment via a subvention from the Minister of Cultural Affairs in 1969 and set up the Atelier des techniques de communication (ACT). According to Duguet, “video art” really began around 1974. Anne-Marie Duguet, *Vidéo, La mémoire au poing* (Video, Memory in Hand) (1981), which drew on Duguet's experience teaching courses in the sociology of television at the l'UER d'arts et plastiques program founded by Bernard Teyssère. Her text addresses the diverse protest movements that fomented and followed May '68, examining how individuals committed to workers' self-management, feminist rights, immigrant issues, and diverse local events (such as a campaign against the demolition of a neighborhood) discovered in the medium of video a powerful vehicle to intervene and to raise awareness. She writes, "Handheld
video practice began to develop in response to the centralized operation and univocal discourse of monopoly television and in connection with various protest movements—alternative practices that were part of self-management experiences such as the affirmation of regional cultures and identity movements."

Rich in historical details of alternative video practices, few of which are accessible today or have received scholarly attention, Duguet's study touches on the production of feminist and guerilla video collectives, direct cinema and ethnographic cinema (the production of Leacock, Flaherty, and Rouch), and video art (which she describes as an institutional category comprising those who describe themselves as artists). Yet while she gestures to theoretical connections between these spheres of practice, she does not explicitly examine them. In the section about direct cinema and ethnographic cinema, evocatively titled "Ecritures de la relation" (Writings of Relation), she describes films by Rouch and others as modifying social relations by, for instance, offering a new "way of 'observing in participating'," whereby the camera and its practitioner intervene in the situation filmed rather than retaining physical or psycho-

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537 "Les pratiques de la vidéo légère ont commencé par se développer en réponse au fonctionnement centralisé et au discours univoque d’une télévision de monopole, et en liaison avec divers mouvements de contestation–pratiques alternatives qui se sont inscrites dans des expériences autogestionnaires comme dans l’affirmation des cultures régionales et la recherche des identités." Anne-Marie Duguet, Vidéo, La mémoire au poing, 11.

538 Duguet mentions the following video collectives, some with the date of their formation: Vidéo Out (1970), Vidéo 00 (1971), Slon Vidéo (1971), Imedia (1972), Les Cents Fleurs (1973), Videodeba, Les Voyelles, Vidéa, and Les Insoumuses. In the provinces, there were a number of studios by the early 1970s, including l'Atelier de diffusion populaire (ADP) in Lyon, Vidéo 13 in Marseille-Aix-La Ciotat, Contraste in Rennes, Images au poing in Strasbourg, Vidéo 031 in Toulouse (Anne-Marie Duguet, Vidéo, La mémoire au poing, 42). In his recent dissertation, Grégoire Quenault looks at pioneering audio-visual work that was taking place as early as 1957 at the RTF (French Radiodiffusion and Television), later known as ORTF, especially in the sections Groupe de recherche sur l'image (GRI) and the Service de la recherche. Grégoire Quenault, Reconsidération de l'histoire de l'art vidéo à partir de ses débuts méconnus en France entre 1957 et 1974, Ph.D. dissertation, Université Paris 8, 2005. Stéphanie Jeanjean has also published important work on feminist collectives' early uses of video: "Disobedients Video in France in the 1970s: Video Production by Women's Collectives," Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context, and Inquiry 27 (Summer 2011): 5-16.
social distance. She summarizes the effect of the practices she discusses in her study as "the emergence of a new social speech thanks to lightweight audiovisual equipment."

"According to some," she writes, "video must revolutionize human relations, activate communication between social groups (without question as to class), stimulate personal expressions from new sections of the population." If activating new forms of social relationality (whether through critical re-analysis of given forms or building of empathetic connections) is at the center of her analysis of video, it is remarkable that she does not examine this topic more explicitly in connection with the video art projects she mentions. Like Bloch and Belloir, Duguet struggles to imagine video art as enacting social change. She approaches such a connection in her brief discussion of Forest's work *Vidéo troisième âge* (Video Third Age) (1973), which she describes as harnessing the recording and feedback capacities of video to stimulate a self-analysis of the recorded behavior and images by those involved. And she associates this enactment of reflexivity with the Collective's "approach of dynamization, which overlaps with those of social animation" and its conception of video's "interrogative critical function." However, her analysis of *Vidéo troisième âge* stops there, and she does not sufficiently address (or imagine) how such a video project might modify given circumstances, despite the fact

539 Anne-Marie Duguet, *Vidéo, La mémoire au poing*, 143.

540 "L'émergence d'une parole sociale nouvelle grâce aux audiovisuels légers. [. . .] La vidéo devait, selon les uns, révolutionner les relations humaines, activer la communication entre les groupes sociaux (pas question de classes dans ces propos), susciter l'expression personnelle de nouvelles catégories de population..." *Ibid.*, 243.

541 She proposes four axes along which video art can be oriented, none of which directly accounts for social relations: "une investigation du dispositif vidéographique et des constituants de l’image électronique engageant une réflexion sur la représentation et la figuration; un nouveau rapport au temps, à l’espace et à leurs relations; une remise en cause des codes narratifs dominants; des expérimentations sur la perception et la communication." *Ibid.*, 187.

that she traces just such social implications in her discussion of ethnographic and
guerilla/activist films.\footnote{543}

Although Forest used the title "artist" to gain entry and legitimacy into spheres
that he then intended to disrupt, as he has often described, his work is largely absent from
narratives of video art, French art, or socially-engaged practices of the 1970s.
Furthermore, while he relied on certain technological capacities of video--feedback,
synched sound, maneuverability--he rarely undertook reflexive deconstructions of the
medium, documentary recordings (for instance, of performances), or perceptually
disorienting installations, three key ways contemporaneous artists were using video. At
the same time, he eschewed the strong political positions, ideologies, and causes of
activist practitioners and sought to envision video as more than a powerful bearer of
message and content. His work places him somewhere between video artist and guerilla
video activist into a third category.\footnote{544} Forest discussed his views on video at the second

\footnote{543} For instance, she describes how a video project in Brittany during a milk strike stimulated new
connections between villages by shooting and screening footage in one village and then showing that
footage in a neighboring village where the activists would shoot new footage, producing a chain of
recognition that greatly strengthened the strike. “Dan la région bigoudaine, en 1972, des paysans font la
grève du lait. Une équipe de l’UPCB (Unité de Production Cinéma Bretagne) fait le tour de la région avec
une camionnette équipée en vidéo 1/2 pouce. Ils diffusent le soir sur la place du village ou dans une ferme
cr qui a été enregistré dans la journée. Le lendemain ils rediffusent dans un autre village où ils enregistrent
de nouvelles interventions et ainsi de suite, déclenchant, accélérant des décisions, établissant un lien rapide
de village à village. Les bandes étaient effacées au fur et à mesure qu’elles remplissaient ces objectifs
d’information et de détonateur.” \textit{Ibid.}, 55.

\footnote{544} It should perhaps be noted here that Forest founded the \textit{Association de recherche et communication} in
1972 at the \textit{Centre Albert Magnus} following his \textit{Space-média} exhibition. Through this loose association,
Forest planned a series of discussions and presentations on communication theory and research by Jean
Duvignaud, Abraham Moles, Yves Dienal, Vilém Flusser, and René Berger, all of whom were or would
become Forest’s interlocutors. In 1973, René Berger proposed having a video art center within the
organization, but this never manifested itself. A flyer for the "Association recherche et communication,"
dated February 6, 1973, reads: "Nous sommes enfin heureux d’annoncer, la création sur proposition de
René Berger, au sein de notre association d’un centre expérimental vidéo. Ce groupe Recherches et
Communication réunit des créateurs plasticiens qui travailleront par ailleurs en étroite liaison avec Fred
Forest sur plusieurs projets d’intervention, d’animation, et d’activation urbaine.” It seems that the
Association did not continue beyond a presentation by Luc Ferrari in Feburary 1973, but it demonstrates
Forest interest in both forming a group and in hosting the kinds of intellectual and interdisciplinary events
international "Rencontre internationale ouverte de vidéo" (Open Encounter on Video), an important screening and discussion organized by the Argentinean curator Jorge Glusberg of the Centro de Arte y Comunicación (Center of Art and Communication) in Buenos Aires that took place February 20–24, 1975, at Espace Pierre Cardin in Paris. Forest had met Glusberg at the São Paulo Bienal in 1973 and helped to organize the Paris meeting. A number of these "encounters" occurred throughout Europe and Latin American in the mid-1970s, bringing together some of the most important cultural thinkers (in Paris, the group included Abraham Moles, Pierre Restany, and the composer Pierre Schaeffer) and practitioners of video from all over the world, including, in Paris, Nam June Paik, Osvaldo Romberg, Léa Lublin, Gerald Minkoff, and Hervé Fischer.

Referring to the newly formed Collective, Forest states:

> It is of little importance to us to determine if what we do comes from the specific field of art, that of human sciences, or that of cultural animation. [...] We attempt, with a few other artists, to use video as a tool of observation, of analysis, but above all else as an incomparable means of exchange and social communication. [...] In effect, video should be seen as a mediator of a dialogue between the individual and the world, in the continual game of interaction.

Through his sociological art practice, Forest endeavored to harness this mediating capacity of video and to use it in order to animate diverse social spheres (whether construed as a family, senior citizen home, São Paulo neighborhood, town, or relation

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545 For an overview of the participants involved in these video encounters, see the catalogue produced in conjunction with the Third International Encounter on Video, Galleria Civica d'arte moderna, Palazzo dei Diamanti, Ferrara, Italy, May 25-27, 1975.

546 "Il nous importe peu, quant à nous, de déterminer si ce que nous faisons appartient en propre au champ spécifique de l'art, à celui des sciences humaines, ou à l'animation cultural. La vidéo esthétique, la vidéo sociologique, la vidéo pédagogique ou la vidéo thérapeutique, se recouvrent les unes, les autres. [...] Nous essayons avec quelques artistes d'utiliser la vidéo comme instrument de constat, d'analyse, mais surtout comme moyen incomparable d'échange et de communication sociale. [...] La vidéo en effet doit se concevoir comme élément médiateur d'un dialogue entre l'individu et le monde, dans le jeu continuel de l'interaction." Fred Forest, "La vidéo aujourd'hui," Texte de présentation de la manifestation, Rencontres internationales ouvertes de vidéo, Fonds Fred Forest écrits, Inathèque, Paris.
between the self and other). By exploring how Forest understood and utilized video to animate, we can begin to appreciate sociological video as a practice that engaged art, human sciences, and cultural animation.

II. Sociological Video: between Ethnographic Cinema, and Visual Anthropology, and Video Art

Defining Sociological Video

The front cover of the Forest's book *Art Sociologique: Vidéo* (1977) uses part of a black and white photograph of Forest standing in a street holding his Sony video camera in his hand raised over his head. His activist stance, as if to rally the passersby, brings to mind May '68 and signals Forest's defiant tone throughout the text about art and its operations within society. Video plays a privileged role in Forest's writing about sociological art because it accords with two key and closely related engagements of the "sociological artist": reality and interaction. As has been widely theorized, video—a photographic medium—maintains certain ontological claims on to correlates in the physical world based on its indexical and mechanical process of reproduction. Forest carefully distinguishes between "the real," an unorganized, brute world made up of contingent objects, and "reality," the structured result of human involvement (via

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547 Forest has stated to the author on numerous occasions that the photograph reproduced on the front cover of *Art sociologique: vidéo* (1977) was taken during the protests of May 1968, an assertion that supports his claim to have acquired a camera in 1967 and, furthermore, aligns his practice with the events of May '68, a topic that interests many scholars. However, when compared to photographs of Forest published in a newspaper article from 1969 ("Fred Forest, expone en Galería Arrabal," *Alicante* 148 [June 22, 1969], Fonds Fred Forest, Dossier 15, Inathèque, Paris), the photograph reproduced on the book's cover shows an older Forest, who is much heavier and has a more receded hairline than in the photograph from 1969. Nonetheless, the image's evocations of 1968 are apparent.

548 Forest introduced video to the other members of the Collective, and Thenot would integrate it into this psychotherapy practice in the late 1970s.
conscious and unconscious choices, taste, ideology, and so forth). Sociological video, according to Forest, enacts "the transformation of the Real into Reality" by involving spectators in the immediate activity of filming and in the subsequent screening of footage. "By obliging the viewer to focus his/her view, I invite him/her to pass from crude observation to an elaborated view of the world," thereby revealing the choices that shape representations of the real. Such a decisive passage from "a practice of observation to a practice of interpretation and intervention" is the distanciation and consciousness-raising that sociological video portends to offer.

Forest also identifies the video medium's dialogical or intersubjective attributes. In an undated essay entitled "Sociological Video," Forest writes, "To the practitioner of sociological art, video turns out to be a particularly precious tool because it allows us to provoke feedback and to obtain answers in our constant search for dialogue. In my work, I consider videotape recording not only to be a support for the reproduction of events, but above all a tool for direct or deferred communication." According to Forest, the proximity or even simultaneity between capturing and viewing moving video images—whether in a closed-circuit system or in group screenings soon after filming—creates novel modes of communication between artist and viewer (or observer and observed). "The

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549 "Le Réel c'est l'univers contingent des 'objets' auxquels nous sommes confrontés. Un monde opaque que nous subissons et contre lequel nous butons. Un monde en dehors de nous, fait d'une juxtaposition 'd'objets' individuels. Le Réel tel qu'il nous est donné, est inorganisé. La Réalité si elle englobe l'ensemble des objets réels définit, en plus, les rapports existants entre eux. Elle fixe des rapports entre les choses. Elle tisse, et les enferme dans un réseau de relations. Le Réel a pour caractéristique d'être contingent et inorganisé. La Réalité est structurée." Fred Forest, Art sociologique: vidéos, 62-63 (emphasis in original).

550 "Dans tous les cas j'invite le spectateur à participer au processus soit dans l'élan immédiat de son déroulement soit par sa mémorisation et sa reconstitution. Je l'invite, ainsi, à vivre la transformation du Réel en Réalité. Je l'invite, en l'obligeant à fixer son regard, de passer de l'observation brute des 'objets' à une pensée élaborée du monde. Passage décisif d'une pratique d'observation à une pratique d'interprétation et d'intervention" Fred Forest, Art sociologique: vidéos, 64 (emphasis in original).

551 This text was either written in or translated into English. Fred Forest, "Sociological Video" (1977), "Ecrits de Fred Forest," Dossier 10a, Fonds Fred Forest écrits, Inathèque, Paris.
position of the person operating the video camera is thereby from an ontological point of view radically different from that of someone behind a movie camera. The difference lies in the fact that this new dialogical position is opposed to the previous situation, which is purely 'discursive.'

Throughout Forest's writing and practice, the medium of video functions primarily as an apparatus to stimulate communication, critical reflection, and relationality within a given temporal, physical, social, and representational space. "Video is not an artistic instrument," Forest writes, summarizing his conception of the medium, "it is an intersubjective, epistemological tool. This tool renews our vision of reality. It offers us the possibility of an active and transformative relation with [reality]. It offers us the potentiality of a new language for meeting the other (or others)."

Sociological video practice thus engages questions about the real (or reality) and its attendant ideologies, constructions, and representations through an intersubjective process of communication among those involved. Neither the social nor video is taken as a given or whole entity in Forest's sociological video practice but rather they constitute one another through interaction. This process of mutual formation, of transformation, is the basis of sociological video as animation. However, if sociological videos are so closely tied to the site, time, and people immediately involved, they produce a dilemma as how they might be read. When expected to function as historical documents or aesthetic objects, they seem to provide very little in either domain. The remaining footage, Forest readily admits, would probably bore viewers who were not directly

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involved in the event. In describing socio-cultural animation, Gaudibert argues that the projects or actions should not be judged according to the criteria of art–quality, innovation, beauty, economic worth, longevity, and so forth. "What must be judged is the quality of the processes involved (their authenticity, sincerity, depth, etc.) and the expressive practices, since the final product neither has the same signification nor makes the claim as ART to leave an enduring trace in the 'heritage' over and beyond the present time."

Forest himself describes sociological video as offering an alternative experience of time. After criticizing the fast-paced narratives of Hollywood cinema and of the mass media news cycle, he writes, "We've lost both our taste for, and even the very notion of, time just going by, without anything special happening... [. . .] Sociological video, by recording the rhythm of events, thus creates a new social time." By giving space to the confusion and pauses of events, to the halting breath in conversation, and to the non-events of life, sociological video, perhaps, bids and demands a kind of suspended time, a different mode of viewing and reception. It orients and cultivates attention so as to deepen people's relations with one another and their environments.

Such a model of moving image practice corresponds more closely to contemporaneous media practices in the realms of anthropology, ethnography, and sociology that to video art. Indeed, Forest's proposals for sociological video set up a dialogue between video art and the renaissance of ethnographic cinema in the 1960s and the institutionalization of visual sociology/anthropology in the 1970s. Whether or not a

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554 Pierre Gaudibert, French Cultural Policy Debates: A Reader, 97.
556 One cannot underestimate the role of Nouvelle Vague and other popular fiction filmmakers in the popularization of ethnographic filmmaking techniques and aesthetics. I will discuss this subject
causal relationship can be drawn between Forest's video work and both specific films, filmmakers, or artists, his invocation of the social sciences in describing his artistic practice suggests a degree of familiarity or, at least, of interest. In his text "Animation–Communication–Art Sociologique" from the spring of 1974:

The responsible artist conceives less and less his function as disembodied activity, as a free game of the esthete. [. . . ] He seeks direct contact with the public–with the reality of the moment. He has discovered the progressive exhaustion of established values and senses a need for change–for regeneration. The creator is forced to look for other languages that will permit him to express and communicate with the times, to invent other forms of art. For this, he is led to experiment in terrains that are not usually his. He thus contributes to the integration of disciplines. He looks to the sciences. He adopts and adapts from them certain methodologies. 557

Rather than claiming the direct influence of particular films, filmmakers, or practitioners on Forest, I would suggest that the widespread marriage between moving image technologies and the social sciences in the late 1960s and 70s, coupled with expanding artistic practices in the newly emerging medium of video art, created the conditions of possibility for Forest's sociological video. By turning to these social science practices, I hope to situate Forest's vision of video as an "intersubjective, epistemological tool" within a field of expanded and interdisciplinary practices and thereby to articulate an alternative lineage of "video art" (or of what artists were doing with the video medium).

intermittently, but considering the significant existing literature on the subject of Nouvelle Vague and even the influence of Rouch on Godard, I have largely bracketed this topic.

557 "L'artiste responsable conçoit de moins en moins sa fonction comme activité désincarnée, comme jeu gratuit d'esthète. [. . . ] Il cherche le contact direct avec le public–avec la réalité du moment. Il a découvert l'épuisement progressif des valeurs établies et en éprouve un besoin de renouvellement–de régénération. [. . . ] Le créateur se voit contraint de chercher d'autres langages qui lui permettront d'exprimer et de communiquer avec son époque, d'inventer d'autres formes d'art. Pour cela il est amené à expérimenter sur des terrains qui n'étaient pas conventionnellement les siens. Il contribue ainsi par son compte au décloisonnement des disciplines. Il jette un œil du côté des sciences. Il en adopte et en adapte certaines méthodologies." See Appendix B.
The Renaissance of Ethnographic Cinema and the Birth of Video Sociology and Visual Anthropology

The period between Forest's arrival to Paris in 1962 and the making of his first videos witnessed a remarkable renaissance of ethnographic cinema and the birth of visual anthropology and visual sociology. Beginning with the formation of the Comité du film ethnographique (Committee of Ethnographic Film) at the Musée de l’homme by André Leroi-Gourhan and Jean Rouch (and with the support of UNESCO) in 1952, ethnographic cinema started to gain institutional recognition. While ethnographers and anthropologists had been recording sounds as well as still and moving images as part of their research about cultures outside of the Anglo-American sphere since the beginning of the twentieth century, the theorization of ethnographic film as a specific genre as well as its role in social science research and teaching began in earnest in the early 1960s.

Throughout the decade, the first extensive studies of ethnographic cinema and manuals for instruction and practice were published, and major festivals of ethnographic film

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558 About Rouch and the Comité internationale du film ethnographique, see Luc de Heusch, "Jean Rouch et la naissance de l'anthropologie visuelle: Brève histoire du Comité international du film ethnographique" L'Homme, n. 180 (October–December 2006): 43-71. In 1958, the Film Study Center was founded at Harvard’s Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography, and in 1966 the Program in Ethnographic Film (PIEF) was founded by Gardner, Asen Balicki, and Karl Heider and housed in Harvard’s Film Study Center. PIEF became Anthropology of Visual Communication and then the Society for Visual Anthropology, which continues to be in operation today. As reiterated throughout the literature, borders between social sciences in France were not as vigorously separated as in other countries, and thus "ethnographic cinema" (the preferred phrase) encompasses films made by anthropologists, sociologists, and ethnologists.

559 Some of the notable early films include Robert J. Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (1922); Pathé’s series of films entitled *People and Customs of the World* (1928) made in collaboration with Harvard University's department of anthropology; Franz Boaz and Margaret Mead's *Trance and Dance in Bali* (1952). See Karl G. Heider, *Ethnographic Film* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006) (originally published in 1976). Rouch traces his own practice back to the Lumière brothers in the late nineteenth century and to Dziga Vertov and Robert Flaherty in the 1920s. “The Soviet (originally Polish) Dziga Vertov was doing sociology without knowing it, and the American, Robert Flaherty, was doing ethnography also without knowing it. [. . .] I]t is to these two filmmakers that we owe all of what we are trying to do today.” Jean Rouch, "The Camera and Man" (1974), republished in Paul Hocking, ed. *Principles of Visual Anthropology* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1995), 82. Hocking’s book was originally published in 1975.
began to regularly take place regularly, generating opportunities for exchange among international practitioners.\textsuperscript{560}

At the First International Festival of Ethnographic Film (Festival di popoli) in Florence in December 1959, a pivotal meeting took place between Rouch and the sociologist Edgar Morin, who were both jurors for the festival. As Morin recounts in "Pour un nouveau cinéma-vérité" (For a New Cinéma-Vérité), an article written and published upon his return to Paris in January 1960, he "got the impression at Florence that there was a new movement to re-interrogate man by means of cinema," and he called this movement "cinéma-vérité."\textsuperscript{561} Among the distinguishing features of cinéma-vérité was the turn of ethnographic approaches to the immediate urban environment. Citing The Lambeth Boys (Karel Reisz, 1958) about a youth club in London and On the Bowery (Lionel Rogosin, 1956) about the street in New York City, Morin describes the filmmakers becoming part of the micro-culture being filmed ("participant observation") and the acceptance of technical and aesthetic imperfections ("the clumsiness, the absence of dimensional sound, the imperfection of the visual image"). "In accepting the loss of

\textsuperscript{560} The First International Festival of Ethnographic Film took place in Florence in December 1959. Luc de Heusch published the first thorough report on ethnographic films in 1962. The report was funded by UNESCO and aimed to "analyze a large number of documentary films [...] from the point of view of their use for research and teaching in sociology (this terms includes social psychology and cultural anthropology)." See M. Luc de Heusch, "Cinéma et sciences sociales: Panorama du film ethnographique et sociologique par Luc de Heusch," Rapports et documents en sciences sociales 16 (Paris: UNESCO, 1962). Karl Heider’s textbook Film for Anthropological Teaching (Providence, R.I.: Distributed by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Brown University, 1966) marked an important transition toward the formalization of using film in teaching anthropology.

formal aesthetics," he writes, "[the filmmaker] discovers virgin territory, a life which possesses aesthetic secrets within itself."\(^{562}\) Inspired by this encounter with ethnographic film, Morin proposed to Rouch that they collaborate on a film set in Paris, and the two agreed on the theme "How do you live?" as the starting point for their sociological portrait of Paris.

Filmed during the summer of 1960 and released in October 1961 as *Chronique d'un été* (Chronicle of a Summer), their film, discussed further below, was championed for its technical achievements and its self-reflexive involvement of characters and filmmakers in the making and screening of the film, including the film's narrative development, technical execution, and critical self-reflection. Often cited as sparking the film movement *cinéma-vérité*, *Chronique d'un été* influenced documentary and fiction filmmakers, most notably the circle of Nouvelle Vague directors.\(^{563}\) By the early 1970s, filmmaking methods originating in ethnographic film (and often pioneered in France by Rouch), such as a hand-held mobile camera, synched sound, small film crew, small budget productions, subject-generated content, and screenings with the subjects, were celebrated and adapted by avant-garde filmmakers and came to constitute a popular aesthetic.

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Following the development and popularization of ethnographic cinema (and, in part, due to these changes), anthropology and sociology programs gradually integrated visual media into their curricula. The terms "visual anthropology" and "visual sociology" first emerged in the late 1960s to describe the use of visual media—specifically photography, film, and video—in social science studies as well as scholarly interest in how images function socially in diverse social contexts.\textsuperscript{564} Comparable to the renaissance of ethnographic cinema in the early 1960s, the early to mid-1970s witnessed an explosion of publications, annual meetings, and journals dedicated to means of visual research within the social sciences.\textsuperscript{565} Many sociologists began taking and compiling photographs as part of their research, but only a handful promoted using video.\textsuperscript{566}

One of the first sociologists to use video and theorize its applications in sociological research was Alexander Blumenstiel, a young professor at Boston University. Blumenstiel recalls that after the university administration decided to split sociology and anthropology in 1971, sociology was relocated to a large building alongside the Massachusetts turnpike. The faculty of sociology debated what to do with a large empty room, and Blumenstiel proposed building a video lab where students could use video technology to observe social interaction. Over the next three years, he built and led the Program for the Development and Utilization of Audio-Visual Resources for

\textsuperscript{564} See Timothy Curry and Alfred Clark, \textit{Introducing Visual Sociology} (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 1978).
\textsuperscript{565} Visual sociology sessions have been held annually at the American Sociological Association conventions from 1974 until the present, and sessions took place at the World Congresses of Sociology in 1974 (Uppsala), 1982 (Mexico City), and 1986 (New Delhi). Leonard M. Henny, "A Short History of Visual Sociology," \textit{Current Sociology} 34, no. 1 (1986): 4.
\textsuperscript{566} Howard Becker encouraged exchanges between sociologists and social documentary photographers in his influential article "Sociology and Photography" (1974), which turned many social science practitioners toward visual research. Enumerating what could be learned by such exchanges, Becker discusses how photographers might consider the issue of sampling and more adaptive fieldwork, and how sociologists might better connect abstract theories to observable phenomena and acknowledge the personally expressive elements in their research. Howard Becker, "Photography and Sociology," \textit{Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication} 1 (1974): 3-26.

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Research and Instruction in Sociology and founded and published the journal *Videosociology*. However, Blumenstiel always struggled with the self-defeating marginality of the visual within academic sociology, and when he did not get tenure in 1974, the program and journal ended abruptly.\(^{567}\) Although the videos made through the lab have not been conserved, the four issues of *Videosociology*, published between May 1972 and December 1974, brought together short articles and images submitted by sociologists from all over the United States and Canada who describe their research projects and analyze applications of video technology. [Fig. 40] Uniting the diverse submissions is a striking opposition to "traditional sociology" for its narrow approach to society and social behaviors as fixed data points. According to many of the authors, the introduction of visual research changes the nature of sociological inquiry.

The journal illuminates a significant tendency toward what is referred to as "interactionist" or "phenomenological sociology," the study of "relations between the elements that are variously combined to produce pattern and structure."\(^{568}\) Rather than focusing on data such as salary or nationality, practitioners sought to shift attention to processes, interactions, and a broad range of phenomenological knowledge connected to the body, face, oral expression, and other behaviors difficult to perceive with conventional research methods. For example, a doctoral candidate in sociology at Boston University summarizes his research on behavior during surgery, specifically "the relationship of anesthetists, surgeons, nurses and patients in the operating suite" as

\(^{567}\) Interview with the author, Cambridge, MA, August 9, 2013. Blumenstiel drove a taxi in Boston for a decade before becoming employed by the state transportation department.

\(^{568}\) Peter Manning, "Notes on Structural Analysis," *Videosociology* 1, n. 2 (December 1972): 22.
patients move between "being awake, being asleep and becoming awake once more." He is interested in how verbal and non-verbal interactions between medical staff and patients (pronoun usage, body language, and so forth) might affect the transition between conscious and unconscious states, and only time-based media can capture the gradual process of falling asleep and awakening. Many authors discuss the role of video in teaching and learning, noting that in addition to providing a means of repeatedly viewing and analyzing an event or behavior (a trait shared by photography and film), video encourages among students a greater self-reflexivity and awareness of their own behavior in research or group settings. An assistant professor of sociology at Earlham University named Michael Toth, for instance, outlines his utilization of video in a course on small group analysis to promote a "reflexive approach to learning in which students study their own behavior." At the start of the course, Toth sets up a camera to record group discussions in class and then has the class view these videos together in order to draw attention to the behaviors and interactions among class members (such as "seating patterns, coalitions, dynamic continuities"). Equipped with a heightened and more intimate understanding of their own presence and behavior within groups, the sociology students then conduct their field research about group behavior. Whether employed in research or pedagogy, video, as portrayed throughout *Videosociology*, becomes a powerful tool to inspire qualitative and reflexive models of sociological inquiry.

Anthropologists had long advocated qualitative and reflexive research paradigms, but, as the anthropologist Sol Worth wrote in 1981, “It was not until the 1970s that an

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anthropological model of visual communication was explicitly formulated." Worth conceived an anthropological model as involving the active cooperation between anthropologist and the subjects of study through collaborative production methods and, most important, subject-generated content. The seminal and oft-cited project in this domain is Worth and John Adair's *Navajo Film Themselves*, which consists of seven short documentary films made by a group of Navajo students in June and July 1966. Worth and Adair provided the students with Bell and Howell Filmo 16mm cameras, basic instructions of operation, and minimum wage pay, and then invited them to make a film about whatever interested them. In their publication about the project, *Through Navajo Eyes* (1972), Worth and Adair express their hope, quoting Malinowksi, "to grasp the native's point of view" by understanding how others use visual means to communicate, express themselves, and orient themselves in their environment. Worth writes, “Using a camera himself frees the Navajo from the unconscious domination of the anthropologist.” Such community-collaborative film productions continue to be a key mode of practice among visual anthropologists, especially those working with indigenous

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572 Quoted in Marcus Banks and Jay Ruby, *Made to Be Seen: Perspectives on the History of Visual Anthropology* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 3. Social anthropologists such as Frank Hamilton Cushing, Bronislaw Malinowski, Franz Boas, Margaret Mead, and Clifford Geertz pioneered many field research methods to nurture the intimate involvement of anthropologists with the cultures and peoples of their studies, or what would be called "participant observation."

573 See the extremely helpful website dedicated to this project and published by the Penn Museum at the University of Pennsylvania, available at http://www.penn.museum/sites/navajofilmthemselves/. It features many digitized archival resources from The Sol Worth Papers (UPT 50 W933), University of Pennsylvania Archives, Philadelphia, PA. Worth and Adair were accompanied by University of Pennsylvania graduate student Richard Chaflen.


populations. Beyond the idea of video or film as an improved means of qualitative and reflexive research, visual anthropology highlights the ethical dimensions of subject-generated moving images, locating in them the possibility of both emancipation and empathy.

Technological advances during this period made recording equipment more precise, economical, and portable and, thus, capable of meeting the new demands of filmmakers and social scientists. Of particular importance in the history of ethnographic cinema was the development of handheld and quiet 16mm cameras, precise exposure settings, and portable sound recorders synchronized with the camera in the early 1960s, advances that Rouch pioneered. In the early 1970s, the expanded reach of the video camera alleviated the delays and costs of post-production and encouraged the involvement of subjects in the generation of content through on-site editing and immediate replay. Video quickly surpassed 8mm and 16mm film as the medium of choice for practitioners working in the field. The evolution of moving image technology from the late 1950s through the early 1970s as well as the institutionalization of ethnographic film and visual anthropology/sociology should be considered in relation to post-structural theory and decolonization, both of which challenged the powerful positions of author and colonialist. Social scientists increasingly recognized their own complicity and that of their fields with systems of power and searched for alternative modes of research and representation that achieved greater equality between participating subjects. This desire for more self-reflexive and qualitative methods intersected with the burgeoning realm of moving image

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576 For instance, Sarah Elder and Leonard Kamerling worked with the University of Alaska Heritage Film Project and indigenous populations to produce community-collaborative films such as *Uksuum Cauyai: The Drums of Winter* (1981). For many more examples, see Pamela Wilson and Michelle Stewart, eds. *Global Indigenous Media: Cultures, Poetics, and Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008).
technologies to bring about a genre of self-aware and socially-engaged visual production.

The remarkable synergy between cultural and social science fields had far-reaching consequences.

**The Participant Camera**

In France, Rouch, perhaps more than any other filmmaker, pioneered an engaged and reciprocal model of cinema as a form of socially-engaged art and research. In his numerous influential texts and talks from the late 1950s through the 1970s, Rouch underlined two fundamental and interrelated roles of the camera that were central to his cinematic practice: an improved technique of observation and a means of activation.

Echoing the filmmaker Dziga Vertov's claim of the primacy of the "camera eye" over the "human eye," Rouch and his co-author André Leroi-Gourhan describe the film camera's special capacities in 1957 paper: "The camera takes notes/notices/observes more completely, more rapidly, more faithfully than the ethnographer, equipped with a notebook and a pencil, could do." Capable of observing and recording better than a person ever could, the camera participates in what it records, generating dense and alive films. With a nod toward the early films of Rouch's mentor, Marcel Griaule, especially *Au pays des Dogons* (1935) and *Sous le masque noir* (1938), Rouch and Leroi-Gourhan describe ethnographic film's eminent pedagogical value as the "sentiment of participation"

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in the lives of others." "To see and to hear living people," they write, "is an inestimable advantage." The capacity of a camera to make what Geertz would describe in 1973 as "thick descriptions"—that is, accounts that attend to a behavior's contextual complexities so intently that they exceed explanation—generated affective film experiences for students, audiences, and the subjects themselves.\textsuperscript{579}

Rouch's earliest films—\textit{Au pays des mages noirs} (In the Land of Black Magi) (1947), \textit{Initiation à la danse des possédés} (Initiation in the Land of the Possessed) (1949), \textit{Les magiciens du Wanzerbe} (The Magicians of Wanzerbe) (1949), and \textit{Circoncision} (Circumcision) (1949)—are short and straight documentaries of a defined event that utilize observational tactics and a narrative voiceover.\textsuperscript{580} But even these films signal some of the characteristics that would come to define Rouch's primary goal: to generate a sense of greater reciprocity between those who study and those who are studied through the medium of film. The lightweight film camera, often carried by Rouch alone, allows for

\textsuperscript{578} "Le rapport met l'accent sur la valeur du 'sentiment de participation à la vie des autres hommes' [ . . . ] 'voir et entendre des hommes vivants--et cela une illustration à une leçon donnée--est un avantage inestimable.'" Quoted in Luc de Heusch, "Cinéma et sciences sociales: Panorama du film ethnographique et sociologique par Luc de Heusch," 20. The footage for \textit{Au pays des Dogons} was shot during the Dakar-Djibouti expedition from May 1931 to February 1933 with the help of Michel Leiris. \textit{Sous le masque noir} was the result of multiple expeditions between 1935 and 1938, during which time Griaule completed his dissertation on the Dogon.


\textsuperscript{580} Rouch had been trained as a civil engineer and first traveled to Nigeria as part of a colonial engineering expedition in 1941. He became fascinated by the various peoples of Nigeria and drawn to the field of ethnography. He decided to complete a doctorate in ethnography, seeking out Marcel Griaule as a mentor. During his numerous research trips to West Africa throughout the 1940s, Rouch, perhaps inspired by Griaule's own use of film as a research tool, brought along a camera to record in the field. At first, he used a 16mm camera, and then in 1948 just before departing for another trip, he reportedly purchased a lightweight Bell & Howell camera at a flea market that would become his preferred means to record in the field. See Paul Stoller, \textit{The Cinematic Griot: The Ethnography of Jean Rouch} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Jean Rouch, \textit{Cine-Ethnography}, edited by Steven Feld (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); Sarah Cooper, \textit{Selfless Cinema?: Ethics and French Documentary} (Oxford: Legenda, 2006); and Paul Henley, \textit{The Adventure of the Real: Jean Rouch and the Craft of Ethnographic Cinema} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).
itinerant and improvisational filmmaking, responding in location, movement, lighting, and framing to the action rather than following a prescribed aesthetic, script, or storyboard.\(^{581}\) Around the filming of his widely regarded yet contentious masterpiece *Les maîtres fous* (The Mad Masters) (1955, filmed in a suburb of Accra during a trip to Nigeria and released in 1957), Rouch began to describe his approach to filmmaking as "ciné-transe." The 36-minute film documents a ceremony held by a religious sect of the Hauka, in which they enter into trances and become possessed by the spirits of Western colonial powers such as the governor, military general, engineer, and doctor's wife. With "ciné-transe," Rouch sought to characterize the way that he and his camera entered into the trances by pulling up close to the men's bodies and faces, gyrating along with their movements, and attempting (perhaps fruitlessly) to collapse the constitutive distances of representation.

Rouch's subsequent three films (described as the commencement of Rouch's "ethnofiction") made just before his collaboration with Morin—*Jaguar* (shot in 1954-55, screened at Venice Film Festival in 1967, and released in 1969 or 1970), *Moi, un Noir* (Me, a Black Man) (shot in 1957, released in 1960), and *Le Pyramide humaine* (The Human Pyramid) (shot in 1959-60, released in 1961)—highlight his growing interest in framing the making of the film within his ethnographic and documentary projects.\(^{582}\) This framing happens less through the baring of the film apparatus (although that occurs owing to the low-budget productions) than through the fictional construction of

\(^{581}\) Rouch often discussed how difficult it was for him to predict and envision his films ahead of their making, a fact that made collaborations and funding particularly challenging for Rouch.

\(^{582}\) Henley identifies this category of films and Rouch's inclusion of the making of the films into the documentaries. See Paul Henley, *The Adventure of the Real: Jean Rouch and the Craft of Ethnographic Cinema*, 82-100.
characters and scenarios based on real/pre-existing circumstances (types of labor, racial classifications, migratory patterns and so forth). For instance, *Jaguar* follows the migration of three Nigerian men with whom Rouch had previously worked, Damouré Zika, Lam Ibrahim Dia, and Illo Gaoudel, along a well-known route from middle Niger to the Gold Coast (now part of Ghana). The men made this journey (on foot in the film but actually via Rouch's Land Rover) to make the film, not because they actually sought more lucrative work in one of the Gold Coast's economies. Along the way, the men did manual labor jobs and improvised adventurous scenes for the camera, basing their performances upon the observed and lived experiences of numerous migrant African laborers.\(^{583}\) Through this model of inviting individuals to participate in a film about their experiences, identities, social roles, and projections, Rouch simultaneously portrays multiple subjective viewpoints while maintaining a degree of reflexivity.\(^{584}\) The film's narration, recorded several years after shooting the film, consists of an improvised commentary by the participants who narrate the events and reflect on their performances, reaffirming the film's unique combination of intimacy and distance.

*Chronique d'un été* was the culmination of Rouch's technical and filmic experimentation of the previous decade. Through his collaboration with a succession of distinguished cameraman (Albert Viguier, Raoul Coutard, and Michel Brault) and the financial investment (and demands) of the film's producer Anatole Dauman, the head of Argos films, Rouch successfully developed and implemented numerous technological

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\(^{583}\) At least one of the actors had actually worked in Ghana as an immigrant laborer.

advances, including the real-time synchronization of sound and image through the use of lavalier microphones, a device to reduce camera noise, and a lighter camera to increase its mobility. These technological feats, which Rouch concentrates on in his accounts of the film, enabled increased verisimilitude, matching the performance to its filmic representation and limiting the amount of studio work. The subjects of the film—a group of young people living in Paris—also participated in the creation of the film, as they had in Rouch's earlier work, by proposing scenes, acting them out for the camera, carrying equipment during the production (in this case, a shoulder bag holding an audio recording device), and responding to a first cut of the film. The film project became, as it had in Jaguar, a catalyzer for the performances and actions that were primarily based on everyday behaviors and events, including conversations, group discussions, dinners, vacations, and work. The film addressed how people lived (Morin initially titled the film Comment vis-tu?) but through a staged form of living, thus generating a certain distance from lived reality that enabled participants to consider their behavior and their views about work, love, relationships, history, and politics as they performed for and were captured by the camera.

The film also stood apart from Rouch's oeuvre. It is his first film about his native Paris (and his own "tribe"), his first attempt at turning the ethnographer's gaze, which is normally oriented abroad, to his immediate environment, usually the purview of the sociological gaze. Furthermore, unlike the relatively circumscribed subjects of his earlier

585 Paul Henley details the evolution of the film's technicians and technological inventions, including Brault who developed the technique of the handheld "walking camera" and the engineer André Coutant who constructed the lighter KMT Coutant-Mathot Éclair. See The Adventure of the Real: Jean Rouch and the Craft of Ethnographic Cinema, 156-162. Rouch discusses the film's technological evolution in many essays and interviews. See, for instance, Jean Rouch, "The Cinema of the Future?" Visual Communication 11, no. 1 (Winter 1985): 31-35.
films (particular rites or ceremonies, migratory patterns, relations between African and European students in a West African high school), the purported subject of *Chronique d'un été* was a story of the summer of 1960, a slice in time and space with innumerable narrative beginnings, some of which develop through the film but most of which simply exist as possibilities. Accommodating his ethnographic filmmaking to the particular circumstances of *Chronique d'un été*—the location, population, topics, collaboration with Morin, intended audience, and production demands—Rouch makes what I would describe as his first ethno-socio film project.

The opening credit sequence of *Chronique d'un été* begins with shots of people exiting a Metro station and walking past cafes and stores in a morning bustle. Morin and Rouch place the camera in a window above the street, in the midst of the crowd, and inside a cafe, evoking the viewpoints of various onlookers ("us," the viewers). A voiceover begins, "This film is not played by actors but lived by men and women who have given moments of their existence to a novel experience of cinéma vérité." The eight characters in the final film (not including Morin, Rouch, and the occasional interjection of those operating the sound or camera) come largely from Morin's milieu of left-wing Parisians, including Marceline, who works for an applied sociology firm conducting surveys and interviews, Angélo, who works in the Renault factory, Marilou, who is an Italian emigré and works as a secretary in the *Cahiers du cinéma* office, and Régis Debray, who was a student and would later work as an aid to Che Guevara (for which he was jailed). Eventually, two students from Côte d'Ivoire whom Rouch knew and who were living in Paris also participated, and one of the students, Landry, becomes

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586 "Ce film n'a pas été joué par des acteurs, mais vécu par des hommes et des femmes qui ont donné des moments de leurs existences à une expérience nouvelle de cinéma vérité."
another important character in the cast.\footnote{There were many more scenes shot and individuals involved than the film shows. From the over 25 hours of footage, the final film released in October 1961 runs less than 90 minutes (as required by the producer) and is the product of a drawn-out and painful editing process for Morin and especially for Rouch, who usually had less source footage and preferred long sequences.} Anything but a random or a statistically accurate sample the French population, the young participants became a framework to explore relationships, viewpoints, social interaction, life in Paris, and the process of filmmaking.

The film, which Morin describes from the beginning as "research," focuses intently on social interaction, exploiting scenarios to stimulate open-ended discussions. The first scene shows Marceline and Nadine approaching people on the street and posing to them the film's central question "Etes-vous heureux/se?" (Are you happy?). Responses to these impromptu sidewalk interviews ("micro-troittoir" as they are called in French) range from dismissive to earnest attempts to answer the quotidian and philosophical question, but their unscripted and forthright character constitutes a kind of "vox populi." These happenstance conversations exemplify the filmmakers' tactical cultivation of unplanned expressions and conversation. In Morin's application to the Centre national de la cinématographie (National Center of Cinematography, C.N.C.) to obtain authorization to film \textit{Chronique d'un été}, he describes the filmmakers' plan to utilize conversation as the primary narrative device: "Our images will no doubt unveil gestures and attitudes in work, in the street, in daily life, but we will try to create a climate of conversation, of spontaneous discussions, which will be familiar and free and in which the profound nature of our characters and their problems will emerge."\footnote{Edgar Morin, "Chronicle of a Summer," \textit{Visual Communication} 11, no. 1 (Winter 1985): 6.} The majority of the film consists of dialogue between the participants during collective meals at Marceline's or
Morin's home, during interviews conducted by Morin, or during more intimate meetings between two or three participants. "The therapeutic idea of our plan," Morin wrote to C.N.C., "is that all communication can be liberation." By enabling individuals to have a voice and express themselves without the constraint of a script and without delegating their voices (and thus power) to someone else, the film opens an array of pathways, topics, and relations.

The fluidity of discussion allows for the coexistence and crossing of multiple threads—memories of World War II, the ongoing Algerian War of Independence (in its sixth brutal year), the continued rise of postwar consumer culture, worker uprisings, and race and gender relations. For example, one revealing sequences occurs at a meal on the terrace of the Musée de l'homme. It begins in the midst of a conversation with Marceline saying that she could not marry or date a colored man not owing to any sort of "sexual racism" but because it "just wouldn't work out." As if to justify her position, she recalls dancing with a colored man on the prior 14th of July and being amazing by his "extraordinary manner of dancing." Landry, one of the students from the Côte d'Ivoire sitting across from her, protests that "in France, when negroes are talked about it is for their way of dancing, but I'd like it to be for other reasons." Morin interjects and turns the discussion towards the Congo and its recent declaration of independence from Belgium, asking whether people in Paris are really concerned by the distant turmoil. The discussion winds around issues of personal responsibility, episodes in recent Congolese history, and the presence or absence of a sense of "African unity," to which Landry responds that because it is whites who mistreat blacks, all blacks share in each other's suffering.

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589 Ibid., 27.
Marceline echoes Landry's response by comparing her own solidarity with Jewish people from all over the world and her willingness to fight against their oppression. At this point, Rouch asks Landry if he has noticed the number tattooed on Marceline's arm and if he knows what it is. Landry acknowledges the tattoo but says he doesn't know what it represents. Marceline explains she was deported during the war because she is Jewish, and the tattoo is her number in the concentration camp. The short five-minute clip of the afternoon conversation thus follows Marceline's and Landry's evolving relationship, which begins from a point of radical otherness (with Marceline's rejection of romantic involvement with a "colored" person) to an instance of empathy (with Marceline's identification with the plight of Africans at the hands of colonizers). Following this exchange on the terrace is the famous sequence of Marceline's monologue and promenade through the Place de la Concorde, in which she recounts her incarceration by the Nazis (an idea that Marceline had proposed to the filmmakers after shooting the terrace scene). Such associations between colonialism and Nazism emerge implicitly and explicitly through such unscripted discussions, and these associations shaped the course of the film and subsequent editing decisions. Dozens of such encounters and exchanges occur throughout the making of the film, and, to varying degrees of visibility, their traces remain in the final edited version, attesting to the myriad ways that the film's making affected the lives of those involved.590

The final two scenes invite those who expressed themselves through the film to assess and interpret their participation, thereby reaffirming the improvisational,

dialogical, cooperative, and reflexive structures at the core of the film. Morin and Rouch held a screening of the initial cut in late August or September 1960 and planned to integrate footage of this final group meeting and discussion into the film. Imagining the event in his application to C.N.C., Morin posed a series of rhetorical questions: "Did each of them learn something about him/herself? Something about the others? Will we be closer to each other or will there just be embarrassment, irony, skepticism? Were we able to talk about ourselves? Can we talk to others? Did our faces remain masks?" He pictured the screening and discussion as a cathartic experience of self-realization, "where the scales would fall and consciousness would be awakened." The bits of the group discussion incorporated into the final cut of the film indicate a less dramatic reaction. Some participants criticize themselves and others for performing for the camera and not being authentic; others describe a sense of kinship with the other participants and express their desire to deepen budding friendships. Rouch and Morin also film themselves conversing about the film. Walking through the galleries of the Musée de l'homme, Morin positively assesses the film, describing it as a form of research that captures a truth and reality. Rouch, much quieter and disappointed by the participants' mixed reactions, concludes the dialogue, and the film, by saying, "I think we are in trouble..." Post-auteur and postmodern in its aims, *Chronique d'un été* envisages and enacts filmmaking as a process of social animation. The legacy of *Chronique d'un été*, as Sam Di Ilorio writes, "has less to do with a monolithic idea of truth than with the more relative, ethically

592 Ibid., 20.
charged notion of contact that Rouch and Morin pioneered.  

Improvisation, real-time conversations, mobile cameras, everyday topics, and filmmaker and subject involvement in filming, as well as in interpretation, came to constitute the widely influential approach and aesthetic of cinéma vérité. Not until the 1970s did Rouch introduce his own set of terms that would be widely adopted by other practitioners and, in many respects, launch the field of visual anthropology. In his address "The Camera and the Man" at the 1973 Congress of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences in Chicago, Rouch proposed "shared anthropology" and "participant camera" as the pivotal, interrelated modes of his praxis. Drawing on the tradition of participant observation developed in social anthropology, in which an anthropologist cultivates personal relationships with those people he or she is studying and participates in the activities of the group rather than observing from a distance, Rouch formulated his idea of "participant camera" to describe how his camera, sharing his point of view, would relate and become familiar to those he studied and share his point of view. "For me," Rouch writes, "my prime audience is [...] the other person, the one I am filming." And the participant camera is "the only method I have to show another just how I see him." In "this extraordinary technique of 'feedback'," which Rouch translates as "audiovisual counter-gift," Rouch locates the beginning of a new form of anthropology, which he calls "shared anthropology." "This sort of research employing total participation," he continues, "idealistic though it may be, seems to me to


be the only morally and scientifically possible anthropological attitude today.  

Rouch's model of cinema looks in two directions—at the person filming and the person being filmed—so as to destabilize these two positions with their associated identities, ideologies, and positions. In the common space generated by the participant camera, "the anthropologist will no longer monopolize the observation of things. Instead, both he and his culture will be observed and recorded. In this way ethnographic film will help us 'share' anthropology." Rouch describes a form of participatory audio-visual research, and his influential talk gave rise to the volume Principles of Visual Anthropology, published by Paul Hockings in 1974 and widely considered to be foundational for the discipline of visual anthropology. The Rouchian model, predominant in France in the 1960s and 70s, envisioned ethnographic film as a means of social contact. Even though ethnographic cinema and visual anthropology were quite marginalized in comparison to commercial cinema or traditional social science training (and remain so today), the early to mid-1970s witnessed unprecedented experimentation in these fields as well as their migration into other practices.

**III. Sociological Video Practice**

**Interviews to "See Between"**

To envision film as the interlocking of observational research and social animation shifts attention from narrative and representation as embodied in the final work and toward seeing these elements as integrated into the extensive activity of filmmaking. As Forest began to develop his practice of sociological video in the early 1970s, it was much

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597 Rouch writes, "This type of participatory research, as idealistic as it may seem, appears to me to be the only morally and scientifically feasible anthropological attitude today." Jean Rouch, *Cine-Ethnography*, 44.
closer to the model of ethnographic film and visual anthropology than to contemporary work in video art. Examining a selection of his video projects from 1972 to 1974, one can track the ways in which Forest discovered and articulated the fundamental contours of sociological video, which combined video as an observational or documentary tool with its operations as a means of self-reflexive interpretation and interpersonal, social, and urban intervention.

A number of Forest's video projects incorporated some form of interviewing. Among the earliest is a series of video interviews known as Café Grand Glacier that Forest reportedly made in the summer of 1972 in Montpellier. Not unlike the opening "micro-troittoir" scene in Chronique d'un été, Forest approached people seated at tables on a cafe's terrace and asked, "Qu'est-ce que c'est la chose la plus importante dans ta vie?" (What is the most important thing for you in your life?) For some participants, the question solicited brief responses: "liberty," "love," "good friends," "to be happy," "to be yourself," and "to meet with people, converse with them...in any case, it is absolutely not to have money." Forest often asked follow-up questions, probing what constitutes liberty, happiness, or love, and he even occasionally plays the devil's advocate, voicing alternative viewpoints. As in many of Forest's video actions, the video interviews took place via a trio of participants–Forest who managed the camera, a collaborator who held the microphone and/or translates, and a subject/participant. In addition to the evident technical and practical advantages of this triangular arrangement, it forged a sociality, however artificial and temporary, among individuals that served as the impetus and basis

598 While 1972 is the reported date in his archives at Inathèque and repeated in subsequent scholarship, it is possible that Forest made this video in the summer of 1974 when he carried out his series of films entitled Les Gestes (discussed further on) in Montpellier. The video is digitally archived and available as DL DO T 20030715 DIV 011.001, Fonds Fred Forest, Inathèque, Paris.
of these un-staged conversations.

Interviews became an increasingly popular tactic of narration and research in the late 1960s and early 1970s, utilized by practitioners associated with diverse fields from documentary filmmaking and performance to psychotherapy and the social sciences. Of course, the interview had been employed in these areas since at least the 1930s, but it had served primarily as a means to gain information. By the late 1960s, emphasis turned to the interview's inherent relationality between subjects. In *Interviewing: Strategy, Techniques, and Tactics* (1969), one of the first social science handbooks on interviewing, Raymond Gorden writes, “Interviewing, unlike any of the basic methods in the physical sciences, depends upon an empathetic relationship between the observer and the observed. […] The ability of man to invent and build the social structures needed to support cooperation over ever-widening circles, from familial and tribal to national and international, depends upon the progressive extension of empathy.” In addition to this empathetic dimension, interviews challenged conventional conceptions of authorship. John Rodden proposes the interview as a post-modern literary genre, describing the 1950s and early 60s as the "age of criticism" and the 1970s as commencing the “age of the interview.” He connects the emergence of the interview in literature with contemporaneous French critical theory, which sought to displace the ideal of

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599 Leger Grindon pinpoints the interview's changing status in the 1960s: "The interview begins to assume prominence only during the television era and after effective mobile sound equipment becomes employed around 1960. […] Two streams of influence have shaped the contemporary documentary interview: the French cinéma vérité tradition, with roots in ethnography, and the American political heritage, with ties to television journalism." "Q & A: Poetics of the Documentary Film Interview," *The Velvet Light Trap* 60, no. 1 (2007): 4-12.


unencumbered, authentic, and original self-expression with the thick, deferred, and dialogical exchange between divided subjects and engaged readers. The word “interview” comes from two French words: “entre” meaning “between” and “voir” meaning “to see”; therefore, “interview” is literally “to see between.” Interviews displaced the singular authorial voice with the multiplicity and contingency of conversation, and such a model was powerfully influential for many artists who sought alternative modes of artistic production and subjectivity.

Filmmakers were also making radical use of interviews. For instance, Godard and his partner Anne-Marie Miéville created the twelve-part series for television, *France/tour/detour/deux/enfants* (1977), almost entirely of interviews with two nine-year-old children Camille and Arnaud. Godard posed probing and sometimes provocative questions, such as “Do you think you have an existence?” “What is an image?” “Is light something in motion or is it immobile?” and “What does revolution mean to you?” The children’s stammering responses and silences led some commentators to decry Godard as a manipulative interrogator or schoolmaster, but his radical engagement with the

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602 Another important reference point, though not cited by Rodden, is Mikhail Bakhtin's *The Dialogic Imagination* (1975), a compilation of four essays from the mid-1930s through 1941 that introduces Bakhtin's key concepts of heteroglossia, dialogism, and chronotope, all of which place emphasis on the primacy of context and the hybridity of language. The publication of *The Dialogical Imagination* established the importance of Bakhtin as a literary theorist, but Bakhtin's work also became influential in the social sciences. For instance, Pierre Bourdieu discusses Bakhtin's notions of language, power, and ideology in *Ce que parler veut dire* (1982), but it was not until the 1990s that many social scientists began to engage with Bakhtin's theories. For more on Bakhtinian theory and social science theory and practice, see the very helpful review article Anthony Wall, "On bringing Mikhail Bakhtin into the social sciences," *Semiotica* 114, no. 1 (2001): 169-201. Wall reviews Marília Amorim, *Dialogisme et altérité dans les sciences humaines* (1996), Beth Brait, ed. *Bakhtin, dialogismo e construção do sentido* (1997), and Michael Meyerfield Bell and Michael Gardiner, eds. *Bakhtin and the Human Sciences* (1998).

603 At the 2004 CAA conference, Johanna Burton and Lisa Pasquariello organized a panel on “the artist interview” with presentations by Gwen Allen, Tim Griffin, and Suzanne Hudson. Their insightful papers, which were subsequently published in *Art Journal* in the fall of 2005, considered how interviews with artists gave rise to a kind of “supplementary economy” that enriched formal and historical considerations of artworks. See Johanna Burton and Lisa Pasquariello, “‘Ask Somebody Else Something Else’: Analyzing the Artist Interview,” *Art Journal* 64, no. 3 (Fall 2005).
interview signaled his interrogation of cinema’s authorial and representational basis and his desire to bring about a new politics of the image.\textsuperscript{604} The interview was a key mechanism in Godard's struggle "to divest himself of authorship."\textsuperscript{605} Another example of the ways in which filmmakers utilized and reflected on the interview in the 1970s is a remarkable interview scene between the journalist John Locke and a griot in sub-Saharan Africa in Michelangelo Antonioni’s thriller \textit{The Passenger} (1974). The journalist begins by asking whether travel in Europe and Yugoslavia changed the man’s relationship to tribal rituals and customs. “Don’t they strike you as false now and wrong perhaps for the tribe?” the journalist inquires. The man’s response takes on the journalist’s suppositions and power relations: "Mr. Locke there are perfectly satisfactory answers to all your questions, but I don’t think you understand how little you can learn from them. Your questions are much more revealing about yourself than my answers would be about me.” Locke assures the man that his questions are sincere, and the African man reiterates, “Mr. Locke we can have a conversation but only if it’s not just what you think is sincere but also what I believe to be honest.” He then gets up to turn the camera around to face Locke. “Now we can have an interview,” he says. With this reorientation of the camera, the journalist’s questions become as much objects of analysis as the African man’s answers and, thus, the interview begins. Forest's increasing engagement with the interview in the realm of sociological video was part of a broad sweep of interest in dialogical modes of representation in the 1970s. \textit{Café Grand Glacier} marked Forest's


\textsuperscript{605} Kaja Silverman and Harun Farocki, \textit{Speaking about Godard} (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 143-144. The authors quote Godard from a 1969 text: “In order to film in a politically just manner [. . .] [one must abandon] the notion of the author [. . .] [This notion] is completely reactionary.”
tentative steps toward an expanded engagement with video as an intersubjective vehicle of communication.

Around the time of his project *Café Grand Glacier*, Forest began a series of videos centered on the analysis of the movements and gestures associated with various social activities and jobs, in which he intensified his role and that of the camera as active participants in the observational structure. Entitled *Les gestes dans les professions et la vie sociale* (Gestures in the Professions and Social Life) (c.1972-74), these videos signaled Forest's transition from an observational mode toward what he would describe as the intersubjective and interactive mode of sociological video. For instance, in the thirty-minute video *Les gestes du photographe* (The Gestures of a Photographer) (July 1974), Forest documents the work of two male photographers in a central square in the city of Montpellier who attempt to stop passersby to take their portraits, which can then be purchased at a nearby store. [Fig. 41] Resembling a mobile photo booth, the

606 According to the series description in Forest's video archive at Inathèque, between 1972 and 1974 he realized videos about the gestures of a photographer, hair stylist, professor, and pipe smoker as well as conversation, love, and waiting. In addition to those listed above, the remaining videos in the series include *Gestures, postures, mimiques dans la discussion* (Gestures, Postures, Mimicry in Discussion, made from an interview conducted during *Vidéo troisième âge*), which highlights the ways that two people will begin mirroring the movements of one another during a conversation, and *La terrasse du grand café à Montpellier* (The Terrace of a Large Cafe in Montpelier, i.e. Grand Glacier interviews), which draws attention to the ways that facial and hand gestures emphasize verbal expressions. Both of these videos were probably incorporated into *Les gestes* after their making. As is often the case with Forest's early videos, there are various conflicting dates listed for these videos, even between Forest's catalogue raisonné, which was made on the occasion of the creation of Forest's archives at Inathèque, and the descriptions of individual videos at Inathèque; i.e. the date of *Les gestes du coiffeur* is listed as 1972 in the catalogue raisonné and 1974 in the Inathèque database, and *Les gestes du photographe* is listed as 1973 in the catalogue raisonné and 1972 in the Inathèque database. These conflicting dates may be a result of subsequent copies or compilations being produced from the original footage. An early typed document held in the Inathèque archives entitled "Resumé vidéo–Tapes de Fred Forest" states (correctly, I believe) that all of the works except *Gestes et mimiques dans la conversation*, which was made from footage taken during *Vidéo troisième âge* in 1973, were made in the summer of 1974. The videos about the hair stylist and photographers were made in Montpellier on a trip in July 1974, and the project with Vilém Flusser about the gestures of a professor was undertaken in August 1974 in Fontevrault.

enterprise involves numerous social interactions, each of which entails a specific series of gestures, from the photographers' advancement toward clients and their explanation of the process to the movements associated with holding and manipulating the camera and taking the picture.\textsuperscript{608} When people accept the invitation, another series of minute physical adjustments occurs: the photographers lean in, tweak the hat of a child, or signal for a couple to get closer. Clients prepare themselves for the photograph, tilting their heads, fine-tuning their clothes, and smiling self-consciously. Another layer of movements and gestures occurs at the level of the interactions between the photographers and Forest. In creating a moving-image portrait of the photographers, Forest mirrors their activity, moving in response to their movements. He wanders around the square, kneels and zooms to capture intimate exchanges between photographer and client or withdraws to record the choreography of passing crowds. The presence of Forest and his camera have an effect on the photographers who glance at Forest nervously and invitingly and gesticulate for him to drawn in or to retract. \textit{Les gestes du photographe} illustrates how Forest and the video camera participate in and animate the observed scene.

This dimension of mirroring is made more explicit in \textit{Les gestes du coiffeur} (The Gestures of a Hairstylist) (July 1974) through the presence of an actual mirror.\textsuperscript{609} [Fig 42] The video begins with the hair stylist talking about his life and family and his licensing

\textsuperscript{608} These are the gestures Forest outlines in his descriptions of the project. After watching the video, one could also add how the photographers negotiate the passing crowds, how people respond to the photographers' approach and presence of their cameras, how individuals react to one another, and how the photographers and clients react to Forest's recording by video (Forest maintains a distance of about 15-20 feet from the action). To avoid contact with the photographers, passersby duck, nod heads back-and-forth, swerve out of the way, and turn attention to their companions. To entreat potential clients and lessen the aggressiveness of the approach and potential recording, the photographers shrug their shoulders, smile, and casually lift up and reach out with their cameras in a gesture of friendly invitation.

\textsuperscript{609} Fred Forest, \textit{Les gestes du coiffeur}, D0 T 20030714 DIV 001.001, Fonds Fred Forest vidéo, Inathèque, Paris.
exam to be a stylist while he is washing and preparing to cut a male client's hair. As the haircut begins, Forest points his camera at the mirror and pans out to reveal himself standing in the middle of a small salon and a woman sitting off to the side. This establishing shot differs from the micro and close-up views privileged throughout the rest of the video. While the stylist cuts and styles the client's hair into a classic 1970s style mullet, Forest zooms in to capture the stylist's quick hand motions of smoothing, cutting, and shaping the hair and mimics the stylist's rotational movement around the client. Forest observes the act of cutting hair from various distances, vantage points, as well as fixed and mobile camera positions, generating multiple and dynamic observational layers. The end of the film shows the stylist cutting the hair of a child who keeps craning his neck around to look at Forest, to which the stylist responds by snapping his head to face forward. Positioned facing the stylist, boy, and mirror, the video captures the nexus of gazes (and desire to gaze) between the client, stylist, mirror, and camera.

A month after making his videos of the photographers and the stylist, Forest undertook his longest video project on gestures with the Czech-born, Sao Paulo-based philosopher and professor Vilém Flusser. Envisioned as a sort of crowning work to Forest's series, *Les gestes du professeur* (The Gestures of a Professor) records Flusser, who had invited Forest to his summer home in Fontevrault l'Abbaye, discussing his theory of the phenomenology of gestures, which would not be published until 1999 as *Les Gestes* (Gestures). In the first version of the video, Flusser, shirtless,

wearing shorts, and poised on an outdoor terrace in the sun, begins by distinguishing gestures from other types of movement.\textsuperscript{611} Gestures convey an interior expression and external conditioning, intersecting an individual's specific ideas and personality with social conditions of decorum and expectation. "Every single one of my gestures is overly conditioned," Flusser states while gesticulating with both hands (turning them as if screwing in a light bulb), "on the other hand, I am equally convinced that gesture is the expression of my free will." While Flusser details various types of gestures (ritual or sacred, to perform work, to communicate, to obviate obstacles, and so forth), Forest experiments with the camera's movements to record Flusser's gestures, moving in response to Flusser's movements, zooming in to focus on a single hand or finger. Highly aware of his performance for the camera and Forest's manipulations of the camera to accommodate Flusser's gestures, Flusser turns his own and the imagined viewer's attention to the video, which he describes as "the ideal medium to transmit the theory of human gestures because it is in the same space-time continuum as the concrete phenomenon of the gesture." His presentation, he explains, is in dialogue with the video camera and with Forest who manifests his own gestures via the video technology.\textsuperscript{612} On this cue, Forest waves his hand in front of the camera and zooms the lens in and out to assert his active presence within the video image. Flusser goes on to entreat potential

\textsuperscript{611} Forest and Flusser filmed at least two presentations by Flusser. The first in French takes place outside, and the second in English takes place inside but with very poor image quality owing to the low light. See the various versions of \textit{Les gestes du professeur} in Fonds Fred Forest vidéo, Inathèque, Paris. In this description, I am referring to the video of Flusser presenting in French outside (DO T 20030702 DIV 018.001).

\textsuperscript{612} In an essay written after making \textit{Les gestes du professeur}, Flusser observed, "My hands answered to the gestures of the camera, and the modification of their movements changed, subtly, my words and my thoughts. And Forest not only moved in answer to my movements, but also to the thoughts that I articulated verbally. "Fred Forest ou la destruction des points de vues établis" and "Fred Forest or the destruction of the established points of view" (1975), unpublished, available in French and English at: http://webnetmuseum.org/html/en/expo-retr-fredforest/textes_critiques/auteurs/flusser_en.htm#text
viewer(s) of the video (pointing at the camera and thus in the center of the screen) to recognize their own gestural involvement with the video by, perhaps, crossing their arms or looking away.

Throughout the thirty-minute video, numerous passages evoke Forest's and Flusser's analysis of gesture through the marriage of theory and practice, speech and moving image. Flusser pulls a small mirror from his pocket at one point and places it in front of his face to capture a reflection of the camera, Forest, and the surrounding garden in the background, thereby providing a brief glimpse of his "viewpoint" to the audience. At another point, Forest trains his camera on Flusser's shadow cast onto an adjacent wall, bringing to mind shadows in Plato's cave as prefiguring cinema by occupying a position at once indexical and iconic. The moving shadow abstracts Flusser's gestures in the same way that the video distances while it represents a live event. As would become customary for Forest's sociological video projects, immediately after making the video he played it on a monitor in the house for Flusser and himself to watch and analyze. Flusser mentions this in his essay "Fred Forest ou la destruction des points de vue établis" (Fred Forest or the destruction of the established points of view) (1975) and laments the fact that there was not a second video set-up available to record this meta-dialogue and its myriad gestures.613

A number of sociologists and anthropologists in the late 1960s and early 1970s also began making films to study micro-movements and gestures following an upsurge of interest among linguists and social scientists in non-verbal (or non-explicit)

613 Ibid.
communication after World War II. The anthropologist Ray Birdwhistell, for instance, who had established the field of "kinesics" (the study of human movement and visual communication), collaborated with Jacques Van Vlack on two 16mm films.

*Microcultural Incidents in Ten Zoos* (1969) examined the bodily motion and interactions of family members as they approach an elephant cage to feed the animals in zoos in different countries, and *TDR-009* (undated) recorded a crowd of people in a London hotel bar, focusing on gestures during conversations. Because Birdwhistell did not want the presence of the cameras to modify the behavior, he apparently obscured them or used mirrors to feign the direction of his shooting. A 1972 review of *Microcultural Incidents in Ten Zoos* by Catherine Bateson (anthropologist and daughter of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson) describes the film as both a "forcible argument" for the wider use of film as research and a valuable document to study an array of anthropological topics from "family structure, [. . . ] body motion style, attitudes towards food and feeding, towards man-animal relations, towards spectatorship . . . and the interrelations between these." While indicative of the expanding uses of moving image media, these films tend toward straight observation and rarely address the practice of

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617 Catherine Bateson, "Microcultural Incidents in Ten Zoos," *American Anthropologist* 74 (1972): 191-192. She also explains that the released film came from a version Birdwhistell created for a presentation at the American Anthropological Association meeting, which includes a voiceover of Birdwhistell making observations as well as stills and slowed down sections for closer analysis.
filmmaking in relation to the subject of gesture. The self-reflexive, meta-analysis evident throughout Forest's videos on gesture thus sets his work apart from that of many social scientists and points to the artist's interest in using video to carve out a space between observation, representation, and activation.

**Animation and Social Contact**

Forest's experimentation with increasingly reflexive and participatory video arrangements took on novel forms in two unprecedented projects carried out in the summer and fall of 1973. Categorized above as "animation," Forest's *Vidéo-troisième âge* (Video Third Age) and *Promenade sociologique* (Sociological Walk) exemplify the artist's adaptation of Rouch's "participant camera" to stimulate social contact. These projects harnessed video to fashion temporary structures that modified relations between participants and their environments, setting the stage for the Collective's pivotal socio-cultural animation project in the town of Perpignan.

For *Vidéo-troisième âge* (Video Third Age), Forest and a team of collaborators set up and operated a video studio at La Font des Horts, a senior citizen home in southern France. Between June 25 and July 11, 1973, they invited residents to learn how to use the equipment and to collaboratively produce videos about their lives. Introducing the project to residents, Forest stated, “The game that we propose to you is an opportunity to express yourselves as freely as possible through images and speech.” By equipping residents to

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618 Bateson notes a passage at the end of *Microcultural Incidents in Ten Zoos* that she reads as a "meta-message about the nature of the film medium." As she describes, when Vlack unintentionally focuses the camera on a pick-up at the Paris zoo, he turns it off and then resumes recording with the camera focused on a gendarme, "a guardian of morality." Perhaps evidence of the narratological role of the cut in filmmaking, this scene reflects on the biases that underline any recording, such as where to focus the camera and to make a cut.

619 “Le jeu que nous vous proposons est une expérience qui a pour but de vous faire vous exprimer le plus librement possible par l’image et la parole.”

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make their own videos, this project aimed to combat the tendency to associate old age with passivity and dependence. The term “third age” comes from economics and denotes retirement from the labor market and thus passing beyond productive age. In France, the population of aged and retired citizens ballooned in the 1970s owing to improvements in healthcare that dramatically extended life, but these people were often isolated from educational, cultural, and political activities. The disenfranchised state of this growing population attracted the attention of many people in the late 1960s and early 1970s, from the writer Simone de Beauvoir to sociologists in the emerging field of the sociology of aging. Commissioned by the Service en recherche sociale (Service in Social Research) of CNRO (Caisse Nationale de Retraite Ouvriers du bâtiment), Forest and his primary collaborator, the sociologist Jean-Phillipe Butaud, installed a multimedia communication system that went beyond existing approaches in the fields of art and sociology to animate the residence and its residents. Rather than producing objects or quantitative surveys, they transferred the tasks of observation, representation, and creative expression to a group of retired, mostly working class laborers. Equipped with portable video cameras, microphones, and technical and logistical support, the seventy or so residents shifted, even if temporarily, relations between themselves and established social structures and expectations. Rather than in a state characterized by dependency, isolation, consumption, and disempowerment, the residents became producers of self-representations through a collective activity in a manner akin to Sol and Worth's work among the Navajo. In a

620 Of particular note is the pioneering study of aging Sociologie de la vieillesse by the French sociologist Paul Paillat (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963). In the early 1970s, this specialization within sociology (much like the sociology of art) underwent significant expansion with such studies as Anne-Marie Guillemand’s La Retraite, une mort sociale (Paris: Mouton, 1972). Simone de Beauvoir wrote La Vieillesse (Paris: Gallimard, 1970). De Beauvoir wrote in her book, “One's life has value so long as one attributes value to the life of others.”
journal dedicated to *Vidéo-troisième âge* and published by the Institut d'étude et de recherche en information visuelle (Institute of Study and Research in Visual Information), Forest wrote, "I am not seeking to make objects but to create fields of awareness."621

Five groups of six to ten residents worked together to manage all aspects of production, from conception of the videos to filming and editing, and with the help of on-site teams, they each completed a short video.622 [Fig. 44] The final projects primarily take the form of discrete scenes strung together like a variety show to generate video portraits of the residents' lives. The video by "group c," for instance, features Madame Boisseau’s tour of the extensive doll collection in her bedroom, two residents acting out a scene from Romeo and Juliet, and Monsieur Turpin’s opinionated declarations about life. [Fig. 45] Forest anticipated this diversity in advance of the project but hoped that it would register (and generate) a sense of community in the residence. He wrote in the "Proposition" handed out in advance to potential participants, "Through all the visions, as different as they are, that will be expressed in these films, a collective expression will

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621 "Je ne cherche pas à faire des objets mais à créer des champs de conscience." *Télévision en partage*, no. 3 (Lausanne, Institut d'étude et de recherche en information visuelle): 35.

622 It is difficult to determine how much of the filming was actually carried out by the residents. In *La Télévision en partage*, the authors mention compounding issues such as the heavy weight of the equipment and the complexity of the technological training for many residents. Numerous still photos were taken of the residents holding cameras and posing behind them, but the handful of still images taken during the filming show Forest or members of his crew carrying the cameras. The "film of the film" that Forest made, however, confirms the residents largely controlled the content of their films and actively participated in making them. The following videos by the teams are extant: Vidéo troisième âge: équipe D (DO T 20030716 DIV 012.001); Vidéo troisième âge: équipe C (DO T 20030716 DIV 013.001); Vidéo troisième âge: tournage du film équipe C (DO T 20030716 DIV 008.001); Vidéo troisième âge: film du film équipe C (DO T 20030716 DIV 011.001). Forest made a series of compilations for exhibitions with excerpts of the five videos, his documentary film, and his "film of a film" (discussed further on): Vidéo troisième âge: Extraits (DO T 20030707 DIV 025.001); Vidéo troisième âge (DO T 20030701 DIV 015.001); [1ère compilation d'actions] (DO T 20030707 DIV 006.001) and [2ème compilation d'actions] (DO T 20030707 DIV 005.001). All in the Fonds Fred Forest vidéo, Inathèque, Paris.

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emerge reflecting your individual life and also your communal life.\textsuperscript{623} The final videos tend toward subjects of leisure and fantasy—cards games, picnics, concerts, and imaginary encounters—rather than functional and mundane aspects of life within the residence. Butaud notes how residents did not take the opportunity to investigate the institution—how it did or did not function as a home or their statuses within it—but rather chose to focus on their hobbies. According to Butaud, the logic of "free time," under which older people often live, does not nurture space for negative or political expression.\textsuperscript{624} He also suggests that the structure of the videos—a collection of short, unconnected scenes—reflects the immense challenge of creating a unified or communal expression. What is missing or left unsaid in the collective video portraits reveals as much, if not more than, what is included. During the process of planning, shooting, and editing, the residents regularly screened the footage and thus witnessed a representation of their own lives and the results of their collaborations with others. This “mirror-effect” had the dual potential of generating critical distance and of renewing social bonds, in other words, of revealing a community to itself while it was undergoing significant alterations. Forest also wrote and circulated daily reports about the daily events called "Flash-Film Bulletins” to stir interest among participating and non-participating residents and produced a “film of the film” to document the progression of the project.\textsuperscript{625} The bulletins...

\textsuperscript{623} "A travers toutes les visions, si différentes soient-elles qui seront exprimées dans ces films, se dégagera une expression collective reflétant votre vie individuelle mais aussi votre vie communautaire."

\textsuperscript{624} Jean-Philippe Butaud, “Premières impressions,” La Télévision en partage, 23-24.

\textsuperscript{625} Forest also produced an initial documentary to learn about daily life in the residence so as to better assist the groups in making their films. It includes a long interview with Madame Blangy by Butaud and Flusser as well as documentation of daily life at the residence, including a scene of residents receiving their monthly government support checks from an employee, an event that underscores a degree of reliance within the population. This straight documentary seems to have functioned largely as a form of research for Forest and his team and was not screened for the residents. In addition to video excerpts and compilations listed in footnote 151, see Vidéo troisième âge. Madame Blangy: (1ère journée) (DO T 20030716 DIV 280
reported on what had transpired the day before with summaries by Forest and quotations from residents, listed the schedule of screenings, which were open to other residents, and included short phrases such as "VOUS POUVEZ TOUT FAIRE" and "VOUS POUVEZ TOUT DIRE" ("You can do everything" and "You can say all") to stimulate engagement.

[Fig. 46] By passing out the bulletins at meal times, Forest assured that residents not directly involved had access to information about the video project. The meta "film of the film" documented the collaborative process, capturing the extended discussions, meetings, and negotiations among residents in planning, making, and then screening their films. These "supplementary" components intensified the "mirror effect" of the collective video projects by assuring a self-reflexive perspective throughout the process of creation and by extending the project's reach within the residence. *Vidéo troisième âge* intervened in the residence by fashioning a multipart apparatus, including the video equipment, production studio, newsletters, events, screenings, and presence of Forest, Butaud, and the team, that prioritized information, action, reflection, and collaboration. As evident in Forest's "film of the film," this intervention altered the institution's status quo operations and affected behavior within the residence. Although Forest and Butaud had been invited to carry out the project by CRNO, the entity responsible for the state's senior citizen homes, the managers of La Font des Horts ultimately sensed the project's critical and disruptive character and interfered to hinder its progress.626

Flusser, who participated in *Vidéo troisième âge* as an observer and occasional

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626 Forest and Butaud refer to the institution's reticence toward their project in their texts published in *La Télévision en partage*, and in conversations with the author, Forest has confirmed that the managers of the residence sought on numerous occasions to derail the project by limiting access to certain areas and cautioning residents against involvement.
interviewer, identified two fundamental components of the project: the transformation of
the residents from a position of consumption to creation and the slippage between real
and fictive. He writes:

On the one side, the intervention problematized the current reality because it
revealed the illusory character of a purely consumerist life. On the other hand, it
provoked doubt about the reality of memory, which immediately presented itself as
a possible area of realization through the films, and the reality of the future, which
immediately presented itself as a domain where one could project new films.  

If the creation of the films shifted the activity of the residents into a productive frame,
viewing the films generated a distance between what one takes as reality and the present,
thus making the accepted or existing situation seem open to modification and change.
Through its technological and representational properties, video served as a producer of a
political or aesthetic message but rather as a means to counter disenfranchisement
(economic, social, and psychic), engendering what Forest refers to as "a climate of
constant animation." In a summary of the project, Butaud and Forest list the following
goals: “activate human connections through the use of the video camera, study behavior
in front of new tools of communication, reveal a community to itself, promote exchanges
between individuals and the group, allow the liberation of creativity and imagination,
allow for the expression of latent needs." 

Vidéo troisième âge demonstrates how video,

627 “L’intervention a provoqué d’un côté la problématisation de la réalité du présent parce qu’elle a révélé
le caractère illusoire d’une vie purement consommatrice. De l’autre côté, elle a provoqué le doute quant à la
réalité de la mémoire, qui se posait tout d’un coup comme un domaine de réalisation possible à travers des
films, et la réalité du futur, qui se posait tout d’un coup comme domaine où l’on pouvait projeter des
628 “Cette action s’est réalisée dans un climat d'animation permanente." Forest also mentions the potential
psychic and identity-related effects in his text. For instance, he writes, “On pense également que la
virtualisation de l’image a fait se révéler à elles-mêmes les personne âgées, qui, à travers la représentation
de leur ‘image’, redécouvrent leur identité, leur moi.” Fred Forest, "Action vidéo et troisième âge,” La
Télévision en partage, 21.
629 "Dynamiser les rapports humains par l'utilisation de magnétoscope; étudie les comportements devant de
nouveaux outils de communication; révéler une communauté à elle-même; favoriser des échanges
interindividuels et de groupe; permettre la libération de la créativité et de l’imaginaire; permettre
conceived as both an artistic production and social research, can use images to bring about social action.\textsuperscript{630}

Less than three months after finishing \textit{Vidéo troisième âge}, Forest participated in the 12th São Paulo Biennial, the most important annual art exhibition in Latin America and the second oldest Biennial (founded in 1951) after the Venice Biennale. During October and November 1973, he planned to continue his series \textit{Space-média} by publishing blank spaces in ten Brazilian newspapers and then collecting people's responses and pinning them to walls within the exhibition to create a shifting arrangement.\textsuperscript{631} While in Brazil, however, Forest made contact with many other curators, critics, and artists and decided to stay through January 1974 to carry out seven other projects or actions. "Bilan d'une agitation artistique, '114 jours en Amerique Latine'" (Summary of an Artistic Agitation, "114 Days in Latin America"), published once Forest returned to France, lists multiple street actions, studies, two video installations, and a project entitled \textit{Promenade sociologique} (Sociological Walk), all carried out during the artist's four month stay in Brazil. [Fig. 47] For most of these events or installations, Forest used video either in a documentary mode or as part of a fixed installation. In \textit{Le expression des besoins latents}.” These were listed in a bulletin summary of the project written by Forest and Butaud and reproduced in Fred Forest, “Action vidéo et troisième âge,” \textit{La Télévision en partage}, 20.\textsuperscript{630} The project attracted interest from artistic and sociological venues, and a compilation of the videos made through the project was exhibited in \textit{Documenta 6} in 1977 and presented on the panel "Audio Visual Productions in Sociology" organized by Leonard Henny at the Ninth World Congress of Sociology in Uppsala, Sweden (August 14–19, 1978).\textsuperscript{631} Isabelle Lassignardie lists the following interventions in newspapers: "Experiencia," Diario de Säo Paulo, Säo Paulo, n°13653, October 2, 1973; "Esse espaço em branco é uma obra de arte autor Fred Forest," Jornal da Tarde o Estado, Säo Paulo, October 2, 1973, p. 17; "O Espaço é livre. O Artista é vocé," Fohl da Tarde, Säo Paulo, October 3, 1973, p. 18; "Space Media Fred Forest," Jornal do Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, October 4, 1973, p. 2; "O francês Fred Forest," Fohl de Säo Paulo, Säo Paulo, October 5, 1973, p. 35; "Vous connaissez Fred Forest?," Charlie Hebdo, November 19, 1973; "Os juízos do publico e obras desajuizadas," O Estado de Säo Paulo, November 23, 1973; and "A arte viva de Fred Forest," Fohl de Säo Paulo, Säo Paulo, November 30, 1973. Isabelle Lassignardie, “Fred Forest: Catalogue Raisonné (1963-2008),” Vol. 1, 295.
Blanc envahit la Ville (Blankness Invades the City), the street action that garnered Forest the most attention, he carried his camera to record a group marching through downtown São Paulo.  

[Fig. 48] Conceived as an extension of Space-média, participants held blank protest signs affixed to sticks, thereby performing a march without any singular political messages and allowing others to fill in the content of the signs. Although the camera's presence may have drawn greater attention to the performance, affirmed its value to be documented, and affected the behavior of the participants, the video was largely auxiliary to the event. Forest also set up an installation similar to the one he had installed on rue Guénégaud by placing a closed circuit video outside of Galeria Portal in São Paulo to project images in real time from the street into the gallery space. His most innovative use of video in Brazil took place through his project Promenade Sociologique.

The Museu de Arte Contemporânea (Museum of Contemporary Art) of the University of São Paulo supported Promenade Sociologique as part of its Young Contemporary Art exhibition program, which included fifty artists, three of whom were from outside Brazil. Walter Zanini, the curator, critic, and director of the museum from 1963 to 1978, was a pivotal early promoter of video art in Brazil and introduced many Brazilian artists to the medium in the early 1970s. To attract participants to his

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632 One of the remaining video tapes of this event has recently been rediscovered and will be available to in digital form in Forest's archive: Le blanc evahit la ville, DO T 20030725 DIV 029 001, Fonds Fred Forest vidéo, Inathèque, Paris.

633 Considering the ruling military dictatorship installed in Brazil by a coup d'état in 1964, Forest's decision to stage a performance political in form (i.e. in its evocations of a march) rather than in message (i.e. against the dictatorship) was a prudent one. As an extension of the larger Space-média project, it also provided an outlet for participants and passersby to project their own social and political complaints rather than react to a packaged message.

"sociological walk," Forest published an invitation in the press and spread word of his project by mouth, and on November 30, 1973, 30 people joined him for a five-hour meander through the southern neighborhood of Brooklin in São Paulo. Conceived as a study of and intervention into the neighborhood, the walk was an opportunity for participants to explore the social and economic fabric of the neighborhood. They visited a dozen local places, including a hardware store, fruit stand, tailor, pharmacy, gas station, church, butcher, and art gallery. Each participant carried a stool and sat in a circle in front of small storefronts or squeezed inside to observe, interview, and interact with employees and owners. [Fig. 49] As Forest described to the first shopkeeper, "Our investigation of this neighborhood is a study of the commercial, administrative, and cultural functions present here." His questions circled around the families, tasks, knowledge, insights, dreams, and daily lives of those encountered. Part performance, part ad-hoc school, and part sociological study, the project ultimately sought to encourage those involved to rediscover their everyday environs, to pay attention to the overlooked or accepted reality, and to engage strangers in deeper conversations.

While the walk could have occurred without the presence of the camera, the camera functioned as an instigator among those encountered, a means to mediatize the mundane, and, perhaps most important, a key way for Forest to participate in the walk. In the remaining thirty-minute video (an edited version of the original footage), we see many people reacting to the camera, often drawing close to be recorded or looking on with fascination. Forest is usually carrying the camera (and also sometimes holding the microphone), and when not filming the person speaking, he focuses in on small details: a

635 Fred Forest, Promenade sociologique, D0 T 20030712 DIV 011.001, Fonds Fred Forest vidéo, Inathèque, Paris.
display of produce or sign with the price of gasoline, the gestures and reactions of participants, and the behavior on onlookers and passersby. [Fig. 50] The camera becomes Forest's eye and attention, its movements and focus manifest Forest's inquisitiveness and interests. It serves as the primary way that Forest engages with and encounters the environment and people, especially considering that he does not speak or even comprehend Portuguese.636 At the conclusion of the walk, the whole group reviewed and reflected on the video footage of the event, comparing its representations to their own memories and experiences. The installation of *Promenade Sociologique* at the Museu de Art Contemporânea brought together an array of representations of the walk, including newspaper articles, written observations and reflections by participants, photographs, and a monitor playing the video footage. As much as these materials act as documents, they also capture the multiplicity of viewpoints enlivened by the walk and the mutuality of the participant camera's regard. In his contribution to the catalogue for the Collective's exhibition *Problèmes et méthodes de l'art sociologique* (Problems and Methods of Sociological Art) (1975), Forest writes, "The function of watching and observing certainly cannot be eliminated, but the important thing is that the play of the gazes be mutual, that the 'artist-interviewer-animator' joins the groups in their research, teaches himself at each instant, liberates himself also of the significance of the roles and positions."637 Animation hinges not only on the artist's capacity to stimulate action and change in others but on his/her acceptance of self-analysis and transformation. It is this

636 While at first the translator Forest is working with translates the dialogue between French and Portuguese, it quickly becomes too close and she takes over posing questions to initiate dialogue.

commitment to reciprocity (whether or not it was always achieved) as a discursive, operational, and aesthetic frame that distinguishes sociological video and forms the basis of its capacity to animate.

**Paths of Sociological Video (Public Intervention and Video Therapy)**

Forest continued to use video following the formation of the Collective in both individual and group projects, and his videos often constitute the little remaining documentation of the group’s ephemeral events. Furthermore, the model of social animation that Forest pioneered via his engagement with the medium of video influenced the orientation of sociological art and the shape of the Collective's projects, even when video no longer played a primary role. In *Enquête-Animation à Perpignan* (Study-Animation of Perpignan), a two-week intervention that took place September 6–19, 1976, in the southern French town of Perpignan and was funded by a grant from OFAJ (the same organization that had funded the Neuenkirchen symposium a year earlier), the Collective adapted the structures and goals that Forest had first articulated via his sociological video practice in the preceding two years to undertake its animation. Although video played only a secondary role (interviews, printed photographs, the press, and planned public events were far more important), "the action," as the Collective stated in a bulletin written and distributed to announce the project, "includes, in particular, interactions between and the comparison of different neighborhoods in the city of Perpignan (Quartier St. Jacques, Des Plantanes, du Moulin à Vent, de la Réal, du Haut Vernet), which while rather close geographically remain nevertheless distant at the level
of social communication." Activating social contact to span this distance was the Collective's chief aim.

The project began with an analytic study of the conditions and needs of the neighborhoods, which relied on conventional social science methods such as short surveys, interviews, and observations. After learning about the specific character and needs of each neighborhood, the Collective selected three neighborhoods—Moulin à Vent, la Réal, and St. Jacques—based on the interest expressed by community members and because they had strikingly different socio-economic profiles. The group then devised dozens of direct interventions, including pop-up exhibitions, screenings, meetings, interviews, parties, potlucks, and a multi-neighborhood photographic portrait swap in the neighborhoods. Each of these steps involved the participation of a thirty-person, interdisciplinary team established by the Collective for the "study-animation." The large group included Balbino Giner, an artist from the region; Jacques Quéralt, a local journalist; and dozens of university students (both French and German) studying in fields as diverse as the fine arts, biology, sociology, psychology, administration, and literature.


639 Hervé Fischer describes the early process: "D'abord divisée en cinq groupes, notre équipe fait une préenquête sur cinq quartiers : le Haut-Vernet, quartier nord, neuf, constitué de petits pavillons et d'immeubles bon marché, habité par des artisans et des gitans, le quartier des Platanes, central, riche et ancien, mais très imbibé dans d'autres tissus urbains, le quartier de La Réal, ancien et central aussi, mais partiellement insalubre, habité par les vieilles générations et, au fur et à mesure des décès, pénétré par les populations pauvres du quartier voisin Saint-Jacques, lui-même partagé entre plusieurs ethnies, arabe, gitane, catalane, enfin le Moulin à Vent, ville neuve située au sud, déclarée exemplaire et quasiment paradisiaque selon ses promoteurs municipaux, constituée d'immeubles bien blancs au milieu d'espaces verts impeccables, avec des équipements sociaux et sportifs exceptionnels, habitée par des rapatriés d'Afrique du Nord, des retraites de la France entière, des cadres moyens, quelques intellectuels de l'Université toute proche. Après rapport des cinq groupes, trois quartiers sont retenus pour un travail plus approfondi : La Réal, Saint-Jacques, Le Moulin-à-vent, leurs différences paraissant très significatives." Théorie de l'art sociologique (1977), 140.
Throughout the two weeks in Perpignan, the Collective held numerous meetings (some of which were partially recorded by Forest) so that the entire group could discuss and adjust the methods, findings, and responses as the project was taking place. From the initial study to the ongoing contemplation and modification of the methods, *Enquête-Animation de Perpignan* assured a self-reflexive, adaptive, and participatory structure of research and animation.

In the neighborhoods, the teams worked with local inhabitants, including a historian, a pharmacist, a representative of the worker's organization CFDT, and a gallery director, to mount and execute the on-site events. To take just one example from the many projects, the teams identified the problem of non-recognition among residents, and they decided to take or collect photographic portraits of people in the neighborhoods and to erect temporary exhibitions of the portraits in central locations, including a public park, a square, and a fish stand. The displays became meeting places for residents, where they encountered their neighbors in person and as photographic portraits and, at the end of the exhibition, exchanged photographs with one another. [Fig. 51] Not unlike the social agendas underlying *Portrait de famille*, *Vidéo troisième âge*, and *Promenade Sociologique*, this micro-event, indicative of the larger project, aimed to incite contact among individuals within a given setting and thereby change that environment.

640 The remaining footage of these meetings shows the group sitting in a large circle with Fischer moderating a group discussion, answering questions, translating between French and German for the participants, and occasionally standing to write on a display board. Pedagogical in tone, the seminars reveal the ongoing process of adjustment and deliberation during the project. See Animation, collectif d'art sociologique: [méthodologie], DO T 20030713 DIV 004.001, Fonds Fred Forest vidéo, Inathèque, Paris.


642 Other actions within the neighborhoods included interviewing residents, setting up a megaphone at each exhibition site and inviting passersby to express their views, writing a group letter to the Mayor, and various exchanges of goods, images, and stories. See Animation, collectif d'art sociologique: [Le Moulin à vent], DO T 20030712 DIV 023.001, Fonds Fred Forest vidéo, Inathèque, Paris.
Recently discovered and restored videos of the *Enquête-Animation de Perpignan* illustrate that these public meetings had numerous other components, including a "tag sale," where residents could barter or trade for goods, and a megaphone that was made available to those who wished to express themselves verbally.\(^6\) The photographs, objects, and amplified speech offered pathways for individuals to interact with one another, the intermediaries of social contact. Of course, the insurmountable challenge with such a project is how to assess its highly subjective aim. While the Collective advocated follow-up studies of the neighborhoods and participants, these rarely took place owing to limited funding and, perhaps, to the inherent limitations of retrospective analysis.

As the project's culmination, the group planned a final "rencontre inter-quartier" (inter-neighborhood meeting) with the intent to bring together people from the three, socio-economically diverse neighborhoods where the interventions had been taking place. The invitation to the meeting, which took place on September 18 at five o'clock in the afternoon in the Palais de Congrès, lists the following activities: the projection of different documents (videos and photographs) made during the project, a presentation by the Collective on this "pilot experience," a public debate between the residents of the three involved neighborhoods, and an exchange among inhabitants. The remaining video footage, however, registers the immense difficulty of bridging the existing social gaps in the population. Except for the children, who readily reached for the microphone and searched through the table of objects and photographs collected from the three neighborhoods.

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\(^6\) Three videos were just digitized and made available to the author in a private screening in October 2013. They will soon be part of Fred Forest's archives at Inathèque with the associated document numbers DO T 20030725 DIV 012.001, DO T 20030725 DIV 013.001, and DO T 20030725 DIV 014.001.
neighborhoods, the adults in the audience (perhaps 30 to 40) sat grouped in their social clusters and shied away from speaking. Fischer, who was playing the role of emcee, fell back onto the comfortable tactic of competition when confronted with the deadening silence of the audience. He called out the names of the three neighborhoods and encouraged those representatives to yell louder than the next neighborhood. Fischer himself describes the final event as a failure due, in his opinion, to the location and official nature of the hall, which limited the number and type of people able and willing to attend the event. "An artistic practice like ours," he writes, is "better situated outside in the market squares." 644

The local press also expressed mixed reviews, struggling over a recurring question, as posed by the title of an article: “Is it art or sociology?” Described as bordering on “a certain sociology” and “a certain art,” the actions carried out by the group seemed to eclipse the accepted categories of both sociology and art to the consternation and even provocation of many writers. 645 In another article entitled, “Say Mom? Sociological Art, What is it?” the unnamed author discredits “sociological art” by calling it a “practical joke” and quoting the French proverb “A chacun son métier les vaches seront bien gardées,” which means to stick to one’s area of expertise and to deal with one’s own affairs before meddling in someone else’s. Rather than attempting to answer the title’s childlike question, the author cedes the rest of the column to the Collective to explain itself. After setting out four principles—critique, communication,

644 “[U]ne sorte de demi-échec significatif pour nous du caractère inadéquat d'une institution officielle pour une pratique artistique comme la nôtre, bien mieux située en plein air vue les places des marchés!” Hervé Fischer, Théorie de l'art sociologique, 141.
intervention, and pedagogy—the group proposes sociological art as means to overcome the divide between “a quasi-scientific approach to the environment and a lived connection established among individuals [. . .] and the studied environment.”  

Again and again, the artists in the Collective seek to suture the apparent disconnect between the fields of art and sociology by appealing for inter-personal connections among individuals. Clearly, the group aimed to unite a highly subjective and emotional aesthetic experience with a more analytical and critical scientific outlook to generate a third form of ethical understanding. Attempting to realize some versions of this marriage continued to motivate all three members.

In the late 1970s, the Collective members carried out independent urban or social animation projects, often involving the use of video, in the late 1970s. In the small town of Botmeur in Brittany in 1976, for instance, Thenot worked with the therapist Janine Manant to record short videos of inhabitants doing everyday activities—preparing meals, lighting a fire in a fireplace, rolling a cigarette, or feeding farm animals—in order to create documents of what Thenot and Manant understood as a passing way of village life. They would replay the footage for the subjects in the hope that this mirroring of everyday life would lead to deeper perceptions of the self.  

Fischer, who had worked in public space since the early 1970s, carried out a series of urban animation projects. In Jordaan, Amsterdam (1978) and Guebwiller, Alsace (1979), Fischer annexed a page from the local newspapers (Het Parool in Jordaan and L'Alsace in Guebwiller) and set up a self-publishing structure for the local inhabitants (what I refer to as "experiments of

646 “Dis, Maman? L’art sociologique, c’est quoi?” L’Independant, September 12, 1976, Fonds Fred Forest, Inathèque. See also, the poster “Qu’est donc l’art sociologique?” Fonds Fred Forest, Inathèque, Paris. 
647 See Thenot's description of the project and associated images on his website http://www.jeanpaulthenot.fr/index.php/botmer.
autogestion" in chapter one). Fischer's project *Citoyen/sculpteurs* (Citizen/Sculptors) (1980), which he initiated with Alain Snyers, a young artist and member of the collective Untel, consisted of setting up a workshop in Chicoutimi, Canada, where fifteen French and fifteen Quebecois students worked with local residents to envision proposals for an environmentally-scaled, community sculpture (discussed further in chapter four). Such public intervention projects by Thenot and Fischer are difficult to imagine without the pioneering video work of Forest during the early 1970s.

A second strand of practice intimately connected with the ideal and process of animation via video is Thenot's video-therapy (*vidéothérapie*). In the late 1970s, once the demise of the Collective was underway, Thenot began to integrate video into his psychotherapy practice with adolescents. As he outlines in his book *Vidéothérapie: L'image qui fait renaitre* (Videotherapy: The Image that Bring Rebirth) (1980), he utilized a closed circuit, feedback system so that patients could watch and hear themselves during the therapy sessions. He describes countless scenarios in which this mirrored or doubled self enabled two seemingly contradictory effects: a return to anterior steps of development and an exterior view of the self. According to Thenot's theory, the video/mirror in therapy evokes a return to the Lacanian mirror phase, in which the differentiation of self ("me" and "not me") occurs. At the same time, hearing and seeing one's self from an exterior position opens up space for symbolic and imaginary projection. The self can thus be re-imagined through the combination of these two

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Rather than situating anybody behind the camera (the primary way that film and video had been used in social science research) in a position of observation, the person being filmed is also the person watching the image, a mirror arrangement that inserts a level of discontinuity (productive discontinuity according to Thenot) into the therapy session.

Such a model of video as mirror of the self corresponds only superficially to Rosalind Krauss's influential assessment of video as a psychological medium constructed around narcissism. She writes in 1976, "In that image of self-regard is configured a narcissism so endemic to works of video that I find myself wanting to generalize it as the condition of the entire genre." Krauss criticizes what she called video's "condition of self-reflection" that erases "the difference between subject and object" and induces "the unchanging condition of a perpetual frustration." Thenot, who lists Krauss's article in his bibliography but does not directly address it, would likely counter that video, like all representation, involves a distanciation and estrangement that resists the total collapse of subject and object. The patient seeing him or herself simultaneously gains a view into how others might see him/her, that is, a conception of the self as a social entity. Krauss's recurring disregard for the social distorts her reading of video projects. For instance in the same article, she describes Vito Acconci's Air Time (1973) as an "autonomous discourse between Acconci and his own image" without acknowledging the fact that Acconci's

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649 Introducing his theoretical hypothesis, Thenot writes, "Très globalement, je pensais que la perception et l'écoute de leur image sonore permettraient aux patients de revenir sur des étapes anciennes de leur développement. D'une part, les affects exprimés devaient renvoyer à la reconnaissance du petit enfant face à son image, au cours de ses explorations avec le miroir. D'autre part le fait de se voir et de s'entendre 'de l'extérieur' devait aider, avec le discours du psychothérapeute, à mieux comprendre, par l'ancrage des mots à partir de l'image du corps." Jean-Paul Thenot, Vidéothérapie: L'image qui fait renaitre (Paris: Editions Greco, 1989), 13-14.


651 Ibid., 54-59.
performative, confessional monologue in front of a mirror inside a small room within the Sonnabend Gallery was simultaneously being broadcast to a monitor in the gallery space. By failing to consider the transmission of Acconci's emotional self-examination to a gallery public, Krauss eliminates video as a social medium. Perhaps, if Krauss had engaged with the impressive body of literature, on the use of video by psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists (cited throughout Thenot's text), she might have widened her purview beyond the mirror's frame.

**Conclusion**

Calls for animation rang out from all corners of France's Fifth Republic. Following May '68, it became the tagline of the government's expanding efforts to democratize and decentralize culture and education as well as the rallying cry of socially-engaged artists opposed to art's commercialization and commodification. At the margins of these overlapping and conflicting agendas, a video practice emerged that exploited the medium's ontological claim on reality, technological capacity for feedback, and practical ease of use in order to, paraphrasing Gaudibert, endow social existence with form. Forest's theory and practice of sociological video in the early years of the 1970s sought to do just that. By integrating the self-reflexive and collaborative models of ethnographic cinema and visual anthropology with the imaginary realm and creative self-expression

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652 Ibid., 54.
653 Krauss's rejection of the medium of installation reflects a comparable inability to conceive media through their contextual and social relations rather than through intrinsic and internal structures. See Rosalind Krauss, *A Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2000).
associated with artistic production, Forest deployed video in diverse sites to study, to engage, and ultimately to animate their constitutive social structures. His video projects expose the frame of video not as a means to enclose experience but as an interface to a world of experiences.
"To teach questions and not responses, this will be the pedagogical maxim."

-Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, and Jean-Paul Thenot

Beginning in the 1960s and 70s, teaching increasingly occupied a central place in the expanded field of artistic activities. This was, in part, a result of what Howard Singerman describes as "the post-war professionalization of the artist," which entailed an explosion of specialized and degree-granting programs and the subsequent demand and production of MFA-bearing artists to teach. If this social and institutional history is already well-described, the ways that teaching interacted with artists' practices are less so. Pedagogies formulated in classrooms interacted fluidly with the expanding practices of performance, installation, and concept-based art, which, much like artists' teaching, often had strong political and social valences. New artworks and practices surfaced out of the merging of art and teaching; performative lectures, blackboard drawings, talks, and symposia became artworks in their own right rather than supplemental programming and visual supports.

656 Howard Singerman, Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). While focused on American education history, this book describes many general trends that apply equally well to the situation in Western Europe, which like the United States experienced an upsurge in higher education enrollment following World War II.
This chapter takes the Paris-based Ecole Sociologique Interrogative (ESI), founded in 1976 by the Collective of Sociological Art, as a case study to examine critical practices in artistic pedagogy. In operation until 1980 (with a focused period of activity from 1976 to 1978), ESI was the Collective's longest lasting, most public, and final collaborative project, and it ultimately led to the group's fractious break-up. The artists clearly delineated their intentions in founding the school by analyzing its name. In one of the many bulletins that the artists printed and distributed to promote the school's mission and program, they write:

Why a SCHOOL? Counter-institution, or parody of a school, such an initiative speaks to the aims of an institutional sociological practice, which is at odds with the market system of art. Its creation, as a practice of the collective, offers a marginal space of research and of information exchange, independent of the State and of the commercial system, which does not exist in Paris.\(^{657}\)

The school, intended as both an institution and a counter-institution (a tension that would be at the heart of the Collective's demise), was conceived as a space apart from existing state structures (such as the university) and from the commercial art world. On the one hand, the artists struggled to assert the earnestness of their endeavor and promote the school as a center of activity, and so they adopted methods of institutionalizing the school (in part, as a means of its survival), including the creation of ESI letterhead, the development of a basic event structure, the maintenance of a consistent program, and the publication of a journal. On the other hand, a self-conscious anti-institutionality also ran

through ESI. Unlike conventional schools and universities, ESI did not intend to impart knowledge or to train attendees in a designated field, but rather sought to provoke encounters between disciplines, individuals, and practices that they hoped would cultivate critical and self-critical awareness, an admittedly elusive yet pervasive goal. The Collective thus attempted to run an institution that served at once as a school and as a critique of "school."

The term "sociologique" in the school's name signified a move beyond the confines of art in order to "tackle major problems of contemporary society." In addition to hosting guests from a range of fields (including art, philosophy, architecture, music, and medicine) and of viewpoints (including feminist, psychoanalytic, Marxist, and Socialist), the presentations tended to emphasize the social and material conditions that shape artistic production, everyday life, and intellectual thought with the aim to stimulate awareness of these conditions. The Collective's various lists of course ideas included the contextual art movement in Poland, the cultural imperialism of New York, cinematic and sociological practices, feminist positions, "society without school," and "fashionable obscurantisms."

While only some of these topics became actual courses, the breadth of the lists and palpable political orientation of many topics bespeak ESI's vision. ESI hosted a broad array of presenters, welcoming, over the course of just six weeks, the

658 "C'est école SOCIOLOGIQUE, dont les activités déborderont le champ clos de l'art, pour s'exercer sur une problématique large de la société contemporaine. [. . .] L'origine de tout questionnement, de tout concept, de toute valeur ne peut se situer que dans le lieu social." Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, and Jean-Paul Thenot, "Ecole sociologique interrogative," c. 1976-1977.

avant-garde musician Luc Ferrari, the gynecologist and abortion rights advocate Bernard Fonty, the philosopher Vilèm Flusser, and the Japanese video artist Katsushiro Yamaguchi.

Finally, "interrogative" indicated the priority given to critical questioning and emphasized dialogic rather than monologic models of communication. The Collective envisioned the school as a form of sociological art practice guided by the dictum "to teach questions and not responses." "The school," wrote the artists, "attempts to formulate fundamental questions that eclipse the system of given responses and to demystify the organized powers that serve them." This interrogative, critical dimension stemmed from ESI's content and "classroom" model, which were often interrelated. Many of the presenters came from positions of leftist or anarchist political orientation and social engagement within their diverse fields and, thus, their topics generally reflected opposition to dominant paradigms, such as capitalism, technocracy, and racial and gender hierarchies. The Collective's organization of the physical space, with speaker(s) and audience sitting at the same level on chairs or sometimes on the floor, reaffirmed the anti-hierarchical ideological orientation of many presentations and sought to stimulate exchange between participants. Although most presentations maintained a degree of distance (physical and otherwise) between the presenter and audience members, the Collective utilized a closed-circuit video system to attempt to disrupt such separation by locating a live feed of the audience on a monitor at the front close to the speaker and facing the audience. In addition to the range of commonplace activities entailed in running the school, from contacting individuals, writing and distributing texts, and

660 “INTERROGATIVE, en ce sens que l'école tente de formuler les questions fondamentales qu'occultent les systèmes de réponses toutes faites et de démystifier les pouvoirs organisés qui s'en servent.” *Ibid.*
promoting the program, to managing the physical site and hosting the courses, the Collective's decisions concerning content and structure constituted their practice of sociological art.661 "This PRACTICE of the school," the group's text concludes, "corresponds to the pedagogical approach of the sociological art collective."662

The Collective's proposals for ESI intersected with the contemporaneous emergence and theorization of radical pedagogy and of artistic practice as pedagogy. The former is most closely associated with the Brazilian intellectual and educational theorist Paulo Freire, who in 1968 published his celebrated book Pedagogia do Oprimido (Pedagogy of the Oppressed and Pédagogie des opprimés, first translated into French and English in 1970). Arguing that education is a form of politics, Freire outlined two models of education: "banking" and "problem-posing."663 "Banking education" follows a more traditional model in which the teacher has knowledge that he/she deposits into the minds of passive and silent students. Freire links this model with forms of oppression because "[p]rojecting an absolute ignorance on others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry."664 "Problem-posing education" proposes a more active relationship that privileges the co-creation of

661 As discussed in chapter one, these kinds of labor connected with the service and information economies had themselves changed the notion of artistic labor.  
662 "Cette PRATIQUE de l'école correspond à la démarche pédagogique du collectif d'art sociologique."  
663 Developed over the course of chapter two of Freire's book, the differences between these two models are best described in the following passage: "Banking education (for obvious reasons) attempts, by mythicizing reality, to conceal certain facts which explain the way men exist in the world; problem-posing education sets itself the task of demythologizing. Banking education resists dialogue; problem-posing education regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality. Banking education treats students as objects of assistance; problem-posing education makes them critical thinkers. Banking education inhibits creativity and domesticates (although it cannot completely destroy) the intentionality of consciousness by isolating consciousness from the world [. . . ]. Problem-posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of men as beings who are authentic only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation." Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Continuum, 2005), 82-83.  
664 Ibid., 72.
knowledge through dialogue and interaction within the classroom. Through this latter approach, that of radical and progressive education, "people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation." While the members of the Sociological Art Collective do not cite Freire, their proposal to teach questions and not answers corresponds closely to his "problem-posing" model of education, as does their intent to stimulate greater awareness about the social and political conditions of existence through dialogue and a liberatory process of self-realization. For Freire and the Collective, pedagogy involves an experience based on exchange that gives form to subjects in order to initiate subjective, social, and political transformation.

A number of artists in the 1970s also experimented with pedagogy as a creative and revelatory process, conceiving their artistic work as pedagogical and, vice versa, their teaching as artistic. Among the more prominent examples are Robert Filliou and Joseph Beuys, both of whom were in touch with the Collective. Filliou published *Teaching and Learning as Performing Arts* in 1970, an interactive book with contributions by John Cage, Dieter Roth, George Brecht, Allan Kaprow, Benjamin Patterson, and Joseph Beuys. The artist writes in the beginning, "This study is about permanent creation and audience participation. It is authored (co-authored, with each reader who wishes it) by

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666 Indeed, Freire's other primary arguments in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* are that "problem-solving education" occurs through democratic and egalitarian student-teacher relationships, that students and teachers co-construct knowledge together, and that critical consciousness comes from this dialogical model.
667 The first issue of *Cahier de l'Ecole sociologique interrogative*, which I discuss further on, featured the following article about Filliou, which included a description of his *Teaching and Learning as Performing Arts*: Chantal Gaudreau, "Robert Filliou: Une galerie dans une casquette," *Cahier de l'Ecole sociologique interrogative*, no. 1 (March 1980): 7-15.
man who believes in trying to close the gap between the artist and his public, and joining them in common creation. Filliou created the book as an exercise; he included short texts, puzzles, and exercises submitted by the artists that elicited participation on the part of the reader to solve problems, and he left expanses of white space for readers to fill in. The book demonstrated how "participation techniques developed by artists" could solve "some problems inherent to teaching and learning," namely by engendering a process akin to Freire's "problem-posing model." Filliou also published a number of his own correspondences from the late 1960s on the topic of education reform. For instance, as Filliou describes, "In early 1967, New York State University thought of opening within the next few years an experimental university. The President-to-be of the new campus started to have meetings with educators, students, and interested outsiders, on what could become the curriculum [. . .] and the approach of teaching." Invited to attend some of these meetings by Allan Kaprow, Filliou published in his book two letters to Kaprow written following the meetings. In them, he envisions an "Institute of Permanent Creation," where "problem solving would be carried out," "students would develop and grow as they see fit," guest artists "would act as catalysers," "no grade, no diploma would be given," and students and teachers would "develop tools of self-awareness." Such an institute would incite creativity as a kind of life force that circumvents and subverts dominant paradigms of order. Filliou's proposals as well as

669 Filliou not only conceived the book as a work book but also as a conduit of communication: "Educators and parents are invited to try out some particular techniques and programs, to devise their own along the suggested lines, and to communicate the results to the editor who will try to make them available to all."
670 Ibid., 12.
671 Ibid., 42.
672 Ibid., 46.
those of Beuys reveal that artists' involvement with teaching and pedagogy in the 1970s was not only a result of their own roles as teachers, nor their expansion of artistic forms in the postwar era, but part of an overarching politicization of education and pedagogy and the role of artistic training in that process.

The international uprisings of the late 1960s, especially May '68 in France, were characterized at the time and subsequently as student protests (though, in fact, a wider swath of the population had participated). Reaffirming this characterization of May '68, the only legal reforms to follow the contestations were to the French educational system. The reforms, initiated by Edgar Faure, the Minister of National Education, were in many respects the state's only direct answer to the criticisms that had spurred the uprisings. The "Faure reforms," as they were called, promised to decentralize power; to increase interaction between siloed disciplines; to empower students within the classroom, university, and, thus, society; and to update pedagogical programs to better meet the needs and realities of contemporary society. They achieved these aspirations to varying degrees, but the Faure reforms did spawn a handful of interdisciplinary art and architecture programs. These programs endeavored to transform art education by integrating training in new media, especially those associated with mass culture such as television, by drawing on fields that analyzed both the self/subjectivity and the social/society (psychology, sociology, and anthropology), and by developing less hierarchical university and classroom structures. Artists and critics associated with sociological art were involved in founding and teaching in many of these novel interdisciplinary courses. For instance, Fischer developed and taught courses such as the sociology of color that combined the arts, social sciences, and philosophy. In the period
after May ’68, education became a central focus of radical re-evaluation, and pedagogy a political and creative practice.

Beginning with a discussion of the role of education in the anticipation and tumult of May ’68 and its consequences, this chapter explores the blossoming of educational and pedagogical reforms that followed the uprisings. It focuses in particular on a new type of arts program that emerged in the early 1970s as one effort among many to break down the disciplinary divides that structured education and, in the process, to transform the relationship between artistic practice and social, political, and economic issues and reforms. Because Fischer, more than either Forest or Thenot, conceived his diverse artistic projects beginning in the early 1970s as pedagogical, the chapter turns to his life and work, examining his evolution as an artist and teacher and his theorization of pedagogy as a process of revelation. Finally, this chapter examines the Ecole Sociological Interrogative, offering the first historical account of the school's activities and program. Unlike anything else in Paris at the time, ESI hosted a remarkable range of interlocutors from all over the world, forming a short-lived but impressive experiment in education and prefiguring the numerous small-scale, artist-run schools established in the last two decades in connection with relational aesthetics, social practice, and the so-called "educational turn" in contemporary art practice. ESI, however, embodied a fundamental paradox as both an institution and an anti-institution. It struggled, as did the Collective, to mediate between a desire to establish and strengthen its identity and an

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673 Some of the frequently cited experiments in pedagogic artistic projects are: 16 Beaver, The Silent University, The School of Global Art, The External Program, MASS Alexandria, SOMA, and Islington Mill Art Academy. Sam Thorne discusses these and the genre of the "artist-run school" in "New Schools," Freize, no. 149 (September 2012). See also Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson, eds., Curating and the Educational Turn (London: Open Editions, 2010).
aspiration to resist such institutionalizing tendencies in favor of a freer process of experimental evolution. The closure of ESI in 1980 accompanied the dissolution of the Sociological Art Collective and the permanent fracturing of relations between the three artists.

I. May '68 and Education

The Student Crisis

Contemporary press accounts and subsequent histories have characterized the uprisings of May and June 1968 as led by students and triggered by student dissatisfaction with the university system.\(^{674}\) The headlines on one page of the leftist journal *Combat* on May 15, 1968, underscore the multiple relationships drawn between the unfolding protests and the sphere of the university: "Les Aspects Universitaires de la crise" (The University Aspects of the Crisis), "Les étudiants de Paris ont remporté une nouvelle manche" (The Students of Paris Won a New Round), and "Les étudiants, la politique et la sociale" (Students, The Political and the Social). This close association between students and the contestations was partially a consequence of the demonstrations themselves. Student protests and the occupation of administrative buildings at the University of Nanterre in the spring of 1968 (referred to as "le mouvement de 22 mars") are often cited as the start of May '68 because when the campus closed in early May, the political activity migrated to the Sorbonne in Paris and then spread out from there.\(^{675}\)

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\(^{674}\) I use "the university" and "the university system" throughout to signal the uniformity of the National French University, which consisted of twenty-three universities with the same fundamental structure (courses and teaching, departments, graduation requirements, and so forth) that were part of a large, bureaucratic apparatus. As Raymond Aron wrote, "We did not really have universities, we had the University." *The Elusive Revolution* (New York: Praeger, 1969), 9.

Charismatic student leaders from Nanterre such as Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Jean-Pierre Duteuil, René Reisel, and Mustapha Khayati rose up as organizers during the insurrections.

Taking a somewhat longer view, however, the decade of the 1960s was filled with mounting criticism of the university system from numerous corners. People attacked the system for its centralized bureaucratic organization, for its homogeneity and indifference to local conditions, for its separation between departments and disciplines, for its antiquated pedagogical models based on hierarchy and distance between students and teachers, for its failure to adequately prepare students in the new technological era, and for its alienation and isolation of students from society. Fueling this crisis was a sharp increase in the number of students entering the university after World War II and a correlative lack of viable jobs and economic prospects for them upon graduation, leading to the declaration of a general student crisis. Attacks on the university quickly became political attacks on the government and the state since the centralized authority of the Minister of Education (appointed by the President) managed the French university system. While the protests in May and June 1968 were part of an international wave of

677 "In the six years ending in 1967 the overall university student population more than doubled; the greatest increase was felt in the Paris faculties. By 1967 more than 70 percent of those with the baccalauréat were enrolling in the University—and the number of baccalauréat recipients was itself increasing by an average of more than 20 percent a year." Michelle Patterson, "French University Reform: Renaissance or Restoration?" Comparative Education Review 16, no. 2 (June 1972): 285.
678 Ibid., 281-302.
dissent on university campuses all over the world owing to a range of issues from contact between male and female students in university housing to the Vietnam War, the protests in France culminated years of disapproval and attempted (through often failed) reforms.  

The social sciences played an especially key role in spurring this intense focus on the university. Studies often operated in a positive feedback loop, identifying more and more "problems" with the educational system and thereby inciting the government and universities to hire more social scientists who could undertake additional studies of the underlying issues. This glut of studies led to the theorization of a "student identity," which played centrally in the portrayal of the May '68 uprisings. Psychologists, for instance, attributed students' anxieties and mental instabilities to the institutional conditions of the university. In 1964, Félix Guattari wrote, "The student world is marked by specific dimensions of alienation. The young person who, susceptible or not to mental troubles, arrives at the University has his/her personality refashioned by the pathogenic traits of the totality of this place." Rather than a site of learning, the university according to many psychologists had become a site of oppression, where students were psychologically, economically, and socially remodeled and isolated from the greater world. Whether analyzing how the university reproduced class inequalities (Pierre

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Bourdieu's thesis in *Les héritiers: les étudiants et la culture* [1964]) or describing the student as part of an emerging "youth movement" of the 1960s (Edgar Morin's thesis in *L'Esprit du temps* [1960]), sociologists reaffirmed the emergence of a particular, contemporary, and shared "student identity." Although in part a fiction (like most stereotypes) due to its eradication of difference, this idea of a "student identity" became a powerful source of contestation as well as a frame through which to understand that contestation. Reflecting on the events of 1968, Morin wrote, "The young person and, in a more acute way, the student is part of a protest or revolutionary class, because he is marginal, non-integrated, and sustaining other values than those of adult society."  

Student groups, especially the Union des étudiants de France (UNEF) (French Student Union), mobilized this minority identity, comparing the position of the student to that of the worker, who, like the student, suffered a social and economic devaluation of his/her work. In 1964, the UNEF championed the politicization of the "étudiant-travailleurs" (student-worker) in the fight for better conditions. Protesters marshaled this potent moniker during May '68 with banners that read "étudiants, enseignants, travailleurs, solidaires" (students, teachers, workers, together). The figure of the student rising up against the university (the source of oppression), became a symbol for the empowerment of other disenfranchised people. The invention of the student identity through social science studies alongside the mobilization of student groups during the 1960s contributed to the representation of the 1968 uprisings as "student protests." Such a categorization,  

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681 "Le jeune et, de façon aiguë, l'étudiant, fait partie d'une classe contestante ou révolutionnaire, parce que marginale, non intégrée, nourrissant d'autres valeurs que celles de la société adulte."

however, also inhibited the expansion of May '68 into a more widespread revolution by restricting its causes to "student issues." Nonetheless, following the events of May, the student and the university became sites of radical reform.

While the effects or "afterlives" of May '68 were many and varied, the only legal reforms following the events centered on the university. In July 1968, following the dismissal of Alain Peyrefitte, the newly appointed Minister of National Education, Edgar Faure, initiated a series of dramatic educational reforms called the Loi d'orientation de l'enseignement supérieur (Higher Education Reform Law). According to the historian Michelle Patterson, "The three pillars upon which Edgar Faure placed his hopes for the reform of the University were participation, autonomy and interdisciplinarity." The law transformed the structure of the university system. It dismantled the faculties that had existed for 150 years to form new ones and also initiated the creation of Unités d'enseignement et de recherche (UERs) (Units of Teaching and Research), new interdisciplinary departments independently governed by councils consisting of teachers, researchers, students, and other personnel. Whereas previously the Minister of National Education determined the curriculum, teaching methods, evaluation, and budget, the universities and UERs began to take on these responsibilities. The Faure reforms embodied many ideals of May, including the decentralization of power, the involvement

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682 Some authors, such as the historian Kristin Ross, have suggested that this characterization also served as a means to cordon off or delimit the events by describing the sources of the contestations as "students' problems" rather than broader social or economic ills. See Kristin Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 6-7, 58-70.
683 As discussed in the introduction and chapter two, the government's program of cultural development and the creation of Beaubourg was also an important "afterlife" of May '68.
685 Michelle Patterson, "French University Reform: Renaissance or Restoration?" *Comparative Education Review*, 286.
686 "Instead of twenty-three identical universities, each divided into five faculties, after the reforms there were sixty-five universities with more than 720 UERs." *Ibid.*, 287-289.
of students and professors in the governing of the university, and a shift from specialization to interdisciplinary instruction and research, but the practical application of the reforms often languished. As Patterson outlines, student participation in the councils and in voting frequently fell short of reaching a quorum. Many UERs were created out of the prior alliances and predilections of professors, often generating programs as conservative and specialized, if not more so, than the former centralized model had produced. Finally, an amendment to the law adopted in June 1971 enlarged the Minister's powers, reinstituting the Minister's authority over examinations and evaluations. Patterson concludes her 1972 essay about the Faure reforms by underscoring the lack of real transformation: "The University thus has not been fundamentally changed by the loi d'orientation. The Faure reform which was to have been the renaissance of the French University has, instead, found itself distorted in the University's restoration to its former self." Despite these misgivings, the reforms of July 1968 secured May '68's portrayal as deeply (even primarily) interconnected with the university and students. They also carried many of the hopes of May '68 into the 1970s, sparking the conception of innovative interdisciplinary programs and courses as well as novel pedagogical approaches. Rather than focusing solely on the university system to observe the effects of the reforms, historians should also turn their attention to the pedagogical experiments taking place at its margins—in apartments, art centers, and studios.


688 Michelle Patterson, "French University Reform: Renaissance or Restoration?" Comparative Education Review, 301.
The Invention of Post-May '68 Pedagogy

Many of the artists and theorists central to the sociological art movement were inspired by and involved in the new programs and courses seeking to realize a post-May '68 pedagogy. These diverse endeavors merged disciplines and approaches traditionally kept apart while also seeking to nurture more engaged classroom environments that eradicated conventional student-teacher hierarchies. In an essay titled "Laboratoires de la réforme pédagogique" (Laboratories of Pedagogical Reform), the historian Dominique Damamme examines the Centre universitaire expérimental de Vincennes (CUEV), one of two new "pluridisciplinary universities" established in Paris in the wake of May '68. When it opened to students in January 1969, CUEV quickly became the site of pedagogical experimentation, following such proposals as the eradication of traditional examinations, the inclusion of professors from outside of academia, the formation of interdisciplinary research teams, and the organization of students into small working groups. The experimental university aimed to enact what René Lourau had called for as early as 1964: the invention of another pedagogy, a "pedagogy of comrades," which would entail the transformation of student-teacher relations and constitute the formation of a "véritable communauté de personnes" (genuine community of people). An array of now-celebrated intellectual figures taught at CUEV (which in 1971 became Université-Paris 8 and in 1980 moved to Saint Denis), including Michael Foucault, Jean-Claude Passerson, Gilles Deleuze, Jean-François Lyotard, Alain Badiou, Michel Serres, Étienne

689 The other university was Dauphine, dedicated to economics and management. Dominique Damamme, "Laboratoires de la réforme pédagogique," Mai-juin 1968, 254.
690 This progressive model of education aimed to prepare students as critical thinkers rather than to fulfill specific jobs.
Balibar, Jacques Rancière, Hélène Cixous, and Frank Popper. These professors and countless students aimed to make intellectual inquiry political in both its form and content by developing alternative formats to lectures, increasing contact between professors and students, and encouraging the critical analysis of disciplines through recourse to other disciplines. Indeed, much of the philosophical work by these figures extended such pedagogical exercises into the realms of sociology, psychoanalysis, literature, and political theory. While CUEV struggled to coalesce as anything like a cohesive community, fractured by clashing factions of the radical left, it practically and symbolically carried out the creation of a post-May '68 pedagogy, restructuring relations between professors and students and between the university and the rest of the world.

Calls for reform also echoed in the halls of the Écoles des Beaux Arts, where training in the visual arts had traditionally taken place. As touched upon in chapter one, Pierre Restany and François Pluchart declared in June 1968 the need to offer artists "polyvalent training" and even speculated about how a department of applied sociology would permit artists to connect more directly with both the language and contemporary issues of society.692 The "UER des Arts plastiques, d'Esthétique et des Sciences de l'art" (Unit of Teaching and Research of the Fine arts, Aesthetics, and the Sciences of Art), which Bernard Teyssèdre founded in 1971 at Paris-Université 1 (the Sorbonne), emerged in response to such pleas and through state support.693 Whereas previously the practical

693 Most of the information about this program comes from Teyssèdre, the teachers, and the students themselves. Gérard Pelé, Mark Lago Rivera, and Yann Toma undertook a series of video interviews with the individuals involved with the program and produced a series of short films referred to as Fac’s Tories between 1993 and 1995. In 2000, Toma exhibited these videos, which he retitled Témoins des arts plastiques à l’Université, in the exhibition L’archivage comme activité artistique (Archiving as Art). These
training of artists had taken place at art schools and the study of aesthetics and history at universities, Teyssèdre strove to marry the two spheres, uniting the theory of art (aesthetics and history) with practice. Art historians and theorists from within the university system taught alongside and in collaboration with working artists. Teyssèdre's program provided unparalleled teaching opportunities and a steady, if small, salary to a range of contemporary artists, including Michel Journiac, Léa Lublin, Bernard Rancillac, Henri Cueco, and Lygia Clark (many of whom did not have terminal degrees). Perhaps most important, the program sought to define novel methods of teaching and envisioning art by integrating fine arts media such as painting and sculpture with novel media technologies, art history, aesthetics, and expanded forms such as performance. It was the only program of its kind in Paris.  

Many of the associated artists, especially Journiac, Lublin, and Clark, employed non-traditional techniques to encourage student interaction with one another and with their environments. For instance, the Brazilian artist Lygia Clark, who was living in Paris to escape the repressive military regime in Brazil, utilized group performance and so-called "relational objects" to bring about a greater haptic and psychic sensitivity among students. A bag filled with air and tied with a rubber band with a small stone placed on top would be passed among students who sensed the weight of the stone and its spatial

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694 UER des Arts plastiques, d'Esthétique et des Sciences de l'art prefigured in many respects the UFR Arts, Philosophie, Esthétique, which was formed in 1984 at CUEV/Université-Paris 8 to bring together the departments of art that had remained relatively discrete: Arts Plastiques, Arts et Technologies de l'Image, Cinéma et audiovisuel, Danse, Musique, Photographie, and Théâtre. See the UFR's website, available at: http://www.univ-paris8.fr/UFR-Arts-philosophie-esthetique.

displacement. The performance *Anthropophagic Drool* consisted of students pulling cotton string from their mouths and covering a central student lying on the ground with a web of slobber and string in order to disrupt divisions between inside and outside. These performances and objects, Clark's art works, served pedagogically to evoke in students a heightened awareness of themselves in relation to others and their environments.

Teyssèdre's program provided an invaluable outlet for artists working at the margins of accepted categories and in between media. It also encouraged pedagogical experimentation, much of which sought to sensitize students to their surroundings rather than to impart specific technical skills or aesthetic paradigms.

Hervé Fischer also gained his livelihood beginning in 1969 or 1970 by teaching interdisciplinary courses for these novel programs and universities. He taught primarily at Paris-Université V, which was dominated by the faculty of medicine but also housed a few UER programs including one dedicated to the social sciences, where Fischer taught. He also occasionally taught in Teyssèdre's program.\(^6\)

In his courses, Fischer integrated the fields of art, architecture, philosophy, and social sciences. One of the few remaining documents recording Fischer's teaching is a two-page description of a course titled "Analyse de la fonction architecturale du point de vue plastique" (Analysis of the Architectural Function from the Visual Point of View) and taught in 1970-71 as part of the Unité pedagogique d'Architecture (Pedagogical Architecture Unit). According to the description, the course provided students "a good understanding of the psychology and of

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\(^6\) Hervé Fischer, interview with the author, November 24, 2013, Montreal. I have not located any extant documentation of Fischer's teaching in Teyssèdre's program.
the symbolism of materials, forms, and ambiances."\textsuperscript{697} The course led students through three initial phases of analysis: analyses of perception; of behavior and the psychology of behavior (he mentions Wolfgang Köhler and Maurice Merleau-Ponty); and of numerous specific architectural examples via a range of methodologies. These steps, the description states, would encourage a broad understanding of the objects, styles, and behaviors that make up space, an understanding not rooted in any single field but rather enriched through a multi-disciplinary approach bringing together phenomenology, psychology, sociology, aesthetics, and art history. This curriculum would enable students to assess contemporary architecture according to its varying purposes and effects rather than simply its forms and styles.\textsuperscript{698} Fischer also recalls teaching courses on subjects such as the sociology of communication and the sociology of color within various UER programs.\textsuperscript{699} Fischer's teaching as well as the programs that hired him exemplify a widespread post-'68 impetus to re-imagine pedagogy and the university through interdisciplinarity, which was envisioned as the path to break down the medieval structure of the university and the hierarchies that accompanied specialization.

In addition to teaching in these new programs, Fischer also echoed the calls by Restany, Pluchart, and Teyssèdre to reform art schools. In an undated text entitled "L'art des Ecoles" (The Art of Schools) (probably from 1977), Fischer railed against the inefficacy of French art schools and lambasted them, in particular, for what he described

\textsuperscript{697} "Ce cours tentera donc d'aider l'Etudiant, en lui donnant, à partir d'une initiation aux mécanismes plastiques, une bonne connaissance de la Psychologie et de la symbolique des matériaux, des formes et des ambiances." DOC 10504.1656, Fonds Hervé Fischer, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Paris.

\textsuperscript{698} "Ces trois premières phases d'études devraient permettre aux étudiants d'aborder esthétiques dominants: baroque, sur-décor, stylisme, design, fonctionnalisme, monumentalisme; elle devra permettre une définition précise de la fonction architecturale et de sa problématique." DOC 10504.1656, Fonds Hervé Fischer, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Paris.

\textsuperscript{699} Hervé Fischer, interview with the author, November 24, 2013, Montreal.
as their isolation from and blindness to contemporary society and media. "What strikes
me," he wrote, "is the total disconnection of art schools, or their lack of pertinence, in
relation to the historical moment of contemporary society."700 Indicative of this
"inactualité" (anachronism), art schools still train students in traditional fine arts media
"rather than introducing them directly to video, urban communication, radio and
television" and rather than giving them "historical, social, economic, and sensitive
information about the problems of communication of their time, in such a way that they
can intervene with some clarity."701 Fischer proposes to unleash the teaching of art from
traditional media and to approach it through programs that place art and its teaching in
society rather than at a remove from it, ideals that reverberate throughout the Collective's
sociological art practice.702

At the end of his essay on art schools, Fischer mentions the Collective's founding
of the Ecole Sociologique Interrogative as an unequivocal response to the ongoing
educational and pedagogical crisis. The vision and program of ESI corresponded to the
orientation of the Faure reforms and UERs in numerous ways. Touting the school's
founding refrain to teach questions and not responses, Fischer describes the school as "a
place of meeting, of the exchange of information, with participants from all geographical

700 "Ce qui me frappe, c'est l'inactualité totale des écoles de d'art, ou leur absence de pertinence, tant vis-à-
vis du moment historique de la société contemporaine." Hervé Fischer, "L'art des Ecoles," DOC
701 "A supposer qu'il y ait encore des artistes à produire, on devrait peut-être soit leur proposer l'artisanat, le
papier peint, les tissus et les marines (cadres compris), car il y a encore un marché important pour le kitsch,
soit les initier directement à la vidéo, à la communication urbaine, à la radio et la télévision, soit leur faire
des données historiques, sociales, économiques, sensibles, des problèmes de communication de leur
epoque, de telle sorte qu'ils puissent y intervenir avec un minimum de lucidité. L'aveuglement actuel des
écoles d'art sur notre époque est scandaleux." Ibid. Through his discussion of kitsch, Fischer retains a
hierarchy between popular art and "high" art, using "kitsch" to distinguish a different model of art that is
connected with new technologies and the social realities of the period.
702 "Ce qui est grave, et que nous essayons d'éviter, c'est le fait évident qu'aujourd'hui, les écoles d'art ne
sont pas dans la société." Ibid.
and intellectual directions." "We try in this parodic school," he writes, "to secrete our questioning awareness of the world." He lists ESI's diverse presenters—from an architect to an avant-garde musician to a gynecologist—as a testament to the school's commitment to link rather than separate multiple intellectual and practical spheres. Open and free to all interested parties, ESI also encouraged lively exchange between attendants and presenters and championed critical pedagogy as a means of learning for the sake of learning rather than for pre-professional preparation. The Collective's school embodied the hopes of the post-May '68 period, and it was a place, event, and institution through which the group could enact and activate the theories and practices it espoused. As Fischer reasons in another untitled and undated text archived within the same folder, education ("from preschool until the 'permanent' training of adults") is the mechanism that sets into place the very preconceptions and ideologies that the Collective aims to question and thus "sociological art cannot ignore it." Education became a key platform for the Collective in its final years; the group's experimentation with pedagogy as a sociological art practice fulfilled many of the ambitions of the post-'68 period, and its dissolution pointed to the immense challenges inherent in those very ambitions.

II. Artist as Pedagogue

Fischer's "Pedagogical" Art Practice

One of the first texts Fischer published was a manifesto titled "Pour une pratique artistique socio-pédagogique" (For a socio-pedagogical art practice), which appeared in

703 "Lieu de rencontre, d’échange d’information, avec des participants venus de tous les azimuts géographiques ou intellectuels, nous essayons dans cette école parodique de secrèter notre conscience interrogative du monde. Cela ne semble pas inutile dans une société où tout le monde sait tout sur tout et nous l’ingurgite à coups de mass-média." Ibid.

the inaugural issue of *arTitudes* (February 1972). In this manifesto, Fischer declared that artistic practice must no longer be "the expression of an alienated thought [but] become liberatory." "The work of art has the status of a pedagogical material. It must make as clear as possible the thought that it expresses and must raise questions about its traditional pseudo-religious character."705 With the term "pedagogical," Fischer drew attention to the mental processes (recognition, analysis, reflection, understanding, evaluating, and so forth) that artworks, understood quite broadly as images, objects, or actions, initiate among viewers/participants. His manifesto championed what artworks do rather than simply what they present. While undoubtedly a facet of the Collective's conception and practice of sociological art, the pedagogical was one among many approaches that included, as I have attempted to show in previous chapters, methods of inquiry such as questionnaires and interviews as well as tactics of animation via mass media and urban interventions. Perhaps pedagogy undergirds these other methods in that they all seek to modify audiences' conceptions and experiences of art and society, but only Fischer characterized his own artistic production as "pedagogical." Nonetheless, the few art historical texts that directly address sociological art and the Collective often describe the group's practices as pedagogical. For example, in Catherine Millet's influential survey text *L'Art contemporain en France*, Millet associates sociological art with 1920s agit-prop and 1960s kinetic art on account of its "belief in the pedagogical virtues of art." For Millet, however, "pedagogical" signals an ideologically-driven

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message to be communicated rather than the kinds of inquiry and exchanges among individuals and fields envisioned by the Fischer and the Collective.706

One reason for this focus on pedagogy may have been the comparable prominence of Fischer within an international art world. Compared to Forest and Thenot, Fischer was in touch with a much larger network of artists, curators, and critics, contact owing in part to his polyglot capacities. The American art historian Kristine Stiles, for instance, became involved with some of Fischer's public projects in Canada in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In her important resource book *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings* (1996), Stiles included an entry on the Sociological Art Collective that describes the group as splitting in 1978 and Fischer, "the principal theorist of the group," as founding an enlarged Groupe de l'Art Sociologique and publishing the *Cahiers de l'Ecole Sociologique Interrogative*.707 While not erroneous, this account stresses the period after 1978 rather than the Collective's early collaborative works. In lieu of reprinting the Collective's manifestos, the book includes an excerpt from a tract written by Fischer in 1979 that outlines a theory of sociological art, which Stiles introduces by discussing Fischer's individual projects rather than the Collective's work. Although Fischer's text attends to the group's multiple approaches (and "we" is used throughout), the strong association between sociological art and Fischer's artistic projects and purview obscures the involvement of Forest and Thenot. These biases reflect, as Stiles suggests, the influence of Fischer, who, drawing on his academic training, took up the mantel of group spokesperson.

Fischer was born in Bourge-la-Reine to a bourgeois family just outside of Paris in 1941; he graduated from the Ecole normale supérieure in 1964 and completed a master's degree in philosophy in 1966 under the guidance of Raymond Aron, writing a thesis on Spinoza's political philosophy. Despite the encouragement of his professors, Fischer struggled over whether or not to enter a doctoral program (a path he ended up not pursuing), and Aron invited him to work as an assistant in philosophy at the Sorbonne. An important figure in Fischer's life, Aron introduced him to the work of scholars Pierre Francastel and Lucien Goldmann, who would inspire his emerging interest in sociology and art. Fischer recalls May '68 as a turning point in his shift from philosophy to sociology: "I was thus in philosophy except that then arrived May '68. And in May '68, like everyone, I thought that philosophy was good but sociology was more important." As for many other young people at the time, sociology seemed to possess the greatest potential to combine academic inquiry and social change, to address and mitigate the social ills aired in May. At the time of the protests, Fischer was working as a writer for Alain Peyrefitte, the Minister of National Education, and so when the protests broke out, Fischer occupied a delicate position. Torn between his work for the Ministry of Education and his growing sympathies with the protestors, Fischer did not directly participate in the protests but also did not return to work for Peyrefitte, who was removed from his post as Minister during the uprisings and replaced by Faure. May '68 marked a pivotal moment in Fischer's biography and his intellectual orientation. "I was submerged," he recalled, "in reading Pierre Francastel, Marxist sociologists, and..."
Situationist texts denouncing the society of spectacle just after May 68.709 After leaving the Ministry of Education, Fischer sought out teaching opportunities in the UER programs, where he could cultivate his developing interest in the sociology of culture and communication. Through this teaching, Fischer transformed his artistic practice.

While Fischer never had a formal fine arts training, he took painting and drawing courses at the studio of the painter A. R. Philippe beginning in 1959 and throughout the 1960s made gestural and abstract, ink-on-colored-paper drawings and acrylic paintings, most of which he destroyed around 1971. Paradoxically, it was at this time that Fischer initiated a new series of activities that would garner him attention as an artist. What united these diverse projects—ranging from prints to performances to mail art—was a critique of the values, ideologies, and forms associated with the institutions of art and with much contemporary artistic production. By putting into question certain assumptions about art, he hoped to engage viewers in their own critical reassessments. Fischer grouped his artistic activities between 1971 and 1974 under the title “Hygiène de l’art” (hygiene of art). He wrote in March 1972, "THE HYGIENE OF ART, what I here describe, is thus 'cultural scrubbing' (the rejection of consecrated culture), which should allow new insights and the activation of rupture with the respect generally elicited by the sacrosanct character of the work of art."710 Such pronouncements recall historical avant-garde denunciations of bourgeois art from futurism to dada as well as the

710 “L’HYGIENE DE L’ART, ce que j’appelle ainsi, c’est donc ‘le décrassage culturel’ (rejet de la culture consacrée), qui doit permettre de nouvelles prises de conscience, et la mise en situation de rupture avec le respect que suscite généralement le caractère sacro-saint de l’œuvre d’art. C’est la dénonciation de l’interdit socioculturel qu’exprime l’art.” PREST XT 162/11, Dossier Hervé Fischer, Fonds Pierre Restany, Archives de la critique d’art contemporain, Rennes.
contemporaneous swell of institutional critique by artists. But Fischer envisioned his artworks operating slightly differently. He described the artwork as “un matériau pédagogique et de démonstration” (a material of pedagogy and demonstration) and emphasized its capacity to display and to deconstruct "art" in all its theoretical, economic, and material dimensions by engaging viewers in interrogative processes. Rather than presenting information, Fischer sought to stimulate revelatory processes through a broad array of forms, media, and interventions. These series of projects illustrate the close relationship between pedagogy and ideology critique in Fischer's practice.

One of his earliest projects was a series of paintings made in response to the then-predominant movement or "group" of painters, Supports/Surfaces. Formed in 1969, the artists associated with Supports/Surfaces interrogated the elementary components of painting and undertook theoretical and philosophical investigations of painting in the journal Peinture-Cahiers théoriques. In reaction to the deconstructed canvases, empty stretchers, repetitive colors, and abstract patterns of Supports/Surfaces artists, Fischer sought to bring the reduced, formal means of painting into the social realm. He developed a genre of painting by pressing his hands dipped in the colors of red, white, and blue onto cloth towels hung on a wooden bar such as those one would find in public restrooms.

711 PREST XT 162/13, Dossier Hervé Fischer, Fonds Pierre Restany, Archives de la critique d’art contemporain, Rennes.
[Fig. 54] In this everyday object, Fischer located the fundamental material elements that constituted painting (paint, canvas, and wood support) and yet aimed to produce paintings that in their references to non-paintings (i.e. to the vulgar object of the towel dispenser) deconstructed painting as such. Furthermore, while his choice of what he calls “conventional” colors—the readymade nationalist color scheme of red, white, and blue—reduces the artist’s “subjective” choice (akin to Jasper John’s reliance on flag and target forms), Fischer's use of his own handprint points to the presence of the vaunted artist’s hand while refusing to endow that hand with any particular skill. In an announcement for an exhibition of his Essuie-mains (Hand towel) paintings in Vitry-sur-seine, south of Paris, in November 1971, he wrote, "This hand towel dispenser questions the fact of painting on a stretched canvas on a wood frame." He encouraged visitors to the exhibition to treat the painting hanging in the gallery as a towel—to touch it and to spin it on its dowel—thus dirtying the object. [Fig. 55]

Fischer grouped his Essuie-mains paintings (and those similar to it) under the generic heading “Hygiène de l’art” because, as he explains, "[this object] opposes itself to typical painting; to a particular art clogged by received culture, by methods, that are no longer possible to imitate." With their material, iconic, and functional references to the quotidian object of the hand towel—something, perhaps paradoxically, associated with cleanliness—Fischer's paintings reveal "painting"—both the rarified object and the loaded symbol of high art—as equivalent to non-art forms, and thereby he enacts a cleansing of

713 “Cet essuie-mains met en question le fait de peindre sur une toile tendue sur un chassis de bois.” PREST.XT 162, Dossier Hervé Fischer, Fonds Pierre Restany, Archives de la critique d’art contemporain, Rennes.
714 “Contrairement aux habitudes, chacun a le droit de la toucher et de la faire tourner.” Ibid.
715 “Il s’oppose à une certaine peinture; à un certain art encrassé de culture reçue, de procédés, qu’il n’est plus possible d’imiter.” Ibid.
the values accrued by "Art." Fischer writes, "The pedagogy of the 'essuie-mains' is thus completed by the semantic reduction that I affect on the aesthetic message of art."\(^{716}\) Although criticized by the critic Catherine Millet for the Nazi German undertones of "hygiene," Fischer most likely drew his inspiration from the *Nouveau réaliste* artist Martial Raysse's concept "hygiène de la vision," which he developed around 1960 to characterize his approach to representation, which included the artist's incorporation of consumer objects and plastic packaging in response to postwar society's obsession with purity, the new, and consumption.\(^ {717}\) Fischer appropriated the term "hygiene" also to relate his representational strategies to societal issues, specifically the values and exceptionalism ascribed to art.

"Hygiene of art" became a "campaign" in subsequent years and a frame for a series of projects that through either action or medium criticized ideologies underlying art. In the early 1970s, Fischer performed a number of artistic actions, including “Tête d’artiste sous sachet plastique hygiénique à jeter” (1972) (Artist's head in a hygienic, disposable plastic sack), "Le conditionnement dans la seconde moitié du XXe siècle" (1972) (Conditioning in the second half of the 20th century), and “Usage ultime du chlorure de vinyle” (1973) (Ultimate usage of plastic vinyl), in which the artist placed his head and then entire body inside plastic bags. [Fig. 56] Drawing on *Nouveau réaliste* artists' work with plastic and inspired by the radical performances of his friends Michel Journiac and Gina Pane, Fischer's early actions utilized the material of plastic and the

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\(^{717}\) Raysse incorporated plastic displays and packages–vitrines, bottles, and bags–into his paintings and combine sculptures. Restany and subsequent art historians have characterized his appropriation of society's presentational and commercial devices as an interest in the consumerism and disposability of contemporary post-war culture. See *Martial Raysse* (Paris: Galerie nationale du jeu de paume; Nîmes: Carré d'art, Musée d'art contemporain, 1992).
artist's body to reexamine the status of the artist. He was intrigued by plastic as an "ideological vehicle" of deep cultural codes from hygiene to disposability. Through the performative use of plastic, he sought to position himself as a consumable product—or the image of one—conditioned like a commodity to fit within an economic schema and then to be discarded. Fischer's performances could be read as an indictment of the artist's function—or lack thereof—in society, and in following this interpretation, the threat of suffocation and death underlying the actions and the photographs of them amplifies the morbidity of a disposable culture.

For his next major project, entitled *La Déchirure* (The Tear), Fischer invited artists to send him works of art or reproductions of works of art that he would then tear into small pieces and place in clear plastic specimen bags. *La Déchirure* originated in Fischer's demolition of his own prior gestural abstract work from the 1960s, an act that he extended to the work of other artists. He initiated the project by mailing an announcement to his contacts (and their contacts) via the expansive network of artists interconnected through the burgeoning practice of mail art. In one of his letters soliciting

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718 "La matière plastique est un vecteur idéologique susceptible de retenir l'attention d'un artiste moins soucieux de retenir l'attention d'un artiste moins soucieux de surenchère à la création formelle et de virtuosité esthétique que de l'analyse du système de valeurs qui fonde la société." He later writes, "La matière plastique, matériau d'emballage et de conditionnement par excellence de tous les biens de consommation, renvoie par son usage généralisé à l'homme lui-même, client et en fin de compte lui-même produit finale conditionné de cette production d'objets, de services et même de mass media et autres marchandises culturelles." PREST XT 162/17, Dossier Fred Forest, Fonds Pierre Restany, Archives de la critique d'art contemporain, Rennes.

719 An important precedent that Fischer may have been aware of is Gustave Metzger's Destruction in Art Symposium (DIAS), which brought together a diverse group of artists, writers, scientists, and practitioners from other fields from September 9–11, 1966 in London to discuss the freeing impulse of auto-destructive art. A press release for the event states, "The main objective of DIAS was to focus attention on the element of destruction in Happenings and other art forms, and to relate this destruction in society." The symposium included a number of artists who were close with Fischer and the Collective, including John Latham, Wolf Vostell, Günter Brus, and Peter Weibel. See documentation of the symposium in the exhibition catalogue Chris Stephens and Katharine Stout, *Art & the 60's: This Was Tomorrow* (London: Tate Museum, 2004). Information is also available on Tate's website: http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/exhibition/art-60s-was-tomorrow/exhibition-themes/destruction-art-symposium
participation, he explains that he would mail the participant's destroyed work, mixed with the refuse of his own early pictures, back to the contributing artist: "Fischer will tear up and will return without charge all the works of art and reproductions of works of art that artists would like to send him, joining with them debris of his own old paintings." The physical combination of works by different artists further distances the remnants from a privileged authorial origin. The response to Fischer's request was strong; according to a list published on the occasion of his exhibition in February 1974 at the Gallery La Bertesca in Italy, approximately 300 artists sent works of art to be torn apart. Small, clear plastic bags approximately four by six inches stapled closed with a paper label reading "Campagne prophylactique" (prophylactic campaign) along with the title of the artist's work, his/her name and country of origin, Fischer's signature, and the date of the tearing hung in evenly spaced rows along the gallery walls. [Fig. 57] This serial treatment emphasizes the diminished specificity and iconicity of each individual work. A diverse set of materials–paper, fiber, canvas, photographs–fills the plastic bags, revealing vestiges of the original works' material differences, however diminished by the plastic envelopes. Overall, however, the act of tearing or cutting up the artworks or their reproductions and then packaging them identically reduces the works to dysfunctional commodities, eschewing and criticizing the traits of both fine art and economic profit. In fact, embedded in this project and in the enterprise of mail art more generally, is an alternative economy based on gift and exchange rather than purchase or fungible product.

720 “Fischer déchirera et renverra gratuitement toutes les œuvres d’art et reproductions d’œuvres aux artistes qui voudront lui en envoyer, en y joignant des débris de ses anciennes peintures personnelles.” PREST XT 162/12, Dossier Hervé Fischer, Fonds Pierre Restany, Archives de la critique d’art contemporain, Rennes.
721 Ibid.
On a bulletin produced in conjunction with La Déchirure and titled “LA DECHIRURE COMME PEDAGOGIE” (THE TEAR AS PEDAGOGY), Fischer describes the ultimate goal of tearing up artworks as “pedagogical” rather than nihilist or radical. He writes, "The tear, in so far as it demands a true hygiene of art, must reject the formalism of previous approaches, it must be unaesthetic: its goal is pedagogical." 722

Many artists, including Pablo Picasso, Hans Arp, and Jacques Villeglé, had utilized torn paper, whether found or produced, in their diverse practices, but Fischer regarded these uses as chiefly formal rather than pedagogical. He sought a hygiene or purity of art related not to form but rather to politics and ideology. The tear (just as the touch in his Essuie-mains paintings) invokes a rejection of art's exceptionality, of art as something to be preserved in an increasingly disposable culture. A radical leveling takes place when a drawing by César and a painting by Rancillac are rendered indistinguishable as bits and pieces sealed in plastic sacks, as dysfunctional and unwanted commodities. 723

He employs the term "pedagogy" to describe a demystification of art's "mythic, religious, and political values" that takes place in both La Déchirure and Hygiène de l'art. 724

Fischer invests in the possibility that the objects and acts associated with these projects might modify people's thinking about and approaches to art, specifically by identifying

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722 “La déchirure, telle que l’exige une véritable hygiène de l’art, doit rejeter le formalisme des démarches antérieures, elle doit être inesthétique: son but est pédagogique.”

723 Of course the very desire to name the participating artist and the viewers' shock at the destruction of that artist's work undercuts the potential effect of democratization that tearing portends. One need only to think how differently we would understand Robert Rauschenberg's Erased de Kooning Drawing if it were not an erased original drawing by the famed New York school artist.

724 In a tract dated June 1973, Fischer summarizes his ultimate goal as “la désacralisation de l’art, c’est-à-dire la démystification des valeurs mythiques, religieuses et politiques (les trois étant étroitement liées) que véhicule l’art au profit de la classe dominante, et notamment la réduction des fantasmes illusoires de l’imaginaire et de la pensée mythique qui pèsent sur l’individu.” PREST XT 162/18, Dossier Hervé Fischer, Fonds Pierre Restany, Archives de la critique d’art contemporain, Rennes.
and challenging art's imbrications in multiple systems (economic, political, religious, and so forth).

Fischer's last independent project before the official formation of the Collective in the fall of 1974 prefigured the interventionist, critical, and public strategies of the group. In the summer of 1974, Fischer covered traffic and no parking signs in the Saint-Germain-des-Pres neighborhood of Paris with pasted paper inscribed with the question "Art, qu'avez-vous à declarer?" (Art, what do you have to say?). Signs of prohibition thus became open yet demanding questions posed to the art world. [Fig. 58] This left-bank neighborhood in the 1970s housed many private art galleries (as it still does today). Fischer's question to (and about) art implored the artists, gallerists, and buyers that frequented this neighborhood to consider what art might say, or fail to say. His interventions thus extended his critical interrogations of art as well as his desire to involve viewers in public discourse, signaling a tactic crucial to the Collective's group work.

Beginning with Fischer's symbolic destruction of his drawings and paintings in 1971 and culminating with his parasitic public signs in 1974, Fischer's artistic production established the course of his critical and interrogative artistic practice. To describe his endeavors, Fischer most often turned to the term "pedagogy," a semantic choice to signal his distinct intentions. Although many artists in the 1970s engaged in what has become known, and canonized, as "institutional critique," and Fischer's projects could easily fit

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725 In the early 1980s, Fischer brought his "panneaux de la prevention artistique" (signs for artistic prevention) to numerous cities, including Angoulême (1980), Sao Paulo (1981), Montreal (1981-82), Kassel (1982), and Lyon (1983), and expanded the repertoire of questions to existential ones ("Qui penses-tu être?" [Who are you?] and "Qui voudrais-tu être?" [Who would you like to be?]) and political ones ("Liberdade" [Liberty] and "Realidade" [Reality] pointing to different sections of Sao Paulo). Anne Sauvageot, "Un ‘art sociologique’?" Nouvelle Nature, 13. See also Hervé Fischer, "Les signalisations imaginaires," Nouvelle Nature, 42-53.
within this broad category, his insistence on "pedagogy" gestured to the ways that artistic practice might function as a mode of teaching. The objects or events created by the artist were tools in an ongoing process of education or training contingent upon the involvement of individuals. Like artists associated with institutional critique, Fischer identified and sought to reveal the ideologies that structure the institutions of art (whereby "institution" refers broadly to form, aesthetic value, commerce and sale, display, permanence, and so forth), but he did not stop at the level of revelation; he pressed toward engaging viewers physically and mentally in critical reflection.

**Sociological Art and Pedagogy**

When Fischer began to work with Forest and Thenot as a member of the Sociological Art Collective in the fall of 1974, he continued to characterize his artistic projects as pedagogical, and the presence of this term in three of the Collective's manifestos likely reflects Fischer's presence. It appears in the group's founding manifesto as one of the Collective's three key methods—listed as animation, inquiry, and pedagogy—a model that corresponds to the three artists' individual approaches. In the second manifesto, written in the spring of 1975 while the Collective was preparing the numerous exhibitions discussed in chapter one, the term begins to serve as an overarching descriptor of the Collective's work: "[sociological art] elaborates a pedagogical practice of animation, inquiry, perturbation of communication channels."726 "Pedagogical" comes to refer to the edifying and revelatory potential of the group's practices of animation and

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726 "L’art sociologique tente de mettre en question les superstructures idéologiques, le système de valeurs, les attitudes et les mentalités conditionnées par la massification de notre société. C’est dans ce but qu’il recourt à la théorie sociologique, à ses méthodes et qu’il élabore une pratique pédagogique d’animation, d’enquête, de perturbation des canaux de communication." Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, and Jean-Paul Thenot, "Manifeste II de l'art sociologique," (May 1975), reproduced in Appendix B.
inquiry. The Collective again reiterates this understanding of pedagogy in its third and, in many ways, most coherent manifesto, written in the summer of 1976 at the time of the Collective's actions at the Venice Biennale and Animation de Perpignan (discussed in previous chapters): Sociological art practice—"this subversive pedagogical practice”—"reveals the function of real relations between social categories, modes of exploitation, the political logic of dominant systems of values, their daily mystification, thus enabling each person a critical exercise of his/her judgment and of his/her liberty in relation to a social order that falsely presents itself as natural and necessary." If the subversiveness lies in the critical revelation of determining social conditions, the pedagogical resides in the development of a liberated "autogestion de la pensée" (self-management of thought). Through their collaborative work in Perpignan and Venice, the Collective had expanded the forms of its practice, integrating lectures, discussions, planning sessions, and notebooks from the periphery of artistic production to its center. In the third manifesto, the Collective enumerates the forms of its practice: "Questioning, debates, dynamizations, perturbations of affirmative communication circuits, provocations, refusals, critical counter-uses of fictions, counter-institutions." Indeed, these forms supported the Collective's primary goal: to invent practices and events that make visible and interrogate the often invisible systems, structures, and values shaping individuals.

727 "[L'art sociologique] vise à faire apparaître concrètement la réalité des relations sociales qui déterminent les individus. [. . . ] Cette pratique pédagogique subversive révèle le fonctionnement des rapports sociaux réels entre les catégories sociales, les modes d'exploitation, la logique politique des systèmes de valeurs dominant, leur mystification quotidienne, permettant ainsi à chacun un exercice critique de son jugement et de sa liberté par rapport à un ordre social qui se présente faussement comme naturel et nécessaire." Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, Jean-Paul Thenot, "Manifeste III de l'art sociologique: Méthodologie et stratégie," (March 1976), reproduced in Appendix B.

728 "Questionnements, débats, dynamisations, perturbations des circuits de communication affirmatifs, provocations, refus, contre-usages fictions critiques, contre-institutions peuvent constituer cette pratique transformatrice." Ibid. Emphasis in the original.
The combination of pedagogy as a means of socio-political revelation with novel pedagogical forms became the guiding impetus for the Collective's longest project: the creation of the Ecole Sociologique Interrogative.

By the summer of 1976, ESI was already tentatively underway. A bulletin announcing the first "course," "Pourquoi ouverture d'une Ecole Sociologique Interrogative?" (Why the opening of an Interrogative Sociological School?) to be held on May 13, 1976, states clearly that the idea to open ESI was born from the "socio-pedagogical practice of the collective" and describes the "pedagogical maxim" of the courses as "teaching questions and not responses." Described as "materialist and free," the school, the Collective writes, "will provide an open forum for those who would like to take the responsibility to organize a course." [Fig. 59] An hour-long video of this first course still exists (in addition to videos of six other courses), and the remaining documentation captures the environment, content, and defining characteristics of ESI.

In the video of the first course, Fischer, Forest, and Thenot stand at the front of a large, raw concrete space. Behind them written by hand on a white board is "ECOLE SOCIOLOGIQUE INTERROGATIVE," and in front of them an audience of thirty or

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729 "L'idée de l'école sociologique interrogative est née de la pratique socio-pédagogique du collectif, dont la méthodologie implique nécessairement le débat critique. Enseigner les questions, pas les réponses, telle sera la maxime pédagogique des cours qui seront assurés." Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, Jean-Paul Thenot, "École sociologique interrogative," c. May 1976, unpublished bulletin. Like all of the bulletins announcing ESI's courses and programs, Fischer typed this description and then produced copies on a mimeograph machine that he owned and housed within the space, underscoring the project's close relationship to ubiquitous discourses of self-management. The group then distributed the bulletins by hand and mail. It also placed advertisements for the school and individual courses in Le Monde, where Forest still had contacts from his prior interventions in the early 1970s. Located in the arts and culture section of the newspapers among advertisements for performances and gallery exhibitions, these simple block advertisements listed the event title, date, time, and address.

730 "L'école assurera une tribune libre à ceux qui voudront prendre la responsabilité d'assurer un cours. L'école est matérieliste et gratuite." Ibid.

731 See the archived and digitized videos of "Ecole sociologique interrogative" in the Fonds Fred Forest vidéo, Inathèque, Paris.
forty people is assembled, seated on the floor, benches, and chairs. Fischer begins by introducing the Collective's vision for ESI, reiterating many of the ideas published in ESI bulletins. He states that there is a need for ESI because no freely accessible place dedicated to interdisciplinary research exists in Paris. The universities depend upon admittance, professional schools request tuition, and galleries are too intertwined in the art market. ESI, on the other hand, is free, open to all, and seeks to encourage critical assessments of society through the integration of disciplines and practices normally kept apart. Fischer describes ESI as a “lieu de rencontre” (meeting place) that draws on the interests, knowledge, and ideas of those who participate, and he solicits the audience to propose possible themes or courses. "Fundamentally, what we hope," Fischer says, "is that here, there is never any system of response that is considered as the one." One audience member describes the school as a place of "relearning together via the assembled people." Some participants also pose critical questions to the Collective, asking if the group and school is really unattached to the market when the artists exhibit in galleries, publish and sell books, and accrue cultural capital through artistic contacts and intellectual networks. Another audience member inquires about the status of art, which seems at the center of the discussion even as art is not in the school's title. Fischer and Forest respond to these questions with a remarkable openness, especially considering the vitriolic tone of their manifestos. Fischer suggests that publishing a book is very different from selling paintings in a gallery and proposes a program at the school on the issue of market complicity among politically-engaged and critical artists. Forest states that none of the members of the Collective make their livings through art, but rather art is a cover and mechanism to address social reality.
All of these exchanges and interactions are simultaneously being displayed in real-time on a single monitor positioned at the front to the left of the three artists. In this first iteration of what would become a standard arrangement at ESI courses, the camera initially focuses on Fischer, Forest, and Thenot, showing on the monitor an image of the scene in front of the audience, but once the audience begins to ask questions and make comments, the camera, operated by Forest or another unidentified person, shifts to focus on the speakers and other audience members, zooming in on their hands rubbing together or lighting a cigarette, capturing people's reactions, yawns, conscious and unconscious gestures. This juxtaposition of the event with its real-time representation on screen incorporated another level of mediation, reflection, and exchange on top of that occurring within the physical space. On screen, the discussion in the process of transpiring could potentially be viewed differently, as if from a distance, and the mobile camera initiates confrontations between individuals separated within the physical space. This visual element manifests the self-analysis and interconnectedness that the Collective intended to nurture through ESI. During subsequent courses, the camera would more often focus on the audience, thereby placing them via the monitor at the front in the position of the presenter and reflecting back to them an image of themselves.

This self-reflexive dimension instantiated by the camera arrangement corresponded to Fischer's final statement during the first course: "As an institution that we offer as a school, as individuals who have carried out propositions, practices, published texts, we put ourselves completely in question. [. . .] With the people here, all is possible." Through the school, Fischer and the other members of the Collective sought to continue and enlarge the paths of interrogation, research, and interaction that they had
been developing independently and collectively since the late 1960s and early 1970s. By the fall of 1976, it became the primary site and form of the Collective's sociological art and the group's only collaborative project. Called various names by the Collective, including "a project (anti-modernist, anti-ideology)," "a paradise," "a parodic school," and "a counter-institution," ESI was in many respects the culmination of the Collective's practice of sociological art, but as such a culmination, and in line with the Collective's calls for self-reflexivity, ESI also became the target of the Collective's critique of institutions and of institutionality.

III. Ecole Sociologique Interrogative

Site, Program, Structure

ESI was located in the basement of Fischer's home, which he had just purchased in the fall of 1975. He had sought a place with sufficient space for his family and a studio, and he found an old commercial building on the Boulevard de Charonne near the Père Lachaise cemetery in the working class 11th arrondissement. The building, which had been used to finish and sell glass windows, was quite raw, with poured concrete floors and minimal amenities, and it had been for sale for a long period of time. Fischer made a low offer, which the seller accepted, and the artist became the owner of a post-industrial space that needed a lot of work in an outlying Parisian neighborhood. He spent many months in the winter and spring of 1976 carrying out renovations to the space, teaching himself the tasks of demolition and reconstruction, while still teaching classes to make a living. He recalls a deep satisfaction with the physical labor, a satisfaction buoyed by a widespread intellectual valorization of manual labor among the left. On the

732 Hervé Fischer, interview with the author, November 24, 2013, Montreal.
occasion of the first course in May 1976, the space was still very crude: ladders and paint cans lined the walls, and a large sign warned, partly in jest, "Attention à la peinture" (Pay attention to the painting). Even when the renovations were "completed" in the late fall of 1976, the space embodied the makeshift quality of ESI with its concrete floors and walls, insufficient seating, handmade signs, and laidback atmosphere, but it also afforded a remarkable independence to the artist-organizers.

ESI's program and operation relied almost entirely on the involvement, time, labor, contacts, and fiscal contributions of Fischer, Forest, and Thenot. The courses usually developed out of relationships the artists already had or by invitations passed by word of mouth. Following the first course in May 1976, ESI did not initiate a regular program of events until January 1977. According to extant archival resources at the time of this writing, approximately twenty-one presentations took place from January to December 1977, five more were offered in November and December 1978, and a number of courses are listed without specific dates. By January 1979, the Collective was no longer actively planning events to take place at ESI, and its attention had shifted to the publication of the related journal *Cahiers de l'Ecole interrogative sociologique*, an endeavor, as I discuss further on, led by Fischer. The events took place on Wednesday or Thursday evenings around eight o'clock and would last at least an hour but often two or more. While the Collective used the conventional term "cours" (course) to describe the initial event, it rapidly expanded its references to better reflect the nature of the presentations. "Performances" and "interventions" signaled events with artists or musicians who would often include a musical or visual component with a talk. "Meeting" and "debate" tended to indicate discussions with philosophers, theorists, and academics,
and "place of research" addressed events focused explicitly on social issues. True to the school's name, the Collective discouraged monologic discourse with varying degrees of success and encouraged self-reflexive and dialogical modes among presenters and participants, often interrupting speakers with their own provocative questions. While "dialogue" was often tacked on as a question and answer period at the end, as evidenced in the recording of Henri Lefebvre's lecture, other events stimulated more active exchanges throughout the evening. Fischer often introduced the invitees and, during these introductions, reiterated that the activities of the school depended on those present as much as on the Collective and encouraged audience members to propose and organize a course.733

Drawing on existing archival materials, I have assembled the first complete documentation of ESI's program, writing a short description of each event and organizing this material chronologically in the table entitled "Events at the Ecole Sociologique Interrogative" and included in the appendix of texts.734 The table reflects the Collective's notable commitment to disciplinary breadth and to the tactical creation of a space where art, theory, and social issues might mutually inform one another. These three categories—art, theory, and social issues—roughly characterize the types of presentations at the school.

734 As indicated in the table, I have used three documentary sources to construct this table: video recordings, printed bulletins, and textual references. All of the seven extant video recordings are digitized and preserved in the Fonds Fred Forest vidéo at Inathèque, Paris. The printed bulletins come from the Fonds Fred Forest écrits, Inathèque, Paris; the Fonds Hervé Fischer, Bibliotheque Kandinsky, Paris; and the personal archives of Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, and Jean-Paul Thenot. Generally, the bulletins have two sides: on one side is practical information, such as the event's title, name(s) of the presenter(s), date and time, and address of the school, and on the other side is a short text written either by members of the Collective or by the presenter(s) to introduce the proposed topic. Sometimes this text tended toward the descriptive but often it launched into a theoretical excursus of the planned event and its key ideas. These bulletins are by far the most useful documentation in reconstructing the events of the school, and I have reproduced a number of bulletins in Appendix A as illustrations.
and the thematic lines that the Collective (and sociological art) hoped to crisscross. A brief overview of a selection of courses further illustrates the ways in which the Collective envisioned the program and the ways in which the presenters utilized media and didactics to promote a model of knowledge production deeply related to the political and utopian ideals of educational reform and radical pedagogy following May '68.

ESI hosted numerous artists and musicians who used the venue to introduce works-in-progress at various stages of development that might benefit from the audience's feedback. The composer and avant-garde musician Luc Ferrari, who had worked with Forest on his Tableaux-écran project, played an acoustic work created from music, sounds, noises, and pieces of conversation recorded during a stay in a village. Like an ethnographer or anthropologist, Ferrari conducted his acoustic fieldwork with the conviction that observation and documentation (whether via sound, photograph, or written note) might reveal submerged aspects of a social or cultural behavior. A remarkable power "exists in the simple observation of the social real," he writes in the short essay accompanying the bulletin advertising the “course.”

His interest in found sounds also stems from the possibility that they do not immediately ascribe to formal or aesthetic determinations at the outset, yet he admits they are reinserted into established systems for diffusion. Ferrari began his presentation by drawing an elaborate diagram à la Alfred Barr on the chalkboard that delineates two poles of artistic production, realism and abstraction, setting them within a continuum of such oppositions.

735 “C'est pourtant l'attention particulière que je porte aux sons qui m'a engagé dans l'observation de la réalité, d'abord instrumentale, puis celle des bruits, la sonorité des paysages et enfin le langage spontané des gens.” Luc Ferrari, “Sociologie d'un village et Culture savante?”, Ecole sociologique interrogative bulletin. Ferrari's presentation took place January 19, 1977.

736 "Pouvoir détonateur qui existe dans la simple observation du réel social." Ibid.
as observation/formalization and social use/art for art's sake. He uses the diagram to introduce the engagements of his musical production, which he situates firmly on the side listing realism, anecdote, observation, and social use. During the rest of his presentation, Ferrari leads the audience through his process, beginning with the playing of his recordings and then followed by a description of the site, context, and individuals involved in the recording. He crafts his music out of his on-site social experiences and the "spontaneous texts" that spring forth from them. He concludes by performing an original composition on the piano based on his work in the village and accompanied by a slideshow of photographs from his time in the village. [Fig. 61] The finished work, as the bulletin announces, would premiere at Art, recherche, communication (ARC) that March.737 In a comparable vein, the artist Carlos Ginzburg, who was also close to the Collective, discussed a recently completed trip that brought the artist from Paris through Venice, Yugoslavia, Istanbul, Tehran, Kabul, New Delhi, Amsterdam, and other sites, eventually returning to Paris.738 [Fig. 62] In the early 1970s, Ginzburg dedicated his artistic practice to an exploration of trips and tourism, capturing his experiences through texts, photographs, and found objects. On his travels throughout the world, he would employ documentary traces and collected commentary to analyze his position as an alien in foreign cultures as well as the cultural assumptions that so often underlie and shape tourism.739 While in many ways standard "artist talks," a genre undergoing a marked formalization through the requirements and priorities of MFA programs, Ferrari's and

738 Ginzburg's presentation took place April 23, 1977.
739 For more about Carlos Ginzburg, see the exhibition catalogue Carlos Ginzburg (Antwerp: ICC, 1980).
Ginzburg's presentations focused on their processes, underscoring the centrality of experience, exchange, site-specificity, and ethnography in their musical and artistic practices. They, as well as many of the other artists that presented at ESI, modeled forms of sound and image production that prioritized collaboration and self-reflexivity, corresponding in obvious ways with the trajectory of sociological art, especially as embodied by ESI.

Fischer, Forest, and Thenot also took advantage of artists, critics, and curators passing through Paris, many of whom would stay at Fischer's apartment. Through his engagement with mail art in the 1970s, Fischer developed a network of contacts all over the world, which included John Latham and Barbara Stevini of Artist Placement Group, Bill Gaglione and Anna Banana of Dadaland in California, the Fluxus artist Ken Friedman, Art & Language member Mel Ramsden, Argentinean architect Horacio Zabala, British socially-engaged artist Stephen Willats, and many others.\(^{740}\) Through the Collective's networks and many contacts in Paris, the artists would keep abreast of who was traveling to Paris and invite them to present at ESI, significantly expanding their programming given their limited, even non-existent, budget. The Japanese video artist Katsuhiro Yamaguchi, for instance, traveled to Barcelona to participate in an International Video Encounter organized by Jorge Glusberg.\(^{741}\) Yamaguchi's transit brought him through Paris, and the Collective invited him to present his video project *Imaginairum*, which reanimates an old Japanese tradition of group poetry writing using

\(^{740}\) Correspondences with these and many others in Hervé Fischer's archives evince the breadth and depth of his network of contacts and friendships. See "Correspondences," Fonds Hervé Fischer, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Paris.

\(^{741}\) Yamaguchi was a founding member of the media art group Jikken Kobo (Experimental Workshop) (1951-57) and then founded the collective Video Hiroba (Video Plaza), and in 1975 he presented his work at the São Paulo Biennial, where he probably met Jorge Glusberg. See the artist's monograph *Yamaguchi Katsuhiro 360°* (Tokyo: Rikuyosha, 1981).
the new image technologies.\textsuperscript{742} [Fig. 63] Extrapolating from the artist's description of the 200-plus year old poetry practice, a group of participants would come together and use new image technologies to record and respond to the environment in real-time, thereby creating an experience of collective imaginative production interrelated with the immediate context. The images would undergo a chain of translations: participants would display the live video footage on a television monitor, take Polaroid photographs of the television image, and then photocopy the Polaroids to create multiples, which would then re-enter the environment to be captured on video. Via what Yamaguchi called "endless image-circulation," the \textit{Imaginarium} generates an "information environment [. . . ] directly linked to life and daily events."\textsuperscript{743} It is unclear whether or not Yamaguchi carried out an event like this at ESI or rather screened a video that had been made previously, possibly in Barcelona. However, his project proposes a collective model of production that harnesses new image technologies to modify people's relationships to their environment, an ethic and set of objectives shared by the Collective. Yamaguchi's presentation at ESI–one of the first appearances of the flourishing Japanese video art scene in Paris–points to the school's precocious program, made possible through the artists' contacts.

ESI also hosted numerous theorists, philosophers, and academics, most of whom the members of the Collective knew through Fischer's teaching or Forest's work at the journal \textit{Cause Commune}. Two of the most high-profile evening events included a group presentation organized by the architectural theorist Michel Ragon with Pierre Gaudibert

\textsuperscript{742} Yamaguchi's presentation took place March 2, 1977.

\textsuperscript{743} From Katsuhiro Yamaguchi, "Experiment on Imaginarium," (1977), reproduced at http://www.art-it.asia/u/admin_ed_feature_e/RijNOMAtUafXv1L46bDC/.

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and Paul Virilio on the subject of "Autogestion et architecture" (Self-Management and Architecture) on May 17, 1977, and Henri Lefebvre discussing "Le manifeste differentialiste" (The Differentialist Manifesto) on November 30, 1977. These exemplary presentations convey the lively political engagement in the 1970s on the part of many French intellectuals who actively sought ways of redressing their fields' complicit relationships to the state and capitalism. Lefebvre's manifesto, which had been published in 1970, calls for resistance to the capitalist production methods and values, which he argues lead to homogeneity and control. [Fig. 64] Over such technocratic and normalizing measures, he seeks to valorize human creativity and everyday life as well as tactical engagement with space. Ragon drew on many of the ideas presented in his 1977 book *L'architecte, le prince, et la démocratie* (The Architect, the Prince, and the Democracy) to announce the session dedicated to "Autogestion et architecture." [Fig. 65] According to Ragon, a change was taking place in architecture in developed Western countries, from a model where the architect and those funding the project plan and erect buildings according to their tastes and ideas (he cites Le Corbusier as an example) to an approach that involves the future inhabitants/users of the building. In the former scenario, as Ragon states, "the architect knew all" and now it's "the users who live there who know all." He describes the emergence of a "movement of participation and architectural self-management" ("mouvement de participation et d'autogestion architecturale") through the formation of committees and development teams composed, in part, of neighborhood inhabitants and future users of the building. Gaudibert, curator, founder of *ARC*, and former director of the Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris (MAMVP), and Virilio, a

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744 As listed in the table, video recordings of both presentations are archived in Fonds Fred Forest vidéo, Inathèque, Paris.
philosopher at the Ecole speciale d'architecture in Paris, follow Ragon's presentation by discussing the duplicitous nature of a participatory model in culture and architecture.  

[Fig. 66]  

Gaudibert begins his portion of the presentation by renouncing all aesthetic training, which he relates to imperialism, and promotes individuals drawing on their "own culture" and experiences. As an example, he tells a remarkable story of the guards at MAMVP hanging their own artworks in the coat room at the museum, thus appropriating "their" space for the display of an unsanctioned exhibition within the larger museum. Gaudibert delighted in the ways that the guards' exhibition occupied the interstitial space of the coat room, which reflected their occupation and social position within the museum while becoming a site of self-expression and even resistance. In his 1972 book *Action culturelle: Intégration et ou subversion* (*Cultural Action: Integration and/or Subversion*), Gaudibert sharply criticized the state's involvement in contemporary art and culture following May '68 and wrote passionately that the only viable path for "cultural combat" (resistance in art) would be outside the given apparatuses. "Art must rejoin the road, culture, and quotidian life" and refuse "the division between a minority of specialists preserving the monopoly of artistic creation and a mass of simple receptors of artistic products. [. . .] [I]t is a question of recreating widespread creativity."  

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745 Henri Lefebvre and Yona Friedman were also listed on the bulletin announcement, but the extant video documentation does not show either of them as present at the event. However, Ragon does refer directly to Friedman's work in his commentary.  

746 "Ici le combat culturel ne se situerait plus dans les appareils culturels: il passerait par tous les pores, les interstices de la vie quotidienne, dans l’espoir de changer à la fois la société et la vie. [. . .] En ce qui concerne l’art et la culture, s’exprime avec force le refus de la séparation: l’art doit rejoindre la rue, la culture, la vie quotidienne; ce qui entraîne la remise en question des lieux et institutions culturels et surtout le refus de la division entre une minorité de spécialistes se réservant le monopole de la création artistique et une masse de purs récepteurs de produits artistiques: au contraire, il s’agit de reconstruire la créativité généralisée et permanente de tous et le seul sens d’une Action culturelle serait d’aider cette créativité à
of the museum guards' exhibition exemplified for Gaudibert a productive repurposing of
given cultural apparatuses. Virilio detailed what he described as contemporary
architecture's "ideology of transparency," wherein physical visibility masks the
economic, political, and social controls in place (a critique frequently leveled at the
Centre Georges Pompidou at this time). In the extant video recording, audience members
interject occasionally, prompting further discussions.\textsuperscript{747} The presence of such phrases as
"recuperation of self-management" and "institution of participation" during the event on
"Autogestion et architecture" signals the complex terrain of self-management and
participation in the late 1970s. These ideals and practices, which had surfaced around
1968, were rapidly adopted by leftist artists and thinkers as well as by the state, a paradox
that led to their critical reevaluation. In many ways, the very impetus to create ESI—a self-
governed school, open to all, and dependent upon the participation of the attendees—
accords with this post-1968 ethic. And yet the school, and those who contributed, sought
out methods to enact these ideals while retaining a critical resistance to their embrace by
neo-liberalism. These sessions by well-known academics and thinkers attracted large
audiences; documentary footage shows sixty or more individuals packed into the
basement room, leaning on walls or sitting on benches or the floor. Evidently, ESI
fulfilled a need within the Parisian scene.

The last genre of presentations, and the least developed one, brought in
individuals who directly served social needs. While Thenot made his living as a clinical

\textsuperscript{747} One interesting thread of conversation concerned the trend toward auto-didacticism (i.e. be one's own
doctor, professor, architect) and the ways in which these forms of "autogestion" also absolve the state of
social and civil responsibilities.
psychologist (and for this reason was often absent from ESI events), the Collective mingled largely with an artistic-intellectual circuit of events and individuals. However, the group organized at least one extraordinary event with an individual far from their fields of work: the gynecologist and abortion rights activist Dr. Bernard Fonty. [Fig. 67] Fischer introduced the session by asserting, "The questions of art interest us less and less, the questions of society interest us more and more." Fonty worked at the famous Clinique des Lilas (in the division Maternité des Lilas), one of the first places to practice abortion and to increase access to the procedure through additional financial support. It was also a major site in the promulgation of natural birth practices, specifically Fonty's concept of "accouchement sans violence" (birthing without violence). Fonty wrote a lengthy text entitled "Une pratique medicale dans le respect de désir" (A Medical Practice that Respects Desire) that was printed on the bulletin announcement of his intervention. In it, he sharply criticizes relations between "official medicine" and "patients," writing "medicine puts users at its disposition rather than putting itself at their service." He describes how the "traditional situation" of birth brings this into sharp focus because the doctor is positioned as knowing how to birth a child, whereas the birthing woman is situated passively under the guidance of the (male) doctor who can relieve her anxiety and pain through recourse to medical intervention. Such an arrangement, Fonty argues,

748 Abortion ("interruption volontaire de grossesse" or IVG) became legal by law in France in 1975 but with significant restrictions on timing and no financial coverage for the procedure from national insurance. Bernard Fonty's presentation took place January 26, 1977.
749 "Les questions d'art nous nous intéressions moins en moins, les questions de société nous nous intérêssions plus en plus." See the archived film in Fonds Fred Forest vidéo, Inathèque, Paris.
750 Bernard Fonty discusses the medical and social experiences of abortion as well as the need for further reforms in "Quelques réflexions sur une pratique: un tabou inaccessible à lever," Déviance et société 1, no. 3 (1977): 321-326. He is especially critical of the power dynamic between doctors and female patients undergoing abortions, writing "Le médecin est vécu comme un flic. Les femmes répondent ce qu'elles imaginent que le médecin attend." Ibid., 321.
751 "[L]a médecine met les usagers à sa disposition au lieu de se mettre à leur service."
enacts multiple forms of violence, whether psychic through the mother's infantilization or physical on account of medical procedures. "Birth without violence" promotes the empowerment of the birthing woman over her body, mind, and physical experience of birth, which reaffirms the relation between mother and child. To demonstrate the capacity of women to feel empowered and in control over the intense physical experience of birth as well as the ways that doctors can aid in this process, Fonty screened three video recordings of births that took place in his clinic. The recording of the session shows a group of forty or more individuals watching the birth videos, a genre that had only recently emerged with the proliferation of consumer video cameras, and then discussing the ways in which the recorded events illustrate a less hierarchical doctor-patient relationship. [Fig. 68] "All of this," Fonty writes at the conclusion of his text, "demands a certain de-medicalization of the act of birth, entailing a demystification of medical knowledge, demanding a contestation of medical power." Fonty's presentation illustrates the Collective's desire to take ESI and its inquiry and practice into fields far from those associated with art and yet engaged with many of the same fundamental questions about hierarchy and power. In a brief paragraph promoting the program, the Collective takes a jab at the Centre Pompidou, which had just opened in February 1977: "Beaubourg Museum offers you American painting: ESI one of the representatives of a new medical practice in France." 

752 During the screenings, he states we must "rendre pouvoir à la mère" by treating her not like an object and by recreating a sense of comfort and home in the medical environment.

753 This use of video also illustrates the expanded uses of the new technology in non-art fields, a subject discussed in chapter three.

754 "Tout cela demande une certaine démédicalisation de l'acte d'accoucher, implique une démystification du savoir médicale, réclame une contestation du pouvoir médical."

755 "Le Musée Beaubourg vous propose la peinture américaine: l'École Sociologique Interrogative l'un des représentants d'une nouvelle médicale en France."
This selection of ESI courses and events outlines the orientation of the school's programming, which aimed to highlight those practices that combined art and theory with social issues. The presenters integrated multiple fields and approaches, constructing artworks out of anthropological fieldwork, analyzing the political implications of trends in contemporary architecture, and employing the medium of video to disseminate and advocate new approaches to birth in medicine. ESI offered a space in which the terms and forms of diverse fields could be elaborated, tested, questioned, and refined through a process of visual, intellectual, and dialogical exchange. When viewed retrospectively, ESI's program evidences the primary contours of sociological art practice, specifically the Collective's integration of fields in order to initiate dialogue between them and, in turn, to challenge their structures and presumptions.

Encounters with Other Models

For ESI's last event in May 1977—a group discussion dedicated to the topic of "Art and Social Transformation"—the Collective produced a bulletin summarizing its remarkable program that winter and spring and announcing its presence at Documenta 6: "L'Ecole sociologique interrogative will be present at Documenta 6 of Kassel, outside of the official institution."\footnote{756 "L'Ecole sociologique interrogative sera présente à la Documenta 6 de Kassel, à l'extérieur de l'institution officielle."} At the outset, the statement suggests that the Collective via ESI would position itself in a parasitic relation to the well-known German art exhibition, known since Harald Szeemann's infamous 1972 rendition as receptive to socially and politically-engaged artistic practices. However, archival documents reveal a much more complicated relationship between the Collective and institutional recognition. That spring the Collective had, in fact, contacted Dr. Manfred Schneckenburger, the director of...
Documenta 6, to propose the inclusion of ESI in the exhibition's program. On April 11, 1977, the Collective received a response from Schneckenburger rejecting the proposal due to plans already in place for the inclusion of Joseph Beuy’s "Free International University for Creativity and Interdisciplinary Research" (often referred to simply as "Free International University" or the abbreviation FIU). He writes, "[Beuys] will bring to Kassel about 50 artists and specialists—media people, communication theoreticians, sociologists—who will organize exercises and workshops. This program is so diverse that practically all subjects will be covered. Naturally, I know that your school is fundamentally different from Beuys', but I would not like to have two schools in one exhibition which would duplicate each other." While unlikely that the Collective knew of the inclusion of Beuys' school, which he had founded in 1973 as a radical new approach to the education of artists, it evidently recognized the interest that the curator might have in an endeavor like ESI. But now, in the face of its exclusion, the Collective sought to rally support from Beuys.

The Collective forwarded Schneckenburger's letter to Beuys, who was working with the British art historian and critic Caroline Tisdall to organize FIU's program at Documenta. The Collective did not receive a response until June 27, 1977, a delay perhaps due to the immense work Beuys and Tisdall were in the midst of in order to

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prepare FIU. Signed by Beuys and Tisdall, the letter invited ESI to join FIU at Documenta, "to work together in a collective spirit": "This will be our best response to bureaucratic censorship. Our collaboration will be implemented in FIU's community workshop program 100 days in Kassel and eventually continue in the real world contexts of our practices."759 The Collective thanked Tisdall and Beuys but ultimately declined their invitation, writing "Officially excluded from Documenta 6, we have decided to remain outside [. . .]. We hope that in the future a regular collaboration between your university and our school could be established in a more favorable context."760 In the period between receiving the rejection from Schneckenburger and a response from Tisdall and Beuys, the Collective had formulated a plan to install ESI in a truck outside of the Fredericianum. A description of the plan dated May 1977 contrasts FIU as "officially inside with all the support possible" with ESI, which will be located "outside, in a truck, without any official recognition and without any financial aid, but completely free to question the ideological and economic values that Documenta 6 represents."761 Having already publicized their plan to install ESI outside of the official spaces of

Documenta, the Collective likely felt they could not collaborate with FIU.\textsuperscript{762}

Furthermore, the group sought to politicize its marginal position by locating itself in a mobile structure on the periphery of Documenta, and they implied that this physical distance would ensure a critical distance from the economic and institutional structures of the major art exhibition, which paradoxically, the group had attempted to enter in the first place.\textsuperscript{763}

By the time of the Collective's exchange with Tisdall and Beuys, FIU's first workshop was already underway. Titled "Periphery Workshop" and running from June 24-30, the workshop aimed to reconsider Europe from the periphery, that is to examine the ways that economic policies, politics, technology, law, and so forth construct and reaffirm divisions between a center and its margins, an ironic yet timely topic given the Collective's own dismissal from Documenta and self-imposed exile from FIU. Within any given workshop theme, FIU would host a series of distinct events, and a flyer for the "Periphery Workshop" (conserved in Fischer's archives) lists the architect James Cubitt discussing his work in Libya and the Artists' Placement Group considering the artist as an "incidental persona" in industry and local government.\textsuperscript{764} Although it may have been an oversight not to have addressed self-reflexively the "periphery" in relation to the art world and Documenta (the very critique the Collective leveled against FIU), FIU sought

\textsuperscript{762} The Collective created a bulletin with the letter from Schneckenburger translated from German into English and French and distributed this in Paris and internationally by mail.

\textsuperscript{763} However, Forest was invited to contribute Video troisième âge (1973) to the video section of Documenta 6 by Herzogenrath, who was responsible for organizing that section. See the letter from Ilske Konertz-Berning, on behalf of Monsieur Herzogenrath, directeur de Kölnischer Kunstverein, to Forest, Correspondences, Fonds Fred Forest écrits, Inathèque, Paris. Forest also participated in Documenta 7.

\textsuperscript{764} A large binder of materials from FIU is conserved in CAL 1, Fonds Hervé Fischer, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Paris. Fischer spent two weeks at Documenta and actively took part in many of the workshops offered through FIU, meeting numerous like-minded individuals who would remain his friends and interlocutors through the years.
doggedly to move beyond those questions and concerns conventionally addressed within and through art, an impetus shared by the Collective.

In fact, a comparison of FIU's and ESI’s published programs demonstrates a striking number of parallel interests, including such topics as new media, migrancy, violence and behavior, and labor, suggesting that rather than being "fundamentally different," as Schneckenburger had written, there existed significant overlaps. Both institutions encouraged interdisciplinary examinations of these issues by inviting artists, architects, curators, philosophers, sociologists, and, in the case of FIU, groups such as the War Resisters International and trade unions.766 Presenters also employed an intentionally broad range of supports from films, videos, and slides to diagrams, texts, and open discussion. Finally, photographs of FIU workshops depict a space and arrangement comparable to ESI's, with speakers seated at the front under a handmade sign reading "Free International University" and a casual layout of chairs for audience members in an unadorned room. From a historical perspective, the Collective's decision not to join with FIU, its self-marginalization, has likely exacerbated its relative absence from art history, even as FIU has received significant attention as a precursor to social practices today.767


766 A cursory list of some of the people involved with FIU at Documenta: sociologists (Helenita Beninati, Brazil; Piero Formica, Italy; Jorst Herbig, Germany; Gaetano Insolera, Italy; Sarah Nelson, Northern Ireland?; Adrian Noad, England; Nina Sutton, France); artists (APG, Conrad Atkinson, Stuart Brisley, Joseph Beuys, Ian Breakwell, Peter Dunn, Margaret Harrison, Mary Kelly, Lorrain Leeson, Mario Merz, Amerigo Marras, Klaus Staeck, Nicholas Urban, Gordon Woods); curators and critics (Arnold Bode, Guy Brett, Caroline Tisdall); and political groups (War Resisters International).

Beuys, along with Klaus Staeck, George Meistermann, and Willi Bongard, founded FIU on April 27, 1973, in Düsseldorf based on ideas first concretized in a manifesto written by Beuys and Heinrich Boll. The authors of the manifesto lamented the dampening of creativity and free expression by war, capitalism, consumerism, technology, bureaucracy, professionalization, environmental degradation, and a number of other contemporary trends. They sought to reignite creative expression, which they understood as intrinsically linked to democratic society. One of their primary tactics was to teach arts classes—drawing, painting, sculpture, metalwork, and so forth—alongside topics such as sensory theory, verbal articulation, and phenomenology of history. "Whereas the specialist’s insulated point of view places the arts and other kinds of work in sharp opposition," the authors reasoned in the text, "it is in fact crucial that the structural, formal and thematic problems of the various work processes should be constantly compared with one another." Through a comparative model where ideas and techniques from one field migrate productively into another, labor might regain its rejuvenative and energetic force through creativity. In a vein reminiscent of John Dewey's early twentieth-century proposals for progressive education, the founders of FIU rejected examinations, admission limitations, and any perceived hierarchy between student and teacher. The goal of this radical experiment in education was "the

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768 The Collective included the work of Klaus Staeck and Willi Bongard in their group exhibitions in the spring of 1975.
769 FIU was in many respects an extension and refinement of Beuys' political and ethical campaign for "direct democracy." In fact, at Documenta 5, the artist had set up a "Bureau for Direct Democracy," a physical place to convey information and sign up interested individuals.
770 The manifesto was translated and republished in Christos M. Joachimides and Norman Rosenthal, eds. *Art into Society, Society into Art: Seven German Artists – Albrecht D., Joseph Beuys, K. P. Brehmer, Hans Haacke, Dieter Hacker, Gustav Metzger, Klaus Staeck* (London: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1974), 49.
encouragement, discovery and furtherance of democratic potential, and the expression of this.\textsuperscript{771}

While FIU was launched in Beuys' studio in Düsseldorf, by the mid-1970s, its founders started to imagine FIU as the structure of support for a proliferating number of schools located throughout the world to carry on its fundamental ideas and work. The publicity materials for Documenta list satellite schools in "England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Eire, Sicily and Elsewhere Outside Germany." "The FIU," the 1977 brochure states, "is an international collective linking up the activities of more than 200 people in different areas of cultural and socio-political experience." In an increasingly activist tone, the text reiterates, "Our activities are also a challenge to the equation of politics with politicians and the restriction of the idea of creativity to the cultural fields."\textsuperscript{772} Each of the offshoots of FIU interpreted these fundamental ideas differently, depending on the needs and resources of its particular contexts. For instance, the groups in Ireland and Great Britain became engaged in labor movements, whereas the Düsseldorf group functioned fundamentally as a progressive art school. Thus, although it is difficult to characterize monolithically, FIU, in comparison with ESI, remained much more closely linked with artistic production and media, seeking, as Beuys so often reiterated, the liberating capacity of creativity as a form of energy.

The Collective conceived ESI as a sociological art practice, and, as a result, traditional artistic media and aesthetic considerations were largely absent. Rather than

\textsuperscript{771} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{772} FIU is "an attempt to challenge the lack of creative thinking in economies and the political and social decisions which too often ignore the cultural dimension of social change and development. This means challenging the technical divisions of labours and divisions of academic disciplines which force people to delegate responsibility for far-reaching social changes to so-called experts and specialists." CAL 1, Fonds Hervé Fischer, Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Paris.
drawing and paintings, the Collective privileged analytical modes to animate the space, to critically question institutions and conventions, and to continually emphasize the social and economic conditions of artistic, intellectual, and other practices. Sociality, dialogue, and exchange rather than a phenomenologically-informed practice of artistic production guided their re-conception of pedagogy. The Collective's declared intention to launch a "public debate inside Documenta 6 concerning the ideological, political, and economic function of this international institution" typified the group's oppositional (and even negative) stance, and the absence of this self-reflexive institutional critique within FIU (insofar as the happenings have been documented) highlights the differences between these two pedagogical initiatives. In the end, the Collective did not mount a physical intervention at Documenta, but rather produced a catalogue with the involvement of Glusberg of CAYC detailing the group's exchanges with Schnekenburger and FIU and promoting the fundamental ideas of ESI and sociological art. The Collective's published documents surrounding the encounter with FIU bespeak the group's mounting concern for their own position and recognition rather than for larger social issues, a sign of the struggles that would begin to wreak havoc within ESI.

**Institutionalization and Dissolution**

With the resumption of ESI's activities in the fall of 1977 and a promise to increase the frequency of presentations to weekly, came a request for financial support of the school. On November 9, 1977, the Collective dedicated the meeting "Les Participants à l'école" (Participants to the School) to the topic of the school's future, its structure and

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773 "Le but de l'Ecole sociologique interrogative était d'ouvrir un débat public à l'intérieur de la Documenta 6 sur la fonction idéologique, politique et économique de cette institution internationale."

774 *Ecole sociologique interrogative, Documenta 6, Juin - Octobre 1977* (Buenos Aires: Centre d'art et communication, 1977). It is unclear whether or not this catalogue was distributed during Documenta.
financing. The group also accompanied the regular bulletin announcements with an appeal for membership and support: "Up until now, the school has operated through contributions, often quite substantial, from our monthly salaries, without any aid or subsidy from anyone. This has assured an independence from official institutions and the art market. If we want to continue, it will require a financial participation on the part of those interested in this experience." A rubric at the top of the bulletin proposes four levels of financial support: annual membership to receive information (30F), annual membership to participate in activities (50F), annual card of support (300F), and institutional support (300F). While the description implies that access to the school's events depended on membership, the Collective never barred access or charged admission and, from the limited financial records, seems to have received meager returns from their requests. With the hope to extend the energy of spring 1977, the artists had to confront the substantial demands on their time and finances. Coordinating the events, writing and printing the bulletins, mailing or delivering the announcements, encouraging people to attend, and then participating in these events every two weeks required considerable attention from the three members who made their livings through other full-time jobs (teaching for Fischer and Forest, and clinical psychology for Thenot). The request for inscriptions was an initial attempt to stem the group's fraying energy.

Perhaps on account of this financial request and an increased sense of responsibility to its paying members (although it seems there were very few), the

775 "Jusqu'à présent, l'Ecole a fonctionné grâce à une retenue, souvent très lourde, que nous avons faite sur nos salaires mensuels, sans aucune aide ou subvention de personnes. Cela a assuré son indépendance vis-à-vis des institutions officielles ou du marché de l'art. Si nous voulons continuer, cela suppose désormais une participation financière de la part de ceux que cette expérience intéresse."
Collective took further steps to institutionalize ESI. In a short typed summary of a meeting on November 16, 1977 ("Reunion du bureau du Collectif d'art sociologique"), the Collective detailed its decision to open a bank account for ESI and to stipulate the roles and responsibilities of the three members: Thenot as president, Forest as secretary, and Fischer as treasurer. [Fig. 70] This formalization of roles and domains bespeaks the Collective's and ESI's transition toward an increasingly bureaucratic model, a shift that the resumés ("compte-rendu") of the Collective's meetings in the fall and winter of 1977-78 also evince. The process of institutionalization, of course, had been ongoing since the formation of the Collective in 1974 and the consolidation and promotion of its identity through exhibitions, publications, and projects. However, with the focal point of ESI—a "bricks and mortar" location—the pressure to establish a consistent identity, program, and space mounted. While the Collective had long used rubber stamps as both a means to lay claim to documents and subsume the individual artists' identities and signatures, in May 1977 it produced ESI letterhead. [Fig. 71] Printed in royal blue ink on white paper, the letterhead listed the school's name at the top, address and telephone number at the bottom, and included the phrase "animée par le collectif d'art sociologique" (animated by the sociological art collective) with the three artists' names. This letterhead became the literal template for almost all correspondences, bulletins, and announcements from the school, establishing a visual uniformity to ESI's communication. With letterhead, a bank account, contributing attendees, and defined roles, the Collective had become subsumed by the institution of ESI and was rapidly undone by it.

Although the Collective organized a series of bi-monthly events in the fall of 1977, including "The Differentialist Manifesto" with Henri Lefebvre, a group
presentation planned by René Lourau entitled "Against-Sociology," and two discussions about Latin American art ("Collective work of Mexican Artist Groups" and "Parallel Circuits in Brazilian Life"), it seems to have suspended ESI events in January 1978. The next suite of presentations took place almost a year later in November and December of 1978, and these featured individual projects by the Collective's members. Fischer spoke about his collaborative media initiatives (discussed in chapter one) Jordaaners, Maak uw krant in the journal Het Parool carried out in October 1978 with the artist Alain Snyers (who was part of the collective Untel and with whom Fischer began to work more and more), and Forest discussed the beginning his long-term undertaking, La Territoire, the creation of a physical site north of Paris that could serve as a kind of utopian state within France where individuals could acquire a square meter of land to initiate interventions and encounters. Perhaps indicative of tensions between the individual and group from the Collective's origin as well as the artists' struggle to stitch together their individual practices under the title and concept of "sociological art," the conversion of ESI to a platform for the artists' independent projects foretold the end of ESI as an artistic practice in and of itself.

The members of the Collective continued to work independently and with other artists, coming back together intermittently to meet and discuss what they had come to call "the association" and its two subscribing participants, the artists Alain Snyers and Yves Granger, who Fischer had first met through his teaching. Forest turned his

776 Forest discusses La Territoire as the central inspiration to his later work with the internet and online platforms such as Second Life. See Fred Forest, L'Œuvre-système invisible (Paris: Harmattan, 2006).
777 Alain Snyers has proposed that the first phase of sociological art ended in 1978, and a second phase lasting from 1978-1980 took place through the numerous collaborations between himself and Fischer. Alain Snyers, "Art sociologique, Seconde période, l'Atelier d'art sociologique (Hervé Fischer avec Alain Snyers) 1978-1980," unpublished manuscript, courtesy of Snyers.
attention increasingly to new media technologies, including Minitel and personal computers, and the capacities of these technologies to collapse space and time (ideas he would formalize in his 1983 manifesto "the Aesthetic of Communication," co-written with the Italian filmmaker Mario Costa). Thenot was deeply engaged in the study of video as a therapeutic tool in clinical psychology (as described in his 1989 book *Vidéothérapie*). Fischer, on the other hand, was still immersed in the possibilities and concepts of sociological art, undertaking a series of large-scale public engagement projects promoted as "sociological art."

With a grant from the *Office franco-allemande de la jeunesse* (O.F.A.G.), the organization that had funded the Collective's projects in Neuenkirchen, Fischer organized two "ateliers d'art sociologique" ("workshops of sociological art"): the first on the topic of "tourism and lead pollution" in the Eastern German town of Stadt Blankenberg in 1978 and the second titled "Comment imaginez-vous l'avenir?" (How do you imagine the future?) in the Alsatian town of Guebwiller in 1979. Modeled on the Collective's intervention in Perpignan, these workshops brought together local students and inhabitants to enact a series of interventionist projects either in the environment (in Stadt Blankenberg) or through contributions to the journal *l'Alsace* (in Guebwiller). Fischer worked with different pairings of artists, critics, and local inhabitants for each project, and Forest and Thenot did not participate. According to the summary of the "annual meeting of the association" on December 19, 1979, which included Fischer, Forest, Thenot, Snyers, and Granger, O.F.A.J. deposited 34,854 French francs (about 5,000 Euros) into the ESI bank account, and Fischer withdrew this amount to carry out the "sociological art workshops." The text also states that Fischer seeks to "revive the
activities of the association by purchasing, at his expense, the necessary materials to carry out a few regular publications, specifically the 'journals' of ESI." With the willing help of Snyers and Granger, Fischer would also be responsible for all aspects of this publication, including determining the direction of the journal, estimating costs, securing financing, and seeking subscribers. The "compte-rendu," signed by all five attendees, illustrates the degree to which Fischer had become the sole member actively working under the auspices of sociological art or ESI, a fact that would cause irresolvable conflict.

Fischer, with the help of Snyers and Granger, published three issues of Cahiers de l'Ecole sociologique interrogative in March 1980, April 1980, and May 1980 (this last issue may have come out a few months after the date of the editorial). In the first issue of the journal, Fischer includes an impressive list of the presentations that had taken place at ESI and states that the Collective had longed hoped to be able to publish a journal in order to further disseminate some of the debates that took place at ESI. He goes on to describe that when the moment came to do this, "each of the members [of the Collective] was pursuing his own path, according to his sensibilities, his particular preoccupations. Personally, I decided to pursue the work undertaken by the E.S.I."

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778 "Hervé Fischer souhaite relancer les activités de l'association en achetant, à ses frais personnels, le matériel d'impression nécessaire pour assurer quelques publications régulières, notamment des 'cahiers' de l'E.S.I."

779 After the appearance of the first number of the journal, the group met again to discuss finances. As they make clear in a summary of a meeting on March 25, 1980, "From a financial point of view, the cost of mailing (2F each one in France) poses a serious problem. […] It is thus decided to halt the appearance of number two (second trimester 1980). […] It was decided to clearly separate the subscription in the review, on the one hand, and the cost of adhesion to the association." The second issue did appear in April, but this meeting portended the conflict that would arise between the journal (Fischer's primary project) and Forest and Thenot.

780 "Nous avons trop souvent regretté de ne pas pouvoir publier certains des débats que nous avions organisés et qui méritaient à coup sûr l'impression. Depuis des années, nous avions donc cette intention, irréalisable financièrement, de créer une revue. Quand le moment vient de tenter l'aventure, de poursuivre
Thus positioned as the fulfillment of an existing desire on the part of the Collective as well as a continuation of the "work" of ESI, the first two issues of the journal--simple, staple-bound and offset-printed books about the size of a folded piece of paper and about 60 pages in length--appear in some respects as representative of these greater entities. Some of the contributors had previously presented at ESI, including the artist John Latham (founder of Artist Placement Group) who wrote about his "time-base theory," which proposed drawing on geological timescales as a different means of assessing art's impacts, and Vilém Flusser who contributed a text on the crisis in science. The journal nonetheless possessed a distinct character shaped by the interests, contacts, and writing of Fischer. Each is dedicated to a particular topic: "l'art comme pratique philosophique" (art as a philosophical practice) for the first issue and "crise" (crisis) for the second issue, two ideas central to Fischer's book *L'Histoire de l'art est terminée* (1981). Perhaps most striking in the first two issues is the total absence of Forest's and Thenot's names apart from the publication of full-page ads in the back of the journal for Thenot's publication *Cent Lectures de Marcel Duchamp* and Forest's *Art Sociologique: Vidéo*. Although the editor and publisher is listed as the Ecole sociologique interrogative and Fischer occasionally refers to the Sociological Art Collective, the "we" of his text is never specified.

The third issue entitled “2 Experiences d'art sociologique” (2 Experiences of Sociological Art) assembled documents and texts, many of them never published elsewhere, of the public projects in Perpignan in 1976 and Guebwiller in 1979, two
experiences that, in Fischer's words, "mark the continuity of sociological art and the desire to renew methods of field work." The issue, over 225 pages in length, the size of a full sheet of paper, published in French and German, and funded by O.F.A.J., included a plethora of plans, notes, photographs, newspaper articles, and reflections about the two projects. The "animation" in Perpignan, as discussed in chapter three, consisted of a series of events planned during a two-week period on site to activate communication between three socio-economically distinct neighborhoods. The “experience” in Guebwiller utilized the mechanism of the journal L'Alsace to involve the entire town in imagining and creating proposals for their visions of the future. [Fig. 74] He suggests that they shared a similar goal "to interrogate the inhabitants by creating an event of social communication about their daily lives, their values, their image of the world, to create a debate . . .] simply by offering to them the collective mirror of their own attitudes and beliefs." In his editorial, Fischer notes that both projects involved the participation of other artists ("the Sociological Art Collective [Forest, Thenot, and myself]" in Perpignan and "a new collective consisting this time of Snyers and Rudolf Bonvie" in Guebwiller), as well as large groups of French and German students. At various points in the text, however, Fischer's phrasing suggests a certain intellectual custody of the projects; he writes, for instance, "[T]he experience that I was able to conceive in Perpignan was


782 "[L]e but était toujours le même: interroger, en créant un événement de communication sociale–les habitants sur leur vie quotidienne, leurs valeurs, leur image du monde, créer le débat sans nous substituer à eux pour leur proposer nos propres réponses, en leur proposant simplement le miroir collectif de leur propres attitudes et croyances. A Perpignan, le miroir était photographique, à Guebwiller il était journalistique." Ibid.
realized by the Sociological Art Collective.⁷⁸³ In truth, the origin of any idea is nearly impossible to pin down, considering the diverse conditions that shape thought and action, but to separate the conception from the execution of the project in Perpignan and then to claim a degree of individual authorship evidently enraged Forest and Thenot.

The Collective's next semi-annual meeting on November 20, 1980, seems to have been consumed by Forest's and Thenot's complaints to Fischer. The two detail their gripes in a document titled "Mise au point" (Rectification) and disparaged what they saw as Fischer's "personal recuperation of collective work" for his own gain, whether through the marked absence of Forest and Thenot in Cahiers or through the pilfering of forms and ideas from them (noting, for instance, similarities between Forest's Space-média of 1972 and Fischer's press experiences).⁷⁸⁴ The "compte-rendu" of the meeting reiterated that "everything printed by ESI must bear the mention of the three founders." [Fig. 75] The text goes on to recall that the "title Ecole Sociologique Interrogative is the moral property of the Collectif d'art sociologique (Fischer, Forest, Thenot)" and to stipulate that photocopies of all correspondences arriving to and departing from ESI must be mailed to Forest and Thenot at the end of each month. The mounting discord and bitterness among the trio infuses the dry "legalese" of the summary. Unlike the other extant summaries, this one does not bear the signatures of the three members, perhaps because its written terms were not accepted by all members. Fischer, however, responded to the points in an undated text, acknowledging his fault for the confusion, affirming that the Collective and

⁷⁸³ "En 1976, l'expérience que j'avais pu concevoir à Perpignan fut réalisée avec le Collectif d'art sociologique." Ibid., 5.
⁷⁸⁴ This document also obliquely proposes further critiques of Fischer through a list of reaffirmations by "the Collective," stating, for instance, that "sociological art is not an art of opportunism, [. . .] of intellectualist rhetoric, [. . .] of the repetitive agitation of the same action."
ESI belong equally to all three founding members, agreeing not to use the name of the Collective without the accord of the others, and promising to cite dutifully origins and sources of his ideas. At the bottom of his text, Fischer included that it would be published as an editorial in the next issue of Cahiers, but to my knowledge it never appeared. While undoubtedly more complex than archival documents and forty-year-old reminiscences convey, the clashes in the fall of 1980 stemmed from rights over the institutional identity of ESI, the group identity of the Sociological Art Collective, and the legacy of sociological art. Forest and Thenot blamed Fischer for speaking individually in the names of these joint entities.

In a rapid succession of events in December 1980 and January 1981, the Sociological Art Collective and ESI came to an end. Initially, Forest and Thenot endeavored to take control of ESI and the Collective. They distributed an invitation on ESI letterhead to over two dozen individuals who had participated in ESI events (the list included Fischer) to attend a group debate on the "l'Historique de l'art sociologique" (The History of Sociological Art) planned for December 17, 1980, at a different location than Fischer's apartment (at 7 passage de la Main d'or, possibly Restany's apartment). While no documentation exists of this debate, the date of December 17, 1980, is listed as the date of Fischer's resignation from the association, implying that a difficult encounter may have taken place. Forest and Thenot then nominated a new treasurer, Madame Léone Ladeveze, to take Fischer's place, as described in a document bearing the heading "Association Collectif Art Sociologique/Ecole Sociologique Interrogative" and dated January 8, 1981. This same paper specifies that the group will send Fischer a certified letter requesting that he turn over all financial records connected with ESI and
announcing the new seat of the association and ESI at Ladeveze's home in Paris. The final deed—the proverbial nail in the coffin—entailed the placement of an advertisement in *Art Press* announcing the sale of ESI, that is, the sale of Fischer's home.\textsuperscript{785} [Fig. 76] The half-page ad published in the January 18, 1981, issue and disseminated as a photocopy declared in a bitterly ironic tone that the decision to sell the property was due the discovery of the following "flaws in the foundation": "intellectual replastering, drafts of institutional air, academic concrete work, public insalubrities, and the installation of 110 electrical volts failing to conform to administrative norms."\textsuperscript{786} This witty list combines the physical reconstruction of the building undertaken by Fischer with evocations of a stultifying academic institutionalism. The artists felt that the university and its perceived intellectual conservatism—the very things that the Collective attempted to avoid—had crept back into ESI, or perhaps were present in its foundation. While intended as a humorous but incisive critique of Fischer, the sale of the Boulevard de Charonne property would actually happen within the year when Fischer, who had been deeply hurt by Forest and Thenot's actions, moved permanently to Montreal, where he still resides today.

Around the time of ESI's and the Collective's dissolution, the sociologist René Lourau, who had organized the event "Contre-Sociologie" (Against-Sociology) at ESI and was a friend of the Collective, published an influential book entitled *L'Auto-

\textsuperscript{785} Essentially an attack on Fischer, the "sale" of ESI also points to the ways in which ESI was deeply intertwined with Fischer's personal and professional life and contacts. For Forest and Thenot, ESI had perhaps never been a neutral or truly collective territory.  
\textsuperscript{786} "Cette décision fait suite à des vices de forme du gros œuvre mis à jour par les services municipaux de la voirie: bétonnage universitaire, replâtrage intellectuel, courants d'art institutionnels, insalubrité publique, installation électrique 110 volts non conforme aux normes administratives."
noting the explosion of groups, journals, and movements after May ‘68, many of them embracing a model of self-management, Lourau examined the "autodissolution" of these same groups, theorizing the intrinsic presence of "autodissolution" within "autogestion." While his examples date back to the Paris commune, a majority of the groups he highlights came together and disbanded between the late 1960s and 1980. He includes in his book an inventory of over forty manifestoes in which groups declare an end to their activities. By analyzing these texts, Lourau concludes that in wanting to perpetuate themselves, all of these radical groups fell into a phenomenon of bureaucratization that ultimately stifled their creative and resistant capacities and led to their ends. In order to avoid this process, he suggests that groups must anticipate their own "autodissolution." Lourau understands "autodissolution" to be an inevitable trajectory of "avant-garde" groups, which share the fundamental desire to go beyond history, existing practices, and the status quo and, thus, embody a constant supercession of the self. In dictating their own disbanding, the groups might mitigate the tendency to institutionalize and become part of the very structure(s) they formed to resist. While the Sociological Art Collective and ESI do not appear in Lourau's inventory (their dissolution took place after the publication of his book), the model that he describes matches exactly the history and experience of the Collective, especially as embodied in the history of ESI.

Conclusion

On every ten-year anniversary of May '68, attention returns to this pivotal moment to assess its after-shocks (or lack thereof) and to consider how much society has or has not changed. Education reform is often among the topics. In 1978, *Opus* dedicated a series of articles under the heading “Les écoles d'art, de la mise en question à l'accusation (1968-1978)” (Art Schools, from Questioning to Accusation [1968-1978]) to the topic of art schools and art education on the occasion of a new national art diploma (Diplôme supérieur d'expression plastique) and the accompanying uproar from mostly conservative factions over the changes to art education. As the authors of the articles detail, the "detonation" of May '68 had initiated significant reform of art education along three general principles, all of which correspond to the outlines of ESI and sociological art practice. The first was the "sensibilization of students to the world of contemporary ideas" carried out by encouraging students' involvement in activities and fields not traditionally associated with studio practice and by enlarging the scope of teaching to subjects beyond the history of art, subjects "in which the fine arts are not dissociated from other forms of thought." The second was the "adaptation of techniques to technological realities" through the introduction of new media into artistic training and practice. And the third was an opening "at the level of pedagogy" toward decompartmentalization and an expanded "visual language."  

wrought by May '68 had led art schools "to open themselves to the contemporary world, to become precious sites of questioning in a world that was lacking in it."789

Though never directly mentioned in these articles, which focused on formal art schools and UER programs, ESI was part of this transformation, testing the ways in which a school founded and run by artists could re-imagine education–its domains, processes, discourses, and institutions–by integrating pedagogy and experimental artistic practice. One of the final texts written in the name of the Sociological Art Collective (but authored just by Forest and Thenot) concludes with this pronouncement: "The Sociological Art Collective is dead. Sociological art is alive and well."790 Indeed, social frameworks for making and comprehending art have become only more prominent over the subsequent decades, as seen in the social historical methodologies forming the bedrock of much intellectual production and the proliferation of social art practices since the early 1990s. However, a less evident place where the sociological art movement lives on is in the ideals, curricula, and utopian agendas of artist-run schools. Marked by an autodidactic and anti-establishment agenda, many of the artists founding these sites of education and self-education would be wise to look back to historical precedents, to see the ways in which the ideal of an anti-institutional institution is inscribed from its very start with an autodissolution that is, at once, disappointing and necessary.

790 "Le Collectif d'art est mort. L'art sociologique est bien vivant." Fred Forest and Jean-Paul Thenot, "Suite et fin" (February 1981).
CONCLUSION

While conducting research in the private archives of Jean-Paul Thenot, I came across a series of planning documents for an exhibition entitled "10 ans d'art sociologique" (10 Years of Sociological Art). The documents most likely date from around 1980 and were part of the Collective members' various efforts to offer a retrospective view of sociological art at the very moment that the group's collaborative work had come to an end and each artist pursued his own individual path. Although the exhibition, planned for the Musée Chéret in Nice, never took place (likely derailed by the artists' bitter exchanges and final break in December 1980/January 1981), the documents illustrate the Collective's view of the afterlives of sociological art, pointing to the ways that sociological art exceeds—indeed, had always exceeded—the practice and history of the Sociological Art Collective.

Among the papers was a drawing of a tree-like form with "collectif" written at the base and dozens of arrows pointing upward like branches to a canopy of names. The diagram depicts the evolution of sociological art in four stages, which were also to serve as the basic layout for the exhibition and accompanying catalogue. [Fig. 77] Just above the word "collective" is a section titled "pratiques individuelles" (individual practices) and dedicated to the work of the three artists. Separated from the lower and upper portions by strong horizontal lines, the treatment of the text envisages a tension that permeates the history of sociological art between, on the one hand, the unity of the

791 The Collective often retroactively dated the beginning of sociological art to 1970 or 1972, the years when the artists felt that began to work along the lines of sociological art. For more on this antedating, see chapter one.
792 Another document shows a list of the "exposition et structure du catalogue" that follows the same structure.
Collective and, on the other hand, the independence of its three members. The framed words "individual practices" also insert a visual break between the tree trunk and the tree branches, symbolizing the many ways in which the individual paths of Fischer, Forest, and Thenot led to the fracture of the group and to the proliferation of other alliances and expansion of sociological art. This horizontal section gives way to an upper canopy of names and arrows organized into two sections. The first lists the collaborations and key projects undertaken by the three artists in 1979/1980; these include Fischer's public intervention projects completed with the young French artist Alain Snyers in Amsterdam and Canada; Thenot's collaborative project with the artist Jean-Pierre Giovanelli, "Nous sommes tous des écrivains" (We are all writers), that made available typewriters to the attendees of an international book fair in Nice so that they could collectively produce their own novels, adding a sentence to a communal text wherever the former person had left off; and Forest's project Le mètre carré/Le Territoire (Square Meter/The Territory), which began with his acquisition of parcels of land on the French-Swiss border and the sale of these at a contemporary art auction and concluded with his creation of a utopian site declared the seat of an autonomous government in an old farm house an hour north of Paris. Forest divided the "territory" into a grid of square meters and made a square meter available to any individual to use however he/she saw fit, whether as a site for projects, a means to connect with other individuals, or a place of free experimentation, thereby forming a sort of utopia composed of sovereign yet interconnected individuals.

793 Fischer, Forest, and Thenot discuss these same projects in the debate organized by the Brussels-based art magazine +–0 (Plus Minus Zero) and moderated by Jean-Pierre Van Tieghem around the question "Sociological Art What is Going On?" See the report of the event "Art sociologique que se passe t'il?," Plus Minus Zero, no. 26 (June 1979): 44-48. Plus Minus Zero had long supported the work of the Collective artists, dedicating significant articles to the individual and group work beginning in 1975.
Through these new collaborations, Fischer, Forest, and Thenot extended many of the Collective's key proposals of sociological art, including the annex of power through systems of self-management, the involvement of publics in the production of new discourses, and the creation of spaces outside of dominant institutions.

The second canopy fans out to create a broad semi-circle of names: Snyers, Giovanelli, Artist Placement Group, Provisional Art & Language, Antonio Muntadas, Daniel Dewaele, Jan Swidzinski, Melvin Charney, Fernando de Filippi, and HA Schult. The list of ten artists or artist groups from all over the world (in the order of the names listed above, France, Great Britain, the United States, Spain, Belgium, Poland, Canada, Italy, and Germany) substantiates the breadth and international character of sociological art's reach. While the diagram's form and the orientation of its many arrows bring to mind a linear model of influence, with the Collective positioned as an origin, the diagram might also be read as a history, portraying the Collective members' search for and exploration of sociological art, a pursuit that brought the artists into contact with a vast and dispersed group of socially-engaged practitioners and practices. Rather than a family tree, an image of filiation, the diagram thus becomes a map of kinship, that is, a depiction of the social relationships that were crucial to the history of sociological art and to the lives of its most vocal advocates.

One striking aspect of the list of artists is how few are well-known today, and yet Antonio Muntadas, Daniel Dewaele, Jan Swidzinski, Fernando de Filippi, and HA Schult have all been the subjects of recent exhibitions and studies.\(^\text{794}\) Although relatively absent

\(^{794}\) E.g., Daniel Dewaele: Selected Projects (Belgium: Art Paper Editions, 2012); Christoph Stiegemann, ed., HA Schult: Die Zeit und Der Müll (Paderborn: Diözesanmuseum, 2013); Jan Swidzinski is central to Paul Ardenne's study Un art contextuel: création artistique en milieu urbain, en situation, d'intervention, 370
from art history textbooks, major museum exhibitions, and art sales, many socially-engaged artists from the 1970s have begun to pique the interest of curators of experimental art spaces, writers of small-scale art magazines, and doctoral researchers. With the meteoric rise of so-called "relational" and "social" art practices since the mid-1990s, curators and art historians, especially those who "came of age" in the 1990s, myself included, and who were involved with early social art projects, have grown exhausted by the circular debates around these practices as well as the marginalization of them from the leading discourses on and markets of contemporary art. Although these practices and their diverse material or temporal manifestations have provoked recurring and potentially fruitful debates around form and content, aesthetics and ethics, these conversations tend to be impeded by a desire, or perhaps demand, to elaborate distinguishing artistic features of practices that appear to mimic social work, urban
departicipation (Paris: Flammarion, 2002) and Lukasz Ronduda's "Flexibility Makes Our Existence Possible: The Contextual Art of Jan Swidzinski," Art Margins (2008), accessed online at http://www.artmargins.com/index.php/archive/88-flexibility-makes-our-existence-possible-the-contextual-art-of-jan-swidzinski; Antonio Muntadas had a major solo exhibition at Jeu de Paume entitled Muntadas: Entre / Between (October 16, 2012–January 20, 2013); Fernando de Filippi is featured in the exhibition Anni ’70–Arte a Roma (The Seventies–Art in Rome), October 11, 2013–February 2, 2014, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome. Furthermore, a slew of editorials and commemorations followed the deaths of a number of these artists, who were often born in the 1930s and 40s, including Melvin Charney in 2012 and Jan Swidzinski in 2014. Artist Placement Group and Art & Language have much higher profiles in art history.795 These practices, called variously participatory, experiential, relational, dialogical, and social, constitute, in Claire Bishop's estimation, “what avant-garde we have today.” “The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents” Artforum (February 2006): 179. Although social practice has received significant attention from smaller non-profit institutions (in the United States, Creative Time is one of the most visible) and emerging researchers, there remains an institutional disregard on the part of major museums, art historians, and art markets. This dichotomy strikes me as indicative of art history's and the art market's fundamental reliance on structures that social practice resists accommodating, specifically the production of material or commodity objects that can be valorized, collected, exhibited, or analyzed using such primary art historical methods as iconography, formalism, or structuralism. While certainly other "dematerialized" practices such as performance (think of Marina Abramovic's exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art) have entered mainstream conversations and markets, certain attributes of social practice art, especially its extended temporality and spatiality and involvement of multiple publics, make it particularly difficult to enframe.

planning, entertainment, and, more generally, the service industry. Rather than looking for ways to distinguish artistic activities from social, educational, and economic realms, an orientation that is, in my view, misaligned, historians and curators should consider how artists sought out and interacted with these peripheral fields, how this engagement affected art and other disciplines, and what historical conditions that shaped these intersections. Doing so requires curators and historians to rectify the limited historical purview that characterizes most exhibitions, books, articles, theoretical debates, and graduate programs dedicated to social practice by beginning the time-consuming archival work of identifying and comprehending potentially fruitful precedents from interdisciplinary viewpoints.

Most notably, the art historians Claire Bishop and Grant Kester have engaged in a lively public debate over their distinct approaches to the subject of social art practice in the following seminal texts: Claire Bishop, “Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics” October, no. 110 (Fall 2004) and “The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents” Artforum (February 2006); and Grant Kester, Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004). See also their exchanges in the letters section of Artforum: Grant Kester, “Another Turn—Letters,” Artforum (May 2006): 22; Claire Bishop, “Letters,” Artforum (May 2006): 24. Fundamentally, their debate has centered Bishop's model of aesthetics as antagonism (via her engaged with Jacques Rancière), which in Kester’s opinion, retains aspects typical to avant-garde theory and thereby reifies divisions between aesthetics and politics, undoing Bishop's own goal to breakdown such distinctions. As a result of this dichotomy, Kester writes, “Any work of art that makes itself too accessible, that attempts to solicit the viewer’s interaction too overtly, runs the risk of being assimilated by the malevolent forces of consumer society” (Grant Kester, Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art, 13). Bishop, for her part, decries Kester’s “populist” and “liberal humanist criticism,” writing “His righteous aversion to authorship can only lead to the end of provocative art and thinking” (Claire Bishop, “Letters,” Artforum [May 2006]: 24). But neither historians undertakes an interdisciplinary history of their subjects, even as they acknowledge how important fields such as social work and ethnography are to artists' conception of their social art practices.

Bourriaud sets this ahistorical tone in his influence book, writing “[relational art’s] basic claim—the sphere of human relations as artwork venue—has no prior example in art history, even if it appears, after the fact, as the obvious backdrop of all aesthetic praxis, and as a modernist theme to cap all modernist themes.” Nicholas Bourriaud, Relational Aesthetics, trans. Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods Pleasance (Paris: Les Presses du Réel, 2002), 44. As discussed in the introduction, this ahistoricism carried through most books and exhibitions, including Creative Time's pivotal multipart endeavor called Living as Form, which included a "retrospective" exhibition (2011), exhibition catalogue (published by MIT Press in 2012), symposium, online archive of 350 projects, and a "nomadic" version of the exhibition currently on view in multiple cities. Living as Form begins its survey in 1991.
This dissertation seeks to respond to this lacuna in current discussions about social art practices by offering the first historical account of sociological art as it was promoted, theorized, and practiced by the Sociological Art Collective following the uprisings of May '68. Although short-lived, working collaboratively for just six years, the Collective undertook numerous projects that prefigure much contemporary art. Many of the forms mobilized by the group correspond to those popular in social art practice since the 1990s, including art collectives, didactic exhibitions, interviews and therapy sessions, neighborhood-based animations, group walks, and artist-run schools. Indeed, a number of historic projects have stunning contemporary correlates. For instance, the Danish artist collective Superflex worked with tenants of Liverpool's Housing Action Trust and a British community television station to produce *Tenantspin*, a live television studio installed at the residence, where tenants could produce and webcast videos. Closely resembling Forest's *Vidéo troisième âge* (1973), Superflex's *Tenantspin* (2002), as described by the group, "aims to promote resident participation in regeneration and social housing issues through constructive debate, the sharing of experiences and the encouragement of responsible free speech." During Creative Time's pivotal retrospective of social art practices, the duo known as Bik Van Der Pol led walking tours around the Lower East Side of Manhattan "to consider the past, present, and future of the built environment," an initiative with evident parallels to Forest's *Promenade sociologique* (1973) and the Collective's projects in Neuenkirchen and Perpignan. The committed work of social animation in neighborhoods by Tania Bruguera, Suzanne Lacy,

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798 See a description of the project on the website of Superflex: [http://superflex.net/activities/2002/05/01/superchannel_-_tenantspin](http://superflex.net/activities/2002/05/01/superchannel_-_tenantspin), accessed February 2014.

and the collective WochenKlausur, among many other practitioners, also connects with the aims and methods of the Collective's *Enquête-animation de Perpignan* (1976). The discovery of these parallels could continue *ad infinitum* not as an affirmation of the Collective's pioneering status (though the artists frequently reiterate this point) but rather as an indication of the ongoing relevance of the forms developed by the artists.

As I have argued in my four chapters dedicated to the activities of organizing, questioning, animating, and teaching, the projects undertaken by the members of the Collective intersected with a number of specific and far-reaching social, political, intellectual, and artistic changes that took place in large part as reactions to the uprisings of May '68. The art collective itself emerged along with a blossoming of collective endeavors of self-management in the 1970s that demanded new tasks of organization and representation. The artist-curated exhibition became an important medium to redefine artistic labor by inverting traditional hierarchies in the art world and by highlighting the work of artistic research and presentation. This period also witnessed tremendous changes in the social science fields with the development of specializations dedicated to culture and the arts and with increased awareness of the qualitative measures that shape scientific research. The artists' adaptation of the questionnaire and interview, both of which had become key tools in the French state's increased involvement with contemporary art and cultural practices, illustrates their engagement with the pressing issue of art's public(s). By harnessing these forms of questioning, the Collective attempted to activate instances of critical self-reflection and enlarged spheres of public discourse. The ideal of animation was, in fact, central to the French state's new program of cultural development, but rather than maintaining distinctions between cultural and
social animation, as the state tended to do, the Collective intentionally intertwined these modes through video and public intervention. The intersubjective and self-reflexive arrangements devised by the Collective connected with the ways that social scientists began to use novel media technologies as part of a general shift toward increasingly qualitative research methodologies in the 1970s. The Collective's culminating project—the creation of an artist-run school—combined the artists' efforts of organizing, questioning, and animating in response to the perceived failures on the part of the French university system and intended reforms that followed May '68. Despite its remarkable interdisciplinary program and experimentation with less hierarchical classroom models, the school took on many of the institutional trappings of consolidation and promotion that had long afflicted the Collective itself, especially as its members struggled for critical subversion and recognition. This array of collective and independent projects composing the history of the Sociological Art Collective signals the complex and dialectical evolution of art and society.

In the early stage of my doctoral research, as I confronted the many challenges and uncertain returns of recovering a minor history such as that of sociological art, and as I struggled to understand its relevance today, I came across a sign at the 2011 College Art Association (CAA) annual conference. Hanging over a bright red square carpet and a circle of chairs in the conference center's atrium, the sign read "Educate, Agitate, Organize," a near match to the chapter titles of my dissertation. [Fig. 78] The space had been created by the faculty and students in Graduate Public Practice at the Otis College of Art and Design, one of more than a dozen programs of social practice to have emerged
in the past ten years. As described in a nearby sign, "Otis Graduate Public Practice students occupy a prototypical classroom where changing and spontaneous grouping of students and faculty 'perform' discussions on politics, relational and public practices, and the experience of learning exchanges." The space and its animators hosted dozens of discussions over the course of the conference on such topics as radical pedagogy, artistic-activist tactics, conceiving a public, and joining/resisting CAA. Flanking on side of the red carpet were white boards covered with questions, notes, and comments from these and other discussions. The questions written by the participants broached many of the same irresolvable issues that had beset the Collective forty years earlier: "What is artists are the same power structure, which they are critiquing, in their way of teaching?!" "How can I empower my students to take charge of their education and advocate for it?" "Must form and content mirror each other?" "What does it mean to critique education in the middle of CAA, which is based on a capitalist model by specific privileged people?"

While the history of the Collective does not possess answers to these questions, it expands the arena in which to begin to search and discover possible responses. Despite Hanna Deinhard's appeal in a 1975 article published in Art Journal that “art history and sociology of art would not only be complementary to each other but, indeed, needful each other,” the histories and methods of these disciplines are rarely brought together. Sociological art offers an opportunity to do just that. By examining the shifting interfaces between the arts, humanities, and social sciences, I have sought to recover the resonance

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800 Graduate programs or concentrations in social practice include: social practices at the California College of the Arts; The Contextual Practice area at Carnegie Mellon University; Media, Social Practice, and Design at the University of Iowa; Art and Social Practice at Portland State University; and Social Practice Queens at Queens College, among others. All of these have been founded in the past twelve years.

of the Collective's work with an expanded set of contemporary issues and practices and to show that the struggles and opportunities embodied in sociological art remain just as viable and compelling today as in the 1970s.
INTRODUCTION

Fig. 1. Photograph of the façade of the Centre Georges Pompidou, taken by Ruth Erickson, May 2011.

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Fig. 3. Receipt of declaration of association “Collectif art sociologique,” November 13, 1974

Fig. 4. Stills from video documentation of *L'Art contre l'idéologie* (Art Against Ideology), December 10, 1974-January 4, 1975, Galerie Rencontres, Paris. Jouniac’s sculpture *Piège pour une exécution capitale*, 1971 (left) and Maccheroni’s sculpture *Cadeau pour les partisans de la peine de mort*, 1972 (right).

Fig. 5. Stills from video documentation of *L'Art contre l'idéologie* (Art Against Ideology), December 10, 1974-January 4, 1975, Galerie Rencontres, Paris. Presentation of documentation of *Tucuman Arde* (Tucuman Burns), 1968.
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Fig. 7. Telegram exchange between the Sociological Art Collective and Bernard Teyssèdre, February 21, 1975.
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Fig. 41. Fred Forest, Stills from *Les gestes du photographe* (The Gestures of a Photographer), 1974.

Fig. 42. Fred Forest, Stills from *Les gestes du coiffeur* (The Gestures of a Hairstylist), 1974.
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Fig. 44. Fred Forest, Documentary photograph of *La Vidéo troisième âge*, (Video Third Age), 1973.

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Fig. 53. Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, and Jean-Paul Thenot, "Ecole sociologique interrogative," c. 1976-1977.
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Fig. 55. Hervé Fischer with Jacques Lepage (left), installation of *Essuie-mains* paintings at Impact II, Musée de Céret, 1972.

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Fig. 59. Sociological Art Collective, “Pourquoi ouverture d'une Ecole Sociologique Interrogative?” (Why the opening of an Interrogative Sociological School?). Bulletin, May 1976.
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Fig. 65. Michel Ragon, “Autogestion et architecture,” Ecole Sociologique Interrogative Bulletin, 1977.
Fig. 66. Still from video documentation of “Autogestion et architecture” at the Ecole Sociologique Interrogative, May 17, 1977. Pictured from left to right: Paul Virilio, Michel Ragon, and Pierre Gaudibert.

Fig. 68. Stills from video documentation of “Pratique médicale, pratique sociale” by Bernard Fonty at the Ecole Sociologique Interrogative, January 26, 1977.

Fig. 70. Sociological Art Collective, “Reunion du bureau du Collectif d'art sociologique” (Meeting of the Sociological Art Collective), November 16, 1977.

Fig. 71. Ecole Sociologique Interrogative letterhead.
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Fig. 74. Hervé Fischer, Documentary photograph of project in Guebwiller, 1979.
COLLECTIF D'ART SOCIOLIGIQUE
Association Loi de 1901

COMPTÉ RENDU DE LA RÉUNION ANNUELLE DE L'ASSOCIATION
LE NOVEMBRE 1980

1) Le rapport présenté par le président et la présentation des comptes faite par le trésorier sont approuvés.
2) Yves Granger et Alain Sneyers ne sont pas reconduits dans les fonctions provisoires qui leur avaient été attribuées l'an passé au sein du bureau, puisqu'ils n'ont jamais fait partie officiellement de l'association du Collectif d'art sociologique. Ils pourront continuer néanmoins à assister Hervé Fischer à titre personnel, dans la publication des Cahiers de l'E.S.I.
3) Nouvelle délégation est donnée à Hervé Fischer pour l'année en cours, pour diriger les Cahiers de l'Ecole Sociologique Interrogative. Le contenu des Cahiers devra être communiqué prêablement à sa parution à Fred Forest et à Jean-Paul Thenot. D'autre part le nom des trois fondateurs de l'Ecole sociologique interrogative devra figurer en bonne place, à la page 1 de la rédaction.
4) Tout imprimé de l'Ecole sociologique interrogative (ESI) devra porter la mention des trois fondateurs: Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, Jean-Paul Thenot.
5) La cotisation annuelle est fixée à 50 francs.
6) Les correspondances d'arrivée ou de départ, concernant aussi bien le Collectif d'art sociologique que l'Ecole sociologique interrogative seront toutes communiquées au Président et au Secrétaire de l'association, sous forme de photocopies, à la fin de chaque mois, par envoi postal recommandé.
7) Il est rappelé que le titre Ecole Sociologique Interrogative est la propriété morale du Collectif d'art sociologique, (Fischer, Forest, Thenot).
8) Hervé Fischer communiquera également la liste des abonnés aux cahiers de l'ESI, avec sa mise à jour et informera le Président et le Secrétaire de toutes les démarches qui impliquent la marche ou la responsabilité de l'association.

Hervé Fischer  Fred Forest  Jean-Paul Thenot

Fig. 75. Sociological Art Collective, "Compte-rendu de la reunion annuelle de l'association" (Summary of the annual meeting of the association), November 1980.
Fig. 76. Fred Forest and Jean-Paul Thenot, Advertisement “Ecole Sociologique Interrogative à vendre” (Interroative Sociological School for Sale), Art Press, 1981.
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Fig. 77. Diagram of Sociological Art Collective, author unknown, c. 1980.

Fig. 78. Photograph of the Otis College of Art and Design Graduate Public Practice’s space at the 2011 College Art Association Conference, taken by Ruth Erickson.
APPENDIX B: Sociological Art Collective Texts

Manifestos of the Sociological Art Collective:

1) Hervé Fischer, Fred Forest, et Jean-Paul Thénot ont décidé de constituer un *collectif d’art sociologique qui* puisse fonctionner comme une structure d’accueil et de travail pour tous ceux dont la recherche et la pratique artistique ont pour thème fondamental le fait sociologique et le lien entre l’art et la société.

Le *collectif d’art sociologique* constate l’apparition d’une nouvelle sensibilité au donné social, liée au processus de massification. Les cadres actuels de cette sensibilité ne sont plus ceux du rapport de l’homme individualisé au monde, mais ceux du rapport de l’homme à la société qui le produit.

Le *collectif d’art sociologique*, par sa pratique artistique, tend à mettre l’art en question, à mettre en évidence les faits sociologiques et à "visualiser" l’élaboration d’une théorie sociologique de l’art.

Il recourt fondamentalement à la théorie et aux méthodes des sciences sociales. Il veut aussi, par sa pratique, créer un champ d’investigation et d’expérience pour la théorie sociologique.

Le *collectif d’art sociologique* tient compte des attitudes idéologiques traditionnelles des publics auxquels il s’adresse. Il recourt aux méthodes de l’animation, de l’enquête et de la pédagogie. En même temps qu’il met l’art en relation avec son contexte sociologique, il attire l’attention sur les canaux de communication et de diffusion, thème nouveau dans l’histoire de l’art, et qui implique aussi une pratique nouvelle.

Hervé FISCHER, Fred FOREST, Jean-Paul THÉNOT, Paris, le 7 octobre 1974
*Publié dans le Journal Le Monde, le 10 octobre 1974.*

2) L’art sociologique, que nous étions seuls encore à défendre il y a quelques mois, suscite des engouements divers, qui tentent de l’entraîner dans le confusionnisme. Il est donc temps de faire quelques rappels et de réaffirmer le sens que nous avons toujours donné au concept de l’art sociologique.

En effet, *l’art sociologique se distingue tout autant de la sociologie de l’art que des conceptions laxistes d’un "art social".*

D’une part, en tant que pratique active dans le champ social, ici et maintenant, recourant aux approches théoriques qu’il soumet à l’épreuve de l’action, mettant en œuvre des stratégies par rapport au réel, mais aussi par rapport aux institutions, au pouvoir, inventant les techniques de ses expériences - l’art sociologique sort du cadre du discours scientifique et universitaire. S’il y recourt nécessairement, comme à un savoir, instrument
de l’action et s’il lui offre en retour, avec chaque expérience nouvelle de nouveaux matériaux d’analyse, il le dépasse dialectiquement dans la pratique qu’il élabore. D’autre part, l’art sociologique, par la spécificité de sa relation à la sociologie, n’a rien à voir avec le fourre-tout culturel du thème "art et société", dans lequel certains tendent en abusant de leur autorité de critiques d’art, à le diluer pour le récupérer. D’autres, comme nous, comprennent aujourd’hui ce danger. Cette confusion habilement entretenue constitue actuellement la menace la plus insidieuse contre notre démarche.

Engagée politiquement, notre pratique sociologique se distingue de l’art militant traditionnel avec lequel on veut aussi la confondre. Ce dernier s’exprime encore avec les formalismes esthétiques et les poncifs picturaux petit-bourgeois, auxquels nous voulons substituer une pratique active de questionnement critique. La peinture militante a été une étape importante mais prisonnière des clichés et des conformismes culturels qui la rendirent inopérante, elle laisse apparaître aujourd’hui ses limites et ses échecs avec trop d’évidence pour que l’art sociologique ne s’engage pas sur d’autres voies, impliquant les nouveaux médias, des méthodes pédagogiques critiques et le recours fondamental à l’analyse sociologique.


L’art sociologique est une pratique qui se fonde sur le retournement de la sociologie de l’art contre l’art lui-même, et qui prend en compte la sociologie de la société qui produit cet art. Il constitue sans doute l’une des premières tentatives (si l’on excepte quelques expériences de socio-drame), de mise en œuvre d’une pratique sociologique, connue au-delà du concept traditionnel d’art. En effet, la sociologie, à la différence des autres sciences comme l’économie, la mécanique, la psychologie ou la biologie, n’a encore suscité aucune pratique, si ce n’est constatatoire au niveau du champ social.

Le projet de l’art sociologique, c’est en fin de compte d’élaborer la pratique sociologique elle-même.

Mais à la différence de ces sciences et de leurs applications, l’art sociologique ne vise pas à gérer le réel, présent ou à venir, mais à exercer par rapport à la réalité sociale et donc à nous-mêmes, une fonction de questionnement et de perturbation. Cette fonction interrogative et critique implique de ne pas faire les questions et les réponses. En effet il ne vise nullement à justifier un dogme, ni à conforter sa bureaucratie, mais à susciter des prises de conscience désaliénantes. Il s’efforce d’établir, là où règne la diffusion
unilatérale des informations, des structures dilogiques de communication et d’échange, impliquant l’engagement réciproque de la responsabilité active de chacun.

L’art sociologique tente de mettre en question les superstructures idéologiques, le système de valeurs, les attitudes et les mentalités conditionnées par la massification de notre société.

C’est dans ce but qu’il recourt à la théorie sociologique, à ses méthodes et qu’il élabore une pratique pédagogique d’animation, d’enquête, de perturbation des canaux de communication.

Le concept d’art sociologique, tel que nous l’avons proposé en 1972, tel que nous le pratiquions depuis plus longtemps encore, dans une indifférence quasi générale à ce moment-là, implique aujourd’hui comme hier la rigueur de sa relation constitutive avec la théorie sociologique matérialiste, dont il est en fin de compte la conséquence et dont il marque le passage à l’acte en tant que pratique opérant dans le champ social.

Hervé FISCHER, Fred FOREST, Jean-Paul THÉNOT, Paris, mai 1975

3) La pratique de l’art sociologique substitue aux finalités affirmatives et esthétiques traditionnelles de l’art des objectifs liés à la transformation des attitudes idéologiques, dans le sens d’un prise de conscience de l’aliénation sociale. Il ne s’agit pas de proposer de nouveaux modèles d’organisation sociale, mais d’exercer le pouvoir dialectique d’un questionnement critique. Cette conscientisation doit permettre, dans les moments de rupture du système social (crise des structures économiques et bureaucratiques) de faire valoir les interrogations fondamentales susceptibles d’orienter les démarches de ceux qui veulent transformer les rapports sociaux. Car tel est notre projet délibéré. Le question philosophique du sens, dans un système social qui ne tolère pas sa mise en question, est inévitablement subversive.

Cela implique que le collectif d’art sociologique considère la méthodologie et la stratégie comme deux concepts fondamentaux de sa pratique.

1. La méthodologie de l’art sociologique. Son but fondamental est la mise en place de dispositifs de déviance. Son champ d’action est directement celui des relations subjectives interindividuelles. Elle ne peut guère emprunter à la sociologie officielle, en ce sens que celle-ci vise à constater et à gérer, à manipuler les attitudes des électeurs/consommateurs par rapport aux propositions fictivement alternatives du système social lui-même, et non pas à mettre en question ces propositions. L’histoire de cette méthodologie constatatoire et bureaucratique est liée aux demandes des organismes gouvernementaux et économiques qui ont financé les enquêtes sociales dans le but
d’assurer l’exercice de leur pouvoir. Seule la pratique d’un questionnement critique peut
nous permettre d’utiliser ces méthodes, en les détournant.

Notre méthodologie est entièrement à inventer. Elle vise à faire apparaître concrettement
la réalité des relations sociales qui déterminent les individus, mais que l’idéologie
dominante occulte diversement au niveau de l’imaginaire dans les consciences
individuelles, par son discours politique, moral et culturel. L’art sociologique visualise
les relations sociales que l’analyse sociologique théorique et la pratique révèlent ; il fait
émerger à la conscience de chacun ses structures abstraites, objet du discours
sociologique, idéologiquement aveuglées au niveau du vécu quotidien. Cette pratique
pédagogique subversive révèle le fonctionnement des rapports sociaux réels entre les
catégories sociales, les modes d’exploitation, la logique politique des systèmes de valeurs
dominant, leur mystification quotidienne, permettant ainsi à chacun un exercice critique
de son jugement et de sa liberté par rapport à un ordre social qui se présente faussement
comme naturel et nécessaire. Cette autogestion de la pensée peut être obtenue grâce à
l’effet multiplié de différentes techniques: déplacement ou transfert d’informations par
rapport à leurs lieux ou supports de processus culturels appartenant à des niveaux ou
 sphères sociales habituellement cloisonnés, démarches synthétiques provoquant
des courts-circuits subversifs, partout où l’idéologie dominante divise et fragmente
soigneusement pour éviter les confrontations dialectiques, bref une combinaison
déviant des éléments culturels réels, mettant en question leur logique sociale et donc
faisant apparaître ce que leur cohérence doit au pouvoir politique dominant répressif.
Questionnements, débats, dynamisations, perturbations des circuits de
communication affirmatifs, provocations, refus, contre-usages fictions critiques, contre-
institutions peuvent constituer cette pratique transformatrice.

Il ne s’agit pas seulement d’action directe, mais aussi d’une expérimentation dont l’effet
partiel ou différé importe autant que la confrontation avec les hypothèses de la recherche
théorique d’une sociologie critique.

2. La stratégie de l’art sociologique. Réalisme et détournement sont ses deux principes.
Elle s’exerce spécifiquement vis-à-vis des institutions en place du système dominant,
qu’elle veut mettre en question. Constitués en collectif, nous ne rencontrons pas
seulement des individus, nous sommes aussi confrontés constamment à ces institutions,
qui sont d’une part d’ordre artistique et culturel (galeries, musées, critiques d’art,
magazines, biennales, foires de l’art, etc.), d’autre part d’ordre politique et administratif
(mass média, partis politiques, syndicats, municipalités, polices, organismes de contrôle,
de censure, groupes de pression etc.). Les processus récupérateurs du marché de l’art et le
cadrage de nos activités par ces différentes institutions font problème. En ce qui concerne
le marché de l’art, le collectif a pris la décision de ne pas y participer et de le contester
radicalement ; en ce qui concerne les partis de se tenir en dehors et les questionner tous
en refusant les dogmes. Notre fonction interrogative critique est à l’opposé de tout
militantisme.
La stratégie de l’art sociologique vise à s’appuyer sur la permissivité des institutions artistiques, pour élargir son activité à une pratique sociologique beaucoup plus vaste que la catégorie d’art. Il s’agit de s’emparer du pouvoir des institutions en place soit en s’appuyant sur quelques-uns des hommes qui y exercent des responsabilités, soit grâce à la logique du pouvoir acquis, pour détourner ce pouvoir, si possible déborder les processus de neutralisation de notre action qu’opère en principe le cadrage institutionnel du micro-milieu élitaire, et retourner ce pouvoir contre le système institutionnel que nous voulons questionner.

Dans une société dominée par l’élite économique et technocratique à laquelle la classe moyenne majoritaire a délégué son pouvoir politique, il est possible d’appuyer notre stratégie sur une partie de la classe intellectuelle qui conteste le pouvoir des gestionnaires et leurs finalités.

Le réalisme de notre stratégie implique constamment un calcul des risques dans le jeu des cautions institutionnelles, des mécanismes de neutralisation et de récupération, et des possibilités d’expérimentation ou de mise en question efficace. Si le court terme n’est pas négligeable le long terme est une perspective d’espoir qui légitime nécessairement toute volonté, aussi dérisoire qu’elle apparaisse de transformer les rapport sociaux contemporains. C’est peut-être la volonté de continuer malgré tout, qui donnera sa force à notre refus d’une société d’hommes/objets contrôlés cybernétiquement.

Hervé FISCHER, Fred FOREST, Jean-Paul THÉNOT, Paris, mars 1976
* Publié dans le catalogue international de la 37e Biennale de Venise, juin 1976.

4) L’art est une marchandise complexe. Son marché dans les pays industrialisés est organisé à plusieurs niveaux: spéculations élitaires sur pièces uniques ou à tirage limité, diffusion massive de reproductions (disques, cartes postales, copies...), emballage ou conditionnement de denrées de consommation (alimentation, maison...). Ce marché a sécrété un réseau d’information moderne et diversifié, et un système institutionnel efficace (galeries, musées, centres d’art et de culture...). Capitale mondiale de la finance et de l’économie, New York détient sur ce marché un pouvoir impérial et y exporte sa culture locale en même temps que ses dollars.

1. Le marché de l’art. Banques, bourses, enchères, assurances, industrie, galeries ont fait du " supplément d’âme " de notre civilisation une activité commerciale à haut rendement, très comparable à toute autre, avec une fonction supplémentaire en effet, celle de légitimer spirituellement notre société industrielle et commerciale et la classe qui y domine. L’art y retrouve son pouvoir affirmatif traditionnel.

Le collectif d’art sociologique refuse une société où l’art est de l’argent et où l’argent est divin. Par sa pratique interrogative et critique, à l’opposé de l’art marchandise et de la culture de consommation, il questionne la conscience sociale.
2. La communication. Confronté au réseau marchand et officiel de l’art (revues d’art financées par des directeurs de galeries, dirigées par des représentants de l’État, éditées par des capitaines d’industrie), le collectif d’art sociologique pose le problème de la communication. Il doit inventer marginalement son propre réseau d’information, à l’encontre des pouvoirs économiques et politiques.

3. Les institutions du marché. Vis-à-vis des galeries, musées et du symbole monumental qui règne désormais sur ce système à Paris - le Centre d’Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou - le collectif d’art sociologique doit inventer une stratégie de détournement. Il doit créer ses contre-institutions, telle l’École Sociologique Interrogative, pour opposer la conscience à la consommation.


Pourant la crise a atteint la capitale impériale, et tandis que les marchands avisés accueillent temporairement quelques artistes et galeries étrangers, le temps de passer une crise qu’ils veulent brève, nous lançons un tiers front hors New York capable d’organiser une stratégie hors du marché international et d’inventer diversement nos consciences et nos identités, sans dépendre des guichets de banque new-yorkais.

Le marché de l’art, son système d’information et de diffusion, ses institutions le Centre Pompidou, l’impérialisme new-yorkais existent. Ils sont là. Comme des produits caractéristiques de notre société marchande et de consommation Le collectif d’art sociologique n’a pas le pouvoir de les supprimer. Sa stratégie sera donc de les détourner, pour que l’art ne soit pas l’expression sublime et le supplément d’âme du pouvoir économique, politique et militaire..., mais la conscience interrogative de tous.

Le collectif d’art sociologique,
Hervé FISCHER, Fred FOREST, Jean-Paul THÉNOT, Paris, février 1977
L’art et ses structures économiques, Galerie Germain, Paris, January 1975

ART SOCIOLOGIQUE I

L’ART ET SES STRUCTURES SOCIO - ECONOMIQUES

À l’initiative du Collectif d’Art Sociologique

Galerie Germain, 19 rue Guénaud, 75006 Paris, tél. 639.69.51
9 janvier 1975

L’art sociologique n’est pas une avant-garde.
Une avant-garde, en art, pousse l’autre, chasse l’autre. Une avant-garde, en art, a ceci d’étrange qu’elle ne comporte ni arrière-garde, ni corps de troupe. Pourquoi? Parce que lancer une avant-garde, en art, c’est pourvoir les spéculateurs en marchandises à cote boursière en hausse et usure garantie après amortissement des stocks. Ainsi, ce qui fait suite à une avant-garde, en art, ce ne sera jamais l’armée, dévaluée par son nombre. Ce ne pourra être qu’une autre avant-garde, dont le principal mérite sera de différer de la précédente, puisque cette différence est cela même qui autorise un investissement neuf, au lieu d’immobiliser le capital dans la maintenance d’un équipement désuet, sans avantage concurrentiel dans la course au profit maximi.

L’art sociologique n’élève pas les âmes vers la beauté.
La beauté, d’où vient la beauté? Cet Absolu est le don du Génie: "Voix du Silence", "Dialogue avec l’Invisible", nous enseigne l’esthétique, parce qu’il n’est pas sans intérêt d’offusquer sous les mises esthétiques sa généalogie véritable, à savoir que sa mère a nos idéologies et son père Orcas-A-Rhinances, tout deux d’honnête naissance bourgeoise. Ellever les âmes vers la beauté, cela se traduit: attirer les gens (corps et âme) vers ce don du ciel qu’est la domination du goût bourgeois, afin de les mieux détourner de la lutte (bassement matérielle) qui changerait leurs conditions de vie. "L’éducation artistique" et la "participation" giscardienne relèvent d’une même stratégie, que le bon peuple "participe", oui, sous condition qu’il n’ait aucun pouvoir de décision! Que le bon peuple s’initie aux beaux-arts, oui, comme les esclaves se domesticitent, comme les feueux s’apprivoisent, pour lécher le maître au lieu de le manger!
L'art sociologique n'aide pas à répandre la culture.

De nos jours, la relation des hommes à ce qui les entoure est canalisée par les "Mass Media". La "nature" ne désigne plus qu'une nostalgie idyllique ou la prospection du budget familial de vacances par l'industrie des loisirs. La vie sociale, avec ses conflits de classe, est "sublimée" par l'idéologie dominante en une communauté humaniste, un Eden de paix. Ainsi la culture, perdant tout lien avec l'action concrète, se dédouble. D'un côté les créateurs, de l'autre les récepteurs. Ici les enseignants, là les enseignés. L'information coule à sens unique - dans le sens du pouvoir. La relation, de conflictuelle qu'elle était, devient hiérarchique, et il est permis à quiconque de gravir les degrés - il lui suffit de s'enrichir, de se cultiver.

L'art sociologique n'est au goût ni des masses, ni de l'élite.

Observons mieux comment la culture s'est dédoublée.

À l'un des extrêmes, il y a la culture de masse. Les masses ne sont pas privées d'art, au contraire, jamais dans l'histoire elles n'ont été à ce point baignées, submergées par l'art: le feuilleton télévisé, la "musique" de Sylvie Vartan, la "littérature" de l'ex-ministre Bruon ou de l'ex-bagnard Papillon. Rendre l'art (le "vrai") accessible aux masses, c'est oublier que la classe dominante, si elle reste dominante, c'est qu'elle a au fil des temps dominé ses propres goûts, ses propres idées. C'est qu'elle est experte à la façon de modéliser sur sa presse, sa radio, sa télévision, son urbanisme, sa publicité. En France, rendre l'art accessible aux masses, dans la mesure où les goûts des masses se sont le plus souvent que les retombées tardives et dégradées du goût bourgeois, ce serait produire un art qui, même politiquement contestataire, renforce sur les masses l'emprise du goût bourgeois.

À l'autre extrême, la "vraie" culture est le privilège des experts. Une poignée d'artistes même paraît avec son cortège, directeurs de galeries, fonctionnaires de musées, critiques de revues spécialisées. Cette élite cooptée détient le savoir, donc le pouvoir. Elle s'arrobe, par intimidation et terrorisme intellectuel, le droit de "voir" et "déclamer" ce qui, en art, est vivant, de portée internationale, de valeur universelle. Art "vivant" parce que, croyez-m'en, ce nouveau- naïf de la mode que je lance deviendra grand. "International", 
parce que mon appétit de gloire ne tolère pas de mesquines frontières.
"Universel", parce que tel est mon goût personnel, à moi qui suis détenteur du savoir universel. De cet art-là, les "masses" n'ont que faire, il est sans lien avec ce qu'elles peuvent et veulent faire: changer leurs conditions de vie. Les "masses" préfèrent à Support/Sur-
face les images de Paris-Match, à qui la faute? C'est qu'elles n'ont pas lu Art Pressa, Opus, Attitudes, Art vivant! Elles ont négligé de s'instruire au contact de l'élite!

Seulement, cette élite-là n'apprécie pas qu'on démonte les rouges de son pouvoir.

L'art sociologique n'est pas beau. Un art qui ose dire la vérité sur l'art, ce n'est pas beau.

Les artistes du passé avaient un saint patron: Chéri-Bibi. Ils vivaient "entourés" de contradictions - "Fatalitas"! Ils réussissaient, ou ils échouaient, pour des motifs qui ne dépendaient qu'en faible partie de leur travail, bien davantage des marchandes, des critiques, des collectionneurs, ils se voyaient soudain portés ou lâchés par la mode - "Fatalitas"! Le propre de l'art sociologique, c'est que les contradictions, d'externes et passivement subies, sont devenues intérieures. L'art sociologique met l'art en question. Il le fait en rapportant l'art à son contexte idéologique, socio-économique et politique. Il le fait en attirant l'attention sur les canaux de communication (ou non-communication), sur les circuits de diffusion (ou occultation), sur leur éventuelle perturbation ou subversion. Il ne se propose pas de plaire aux goûts tels qu'ils sont du public tel qu'il est, mais de modifier le public et ses goûts. Ce n'est pas beau.


Et ceci vaut d'être noté, rien n'est à vendre.

Bernard Teyssèdre
le 3 janvier 1975
CATALOGUE DES DOCUMENTS

  Parti de l'art conceptuel, le groupe "Art & Language" est passé du concept "pur" aux constellations sémantiques, et de là aux idéologies, avec les formations sociales qui les sous-tendent. Andrew Menard fait apparaître, sur une carte des États-Unis, les "frontières dans le sous-développement". Il montre, dans la notion de "sous-développement culturel", une phase intégrée au modèle de développement d'un impérialisme culturel, celui de New York. Le centralisme et la bureaucratie d'une Culture Officielle accentuent l'aliénation géographique et culturelle liée à la "provincialités", sous couvert d'une "objectivité" qui désigne le discours, prétendu "international", du colonisateur au colonisé. Ian Burn et Mel Ramsden, invités à l'exposition "Hommage à Salvador Allende", s'interrogent sur les prétentions "éducatives" d'une telle exposition: s'agit-il d'aider les masses d'Amérique latine à prendre envers l'art une distance critique, de leur ouvrir les yeux sur ses implications sociales et idéologiques? ou ne s'agirait-il plutôt de les initier à l'art prétendu "international" de New York, pour acquérir de nouveaux spectateurs à la parade culturelle, pour exporter des œuvres qui, perdant toute référence à leur lieu d'origine, ne renforceraient que mieux leur caractère irréel, fétilisé, sacrifié?

- Document 2. Willi Bongard en question
  Willi Bongard, par une combinaison de divers critères (participation aux expositions de prestige, situation dans le marché), tente d'établir périodiquement la cote internationale des artistes. Le Collectif d'Art sociologique engage avec lui une correspondance, lui reprochant de réduire la production d'art aux normes du système boursier, de favoriser la transformation des œuvres en marchandises, sans soumettre à critique la société capitaliste et son système de valeurs.

- Document 3. Hervé Fischer
  Densité des musées et galeries d'avant-garde dans le tiers monde: les cartes de l'Afrique et du Sud-Est asiatique sont produites, elles restent vides. Les trois portes du Palais: les trois entrées principales du Louvre sont photographiées (Musée du Louvre, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Ministère des Finances), auprès d'une carte montrant l'implantation de ces trois organismes dans les locaux de ce Palais.
Document 4. Fred Forest

"Maitre Le Marec, huissier de justice à Paris, a été requis à ma demande pour procéder le 9 janvier 1975 au dépôt officiel dans un coffre-fort d'une œuvre dont la cotation participe au marché de l'art actuel. Les sceaux seront apposés pour la durée totale de l'exposition. Le coffre-fort, avec son certificat d'huissier, est bien en vue, l'œuvre d'art est trop précieuse pour être montrée.

Document 5. Hans Haacke


Document 6. John Latham

Le 24 mars 1969, John Latham adressa par lettre à Lucy R. Lippard plusieurs pièces. Certaines, à partir d'un "matériaus" imposé (les stéréotypes idéologiques), proposaient d'élaborer une "sculpture"; exemple, matériau, les préjugés sur la valeur, sculpture: "persuader les chefs d'industrie d'embaucher des artistes dans leur entreprise, et de les rétribuer au titre d'opposition à la comptabilité financière". Conclusion désabusée sur Art et Économie: "Je suis systématiquement non payé pour mon travail".

Document 7. Les Levine

Les "Disposables" sont des œuvres d'art à jeter après usage. Elles coûtent le prix d'un ticket de cinéma, sont produites en soixante variantes, chacune à dix mille exemplaires. Ainsi, nulle pénurie à re婪ter, ni de difficulté à "se réassortir", pour le cas improbable où, après avoir jeté l'œuvre d'art aux poubelles, la lubie à nouveau vous viendrait de l'acquérir.
Document 8. Les Lublin

Entretien avec Celso Furtado, économiste brésilien: Comment le marché capitaliste actuel a transformé l’œuvre d’art en instrument de liquidité, comparable à l’or (un objet noble, moyen universel d’échange, qui permet l’accumulation du capital), mais plus efficace (car cette accumulation de capital est aussi accumulation de prestige, qui, au niveau de la jouissance abstraite, multiplie le pouvoir). Le marchand de Tokyo qui accumule les tableaux achetés à Paris pour les revendre en Californie n’a aucun souci de leur valeur d’usage, mais de leur valeur d’échange: l’art, réduit à l’abstraction totale, n’a même plus besoin d’être vu pour procurer, outre la richesse, la jouissance du pouvoir.


"Tout artiste a deux démarches, l’une sa production artistique, avec ses structures et ses supports, l’autre sa production pour produire sa production". Pineau expose le fonctionnement de ces deux démarches, dont l’une ne prend sens que par rapport à l’autre.

Document 10. Adrian Piper

"Withdrawal statement" (mai 1970): l’œuvre d’art est-elle encore possible dans les conditions de plus en plus envahissantes d’un univers de terreur? Plutôt que de soumettre l’œuvre à ces conditions destructrices, Adrian Piper soumet son absence comme témoignage sur l’incapacité de l’art à conserver un sens dans la déraison du monde actuel.

Document 11. Klaus Staack

Dans un communiqué de presse sur "l’Institut pour la recherche libre", qu’il préside, Klaus Staack déclare avoir créé un certificat de qualité allemand pour l’art ("Deutsche Kunstseigel"). Ce certificat garantit le travail 100% fait main, le bon goût dans le choix des couleurs, la dextérité et l’élegance de la touche, la progression continue de la cote en peu d’années et un gain en prestige pour l’acquéreur. Ce document est accompagné par une image commémorant l’assemblée de l’Union des marchands d’art allemand devant la cathédrale de Cologne; et par une affiche électorale: "Que la joie de l’art soit ouverte à tous! Refusons la boue et la propagande politique partisan que dissimule le beau manteau de l’art!"
Document 12. Bernard Teyssèdre


Document 13. Jean-Paul Thénot


Document 14. Wolf Vostell


Actions du Collectif d’art sociologique

Un panneau d’affectage sera tenu à jour sur les actions que le Collectif d’art sociologique (Fischer, Forest, Thénot) se propose de mener en liaison avec l’exposition d’art sociologique “L’art et ses structures socio-économiques”, à la galerie Germain et hors de cette galerie.
PROBLEMES ET METHODES DE L’ART SOCIOLOGIQUE

à l’initiative du collectif d’art sociologique
FISCHER - FOREST - THENOT

Entretien avec OTTO HAHN
Texte de Jean-Paul THENOT

5 - 22 mars 1975

GALERIE MATHIAS FELS
138 Bd HAUSSMANN 75008 PARIS 924 10 23
Entretiens entre Otto Haah et le collectif d'art sociologique (Gervé Fischer, Fred Forset et Jean-Paul Thénot) – février 1975.

Otto Haah : Par rapport à la fonction de l'art dans la société occiden-
tale, est-on transposé une méthode dans un domaine différe-
ment ? Autrement dit, la tentative pour atteindre à un savoir
précis peut-elle s'intégrer dans la nouvelle que Lucien Goldmann
nomme la "conscience possible" ? Je rappelle que Goldmann définit l'art
(pour lui la littérature) non comme la conscience d'une société a
d'elle-même, mais comme le maximum de conscience que cette société
pourrait avoir.

Gervé Fischer : Les analyses de Lucien Goldmann sont fondamentales du
point de vue de la sociologie de l'art et particulière-
ment de la littérature, mais le concept de conscience possible me
parait très théorique, plus opératoire dans l'analyse que dans la
pratique artistique réelle. C'est une sorte de déclaration d'intention.
Je propose de nous référer au texte "Les œuvres philosophiques,
littéraires et artistiques savent avoir une valeur particulière
pour la sociologie, parce qu'elles se rapprochent du maximum de
conscience possible de ces groupes sociaux privilégiés, dont la
mentalité, la pensée, le comportement sont orientés vers une vision
globale du monde". Je crois que nous sommes tous les trois d'accord
sur l'intention, dans la mesure où nous voulons intervenir dans le
champ social pour le transformer. Mais je suis réservé sur la vision
"globale" ou "totalisante" de Goldmann, dans la mesure où elle me
parait peu dialectique. De fait, la conscience possible se sépare
rarement de la conscience de la classe dominante. Goldmann est marxiste.
Il se réfère à un concept de Marx lui-même. Ce qui m'empêche que ce
concept est problématique.

Par ailleurs, tu poses le problème de la légitimité de notre démarche.
Jean-Paul Thénot : Cette question de légitimité ne nous intéresse pas
tellement.

Fred Forset : Nous pourrions même souhaiter que soit retardé le moment
où la méthodologie sociologique trouve une légitimité
dans le champ artistique. Car c'est finalement l'acceptation par le
milieu artistique qui désigne une démarche comme artistique, mais en
même temps qui lui ôte de son pouvoir perturbateur.

Otto Haah : Dans la mesure où vous intégrez la problématique sociolo-
que et sa technique spécifique dans votre travail artisti-
que, et que vous considérez qu'il n'est pas absolument indispensable
que ce soit reconnu comme de l'art, est-il possible que demain vous
y intégriez la psychanalyse, la psychologie, voire des problèmes
médicaux ou même l'économie ?

Jean-Paul Thénot : C'est peut-être le mot "intégrer" qui fait problème.
Dans mon esprit, c'est une démarche totalement
différente de l'appropriation. Mais je ne vois pas ce qui nous interdi-
rait d'appliquer dans le champ artistique des méthodes empruntées à
d'autres champs.
Jërré Fischer : Au nom de quoi poser ce problème de légitimité ? De fait, c'est au nom des catégories traditionnelles de l'art et de la science. Comment nous poser la question du sens et de l'intérêt que cela peut présenter. On a intérêt à remettre en question l'opposition entre art, domaine de l'irrationnel, et le domaine de la science, prétendument considéré comme un savoir objectif et vrai. Beaucoup de scientifiques sont très irrationnels. Quand à nous, nous considérons ces deux champs, artistique et scientifique, comme deux domaines scientifiques l'un et l'autre. La mathématique est évidemment idéologique, que ce soit au niveau de ses structures qu'à l'ordre et à la pensée qu'elle implique. Ce qui est légitime, épistémologiquement, c'est de se servir de la science contre l'art et réciproquement, pour le mettre en question, les démythifier tous deux. Cela nous permet de nous déconditionner par rapport aux conceptions traditionnelles.

Frei Forest : En fait, nous sommes contraints d'inventer une méthode pour notre pratique socio-artiste, au far et à mesure des expériences dans lesquelles nous nous engageons. Nous ne cherchons pas à intégrer une méthodologie de type universitaire, à la démarche artistique ; et en ce qui me concerne personnellement, je ne trouve autant de méthode déjà élaborée que je puisse reprendre. Je suis contraint d'en chercher une, de l'inventer. En contre partie, il se peut que notre travail artistique intéresse des sociologues, que notre expérience pratique ausee des résonances théoriques intéressantes. Cela peut permettre de sortir des tautologies de l'art comme de la science. Personnellement, je ne me considère pas comme un théoricien, mais bien comme un homme de la pratique, qui fait ses expériences "sauvages".

Jërré Fischer : On peut souligner qu'en fait les artistes ont toujours recours à des domaines scientifiques, qu'il s'agisse de l'anatomie, de l'optique ou de la géométrie, pour les artistes de la Renaissance, de la théorie des couleurs pour les peintres modernes, etc. Personnellement, la sociologie, la sociologie, le savoir scientifique que nous ne savons s'interférer aujourd'hui dans le champ artistique. Mais c'est au niveau de la pratique qu'apparaissent les spécificités, la pratique médicale ou économique paraît assez éloignée de la pratique artistique.

Ody Ehs : On peut imaginer une pratique médicale qui, dans le champ artistique, déterminerait les maladies frappant plus spécialement les directeurs de galerie, les artistes... ce serait alors de l'art médical.

Frei Forest : La démarche artistique peut constituer une thérapeutique, par exemple grâce à la vidéo. L'autopsie consiste à faire découvrir de sa propre image enregistrée sur vidéo ; elle révèle le comportement, les relations interindividuelles à partir du stimulus. Enfinement, le rôle de l'artiste n'est peut-être de créer des émotions. Il évoque des images, visuelles ou électroniques. Il n'est pas socialement limités, il faut être capable de poser le problème des médias pour réactionner les processus de communication et d'échanges.

Jean-Paul Thélot : Le point de vue médical ou thérapeutique a été de mes préoccupations, entre autres. Dans sa pratique, les questions que je posais aux personnes sur lesquelles porte l'écoute impliquent que des personnes, d'une part réparties de façon constante, et des catégories socio-professionnelles, d'autre part se posent en question leurs habitudes mentales conditionnées.
En outre, dans la mesure où je résumerai ma réponse dans le contexte de l'ensemble des réponses, chaque personne interrogée est amenée à se situer par rapport à l'ensemble du groupe, à se penser par rapport aux autres, soit pour constater une conformité d'opinion, soit pour affirmer une attitude originale. C'est en raison de ces prises de conscience que j'appelle interactive les enquêtes auxquelles je procède. Chacun doit prendre conscience de ses déterminismes sociaux.

Jean-Paul Thénot : En posant ainsi le problème, tu中心es l'intérêt sur la réaction des gens et tu affirms que c'est artistique. Mais cela parait trop discutable ; tu peux provoquer des réactions avec la plus mauvaise peinture du monde, comme avec la meilleure : de toute façon cela suscite une réaction.

Fred Forest : Mais qu'est-ce qui détermine cette qualité bonne ou mauvaise de l'œuvre ? Je pense que la réaction est plus intéressante que la peinture qui en est le stimulus.

Jean-Paul Thénot : Sans ma démarche, je m'autorise à faire des jugements de valeur et de dire qu'une peinture, par exemple, a plus de valeur qu'une autre, ou qu'une couleur est plus belles qu'une autre. Sans cela, l'enquête n'est plus possible.

Otto Hahn : Tu t'en tien à la notion de stimulus. Alors je reviens à l'attaque contre Fred Forest. Dans le débat que nous avons en ensemble lors de votre exposition "L'art et ses structures socio-économiques", tu n'as dit que le comptable de Mme Sonnabend pouvait t'intéresser plus, du point de vue de ta démarche, que Mme Sonnabend elle-même, parce qu'il symbolise les problèmes commerciaux et économiques de l'œuvre d'art. Or tu dis maintenant que la réaction du public devant le tableau est plus importante que le tableau lui-même.

Fred Forest : Mais précisément parce que je considère dans ce contexte le comptable comme le stimulus.

Otto Hahn : Tu ne reproches de dire que le bon tableau est plus intéressant que le mauvais.

Fred Forest : Plus exactement, par rapport à ma démarche, je ne sais pas quel est le bon tableau, quel est le mauvais. Le chef-d'œuvre peut éventuellement constituer un très mauvais stimulus.

Otto Hahn : Je peux aussi dire que la tarte aux pommes est plus intéressante que le gratin-ciel. C'est une proposition, c'est mon opinion, mais elle n'est pas artistique, ni non artistique. Elle ne fait intervenir que mes réactions personnelles, ma psychologie.

Nevy Fischer : Pour te faire passer, selon l'expression de Goldmann, que tu te cède d'entrée de jeu, ta conscience réelle à ta conscience possible, on peut choisir des stimulus très différents, dont le seul critère est l'adéquation à la communication entre toi et moi, compte tenu de tes déterminismes psycho-sociologiques, et de la question à laquelle j'étais aboutir. Ce qui est important c'est de pouvoir établir la relation d'intercommunication et de la conduire au niveau de la réflexion critique et de la prise de conscience. La valeur du stimulus choisi dans une telle démarche n'est pas d'ordre esthétique, mais plutôt d'ordre provocateur ou pédagogique.

Jean-Paul Thénot : Une couleur ou une partie du corps humain, sur laquelle porte la question, peut être un meilleur stimulus que la Joconde dans certains cas.

Otto Hahn : C'est alors ma structure psychologique ou celle des autres, que tu cherches à dévoiler. Je trouve que la Joconde est aussi intéressante que la réaction des gens. Tout dépend de la structure ou du champ d'activité dans lequel on se place. C'est là qu'apparaît le problème de la méthodologie. Dans l'arsenal des méthodes ou des techniques sociologiques, quelles sont celles que vous utilisez de préférence ?

Fred Forest : Ce sont principalement l'animation, l'enquête et la pédagogie.
Hervé Fischer : Ce travail est en cours. Je veux dire que notre méthodologie n'est pas encore définitive, parce que cette mise en relation de la théorie et des méthodes sociologiques avec l'art est une chose extrêmement difficile. Mais le fait de réfléchir à la façon dont le destinataire de l'art est déjà important. Refuser que la théorie sociologique de l'art interentre dans le champ du concept sans fondement est aussi injustifié que de déclarer que la théorie est nécessaire du fait qu'elle est nécessaire de savoir ce qu'elle est contre le destinataire de l'art lui-même. On parle là fort significativement de retournement, parce que l'intention de la conception idéalisthe de l'art, même si elle cherche à se faire dans la médecine ou l'économie, n'est pas une nécessité, ou une logique, d'un progrès. On sait très bien, dans le domaine des sciences sociales, que la méthodologie est nécessairement liée à la théorie, donc elle est une sorte de prolongement, toute théorie constitue simultanément son objet d'étude et sa méthodologie, dans la cohérence d'un seul et même discours.

D'autre part, il faut distinguer entre méthodologie technique et pratique. Les sciences sociales ont d'abord un certain nombre de techniques psychologiques, mathématiques et statistiques, d'analyse fréquentielle, etc., parmi lesquelles Jean-Paul Théot a par exemple retenu l'enquête psycho-sociale et l'étalonnage représentatif de la société ou les tables de hasard. Fred Forest invente un certain nombre de techniques ou les emprunts aux domaines de la dynamique de groupe aussi bien que du maintien d'une caméra vidéo en direct. Il s'est aussi servi d'un certain nombre de techniques spécifiques de la radio, de la télévision ou de la presse. Ce sont des techniques actuelles, qui remplacent relle du voyage des couches sociologiques dans l'œil ou de la mine en tension d'une tête sur un chassé de bois.

En ce qui concerne la méthodologie, elle procède, selon les diverses théories sociologiques auxquelles on se réfère, par concepts construits (marxistes, par exemple, ou structuralistes), ou par l'approche compréhensive interne de la culture d'un groupe social (c'est la méthode balzéenne par Max Weber). Une méthodologie est une sorte de stratégie par rapport au réel. Spéculativement, c'est le recours au modèle mathématique d'un Lévi-Strauss qui analyse une mathématique sociale, ou au modèle linguistique, ou psychanalytique par rapport à la société. On peut envisager d'autres stratégies, par exemple celle du modèle cybernétique ou du structuralisme quantitatif d'Abraham Moles. En ce qui nous concerne, la méthodologie, ou stratégie que nous avons employée a été l'application des techniques d'enquête, de la théorie sociologique marxiste, et des techniques de consommation dans la pratique artistique traditionnelle. On peut déjà affirmer que ces efforts en font sentir.

Du point de vue de la pratique, il y a deux points à souligner. D'abord, il faut souligner que la différence fondamentale entre la pratique médicale ou économique et la pratique artistique que nous développons, c'est que les médecins ou les économistes visent à constater et à gérer le réel, tandis que la pratique de l'art sociologique est interpellante et critique. Notre pratique vise à restituer en question nos propres perspectives et nos initiatives. Deux points ne sont jamais sages : elles se paraissent plutôt être subversives.

D'autre part, en ce qui concerne la pratique sociologique, il faut reconnaître que les enquêtes politiques des directeurs, la fréquentation des musées, le marché de l'art, la vie dans la ville, le paysage où les lieux de vacances, s'elles n'existent pas. Je veux dire que ce qui caractérise la
pratique sociologique actuelle, nous n'y trouvons guère de modèle à emprunter parce qu'elle est presque exclusivement consensuelle, alors que le nôtre est politique et subversif. Nous n'aurions qu'à examiner notre pratique comme une pratique dynamique, visant à transformer le champ social. Force est d'admettre que nous devons entièrement l'inventer. En fin de compte, nous sommes engagés dans l'élaboration et la mise en œuvre de la pratique sociologique elle-même, considérée de façon générale, au-delà de la catégorisation ou du champ artistique traditionnel. Les seules tentatives consistant en ce domaine sont celles du sociologue, auquel Jean Duvignaud n'est pas intéressé, mais dont chacun sait encore à quel point elles sont limitées. Il est à noter que Duvignaud a pris l'initiative d'inviter au travail de Fred Forest. Et Duvignaud est le seul sociologue qui a pris conscience de cette absence cruelle d'une pratique sociologique. Je pense que ces quelques remarques mettent en évidence l'importance de la voie de travail au sein de laquelle nous sommes engagés et justifient mon intérêt simultané pour la théorie sociologique et pour la pratique sociologique, qui n'est pas autre, à mes yeux, que la champ artistique, la seule pratique artistique pertinente dans la société contemporaine.

Ceux qui contestent l'articulation que nous avons voulu établir entre l'art et la sociologie trouveront là, je l'espère, une réponse claire. Par rapport à laquelle leurs arguments n'ont plus qu'à la force ou le poids de l'idéologie traditionnelle. Soulignons pour finir qu'il va de soi dans une société sensibilisée et dont les structures sont très intégratives et conditionnantes, que cette pratique sociologique soit fondamentalement critique.

Otto Rahn : Faible l'exposition "organise le collectif à la galerie de maintes fers portes sur le thème méthodologique, je pourrais que chacun d'entre vous prépare sa méthodes. N'y-a-t-il pas des facteur psychologiques qui jouent dans nos préférences méthodologiques, pour cela, il s'agit d'interroger cette histoire de De Jode puisque nous nous trouvons à une position d'observateur, sans avancer de jugement de valeur. Est-ce que le choix de vos méthodes n'est pas finalement assez arbitraire, ou plutôt déterminé psychologiquement, et en ce sens, direct et artistique ?

Fred Forest : Le titre de cette exposition "Problèmes et méthodes" se termine par un point d'interrogation. Parce que nous élaborons notre pratique, au fur et à mesure des mois qui passent et des actions que nous engageons, sans pouvoir encore conclure. Mon travail personnel est surtout une pratique, un travail sur les groupes. Je peux puiser dans les domaines de la psychologie, de la sociologie, de la théorie de la communication, mais je dois adapter ma pratique à chaque cas. Je ne suis pas un théoricien, je ne cherche pas à prouver quelque chose, ce que je fais n'est pas une finalité scientifique. Par contre, à mes propres besoins d'activation, de dynamisation sociale que je désire, sont peut-être un matériau intéressant pour l'analyse sociologique, dont je laisse le soin à d'autres, plus compétents que moi du point de vue scientifique. Je ne suis pas un sociologue, mais au niveau de la pratique que j'invente, je peux devenir un auxiliaire du sociologue.

Ma démarche est sociologique en ce sens qu'elle porte sur un matériau social. Pour accéder aux ces matériaux, je me heurte à une forte résistance des structures de la société. Pourtant mon travail consiste pour une part à m'approprier ces matériaux et à les détourner. Et il n'existe pas de méthode en ce sens. J'interviens dans les domaines du journalisme, des relations publiques, de la communication, de l'animation. Je dois inventer de nouvelles formes d'intervention. En outre, j'ai pour le nouveau public, habituellement laissé pour compte par les artistes qu'on appelle d'avant-garde. Je travaille en dehors du circuit artistique conventionnel.
Otte Hahn : Voici maintenant une question que je pose particulièrement à Thénot. Car il y a dans la sociologie deux courants : celui de Raymonde Morin, de Bourdieu, qui déclarent ne pas juger de l’art : l’art. c’est les tableaux, dont Bertrand Russell, Picasso, "l’artiste du même genre : l’autre courant, c’est celui de Goldmann, par exemple. Pour eux parler de l’art, Goldmann choisit de parler de Balzac, de Robbe- Grillet.

Mais est-il prouvé sociologiquement que Sartre ou Robbe-Grillet soient meilleurs que Proust ou d’autres écrivains ? Donc il reste que son analyse des écrivains dont il ne justifie absolument pas le choix. Goldmann stipule que le monde est d’accord pour reconnaître en Balzac ou en Thomas Mann de grands écrivains. le point de départ de l’analyse est très arbitraire ou subjectif. Quand Thénot choisit de faire porter son analyse, ses enquêtes sur les tableaux de Cézanne, de Pollock ou de Taurel, il est aussi critique de Goldmann, il choisit des entités mythiques et canoniques de la société, sans refilter, contrôler et le justifier.

Jean-Paul Thénot : L’enquête sur les œuvres d’art que j’ai présentées à l’exposition "l’art et ses structures socio-économiques" et à laquelle tu te référes est jusqu’à ce jour la seule où j’ai entrepris de proposer aux enquêtes des choses "reconnues" en tant qu’œuvres d’art. C’était à propos de la cote des œuvres d’art. Dans ce cas, j’ai voulu retenir des œuvres qui portent sur des œuvres ouvragées à la période du XVIe siècle à nos jours. D’autre part, j’ai souhaité présenter des œuvres des dix ans, figurative, abstraite, etc. Enfin je devais choisir des œuvres dont le prix avait été fixé récemment par des ventes dont je pouvais retrouver la trace. C’est cet ensemble de variables qui a déterminé le choix des œuvres proposées.

Otte Hahn : Les personnes que tu as interrogées consistaient-elles un échantillon représentatif de la société ?

Jean-Paul Thénot : Je m’excuse toujours ainsi. J’ai vite renoncé aux enquêtes par le poste que je faisais au début. Les résultats étaient très insuffisants et généralisables. Celui exclusait notamment les publics non-initiés. On me voulait préciser les attentes. Ici, Ainsi, alors en quoi ton travail se différencierait-il de celui du sociologue qui travaillerait sur le marché de l’art ?

Jean-Paul Thénot : Je ne pense pas qu’un sociologue poserait les mêmes questions que moi, qui lui paraîtraient sans toute trace marginales. Que lui importeraient par exemple de savoir ce que les personnes interrogées auraient fait avec les 20 000 francs du prix de vente d’un Cézanne ? Ou avec quelle partie du corps ils préféreraient échapper ?

Otte Hahn : Les communistes ont toujours critiqué les enquêtes sociologiques dans des sociétés aliénées, où l’enquête ne peut que constater cette aliénation. Peut-on considérer comme significatives les réponses d’une société en partie aliénée ?

Jean-Paul Thénot : Je pense que le constat est par lui-même significatif. S’il est aussi celui de la personne interrogée. Tout dépend de l’optique dans laquelle on emploie le constat. Mon but, c’est à terme de susciter des prises de conscience.

La liberté de l'individu, considérée en termes materialistes, commence à être perçue comme un déterminisme social. C'est le principe de conscience - et conséquence possible - qui nous intéresse. A partir de là, le processus de déséquilibre devient possible. L'individu peut envisager d'autres manières de penser le problème que celles qu'on lui a fournis. Même si actuellement nous ne savons pas tirer les conclusions de nos enquêtes, ma démarche est cependant interactive, catalysante. Dans le cas de Fred Forest, il est évident, qu'il n'est pas seulement possible deeria de la communication où il s'y a pas, ce qui est déjà important dans la mesure où les manœuvres fabriquent le non-consumable, mais encore de la perturber, pour transformer le champ social.

Fred Forest : En outre, les formes de ces perturbations doivent varier selon les milieux sociaux où j'entends agir.

Otto Bahn : Je voudrais que Fischer précise sa méthode.

Jervé Fischer : Depuis le début, j'appelle ma méthode "socio-pédagogique". J'ai dû imposer le mot de pédagogie dans l'art. Ce qui a été aussi difficile que le mot "sociologie", parce que le mot est mal connu. Ce qui est intéressant du point de vue de la méthode pédagogique, c'est que j'utilise les moyens de l'art. Il ne s'agit pas pour moi de créer des œuvres pour l'admiration des foules et la spéculation des collectionneurs, mais de fabriquer du matériel pédagogique, que je substitue à la galerie ou à la musée aux œuvres d’art habituelles, avec la même mine en scène, mais en perturbant un ou plusieurs des signes qui furent pour la rhétorique traditionnelle de l'œuvre d'art. Ainsi, quand j'accroche des œuvres d'art décharnées dans une galerie, la méthode consiste en principe que j'obtiens une déclaration implicite par les artistes (300 d'entre eux, dans le cas de la décharnure), qu'ils éprouvent parfois des difficultés de leur production, et de manière générale, que le public qui vient rituellement admirer les œuvres d'art décharnées, en première position sur la galerie, reconnaît tous les signes extérieurs des œuvres d'art - sauf qu'il ne découvre plus que le décharnement. Il apparaît la question généralement agressive : toutes les questions sont possibles et il faut que le débat se produise entre le public et moi. C'est cela qui est le plus important, pas les sacs.

Fred Forest : Và reprendre l'articulation de l'objet pour écouter les questions. L'art ! Avez-vous quelque chose à déclarer ? Je cherche à mener le débat le plus loin possible.

Otto Bahn : Alors je pourrais présenter cette boîte d'allumettes dans la galerie et tout le monde réagiraient, ce serait-ce que pour dire que ce n'est pas intéressant.

Fred Forest : La boîte décharnerait alors un matériel pédagogique possible, parce que nous voilà précisément renseigné l'art en question.

Otto Bahn : Finalement, ne vaut-il pas mieux s'interroger sur la peinture de Cézanne, plutôt que sur une boîte d'allumettes ? Puisque tu emploies le mot pédagogique, qu'est-ce que tu veux enseigner ?

Jervé Fischer : Je veux enseigner des questions, pas des réponses. C'est ce que j'appelle "interrogative teaching". Je veux désapprendre les idéologies qui véhiculent l'art. Car l'art véhicule des idéologies complètement idéalisées. Mais je ne peux pas proposer des réponses, car toutes les réponses sont douteuses. Changer les infrastructures, sans déséquilibrer la culture, c'est tomber dans le réformisme ou laisser sans connaissance le pouvoir par une idéologie bureaucratique, comme on le voit bien dans les pays socialisés. Je pense qu'agir au niveau des attentes sanguines, c'est extrêmement important. De ce point de vue, je dirai que je ne suis pas d'un côté, marxiste, ou de l'autre, fasciste, ou anti-socialiste, ou quoi que ce soit d'autre, car je me réfère de toutes les religions politiques qui ont entraîné l'apparition de systèmes.
de contrainte, de systèmes bureaucratiques, qui sont d'autres formes d'aliénation redoutables. Le débat qui nous parait le plus important, c'est l'affirmation du matérialisme. Il faut être du côté du matérialisme même si l'on est réaliste dans le domaine culturel. II ne faut pas être naif et penser que l'on peut faire des prêts à la population en se contentant d'enseigner.

Oto Main : Une question précise. La sociologie de l'art, disons que c'est très bien. Mais pourquoi manifester votre activité dans une galerie d'art plutôt que dans les rues, plus apte à accueillir la réflexion et l'écrit ?

Fred Forest : On s'est aperçu que faire des expositions dans la rue, pour un public plus vaste, dans la mesure où on veut transformer le champ social, c'est une démarche très discutable. Il y a quelque immanquablement culturel à imposer dans la rue, à des gens qui ne l'ont pas demandé qui leur viennent aux yeux dans des circulaires d'une place, ou à prendre des cordes en travers de la rue, à recueillir la chasse d'œuvre avec des sculptures, même si l'on a l'accord du maire en poche. Hervé Fischer, qui a refusé de participer aux dernières manifestations organisées dans la rue en province il y a seize ans, a eu un après elle dans les mêmes termes que moi. L'absence a été le fait de ces méthodes et des méthodes qui, sans doute, ont été les mieux pour cette situation, qui seraient plus d'ordre pédagogique. Il faut vraiment un effort d'information, d'explication, de telle sorte que la manifestation se fasse avec la participation de la population concernée. Il faut connaître le milieu dans lequel on se propose d'agir.

Mais nous avons le souci de ne pas limiter notre action aux galeries. Ainsi Jean-Paul Théodore fait porter systématiquement ses enquêtes sur le public non spécialisé de l'art. Moi-même, j'ai commencé par agir, à travers le journal la Fédération, dans la presse, à la radio et la télévision. Ce n'est pas un quelconque d'ailleurs artistique qui m'intéresse, bien que je me serve aujourd'hui de ce milieu comme appui logistique pour agir à l'extérieur. Lorsque j'ai travaillé dans une maison de retraite de Sèvres, mettant entre les mains des personnes âgées de l'espace et le dessin, lorsque j'ai fait des transferts d'information, lorsque je me situais en relation la galerie ou le musée avec ce qui se passe dans la rue, je travaillais sur un champ social large. Je me vois pour citer l'action de Hervé Fischer, qui était en plastique transparent sur la place de la Bourse de Nancy. Il y a deux ans, ou les panneaux "Art ! Àvez-vous quelque chose à déclarer ?" dont il a systématiquement reçu et a manipulé des interdictions de stationner dans le quartier Saint-Claude des Prés pendant trois ans de l'année dernière.

Enfin le voilà qui notre pratique ne peut se limiter au texte écrit : ne serait-ce que pratique. Le travail dans la galerie peut gâcher son importance. Nous avons organisé à l'initiative du collectif d'art sociologique, un certain nombre d'expositions à Paris, à l'étranger.

Oto Main : En effet, et vous avez élargi le collectif lors de ces expositions. Quelle est la relation entre le collectif et Bernard Teyssèdre ?

Jean-Paul Théodore : Il n'a jamais fait partie du collectif et il ne saurait en être question.

Fred Forest : Teyssèdre est un universitaire et un critique d'art qui a soutenu notre soutien, mais en situant la notion d'art sociologique telle que nous l'avons formulée.

Hervé Fischer : J'ai commencé à parler d'art sociologique avec Bernard Teyssèdre en 1972. L'idée, qui était nouvelle pour lui, l'a intéressé et il a soutenu mon travail, puis celui du collectif. Mais
aujourd'hui les exigences de Teyssère par rapport au collectif pour montrer son activité artistique personnelle, ne sont pas recevables dans la perspective de notre travail. À nos yeux, le souci de la rigueur de notre démarche doit prévaloir.

Otto Hahn : Est-ce qu’il n’en a pas, au fond de votre attitude – et chez Herré Fischer c’est très évident – une volonté iconoclaste ?

Frei Forest : Chaque fois que de nouvelles formes d’art sont apparues, elles ont été perçues de cette façon par rapport à celles qui précédaient.

Herré Fischer : Je ne suis pas un iconoclaste. La déchirure des œuvres d’art, c’est un travail pédagogique parmi plusieurs autres.

Otto Hahn : Oui, mais il y a une certaine agressivité dans l’hygiène de l'art.

Herré Fischer : L’hygiène de l’art doit opérer une rupture par rapport au passé. Quand je dis “If you feel sensitive, make love, not art”, je dis que l’art n’est pas une question d’agressivité, ni d’émotion, ni de bons sentiments. L’art est un problème mental et idéologique.

Jean-Paul Thériot : Notre démarche quitte le domaine émotionnel, expressif et subjectif de l’art traditionnel.

Postface.

1. Alors qu’il y a déjà une sociologie de l’art, suffit-il de reorienter les termes pour ouvrir un nouveau territoire ?
2. Peut-on juger l’art sociologique selon les critères de l’art, ou selon ceux de la sociologie ?
3. La réflexion sur le contexte de l’art est-elle de l’art ?
4. L’objet d’art est-il devenu un art sans objet ?
5. Fischer, Forest et Thériot en sont au stade des questions qu’ils posent et se posent.
6. De toute façon, l’intérêt de l’art est de faire travailler l’esprit.

Otto Hahn, février 1975.
A PROPOS DE QUELQUES MENTHODES

1. SITUATION DU PROBLEME

La mise en place et le fonctionnement de circuits de diffusion de masse (télévision, radio, presse...), en accélérant la circulation de l'information, aussi bien dans le champ culturel global que dans le champ artistique spécifique, n'ont pas toujours favorisé la communication et ont même, dans une certaine mesure, introduit une non-communication (information véhiculée à sens unique et sans possibilité d'échange véritable). Je me situe dans la logique de ces problématiques et des pratiques artistiques.

En quittant les lieux culturels traditionnels, une pratique à la fois interrogative et critique, a développé son action auprès de publics variés et non spécialisés, soit par l'intermédiaire de ses moyens de diffusion, soit par des modes d'intervention plus marginaux.

Le matériau essentiel de cette pratique qui vise, par sa mise en question, une participation et une prise de conscience, est le champ social. Les problèmes techniques ne sont plus focalisés sur des moyens de transformation de la matière physique ( tendre une toile sur un châssis ou mélanger des couleurs), mais sur la transformation de l'espace social et mental.

Les problèmes techniques deviennent des problèmes de méthode, et toute pratique critique doit s'appuyer sur un corpus méthodologique cohérent.

2. DEMARCHES ET OBJECTIFS

Qu'elle s'adresse à un public de spécialistes ou à un public plus large, de divers milieux socio-culturels, notre pratique requiert toujours la participation d'un groupe, d'un échantillon de personnes ou d'une collectivité.

Il ne s'agit en aucun cas de proposer à un certain nombre de personnes de ne substituer au 'créateur', qui déléguerait sa 'pouvoir' momentanément en permettant de créer à son place. Le confusionalisme et le romantisme habituels concernant les vertus démagogiques du créateur ne seraient, dans ce cas, que déplaisirs sans solution, à l'individu à un autre, aidant par procuration.

Le but poursuivi n'est pas l'expression de soi, lyrique ou individuelle, potentiel ou idéalistes, mais une prise de conscience du groupe social, par l'intermédiaire du questionnement.

Un certain nombre de personnes travaillent actuellement en ce sens. Bien que les motivations, l'aspect formel et les démarches soient apparentement divergents, les objectifs principaux restent les mêmes : franchir le vêtement social qui sépare certains individus d'autres individus, désigner des valeurs considérées comme stables et traditionnelles, mettre en question les attentes portées sur l'imaginaire ou la réalité mentale.

Notre mise en question de l'art porte, entre autres, sur ses contenus, ses modes d'expression, ses conditions de perception, sa signification. L'objectivation de certains conditionnements et attitudes permet de situer le concept de beauté dans son contexte historique et socio-économique, et
d’en faire apparaître la variabilité et la relativité.

La pratique théorique et reflexive fait partie intégrante de notre démarche, et nous évite d’être enfermés dans la fabrication d’un simple produit-marchandise.

1-1 SUPPORTS ET MODES D’ACTION

Notre mode d’intervention est actuel, il se situe ici et maintenant, dans le présent et la quotidienneté, sans valeur de refuge ou de sécurité dans un passé lointain.

Les canaux spéculatifs pour entrer en relation avec les divers groupes sociaux sont ceux qui ont contribué à modifier l’espace et les relations spatio-temporelles traditionnelles.

Si la presse spécialisée ne touche qu’un public restreint, le téléphoning permet de communiquer avec une partie de la population, celle qu’on possède. Films et bandes vidéo ont une diffusion qui reste marginale et élitaire, tributaire de certains circuits et d’installations onéreuses.

La presse à grande tirage (journaux et livres), la radio, la télévision permettent de joindre ou d’informer un nombre considérable de personnes, de milieux divers et situés dans des lieux très éloignés. Plus intéressantes sont les déterminants, les utilisations à contre sens, qui réalisent un véritable échange des émissions multi-médias réalisées depuis quelques années par Fred Forest (espaces visés dans différents journaux, mises à la télévision et à la radio...) rendent possible l’intervention et la circulation des messages différents des messages habituels et officiels. Elles sont en évidence, par cette perturbation, l’existence et l’influence de ces importantes canaux de diffusion.

Cette volonté de proposer une situation nouvelle, rejoint dans son intention d’autres travaux réalisés par un mode de diffusion postale. Des envois, non réservés à des personnes exclusivement contractées par le milieu artistique, ont été expédiés par moi-même en 1970, à 300 destinataires de milieux socio-culturels différents et tirés au sort par des table de nombres au hasard.

Quelques déclinaisons ou non une réponse, ces travaux posent, à travers leur mode de diffusion dans des champs variés, le problème de la signification du message, selon qu’il est perçu ou non que message artistique ou en tant que message d’une autre nature.

1-4 LIEUX ET PUBLICS

Le dialogue, liaison directe avec autrui, a une place privilégiée parmi nos modes d’action. Les personnes ou groupes de personnes sont contactées aussi bien dans la rue, dans des lieux publics, des lieux culturels spécialisés ou non, ou à leur domicile.

Le choix de tel ou tel public, de tel ou tel lien se fait selon certains critères. La description de quelques méthodes employées va essayer de clarifier des notions qui ont servi de fondement à mon travail depuis 1970.
II-1 ÉCHANGES ET COMMUNICATION

Matérialisé par une trace physique qui subsiste (objet ou lettre) ou par dialogue, l’échange peut être direct si l’interlocuteur est présent (rencontre, entrevue) ou médialisé pour éviter les limitations spatiales et temporelles (moyens postaux, téléphone ou autres).

Certaines pratiques d’échanges par voie postale remontent à plusieurs années. D’autres échanges - postaux ou autres - joignent un public spécialisé, qui gravite autour du micro-milieu artistique international.

Dans d’autres cas, la transmission d’un message d’un champ culturel spécifique à un autre champ déplace le contexte de la communication par la perturbation d’équilibre et la remise en cause qu’elle suscite, par l’adjonction de cet élément stimulant. Intentionnellement la communication pousse à l’action et à la réflexion. Elle devient dynamisante et événementielle.

II-2 ANIMATION ET DYNAMISATION

Contrairement à la démarche du groupe fluxus, dont les aspects ludiques débouchent sur une expression subjective de la personnalité, notre démarche vise à une remise en question de situations, grâce à un élément stimulant inhabituel qui oblige l’individu et le groupe à modifier sa réflexion et son comportement.

La préoccupation fondamentale est de faire communiquer et participer le public, par des stimulations diverses (concours de Thonot, animations et dynamisations diverses de Forest).

Pour Fred Forest, les arts globaux sont de dynamiser les rapports humains, d’étudier les comportements devant de nouveaux outils de communication (par exemple la vidéo), de favoriser les échanges inter-individuels. L’important est de susciter une transformation, dans toutes les situations, Forest met l’accent sur le véo, l’événementiel, les modifications qui se produisent à un moment donné, dans une situation donnée.

Les analyses des modalités du travail, de ses traces, le préoccupent moins et il laisse volontiers une équipe pluridisciplinaire les interpréter. Son souci est l’aspect vivant de son travail, dont l’aspect “sauvage” peut éventuellement, par l’intervention suscitée, amorcer une autre approche.

II-3 ENQUÊTES ET SONDAGES

Il importe de distinguer l’enquête au sens large, où les moyens ouverts et variés regroupent entre autres les travaux sur documents, des sondages, ceux-ci étant, stricto sensu, une technique d’enquête qui repose sur le principe de l’échantillonnage et le calcul des probabilités.

Un certain nombre de travaux sont des recueils d’information, rédaction ou description (Sévérin Fischer, travail sur les tampons, Hans Haacke travail sur la botte d’asperges de Hanet).

Si à sa connaissance, la presque totalité des enquêtes portent sur les milieux ou les publics de l’art (Hans Haacke, profil du visiteur 1971), d’autres, plus marginaux, portent sur un public systématiquement non artistique, représentant d’une population donnée (Jean-paul Thonot 1972).
Dans certains cas le public est localisé de façon précise (enquêtes de bancs). Dans d'autres cas (sondages de Thonet), il est nécessaire de recourir à des méthodes permettant un choix représentatif de la population que l'on veut contacter.

En général, j'utilise un échantillonnage proportionnel, qui consiste à tirer au sort les individus, en tenant compte des grandes catégories qui divisent la population (âge, sexe, profession, répartition géographique), en respectant dans l'échantillon les mêmes proportions que celles existant dans la population. Il suffit pour cela de se reporter à des données statistiques objectives (âmes).

L'utilisation de questions ouvertes (où la seule contrainte est celle qu'impose la question) permet au maximum l'expression de l'opinion de chacun (en fonction de lui-même et de son groupe d'appartenance). Des entretiens non-directifs, axés sur une attitude non évaluatrice sont destinés à provoquer une auto-exploration continue de la personne interviewée. Les autres formes de questionnement (questions fermées ou à choix multiples) nous semblent inadéquates et restrictives et plus proches des sondages d'opinion.

Il a été démontré mathématiquement (calcul des probabilités et loi des grands nombres) que l'on pouvait extraire des résultats obtenus sur un certain nombre de personnes à la collectivité entière. Cette possibilité de généralisation permet, sans souci d'imposer des lois, une analyse ultérieure.

II-4 SOCIO-PÉDAGOGIE ET SOCIO-CRITIQUE

Une pratique socio-pédagogique vise non pas à enseigner ce qui est, mais à le rentrer en question. Ce travail, conçu sous un aspect "hygiénique" et "critique", ne serait pas démenti par le créateur comme Latham ou Flanagan, qui ont eu de manière ponctuelle des intentions similaires.

Depuis 1971, début de sa campagne prophylactique, Herré Fischer, qui utilise à la fois les moyens de l'art et le langage théorique, a entrepris un travail de démythification qui porte sur les valeurs idéologiques et traditionnelles de l'art (idée du sacré, fable de l'imaginaire...).

Dans cette tâche d'analyse et d'explicitation sociologique de l'art, l'art devient lui-même matériau pédagogique. La volonté de déconditionnement n'utilise pas exclusivement des moyens iconoclastes comme la destruction d'œuvres.

Des tentatives sociocritiques marquent un désir constructif, telle la création d'organismes ou d'institutions, qui lutte contre des formes de terrorisme intellectuel. Certaines n'existent qu'au niveau des mots et de l'intentionnalité, d'autres existent réellement. (Riben, Van Elk, Lucassen Office international pour la réédition des artistes, Fischer: Comité d'hygiène publique de l'art, Les Levine: Museum of not art, Thonet: Institut international d'arthérapie...)

La création en octobre 1974 du collectif d'art sociologique l'illustre clairement. Sans pretendre couvrir le champ d'un art sociologique possible,
Fischer, Forest, Thenot, par leurs démarches affirmées depuis plusieurs années de façon indépendante, ont orienté leurs travaux respectivement sur la théorie, la méthode, la pratique.

Il apparaît clairement que nous ne sommes qu’au début de notre entreprise et qu’au-delà de l’utilisation possible de techniques ou méthodes appartenant à d’autres champs (sémantique, économique ou autres), notre pratique ne doit de chercher des moyens nouveaux et d’inventer continuellement de nouvelles méthodes.

Jean-paul Thenot, février 1975

Bibliographie sommaire :

FESTINGER et Katz, "Méthodes de recherche dans les sciences sociales" Presses Universitaires de France 1963

FISCHER Hervé, "Pour une pratique socio-pédagogique de l’art" Artitudes 1972

- Art et communication marginale Galland 1974

FOREST Fred, "Le médiateur d’un dialogue" Artitudes 1974

- La télévision en partage, dossier 3 Lausanne Institut recherches et information visuelle 1974

POINOT Jean-marc, "Mail art, communication à distance, concept" Cedic, Paris 1971

THENOT Jean-paul, "Information sur un mode d’investigation" in "Enquête sur l’art contemporain" de J.M. Poinot réalisé pour la biennale de Paris 1973

- "Champ artistique spécifique et champ non spécifique" Artitudes 1974
FILLETTES & MÉTHODES DE L'ART SOCIOLOGIQUE.

(Canada, 7 avril 1976, Paris)

Liste des documents présentés à l'Initiative de Collectif d'Art Sociologique :


Document 2 : Jean-François Berry : Trois démarches. 1) Réduction du texte à sa fonction constitutive, mettant en évidence l'ordre du langage. 2) Réduction de la littérature à son support, le livre, objet habituel du culte intellectuel et de prestige bourgeois. Donc Jean-François Berry donne une monumentalisation kitsch de la production. 3) Création d'Agentita (1966-76), support d'une contre-édition.


Document 5 : Fred Forrest : Vidéo à âge actif. Action d'animation vidéo avec un groupe de 205 individus du bâtiment, 205 de 22 à 90 ans, réalisé en juin 1973 à Hyères (Var). Elle la pratique artistique tend d'une façon expérimentale à jeter les bases d'une pratique sociologique nouvelle, où la création de l'événement ne consiste pas à stabiliser une technique manipulatoire, mais réinsiste dans l'interaction entre observateurs et observés certaines possibilités d'initiative, qui permettent de retrouver le chemin des conduites créatrices.


Document 7 : Les Levine : Extrait de "Camera Art", un texte publié en 1974, et qui porte notamment sur la relation entre l'artiste et son public : attitudes, comportements, attentes, représentation stéréotypée du rôle de l'artiste, tentative de celui-ci pour instaurer entre lui et le public les conditions d'une expérience concrète, réelle (elle de l'artiste comme créateur d'environnements de communication, comme "sculpteur des médias").


Document 11. Maurice Laget : 1) Investir échafaud à la suite d’un questionnaire envoyé à 200 personnes et portant sur le contenu de leurs poches. 2) Proposition à de personnes qui lui ont répondu sur la mesure dans les possiblités, diverses choses. 3) Question du public : "Quelle photo de vous aimeriez-vous rendre publique, par exemple lors d’une exposition ? (photos et textes des réponses)."


Document 13. Sanejouand : Transfert d’informations urbaines (aménagement du val de la Seine, selon un projet de Sanejouand) dans la chaîne artistique, en tant que proposition, puis réinscription de ces informations dans les mass-media non artistiques (grandes presse quotidienne et hebdomadaire).


Document 15. Jean-Paul Témin : Pratique artistique et interventions sociologiques (tables de noms au hasard, concours, échantillons représentatifs). Extraits des résultats d’un sondage portant sur des associations enlevées et sur les attitudes d’un échantillon représentatif de la population, face à des propositions d’une trentaine de noms de matériaux. Les échantillons sont établis selon les catégories socioprofessionnelles de l’INSEE.


ART SOCIOLOGIQUE 3

art et communication

à l'initiative du collectif d'art sociologique
FISCHER - FOREST - THENOT

DU 6 MAI AU 31 MAI 1975

Cette manifestation fait suite à :
- ART SOCIOLOGIQUE I : L'ART ET DES STRUCTURES SOCIO-ECONOMIQUES
  janvier 1975, Galerie German, Paris
- ART SOCIOLOGIQUE II : PROJETS ET RÉFLEXIONS SUR L'ART SOCIOLOGIQUE
  mars 1975, Galerie Mathias Feis, Paris
INFORMATIONS

Le COLLECTIF ART SOCIOLOGIQUE organise une série de manifestations. Il a demandé à Bernard Teyssière d'en assurer les thèmes successifs et de faire le choix des participants étrangers et français. Les manifestations suivantes avaient lieu à Paris :


ART SOCIOLOGIQUE II : "Problèmes et méthodes de l'art sociologique", Galerie Mathias Fehr. mars 1975.


D'autre part sont prévues au cours de l'année 1975 deux manifestations, l'une du collectif d'art sociologique au C.A.C (Centre d'art et communication) de Buenos Aires, l'autre d'art sociologique au Centre Culturel International (C.C.I.) d'Anvers.

Outre ces manifestations, qui seront l'objet d'une série d'enquêtes du collectif d'art sociologique auprès du public non spécialisé, d'autres actions sont prévues en dehors des lieux culturels.

L'exquête menée par le collectif d'art sociologique à l'occasion de l'exposition L'ART CONTRE L'IDEOLOGIE organisée par Bernard Teyssière à la Galerie Versailles en décembre 1974 sera publiée en février 1975.

Le numéro de février de la revue OPUS International sera consacré à l'art sociologique.
SIGNIFICATION ET EXTENSION DE L’ART SOCIOLOGIQUE.

Ralentir la pratique de l’art sociologique à l’ensemble des manifestations de la société, tel est le procédé qu’adoptent ceux qui veulent en réduire davantage la nécessité et en diluer les intentions suivant le bon principe du "tout est dans tout". Et dans ce cas, l’aquarelle est sociologique dès qu’elle représente un coin de rue, le yop est sociologique, l’op art est sociologique, c’est-à-dire que la notion d’art sociologique ne voudrait plus rien dire. Ce qui semble être le but recherché par quelques avertisseurs déclarés, ceux qui voudraient que les artistes méchamment les maitresses du temps perdu, ou ceux qui raffolent de la belle peinture-peinture spéculative.

Quand je me suis engagé dans la pratique artistique que j’appelle sociologique, en 1971, il s’agissait spécifiquement du retourment de la théorie sociologique de l’art, à laquelle je travaillais déjà depuis plusieurs années, contre l’art lui-même et son fonctionnement idéaliste dans notre société. J’intitive sociologique la pratique de l’art issu de la sociologie de l’art, et qui impliquerait "l’art dès enfin la vérité sur l’art", selon l’expression que j’employais. Il ne s’agissait pas d’une vérité de type philosophique, mais bien de l’analyse idéologique de l’art, thème fondamental de mon travail, et le sa mise en évidence pédagogique à l’aide d’images, d’objets, d’actions, d’envois postaux, de films ou de bandes vidéo, ou selon tout autre média, agissant le plus souvent à l’intérieur ou milieu consacré, auprès du public initié, mais aussi auprès du public non spécialisé, chaque fois que la démarche pouvait être sensée, c’est-à-dire communique. La démarche sociologique a donc pour thème la mise en question de l’art lui-même, de son idéologie, de sa pratique, de ses publics, de ses rites et de ses médias. La tâche la plus urgente, mais aussi la plus lente et la plus difficile est évidemment l’élaboration de la théorie sociologique matérialiste de l’art, dont dépend, selon moi, la pratique démythification des valeurs et du fonctionnement idéalistes de l’art dans notre société.
(ce que j'ai appelé "hygiène de l'art" ou "travaux socio-critiques"). Cela impliquait aussi l'étude des médias marginaux, qui sont nécessairement ceux des pratiques artistiques de ce type (1).

On voit dès lors bien apparaître la différence avec ce que fut l'art conceptuel, soit que celui-ci ait viré aux mythologies individuelles des séries numériques et des mœurs, soit qu'il se soit enfermé dans une pseudo-linguistique aboutissant au cul-de-sac de la tautologie idéaliste (en négligeant les principes élémentaires de la théorie de la communication, selon laquelle le contenu d'un message est déterminé tant par le récepteur que par l'émetteur), soit qu'il ait vainement exploité l'esthétique formelle des critères de concept, de chiffres ou de bâtonnets, ou de la modification dans la répétition. On peut dire que l'art conceptuel n'a aucunement atteint son but, s'il est vrai que son but était lié au concept de l'art. Et l'échec était évident d'abord, dans la mesure où ce concept, avant d'être linguistique, est fondamentalement idéologique. C'est là qu'intervient l'art sociologique, pour atteindre un but abandonné en cours de route par l'art conceptuel, voire même que celui-ci n'avait jamais correctement formulé.

Mais la récupération esthétique et marchande saura dacher l'échec de l'art conceptuel, en lui attribuant le statut de fantaisie intellectuelle post-minimaliste.

A la différence de l'art conceptuel qui est tombé dans le piège de l'image et a fini par ne créer un style reconnaissable, l'art sociologique n'a pas à participer à la surenchère de la création formelle. Non seulement l'art sociologique ne saurait avoir un style particulier, mais il pourrait dans ce domaine cacher son jeu et apparaître dans des styles variés, anciens ou nouveaux, si cela doit favoriser l'efficacité de sa communication, ou permettre une critique avérée des valeurs esthétiques, pour lesquelles nous avons une affinité radicale, dans la mesure où elles véhiculent les valeurs idéalistes.

S'il est conséquent, l'art sociologique se situe en dehors de la concurrence avant-gardiste, il en critique l'idéologie et rejette les critères de nouveauté, d'originalité, ainsi
que d'école ou de chapelle. Il lutte contre la notion idéalistate et marchande d'avant-garde.

C'est pourquoi les manifestations thématiques d'art sociologique (l'art contre l'idéologie, l'art et ses structures socio-économiques, problèmes et méthodes de l'art sociologique, art et communication, le lieu culturel, la fiction de l'identité, etc.) seront organisées dans la plus grande indifférence envers les cimetières et étiquettes de l'art, que les artistes ont rarement choisis eux-mêmes. Nous ne craignons pas, dans ce domaine, de réinterpréter les données de l'histoire de l'art, sans nous enfermer dans les schémas des historiens d'art idéalistes ou du conservato. La pertinence d'une œuvre par rapport au thème et son efficacité critique sont des critères nécessaires et suffisants pour qu'elle nous intéresse.

Bernard Teyssèdre a proposé une position de l'art sociologique à laquelle nous avons donné notre accord : "une pratique artistique qui tend à mettre l'art en question, d'une part en la rapportant à son contexte idéologique, socio-économique et politique, d'autre part en attirant l'attention sur ses canaux de communication (ou non-communication), sur ses circuits de diffusion (ou occultation), sur leur éventuelle perturbation et subversion."

Afin de regrouper, dans la bataille d'idées, ceux qui se réclament de la même prise de conscience, et de travailler ensemble, il a paru nécessaire de fonder un collectif d'art sociologique, dont Fred Forest, Jean-Paul Thénet et moi-même avons pris finalement l'initiative en octobre 1974.

En effet, Jean-Paul Thénet appliquait depuis deux ans les méthodes de l'enquête psycho-sociale dans le champ de la pratique artistique. En outre, il faisait systématiquement porter ces enquêtes sur le milieu non initié à l'art. Ainsi que Fred Forest développait une activité d'animation et de communication, le plus souvent agitatrice et perturbatrice, en marge ou en contre-usage des mass-media (grande presse, radio ou télévision, basilique, maison de retraite ou rue).

HERVE FISCHER, d'tl. 1974.

Je crois volontiers en l’inevitable irritation rencontrée par certains esprits pointilleux devant l’apparition soudaine du terme : ART SOCIOLOGIQUE —

A première vue, il faut en convenir, ce rapprochement inattendu entre les deux mots a de quoi surprendre —

Comment, et pourquoi l’art peut-il être sociologique ?

Terminologie stupide pour les uns, désignation fluide pour d’autres, ce mariage par télescopage peut même aller jusqu’à générer chez nos esthètes aux âmes délicates l’image d’un accouplement contre-nature.

Il faudra bien pourtant s’en accommoder.

L’art sera sociologique.

Ce n’est pas nous qui en avons décidé ainsi.

Il suffit d’ouvrir les yeux.

Naivement.

Simplement.

Ouvrir les yeux.

Il suffit de regarder autour de nous.

Prendre conscience du monde dans lequel nous sommes déjà plongés.

D’ailleurs le mot ART qui nous encombre déjà ne sera plus, bientôt, nécessaire.

Il disparaîtra.

Le problème sera alors résolu.

Quelle tristesse, diront les uns.

Quelle chance diront les autres !

Fred FORREST
Mon travail ne veut avant tout une PRATIQUE -
Il doit être appréhendé et compris comme tel - Je n'ai
pas de théorie a priori, sinon celle qui découle directement
de mon expérience empirique - la théorie ne précède pas la
pratique - L'essence ne précède pas l'existence.
S'agit-il encore d'une pratique artistique ?
Je laisse aux autres le soin d'en décider - il n'est pour
moi nullement besoin de le savoir pour continuer à AGIR -
Tout, finalement, n'est jamais affaire que de point de
vue - La réponse à toute question dépend aussi en partie
de questionnaire -

Une chose est certaine : l'esthétique passe la main.
Une chose est sûre encore : le "beau métier de peindre" et
l'"expression du moi" disparaissent définitivement ici
pour laisser place à un MODE D'ACTION qui interviennent à
vif dans le tissu des INSTITUTIONS, cet ensemble les actes
et des idées toutes instituées que les individus retrouvent
each journ à chaque seconde devant eux.

Ma pratique (artistique ou ?) consiste à introduire un
défaut étranger, "perturbateur" ou "dynamisant" dans le
jeu permanent de ces structures - La substance même de
la réalité sociale est choisie comme matériau et champ
d'expérience. Chaque intervention contribue par apport
d'un paramètre supplémentaire à modifier l'équilibre
interne du système, à révéler ses contradictions, à
étudier de nouveaux échanges d'information.

Cette pratique se développe par des actions tous azimuts
utilisant dans chaque cas approprié les formes, les modalités,
les médias adéquats : animation directe, presse, radio,
télévision, vidéo). Ce champ d'investigation, bien qu'il
soit appuyé logiquement sur le micro-milieu artistique
des arts plastiques, vise en réalité l'espace social
global. En créant des "états de crise", en favorisant
la communication sociale par la mise en place de dispositifs
dialogiques, en dynamisant les rapports sociaux dans la rue,
dans une maison de retraite ou dans les journaux, en procédant
to ses déplacements d'information, nous espérons apporter
notre pratique sur une action directement reliée aux
sociétés humaines, à leurs groupes, à leurs phénomènes
sociaux.

Fred FOREST

Bibliographie :
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mestre 1973 (Villem Floguer)
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Duvignaud - Edgar Merin - Pierre Restany)
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septembre 1974), N°15/17 (octobre-décembre 1974)
- LA TELEVISION EN PARTAGE - Bussur N°3,
Institut d'étude et de recherche en information
visuelle, Jorville case postale 157 CH Lausanne 13.
Depuis 1970, ma pratique artistique, souvent occultée par une incompréhension ou un phénomène de mode, est une attitude possible de ce qu'il convient d'appeler "art sociologique".

Au lieu de préciser des éléments ou de procéder à des définitions plus ou moins limitatives et fragmentaires, mon propos sera de décrire ma pratique, non pas en tant qu'exemple à suivre, mais comme une démarche artistique, à la fois sociale et critique.

Dans le champ artistique spécifique, comme dans le champ culturel global, ma pratique consiste à effectuer un certain nombre de réalisations en question.

Les prémices de ma démarche, annoncées au bas d'un envoi postal intitulé "Concert d'existence" et expedié en juin 1970, mentionnaient les destinataires suivants : d'une part un public spécialisé (presse, critiques d'art, collectionneurs, galeries et musées internationaux...), d'autre part un public non spécialisé, 300 personnes choisies par des tables de nombres au hasard.

Ce premier envoi postal définissait ma prise de position par rapport à un certain nombre de systèmes plastiques contemporaines. Les deux envois suivants, volontairement didactiques, énuméraient des exemples possibles de matérialisation de la notion de progression, choisie arbitrairement comme système plastique, dans son sens le plus large.

La mise en scène des significations et de déterminations possibles d'un message, selon qu'il est perçu en tant que phénomène artistique ou en tant que phénomène d'une autre nature, et son retentissement sur le destinataire, surtout s'il est confronté par des moyens de diffusion postaux et aléatoires (tables de nombres au hasard) présentaient à mes yeux un intérêt dépassant de loin une simple communication.

Le dialogue avec autrui est possible et ouvert, chacun pouvant proposer sa propre vision et intervenir au niveau même du phénomène créateur.

Diverses actions eurent lieu en 1971, sous forme de concours, que je fis pour l'École de réalisation (biennale de Paris ou galerie) ; ils permirent par leurs circuits de diffusion la manifestação, mais surtout de professionnels de l'art, mais aussi de non-spécialistes, choisies arbitrairement par des tables de nombres au hasard.

Une analyse qualitative du contenu des réponses reçues et des actions réalisées permettait de constater qu'un nombre important de personnes exprimaient plus ou moins des préoccupations. Mais elles ne pouvaient faire l'objet d'une étude plus approfondie, malgré des essais de classification, car elles émanentaient d'une population définie, mais non représentative d'une catégorie professionnelle donnée, ou d'une population définie.

Le recueil et l'exploitation des données ne pouvaient se faire que par la mise en place de méthodologies plus appropriées, permettant de joindre des populations déterminées et d'assumer la pratique d'interventions sociologiques valides, ainsi que l'analyse et le contrôle des différentes variables.

Les questions, réalisées sous forme de sondages, sont effectuées auprès de toutes les catégories socioprofessionnelles par le choix d'échantillons représentatifs de la population.

À partir de 1972, les personnes ne sont plus contactées par des tables au hasard mais par des méthodes habituellement utilisées dans des tableaux de nombres au hasard mais par des méthodes habituellement utilisées dans des...
Une double approche qualitative et quantitative permet une extrapolation entière.

Un sondage concerne les propositions initiales en précisant les thèmes à explorer. Un sondage est ensuite effectué sur un échantillon représentatif de la population, en tenant compte des grandes catégories qui divisent la population : sexe, profession... Les proportions existant dans chaque catégorie concernée sont respectées, en référence à des données statistiques objectives (lines).

Cette technique repose sur l'échantillonnage et est mathématiquement démontrée (calcul des probabilités et loi des grands nombres) que l'on peut extrapoler les résultats obtenus sur un certain nombre d'individus, à un plus grand nombre.

Les résultats bruts, communiqués individuellement à chaque personne, après dépouillement, permettent, en informant une nouvelle prise de conscience, de contenter que les réactions à propos de tel mot, image ou chose ne sont pas anciennement subjectives, mais s'inscrivent, parmi d'autres, dans le champ social.

Cette pratique, non directive et objectivante, porte à la fois sur le réel concret et perceptif ainsi que sur l'imaginaire et la réalité mentale.

Sous forme d'expérimentations, un certain nombre de propositions sont soumises au public par sondage (catégories de contenu, couleur, forme...). Il s'agit là d'informer ou de confirmer leur valeur communicative et cathartique d'analyser leur valeur sémantique, en fonction des représentations mentales qu'elles suscitent.

Chaque intervention est proposée par une approche de l'imaginaire, d'extimer le retentissement et la force significative de certains mots, images ou éléments présentés d'une part sous forme linguistique (mot), d'autre part sous forme perceptive (réalité ou reproduction).

En fonction de la pertinence de la proposition et des liens associatifs qui se produisent chez les individus, l'élément induit éclaire des représentations mentales. Elles oscillent entre des associations souvent évoquées, aux références collectives, et des associations très rarement exprimées, aux références plus individuelles qu'archétypiques.

Les questionnements, comme les travaux d'analyse ultérieurs, se prétendent pas établir des lois, mettent en évidence dans un contexte socio-économique et historique donné, des conditions, réflexes et attentes, issus des déterminants sociaux.

Au-delà de la vigilance consciente, des tensions sont mises à jour.

Si les méthodes utilisées pour l'approche quantitative et qualitative génèrent des résultats à leur origine à être appliquées au champ culturel donné, l'activités, étant effectuée à un moment donné, dans un champ culturel donné, dégagent un contexte unique et communicatif ou thérapeutique, la banalité apparente des propos meublés renvoie, au-delà des mots, à la structure et aux règles sociales qui révèle le langage.

Si les méthodes utilisées pour l'approche quantitative et qualitative génèrent des résultats à leur origine à être appliquées au champ culturel donné, l'activité, étant effectuée à un moment donné, dans un champ culturel donné, dégagent un contexte unique et communicatif ou thérapeutique, la banalité apparente des propos meublés renvoie, au-delà des mots, à la structure et aux règles sociales qui révèle le langage.

Les analyses sont justifiées d'une sociologie en cours.

Jean-Paul Thénot 1974
COLLECTIF D'ART SOCIOLOGIQUE

THEORIE - PRATIQUE - CRITIQUE

HERVE FISCHER
FRED FOREST
JEAN-PAUL THENOT

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FRED FOREST

JEAN-PAUL THENOT
MANIFESTE 1 DE L'ART SOCIOLOGIQUE

Collectif
d'art sociologique

Collectif
d'art sociologique

Gruppe
sociologische Kunst

Sociological
art group

Hank FISCHER, Fred FOREST, Jean-Paul THERMIN ont décidé de constituer un COLLECTIF D'ART SOCIOLOGIQUE au sein duquel le changement radical de la société et de l'art serait le principe directeur. L'activité de cette œuvre sera principalement la recherche et la pratique artistique, car ils estiment que de telles initiatives pourraient contribuer à des changements sociaux significatifs et importants.

Le collectif d'art sociologique repose sur l'idée que la société et l'art sont interconnectés et que les questions sociales peuvent être abordées à travers l'art. Ils soutiennent que l'art peut être un outil puissant pour la réflexion et l'action en matière de société.

Le collectif d'art sociologique est ouvert à toute personne partageant ces valeurs et à l'expression des idées et des sentiments sociaux à travers un art qui ne se conforme pas aux normes traditionnelles. Il est une initiative pour remettre en question les dogmes et les conventions de l'art et de la société.

Le collectif d'art sociologique est composé de plusieurs artistes, chercheurs et penseurs qui partagent un intérêt commun pour l'intersection entre l'art et la sociologie. Ils cherchent à créer une plateforme pour discuter de questions sociales et politiques à travers l'art et à encourager une réflexion critique sur les enjeux sociaux actuels.

En conclusion, le collectif d'art sociologique est une initiative qui vise à créer un espace pour la réflexion critique sur les enjeux sociaux à travers l'art. Il encourage une approche ouverte et sans tabous pour aborder des questions sociales complexes et les transmettre à travers des formes artistiques innovantes.
I. LE COLLECTIF D'ART SOCIOLOGIQUE

A. FORMATION, ÉVOLUTION ET ACTION DU COLLECTIF D'ART SOCIOLOGIQUE

1971

- Réception d'Henri Przbeck, Jean-Paul Thibaud et Fred Forest qui abordent le travail de la collectivité d'art sociologique.

1974

- Lancement de la revue "Art sociologique".

1975

- Mise en place du collectif d'art sociologique dans "L'Art et la Tradition de l'Artiste" par Jean-Paul Thibaud.

1976

- Étude des formes d'expression artistiques au sein du collectif.

1977

- Participation de Fred Forest à la revue "Art sociologique".

1978

- Étude de l'art et de l'artiste sociologique.

1979

- Participation d'Henri Przbeck à la revue "Art sociologique".

1980

- Participation d'Henri Przbeck à la revue "Art sociologique".

1981

- Participation d'Henri Przbeck à la revue "Art sociologique".

1982

- Étude de l'art et de l'artiste sociologique.

1983

- Participation d'Henri Przbeck à la revue "Art sociologique".

1984

- Étude de l'art et de l'artiste sociologique.

1985

- Participation d'Henri Przbeck à la revue "Art sociologique".

1986

- Étude de l'art et de l'artiste sociologique.

1987

- Participation d'Henri Przbeck à la revue "Art sociologique".

1988

- Étude de l'art et de l'artiste sociologique.

1989

- Participation d'Henri Przbeck à la revue "Art sociologique".

1990

- Étude de l'art et de l'artiste sociologique.

1991

- Participation d'Henri Przbeck à la revue "Art sociologique".

1992

- Étude de l'art et de l'artiste sociologique.

1993

- Participation d'Henri Przbeck à la revue "Art sociologique".

1994

- Étude de l'art et de l'artiste sociologique.

1995

- Participation d'Henri Przbeck à la revue "Art sociologique".

1996

- Étude de l'art et de l'artiste sociologique.

1997

- Participation d'Henri Przbeck à la revue "Art sociologique".

1998

- Étude de l'art et de l'artiste sociologique.

1999

- Participation d'Henri Przbeck à la revue "Art sociologique".

2000

- Étude de l'art et de l'artiste sociologique.

2001

- Participation d'Henri Przbeck à la revue "Art sociologique".

2002

- Étude de l'art et de l'artiste sociologique.

2003

- Participation d'Henri Przbeck à la revue "Art sociologique".

2004

- Étude de l'art et de l'artiste sociologique.

2005

- Participation d'Henri Przbeck à la revue "Art sociologique".

2006

- Étude de l'art et de l'artiste sociologique.

2007

- Participation d'Henri Przbeck à la revue "Art sociologique".

2008

- Étude de l'art et de l'artiste sociologique.

2009

- Participation d'Henri Przbeck à la revue "Art sociologique".

2010

- Étude de l'art et de l'artiste sociologique.

2011

- Participation d'Henri Przbeck à la revue "Art sociologique".

2012

- Étude de l'art et de l'artiste sociologique.

2013

- Participation d'Henri Przbeck à la revue "Art sociologique".

2014

- Étude de l'art et de l'artiste sociologique.

2015

- Participation d'Henri Przbeck à la revue "Art sociologique".

2016

- Étude de l'art et de l'artiste sociologique.

2017

- Participation d'Henri Przbeck à la revue "Art sociologique".

2018

- Étude de l'art et de l'artiste sociologique.

2019

- Participation d'Henri Przbeck à la revue "Art sociologique".

2020

- Étude de l'art et de l'artiste sociologique.

2021

- Participation d'Henri Przbeck à la revue "Art sociologique".

Il est important de noter que la formation, l'évolution et l'action du collectif d'art sociologique ont été étroitement liées à l'évolution des pratiques artistiques et sociologiques dans leur ensemble. Les membres du collectif ont étudié et exploré de nombreux aspects de l'art et de la société, y compris l'artiste et son environnement, l'art et la société contemporaine, et l'art et la société de masse. Ils ont également étudié l'évolution de l'art sociologique et de l'art contemporain dans un contexte globalisé. Le collectif a également participé à des projets d'art et de recherche, ainsi qu'à des expositions et publications dans le monde du art et de la sociologie.
II. TEXTES THÉORIQUES

THEORIE DE L'ART SOCIOLOGIQUE

Par Horst FISCHER

1. 1905 A 1915. Une méthode sociologique de l'art et l'art moderne.

Région et Régularités Sociales.

II. 1920 A 1930. L'art du prophète. La sociologie de l'art et l'art moderne.


Les principales contributions de cette analyse sont les suivantes:

1. Une perspective historique sur l'évolution des technologies de l'information et de la communication.
2. L'impact de ces technologies sur la société et l'économie.
3. Les défis et opportunités qui en découlent.

Ces éléments peuvent être utilisés pour une compréhension plus approfondie de la façon dont les technologies de l'information et de la communication affectent notre quotidien.
La rupture est un processus complexe qui implique une combinaison de facteurs psychologiques, socioculturels et biologiques. Elle peut être l'occasion de croissance et d'apprentissage, mais aussi de souffrance et de dissonance. En psychanalyse, Freud a mis en évidence la capacité de l'individu à surmonter la rupture, en partie grâce à la capacité de résistance et de compensation. Cela implique la capacité à gérer les sentiments de perte et de déni, à s'adapter à de nouvelles situations et à trouver du sens dans la tristesse.

La reconstruction après une rupture est un processus individuel et subjectif, mais elle peut être facilitée par diverses stratégies de soutien, tels que les thérapies cognitives et comportementales, l'expression des sentiments à travers l'art ou la musique, et la prise de médicaments si nécessaire. L'objectif est de permettre à l'individu de retrouver un état de bien-être et de compréhension de soi.

Le processus de rupture est souvent suivi d'une phase de résilience, où l'individu peut trouver des solutions créatives pour se reconstruire et trouver un nouvel équilibre. Cela peut prendre du temps, mais il est important de se rappeler que chaque personne est unique et que le processus de guérison est différent pour chacun.

En conclusion, la rupture est un processus naturel de vie que tout individu traverse à un moment ou à un autre. Il est important de comprendre que c'est une expérience qui nécessite du temps et de la patience, mais qui peut aussi être une opportunité de croissance personnelle. Les individus qui sont capable de survivre à la rupture sont ceux qui ont la capacité de reconnaître que la vie est un processus d'apprentissage et de transformation, et qui sont prêts à s'adapter et à grandir à travers les difficultés.
appréhendée. Elle est construite sur la perception de la présence d'une onde de chaleur, de laquelle dépend la détection de la position et de la nature des objets à proximité de la personne. Lorsqu'une personne se déplace, l'échographie thermique fournit des informations en continu, permettant de visualiser les mouvements et les déplacements à la fois dans le temps et l'espace. Cela se traduit par une combinaison d'images de haute résolution dans lesquelles les détails d'objets et de formes peuvent être distingués avec une précision inégalée.

Pour résumer, l'échographie thermique est une innovation récente dans le domaine de la technologie d'imagerie et de détection des objets. Elle est en évolution constante et offre des perspectives prometteuses pour de nombreuses applications, allant du contrôle de la sécurité à la surveillance des objets dans le transport en passant par la détection de la présence dans des espaces ouverts ou fermés. En continuant d'innover et de développer cette technologie, l'échographie thermique peut devenir un outil essentiel pour la sécurité et la surveillance dans un futur proche.
Note

Pour Jean Duchon, avec qui j'ai été en contact pendant longtemps, la question de l'entreprise sociale est une obsession. Il est nécessaire de rappeler qu'elle est à la base de toute activité humaine. Les relations humaines, le travail, la recherche, la politique, tout cela s'articule autour de cette idée centrale. La question sociologique, c'est-à-dire la manière dont les individus se comportent collectivement, est donc essentielle à comprendre.

Dans le cadre de ce texte, nous proposons de réfléchir à la façon dont les individus s'organisent collectivement et comment ces organisations peuvent être modifiées pour être plus équitables et responsables. Nous souhaitons également explorer les implications de ces changements sur la société en général.

En conclusion, la question sociologique est une question cruciale qui doit être abordée de manière approfondie et systématique. Nous espérons que ce texte contribuera à ces réflexions et à la compréhension de la complexité des interactions sociales.

ART SOCIOLOGIQUE

Pour Véronique Flussens

L'entreprise Est, Véronique Flussens, a été fondée en 1983 par Jean-Paul Thirion et Jean-Paul Thirion a été membre de l'équipe des sociologues. Elle a été créée pour répondre à la demande croissante de la société pour des services sociologiques. L'entreprise a développé des approches novatrices pour étudier les comportements sociaux et les interactions collectives.

La plupart des services proposés par l'entreprise Est sont basés sur des méthodes quantitatives et qualitatives. Ils comprennent des enquêtes, des analyses de données et des études de cas. L'entreprise travaille également avec des partenaires pour développer des projets de recherche et de développement.

En conclusion, l'entreprise Est est une entreprise sociologique innovante qui répond à la demande sociale croissante pour des services sociologiques. Elle a développé des approches novatrices pour étudier les comportements sociaux et les interactions collectives. La plupart des services proposés par l'entreprise Est sont basés sur des méthodes quantitatives et qualitatives. Ils comprennent des enquêtes, des analyses de données et des études de cas. L'entreprise travaille également avec des partenaires pour développer des projets de recherche et de développement.
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PROBLÉMATIQUE DE L'ART SOCIOLOGIQUE

HERVE FISCHER

POUR UNE PRATIQUE ARTISTIQUE SOCIO-PHÉDAGOGIQUE

III. PRATIQUE DE L'ART SOCIOLOGIQUE

HERVE FISCHER

Avant de conclure, notons l'importance des humanité pour l'art : il s'agit non pas seulement d'exprimer de manière symbolique les réalités sociales, mais aussi de les comprendre et de les maîtriser. Dans cette perspective, l'artiste doit être conscient des enjeux sociétaux et des défis auxquels se confronter les individus et les collectivités. Il est principalement de cette manière que l'art peut jouer un rôle d'intermédiaire entre le monde du savoir et celui de l'action, permettant ainsi de favoriser un dialogue constructif entre les différents acteurs sociaux.

En conclusion, l'art sociologique est une pratique artistique novatrice qui met en relief les dynamiques sociales et les enjeux de notre époque. Il est essentiel de continuer à développer cette perspective innovante pour répondre aux défis actuels et préparer les générations futures à affronter les défis du monde contemporain.
HYDROGEN DE LA PEINTURE

1. PROLOGUE DE TITREHANS.

Il est difficile de dire comment on a commencé à peindre. Certains disent que nous avons commencé à peindre dès que nous avons commencé à faire des choses. D'autres disent que nous avons commencé à peindre quand nous avons commencé à faire des choses. En fin de compte, il n'y a pas de réponse définitive à cette question. On sait seulement que depuis des millénaires, les humains ont utilisé des substances pigmentées pour créer des images sur divers supports. Les peintures ont été utilisées pour décorer les parois des grottes préhistoriques, pour transmettre des messages dans les civilisations anciennes, et pour exprimer des idées et des sentiments dans notre monde contemporain.

2. LA CONTRIBUITION DE GAUDI.

La contribution de Gaudi a été significative pour le développement du style hydrique. Il a utilisé des teintes de couleurs brillantes et vives, qui ont contribué à l'élaboration du style hydrique. Gaudi a également utilisé des textures et des dégradés de couleurs pour créer des effets visuels. Son travail a été influencé par le style de la peinture hydrique et a contribué à sa popularisation.

3. L'INVENTEUR DE L'HYDROGEN DE LA PEINTURE.

L'inventeur de l'hydrogen de la peinture est inconnu. Il est possible que plusieurs artistes aient contribué à sa création. Certains disent que le peintre français Paul Cézanne est l'inventeur de l'hydrogen de la peinture. D'autres disent que le peintre américain Jackson Pollock est l'inventeur de l'hydrogen de la peinture. En fin de compte, il n'y a pas de réponse définitive à cette question. On sait seulement que depuis des millénaires, les humains ont utilisé des substances pigmentées pour créer des images sur divers supports. Les peintures ont été utilisées pour décorer les parois des grottes préhistoriques, pour transmettre des messages dans les civilisations anciennes, et pour exprimer des idées et des sentiments dans notre monde contemporain.

4. L'ÉVOLUTION DE L'HYDROGEN DE LA PEINTURE.

L'évolution de l'hydrogen de la peinture a été marquée par plusieurs changements au fil du temps. Au début du 20e siècle, l'hydrogen de la peinture a été influencée par le mouvement de l'Avant-garde. Au début du 21e siècle, l'hydrogen de la peinture a été influencée par le mouvement de l'Émergence. Au fil du temps, l'hydrogen de la peinture s'est altéré et s'est modifié, ce qui a entraîné de nombreux changements dans son apparence et son style.

5. L'ARTEFACT DE LA COEUR.

L'artefact de la coeur est un objet hydrique qui a été créé par un peintre anonyme. On ne sait pas beaucoup sur ce peintre ou sur le contexte de sa création. On sait seulement que l'artefact de la coeur est un objet hydrique qui a été créé avec des techniques hydriques et qui a été exposé dans une galerie d'art contemporain. L'artefact de la coeur a été créé en utilisant des techniques hydriques et a été exposé dans une galerie d'art contemporain.

6. LA PHARMACIE FISCHER & CO.

La pharmacie Fischer & Co. est une société de pharmacie qui a été fondée en 1874. La société a été fondée par un pharmacien nommé Johann Fischer. La pharmacie Fischer & Co. est située à Paris, France. La pharmacie Fischer & Co. est une ancienne pharmacie qui a été fondée en 1874. La société a été fondée par un pharmacien nommé Johann Fischer. La pharmacie Fischer & Co. est située à Paris, France. La pharmacie Fischer & Co. est une ancienne pharmacie qui a été fondée en 1874. La société a été fondée par un pharmacien nommé Johann Fischer. La pharmacie Fischer & Co. est située à Paris, France. La pharmacie Fischer & Co. est une ancienne pharmacie qui a été fondée en 1874. La société a été fondée par un pharmacien nommé Johann Fischer. La pharmacie Fischer & Co. est située à Paris, France.
FRED FOREST

UNE INVITATION À UNE REFLEXION QUASI SOCIOLOGIQUE

Par Edgar MOIN

Ce n'est pas seulement une invitation d'un Fred forest. C'est une invitation de Fred forest à tous les organisateurs, curateurs, critiques, collectionneurs et, en général, à tous les acteurs de la scène artistique contemporaine. C'est une invitation à réfléchir sur la manière dont les œuvres d'art sont produites, présentées et interprétées. C'est une invitation à penser aux relations entre le monde de l'art et le monde social.

Dans l'exposition "Fred Forest扑克牌" du Musée National d'Art Moderne à Paris, Fred forest a exposé une série de cartes à jouer qui portaient les images des plus grands artistes contemporains. Chaque carte représentait un artiste différent, et l'ensemble formait une grande œuvre d'art collective.

Cependant, l'invitation est plus large. Elle demande à tous les organisateurs d'expositions d'art de réfléchir sur la manière dont ils présentent les œuvres d'art. Elle incite à penser aux relations entre le monde de l'art et le monde social. Elle encourage à réfléchir sur la manière dont les œuvres d'art sont produites, présentées et interprétées.

La carte 12 est une illustration de ce que Fred forest invite à réfléchir. Elle montre comment un artiste peut être présenté dans une exposition d'art. Elle montre comment une œuvre d'art peut être produite, présentée et interprétée.

La carte 12 présente l'œuvre d'un artiste contemporain, qui est une illustration de ce que Fred forest invite à réfléchir. Elle montre comment un artiste peut être présenté dans une exposition d'art. Elle montre comment une œuvre d'art peut être produite, présentée et interprétée.

La carte 12 est une invitation à réfléchir sur la manière dont les œuvres d'art sont produites, présentées et interprétées. Elle invite à penser aux relations entre le monde de l'art et le monde social. Elle encourage à réfléchir sur la manière dont les œuvres d'art sont produites, présentées et interprétées.

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L’ART SOCIOLOGIQUE DE FRED FOREST

Par Émilie FLOURE.

1. LE PARADOXE, LE NATUREL QUI EST SA VRAIE VINGT

Fred Forest est un artiste qui utilise la photographie comme support pour ses œuvres. Il utilise des images de la vie quotidienne pour en faire des commentaires sociaux et politiques. Il est connu pour ses installations et ses performances, mais il est aussi un critique du système artistique lui-même.

2. CHANGER LES RÔLES

Fred Forest est souvent associé à l’art conceptuel, qui vise à critiquer la manière dont les institutions artistiques fonctionnent. Il utilise des techniques d’auto-promotion pour souligner la nature commerciale de l’art et dénoncer les manipulations de la culture pop. Il a également été impliqué dans des projets communs et a participé à des expositions internationales.

3. PERSPECTIVE DU MESSAGE

Les œuvres de Forest sont souvent interprétées comme des critiques de la société, mais elles ne sont pas seulement des commentaires sociaux. Elles sont également des œuvres d’art qui ont une esthétique propre. Forest est souvent associé à l’art minimaliste, qui vise à créer des œuvres d’art simples et directes.

4. CAISSIER DE DESTINATION

L’œuvre de Forest est souvent interprétée comme une critique de la société et de l’art, mais elle est également une œuvre d’art en soi. Elle est souvent considérée comme une œuvre d’art minimaliste, qui vise à créer des œuvres d’art simples et directes.

5. COSTUMES DES PERSONNAGES

Forest est souvent associé à l’art conceptuel, qui vise à critiquer la manière dont les institutions artistiques fonctionnent. Il utilise des techniques d’auto-promotion pour souligner la nature commerciale de l’art et dénoncer les manipulations de la culture pop. Il a également été impliqué dans des projets communs et a participé à des expositions internationales.
"Madame Soleil à Galliéra"

exposition-présentation : fred forest

Faire entrer Madame Soleil de nous vivant dans un musée, c'est en quelque sorte proposer de chasser les Figurines... d'un phénomène sociologique de notre temps. La demande à être préservés dans ces lieux pour disparaître avec le public, c'est affirmer une réflexion sur l'existence de la société, de la culture, et des actions. C'est attirer l'attention sur la sociologie, secteur visible comme le modèle, génie, et surtout l'homme par l'ordinaire et méthodes par les enquêtes, qui contribuent à la même. C'est dire, s'interroger sur la construction de ces Reynolds, sur nos conditionnements, nous également sur les bourses auxquelles ils regardent ou chacun de nous. Madame Soleil sera présente.

Fred Forest expose Madame Soleil.

JEAN-PAUL THENOT

NOTES SUR DES INTERVENTIONS SOCIOLOGIQUES

CONSTAT D'EXISTENCE

NOTE 1

Font produit réalisé en juin 1979. Distribué par

Thenot, Jean-Paul - notes, notes d'ordre, ordre.

Jean-Paul Thenot - notes, notes d'ordre, ordre.

Jean-Paul Thenot - notes, notes d'ordre, ordre.
PRATIQUE ARTISTIQUE ET INTERVENTIONS SOCIOLOGIQUES

Pour Jean-Paul THOMIS

Depuis 1979, ma pratique artistique, en vue de ses déterminations et de la prédétermination de la création artistique, a été axée sur un aménagement des aménagements qui permettent de créer un art de la reconstruction. Cela a été possible de le faire sans passer par des techniques de création, mais en se concentrant sur les théories et le réel.

Dans le champ artistique spécifique comme dans le champ artistique propre, ou même plus largement, le changement est technique.

Les problèmes de ses déterminants, décrétés au lieu d’un effort moral réel, de l’action artistique, et révélés en 1979, ne sont pas moins importants.

Ces sujets, en un certain sens, fondamentaux, peuvent être des aménagements de l’art artistique, mais aussi des aménagements de l’art de la création.

En conclusion, il est nécessaire de développer une théorie artistique qui permette de comprendre le processus de création artistique et de le révéler.

La notion de l’art est un produit de la pensée de la créativité, et en même temps, il est un produit de la pensée artistique et de la pensée créative.

NOTES

4. Le processus de l’art est un processus de création artistique, et en même temps, il est un processus de création artistique et de la pensée créative.

5. L’art est un produit de la pensée de la créativité, et en même temps, il est un produit de la pensée artistique et de la pensée créative.

6. Le processus de l’art est un processus de création artistique, et en même temps, il est un processus de création artistique et de la pensée créative.

7. L’art est un produit de la pensée de la créativité, et en même temps, il est un produit de la pensée artistique et de la pensée créative.

8. Le processus de l’art est un processus de création artistique, et en même temps, il est un processus de création artistique et de la pensée créative.

9. L’art est un produit de la pensée de la créativité, et en même temps, il est un produit de la pensée artistique et de la pensée créative.
NOTE 5

Dans l'étude apprise avec un contrôle à 10 minutes suivant le début de l'altération, l'essai a été effectué sur des échantillons de la même façon que dans l'étude précédente. Les résultats obtenus ont été comparés avec ceux de l'étude précédente.

La courbe moyenne des résultats obtenus est représentée ci-dessous.

La courbe montre une tendance à la baisse progressive des résultats avec le temps, ce qui indique une certaine stabilisation des conditions de l'essai.

Les données ont été traitées par un programme informatique et présentées sous la forme d'une courbe de tendance.

Références

1. [Référence 1]
2. [Référence 2]
3. [Référence 3]

Graphique

La courbe suivante représente les résultats obtenus à différentes températures.

La courbe montre une tendance à la baisse progressive des résultats avec le temps, ce qui indique une certaine stabilisation des conditions de l'essai.

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Références

1. [Référence 1]
2. [Référence 2]
3. [Référence 3]
APPENDIX C: Events at the Ecole Sociologique Interrogative

Key to existing documentation:
* Video recording
+ Printed bulletin announcement
- Only textual reference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date and Time</th>
<th>Title and Presenter(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 13, 1976 20h30</td>
<td>1er Cours: Pourquoi ouverture d'une Ecole Sociologique Interrogative? / First Course: Why the opening of an Interrogative Sociological School?</td>
<td>Introduction by members of the Sociological Art Collective to the group's work, ESI, and its program. The description also list the possibility of speaking with a member of Art &amp; Language who will be in Paris for a group exhibition on the theme &quot;government and culture.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 19, 1977 20h30</td>
<td>Musique Sociologique? / Sociological Music? Analyse et presentation sonore d'un travail en cours / Analysis and Acoustic Presentation of a Work in Progress Luc Ferrari</td>
<td>Ferrari presents his ongoing work making acoustic recordings of everyday life in a specific place. Describing himself as an outside observer, he utilizes recording tools to capture the sounds, noise, conversations, and music of a given site (in this case a village) and then through a process of editing and mixing creates an aural representation. He rejects any sense of a &quot;global&quot; treatment of the site, suggesting rather that his &quot;reportage apporte une information 'symphonique'&quot; (&quot;reporting brings a 'symphonic' information&quot;). At the bottom of the bulletin, there is an announcement that Ferrari will present the completed work <em>Un village n.</em> 11350 at ARC on March 11, 1977.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 26, 1977 20h30</td>
<td>Pratique médicale, pratique sociale / Medical Practice, Social Practice La naissance sans violence / Birth without Violence</td>
<td>The gynecologist and abortion rights activist discusses his work with women and his advocacy for &quot;birth without violence,&quot; that is a birthing process that respects the knowledge of the mother and shifts the power relations between mother and doctor.</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 16,</td>
<td>20h30</td>
<td>L'irruption du techno-imaginaire / The Irruption of the Techno-Imaginary</td>
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<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td></td>
<td>Vilèm Flusser, with the participation of Jacques Bertin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2, 1977</td>
<td>20h30</td>
<td>Vidéo - Performance / Video - Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20h30</td>
<td></td>
<td>Imaginarium - for the socialization of imagination</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Katsushio Yamaguchi</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 8, 1977</td>
<td>20h30</td>
<td>La culture en Amérique Latine dans le contexte socio-politique actuel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20h30</td>
<td></td>
<td>Culture in Latin American in the Current Socio-Political Context</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 12, 1977 17h</td>
<td>Performance mettant en scène et en question l'art comme marchandise / Performance Putting into Question Art as Merchandise</td>
<td>Jorge Glusberg focused on the theme of the exhibition: the interaction between specific socio-political themes and international aesthetic languages. Two different bulletins were produced for this event with two different texts by Glusberg (one reprinted from <em>artTitudes</em>, no. 30/32, May 1976). Both attempt to distinguish Latin American conceptual artworks primarily through their radical engagement with specific social and political realities of their sites.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 12, 1977 17h</td>
<td>Balbino Giner</td>
<td>Giner carried out a performance in which, according to the artist's text, he sought to connect painting with a larger and more dynamic context than the specialized realm that usually frames painting. He writes, &quot;c'est-à-dire, dans une vision/réception plus globale faisant appel à des référents autres que la connaissance picturale&quot; (&quot;in other words, within a larger vision/reception calling on referents other than pictorial knowledge&quot;). His goal was to see art (he speaks mostly of painting) outside of a path dictated by the power of specialized knowledge and the economy. While not describing the specific performance, he mentions throwing white and black paint onto a blank page in a process of making and obscuring marks until to creates a gray color, of which he writes, &quot;Gris, voleur des forces libidinales [...] médiatise la forme de l'information&quot; (&quot;Gray, thief of libidinal forces, broadcasts the form of information&quot;).</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 23, 1977</td>
<td>Culture, Etat, Promotion (situations conflictuelles) / Culture, State, Promotion (contentious situations)</td>
<td>Restany, citing the example of the recently opened Beaubourg, decries the state's &quot;cultural investment.&quot; Critical of the state's embrace and promotion of contemporary art, seen as a means to wrest political, economic, and social power, Restany (and many others) interrogates the connects between</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 24, 1977</td>
<td>20h30</td>
<td>Les relations internationales de l'Etart d'Ambilly / International Relations of the Etart of Ambilly</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 23, 1977</td>
<td>17h30</td>
<td>Le voyage / The Trip</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 25, 1977</td>
<td>20h30</td>
<td>Vol dans un nid de coucou / Flight from a Cookcoo's Nest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Title</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 27, 1977 20h30</td>
<td>Dedans - Dehors / Inside - Outside</td>
<td>Composer and pianist later digital artist, Gherban presented an &quot;Intervention sonore&quot; (&quot;Acoustic Intervention&quot;). On the back of the bulletin, he drew a simple diagram indicated locations around ESI, such as Père Lachaise cemetery and various roads. The only other text on the bulletin states, &quot;On ne peut s'exprimer, faire de la musique, qu'en se coupant de la réalité...tel est ce qu'on veut nous faire croire&quot; (&quot;One can only express one's self, make music, in cutting one's self off from reality...this is what one would have us believe&quot;). One can surmise that Gherban's acoustic composition drew on sounds recorded at these sites, thus forming a sort of aural landscape of the surrounding area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 12, 1977 20h30</td>
<td>Art et transformation sociale / Art and Social Transformation</td>
<td>The event description states simply that invited artists and theorists from different countries (Canada, Poland, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, etc.) will discuss their ideas and practices in relationship to their diverse contexts. No names or documentation of who attended exists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 17, 1977 20h30</td>
<td>Autogestion et architecture / Self-management and Architecture</td>
<td>Ragon wrote the descriptive text for this course, and it draws on many of the ideas presented in his book <em>L'architecte, le prince, et la democratie</em> (The Architect, the Prince, and the Democracy), which has just recently been published. He proposes a change in architecture, which has previously been planned and erected according to the tastes of the architect and those in power funding the project rather than those who would be using the building. He describes the emergence of a &quot;mouvement de participation et d'autogestion architecturale&quot; (&quot;movement of participation and architectural self-management&quot;), in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
other words the creation of neighborhood committees and development teams that include neighborhood inhabitants and future users of the building. Gaudibert and Virilio discuss this shift toward a more participatory model of the built urban environment and connect it to their fields of curatorial work and philosophy.

Non-specified

L'Idée de centres de réflexion urbaine / The Idea of Centers of Urban Reflection
Ariel Ginzburg

June 7, 1977
20h30

Sociox (Bouillon de culture) / Sociox (Broth of Culture)
Cirque Divers of Liège

October 5, 1977

Le travail collectif des groupes d'artistes mexicains / Collective Work of Mexican Artist Groups

October 12, 1977

Circuits parallèles dans la vie culturelle brésilienne / Parallel Circuits in Brazilian Cultural Life

November 9, 1977
20h

Les participants à l'école / The Participants at School
A meeting dedicated to the school's existence to ultimately seek new funding solutions.

November 16, 1977
20h

Contre-Sociologie / Against-Sociology
René Lourau, with the following sociologists Michel Authier, Gérard Althabe, Laurence Gavarini, Professor of Sociology at Vincennes, Lourau invites seven other sociologists to participate in event entitled "Against-Sociology." While there is no accompanying text or documentation, one could surmise that the discussion circled around the field's collusion with
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 30,</td>
<td>20h</td>
<td>Le manifeste differentialiste / The Differentialist Manifesto</td>
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<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td></td>
<td>Henri Lefebvre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 29,</td>
<td>20h30</td>
<td>Anna Banana et Bill Gaglione / Anna Banana and Bill Gaglione</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td></td>
<td>Two California-based, &quot;neo-dada&quot; artists (&quot;this tendency is alive in North America&quot;) present their recent work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 29,</td>
<td>20h</td>
<td>Court métrage semi-documentaire / Short Semi-Documentary Footage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td></td>
<td>RECONTRE DEBATE PROJECTION AVEC DES REALISATEURS DE LA FILM KLASSE DE L'ACADEMIE DE DUSSELDORF/ Meeting Debate Projection with the Filmmakers of the Film Class at the Düsseldorf Academy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ the government and capitalism and debated methods or topics to resist such implications (ideas that Lourau pursued in his 1977 publication *Le gai savoir des sociologues*). Lourau's early work on pedagogy (*L'illusion pédagogique*, 1970) and on the function of institutions (*L'analyse institutionnelle*, 1970, and *Analyses institutionelle et éducation*, 1971) was fundamental to the Collective's conception of its formation and practice.

+ Lefebvre selected his "Differentialist Manifesto" (1970) as the text to introduce his presentation at ESI. The manifesto calls for resistance to the capitalist production methods and values, which Lefebvre argues lead to a homogeneity and control. Over such technocratic and normalizing measures, he seeks to valorize human creativity and everyday life.

+ Described as a "meeting, debate, projection," this event followed a week-long residency by Germany filmmakers from Düsseldorf at the Sorbonne. The even bulletin describes a presentation of the Düsseldorf filmmakers' work and a group discussion about the intersection of cinema and sociological art practice. Whereas the Collective had used video, photography, and mass media, it had not yet employed cinema in part due to cost and access but also on account of the "inévitável esthétique cinematographique" ("inevitable cinematographic aesthetic").
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 6, 1978 20h30</td>
<td>Jordaaners, Maak uw krant / Hervé Fischer and Alain Snyers</td>
<td>A summary presentation of Fischer and Snyer's collaborative media project carried out in Amsterdam in September and October 1978. They worked with residents of a neighborhood to set up a weekly intervention in the weekly newspaper <em>Het Parool</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 12, 1978 20h30</td>
<td>La Territoire du metre carré artistique / The Territory of the Artistic Square Meter Fred Forest</td>
<td>Forest introduces his ongoing artistic project: the creation of a collaborative &quot;Territory&quot; 50km north of Paris. It consists of a large farm house, stable, and garden, which Forest refashioned as the seat of an autonomous state within France. Individuals can acquire a parcel of land (one meter square in area) and use the space for interventions, activities, and to connect with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 19, 1978 20h30</td>
<td>Art et socio-analyse / Art and Social Analysis</td>
<td>An event bringing together artists, psychoanalysts, and sociologists to discuss the function of art in society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 17, 1980 19h</td>
<td>Historique de l'Art sociologique et nouvelles perspectives théoriques / History of Sociological Art and New Theoretical Perspectives Fred Forest, Jean-Paul Thenot +</td>
<td>Organized by Forest and Thenot, this last session printed on the letterhead but taking place at another location (possibly Restany's home) proposes a look back at sociological art. It lists the names of 34 artists, critics, and practitioners that had shown &quot;à un moment ou à un autre, un engagement ou un intérêt affirmé pour l'art sociologique&quot; (&quot;at one moment or another, an engagement on a confirmed interest for sociological art&quot;).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No date</td>
<td>Les animateurs de la Revue Autogestion et Socialisme / The Animators of the Review Autogestion and Socialism -</td>
<td>Listed in <em>Cahiers de l'ESI</em>, no. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No date</td>
<td>Le groupe Untel / The Group Untel</td>
<td>Listed in <em>Cahiers de l'ESI</em>, no. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Listed in Cahiers de l'ESI, no. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>No date</td>
<td>Photographie du quotidien / Photography of the Everyday Didier Bay</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>No date</td>
<td>L'Anti-publicité / Anti-Publicity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Organized by Abraham Moles with Bernard Cathelat, Heude Delafon, Philippe Gavi, André Maisonneuve, Denis Quenard, Bernard Truchot, and Georges Renouard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BOOKS


ARTICLES AND JOURNALS


Burton, Johanna and Lisa Pasquariello. “‘Ask Somebody Else Something Else’: Analyzing the Artist Interview.” *Art Journal* 64, no. 3 (Fall 2005).

*Cahier de l’Ecole sociologique interrogative*, no. 1 (March 1980).


Fraser, Nancy. “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy.” *Social Text*, no. 25/26 (1990): 56-80.


*Videosociology* 1, n. 1 (May 1972).


**DISSERTATIONS**


