Abstract
This article considers the changing definitions of curatorial labour in the light of affective economies of care and love. It examines how recent conceptions of curating shift emphasis from caring for objects and collections to producing and managing social networks, collective energies and professional relationships. While curators prioritize their care for artworks and artists, they often overlook the low-status and infrastructural activities that sustain curatorial production. At the same time, by over-identifying with their work, and instrumentalizing their personal relationships and energies, curators risk self-exploitation and burn-out. By recognizing curating's inter-dependent nature, this article prompts a redefinition of curatorial care and calls for a reallocation of curatorial and institutional priorities and resources.

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Over the past decade, as government-funding cuts in neo-liberal regimes have increased following the global financial crisis, curators have become preoccupied by the question of where support for their work and projects comes from. In this context, curators' efforts to secure private, versus public, support have contributed to a redefinition of curatorial care in which the affective labour of human contact and interaction have displaced conventional curatorial responsibilities of conservation and scholarship. On the one hand, curators often prioritize their care for artists and artworks in ways that increase their own prestige, while ignoring their dependence on other activities across the production cycle. On the other hand, recent endeavours – ranging from curatorial research projects to

museum group exhibitions and artists' initiatives – have emerged that shift attention from the gallery's mise-en-scène to the labour and infrastructure that happen out of view. Drawing on feminist social reproduction theory, and underlining the precarity that is central to immaterial labour, I ask how curators and institutions can better acknowledge the myriad activities that sustain their production, while also contesting the exploitation of their own and other people's supportive labour?

Curating and Caring

Discussions of curatorial labour regularly emphasize the link between curating and care, and the etymological roots of 'curating' in the Latin word curare for caring. Boris Groys (2009) goes as far as to suggest that artworks are sick, and that they need curators to cure them, and to give them public vitality and visibility. In many instances where curators assert the importance of care to their practice, both the nature and the object of curatorial care remain ambiguous. At the same time, the idea that curators preside 'over' something implies 'an inherent relationship between care and control', as Kate Fowle has noted (2007: 10). In the post-1960s period characterized by the rise of the independent curator, the associations of curatorial work with artworks' acquisition, conservation and scholarship expanded to include the affective labours involved with communication, liaison and social networking. Curators regularly mobilize their personal charm as a distinctly affective power, to attract artists and venues, motivate community collaborators, appeal to donors or enlist reviewers.1 In the hyper-politicized context of today's art world, where curators and institutional directors are subject to the changing agendas and priorities of state and local politicians, institutional boards, and private and corporate funders, deploying affective labour in order to maintain social relations is a key curatorial skill. Conversely, the requirement that such care be extended to cultural colleagues receives little priority. The regular supply of people who enter the art profession for low or no pay, as so much surplus labour, exacerbates the disparity between who is and is not cared for.

Expending affective resources is central to immaterial labour, which depends on providing services, information and communication to produce and modify feelings,

including those that Michael Hardt lists as 'ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement, passion – even a sense of connectedness or community' (1999: 91, 96). Acting as intermediaries within a relational network, immaterial labourers demonstrate what Maurizio Lazzarato calls their 'capacity to activate and manage productive cooperation' (1996: 134). Identifying with their work as a lifestyle rather than a job, and investing it with their full social and subjective resources, these self-motivated workers manage and promote their own human capital.

In many respects curators are textbook examples of immaterial labourers, from the affective resources they expend when producing and maintaining feelings and relationships to the flexible ways in which they often deliver just-in-time projects in temporary teams working on shortterm contracts (Reckitt 2013). Curators of contemporary art are especially susceptible to the hyper-exploitation that Lazzarato (1996) considers to be inherent to immaterial labour, given that emerging artists and practices they work with require them to advocate for their value. The volatility of the contemporary curator's position thus differs from that of traditional museum curators who accrue specialist knowledge of particular movements, genres or periods.

Identifying with their work as a lifestyle, rather than a job, curators regularly expend the sacrificial labour usually associated with artistic work (Berardi 2009). This includes adopting schedules that blur the boundaries between personal and professional time, and accepting nomadic and irregular employment conditions. Curators' surplus affective labour reflects their 'love' for their work, which they regularly carry out for minimal or even no pay. A recent survey documented the underpaid and precarious nature of UK arts employment: 88 per cent of respondents claimed they had worked for no pay while 38 per cent reported currently working without a contract. Female respondents reported higher levels of unpaid work than men, and, when they were paid, receiving lower wages. The survey had class implications for the sector, too: most respondents claimed that without their families' financial support they could not afford to work in the arts (Create London 2015). In return, curators expect to find fulfilment and self-expression, to see their work as part of an ongoing 'practice' in a manner akin to that of artists. Exploring

what someone means when they say that they 'love' an exhibition, Boris Buden suggests how the shift from artworks to curators has evolved:

> [L]ibido has detached itself from its 'original' objects, artists and their works, and is now floating freely throughout the art world making it possible for every object within it to be loaded with this affect. So it can be attached to the work of the curator.
> (Buden 2012: 39)

Beyond being conduits for the art-going public's 'love', curators now attract some of the affects formerly directed at artists: from admiration and envy to irritation and distaste.

Meanwhile, curators routinely emphasize their affection for the artists that they work with, often collaborating successively with the same artists, their two careers and reputations rising in tandem. Many curators and institutions seem reluctant to undertake themed group shows, favouring monographic exhibitions that allow them to mobilize the cachet of the artist's brand to attract audiences and funders. Hans Ulrich Obrist (2014), who describes himself as an enabler who allows artists to realize their visions, has cautioned against curatorial formats becoming so dominant that the exhibition appears as 'the work of the curator rather than of the artists'. The programme that Obrist directs at London's Serpentine Gallery, which revolves around solo shows and includes little by way of interpretive materials or scholarly publishing, illustrates his theory that curators should get out of the artist's way so that their art can speak for itself. Similarly, when discussing his role running the Artist's Institute in New York, Anthony Huberman underscores the curator's proximity to art and artists, and the need for art to communicate without unnecessary curatorial mediation or the invention of 'curatorial methods for their own sake' (2011: 13). Reversing conventional ideas of curatorial hospitality, he describes the curator as the artist's guest who, like any good visitor, should say 'thank you' (2011: 12–13). Huberman rejects curating's didactic role, aligning himself with traits of intuition associated with artists, and with homage associated with fans, over traditional curatorial activities of scholarship and classification.

While curators gain in the affective power of prestige through their oft-stated closeness to art and artists, other gallery staff, such as educators, accrue lower institutional status due to their primary contact with nonspecialist members of the public (Mörsch 2011) and their association with reproduction rather than production (Sternfeld 2010). A reverse process occurs when artists who adopt pedagogical formats for their work often increase their visibility and reputation as a result. Educational projects can also accrue status when they are reframed as artworks. When the Serpentine rebranded its socially-engaged outreach programmes as 'artist commissions', these initiatives gained in prestige and profile, reflecting a value system reliant on what Janna Graham calls 'a market logic of authorship, genius and making a good (even better if saleable) work' (2012: 199). As these examples indicate, while the expenditure of affective labour produces states of feeling across the cultural field, the results of these emotional investments reflect the uneven status and power associated with different roles and relationships.

Uncaring Curating and Curatorial Control
In contrast to the love and care for artists and artworks that curators often emphasize, the emergence of the independent curator in the 1960s, epitomized by such figures as Harald Szeemann and Walter Hopps, prompted concern that curators were dominating art and artists and did not care about them *enough.* The turn towards more conceptually oriented and experimental curating that Bruce Altshuler associates with the rise of the curator as creator (1998: 236), prompted criticism from artists and critics that curators had abandoned their responsibilities for objects and collections and were subsuming artists under their own names and frameworks: that is, acting as artists whose medium was other artists, as Peter Plagens (1969) accused Lucy Lippard.

Tensions about the curator's increased power and authorial antics came to a head in responses to Szeemann's curatorial projects, as commentators including Beatrice von Bismarck (2011) and Dorothee Richter (2013) have highlighted. While Szeemann advised emerging curators to heed curating's etymological roots in caring (Fowle 2007), during his global emergence artists included in his projects questioned the nature of his

care. The catalogue for Szeemann's Documenta 5 (1972) included essays by two artists in the exhibition, Daniel Buren and Robert Smithson, protesting Szeemann's dominance and asserting their rights to control how their work was exhibited.

Conflicts over curatorial control and its implications for affective economiesof love and care coalesce in current debates about the curator's role and identity. Amongst recent critiques of curating, Anton Vidokle's 'Art Without Artists' (2010) stands out for baldly asserting an artist's disdain for curators' arrogance, ignorance and irrelevance. Curators themselves have recently expressed ambivalence about describing themselves as curators. Jens Hoffmann is one such figure, a revealing development given his many efforts to locate his practice within exhibition history, including establishing a journal of exhibition making – *The Exhibitionist* – and staging a response to Szeemann's *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form*: *Works-Processes-Concepts-Situations-Information* in 2012. In a frank conversation with curator Maria Lind, Hoffmann complains that curating has become diluted: 'The moment curating got disconnected from exhibition making, at least partially, it was a free-for-all,' he says, blaming Lind, in part, for 'the sorts of speculations that you are doing with curating' that make him reluctant to call himself a curator any more. Although he does not spell out what it is about Lind's work that troubles him ('I have seen several of the projects that you mention,' he says dismissively, 'and none of them felt to me like an exhibition'), it is presumably Lind's articulation of 'the curatorial' that Hoffmann objects to (Hoffmann and Lind 2011). Previously, Lind had defined the curatorial as a range of relational and infrastructural activities that respond to 'specific contexts, times and questions', as 'a way of thinking in terms of interconnections: linking objects, images, processes, people, locations, histories and discourses in physical space like an active catalyst, generating twists, turns and tensions' (2010: 63). Lind does not limit her expanded conception of curating either to the gallery or the curator.

Hoffmann, who currently refers to himself as an exhibition maker − one of Szeemann's chosen monikers − is not the only high-profile curator of late to disavow the job title, a trend that suggests that the recent ubiquity of the term 'curator' has reduced its specificity

and, consequently, its prestige. Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev (2015) described her role for the 2015 Istanbul Biennial as a 'drafter', professing discomfort with curating's sinister associations with selection and exclusion. Like Obrist and Huberman, Christov-Bakargiev identifies strongly with the artists with whom she works and expresses loyalty to former collaborators. Her Istanbul Biennial featured numerous artists who had participated in her previous major effort, dOCUMENTA (13), prompting Jason Farago (2015) to wonder if some artists were 'suffering from biennial fatigue', while her strong curatorial signature led him to suggest that 'the real star of the show [was] the curator herself'.

That curators' identification with caring corresponds with their increased power and visibility demonstrates how associations with feminized traits can enhance, rather than diminish, a curator's reputation. But, as the example of the status of curatorial versus gallery education work reflects, where that care is directed has very different results in terms of prestige. At the same time, the curatorial emphasis on the positive, supportive, 'loving' affects of care suppresses curating's more discriminating, controlling and exclusionary procedures (see Fowle 2007 and Buden 2012).

Friends of the Gallery

While corporate and private arts patronage is not a new development, its importance for public arts organizations has increased in the light of recent funding cuts, and in the United Kingdom a move away from the Welfare State, putting added pressure on curators and institutional directors to make corporate sponsors and private donors feel included and befriended. In the United Kingdom, for instance, between 2009 and 2014 arts funding fell by 22 index points (National Campaign for the Arts 2014). While the UK government rewards arts organizations that demonstrate 'entrepreneurialism' in attracting private finance, it penalizes those often small and regional institutions that do not. The situation is exacerbated for institutions in regions where private philanthropy is scarce, and where local councils struggling to balance their budgets treat them as soft targets for cuts. Although models differ from country to country, arts organizations globally increasingly rely on private sponsors and philanthropists in a manner long familiar to US

institutions, albeit largely without the tax breaks for charitable donations that the US system facilitates. This dependency on private support challenges the conceptualization of the public realm and the public institution. After all, wealthy individuals founded US museums and private trustees administer them, whereas in Western Europe museums emerged as a result of wealth transferring from private, church and aristocratic hands to the public sector.

Philanthropists and collectors increasingly join arts organizational boards and acquisitions and programming committees. There they can influence collection and exhibition strategies while also gaining information about upcoming plans that can further their own collecting activities. As the Guerrilla Girl known as 'Frida Kahlo' remarks: 'In any other industry, they could go to jail for that kind of insider trading' (Guerrilla Girls 2008). The recently appointed director for the Hirschhorn Museum in Washington DC, Melissa Chiu, was criticized in the press for hiring a part-time curator who also curated for the commercial fair Art Basel (Capps 2015). But, in general, close associations with the private sector are considered prerequisites for facilitating relationships with the commercial galleries, collectors and foundations who often underwrite major art projects, and who benefit when the value of the artists or works they represent or collect subsequently increases (Harris and Shaw 2015).

Compared with the invisibility of much art world labour, private and corporate sponsors' names appear prominently in public institutions: on gallery walls, publications and in fawning opening speeches. Even established public museums change names to honour their generous benefactors. Gallery display titles now often document when works 'entered the collection', in a personalization of the collecting process and lineages of provenance, and a glorification of collectors' taste and munificence. When Tate Britain's new hang of British Art opened in 2013 the sponsor's name, British Petroleum (BP), dominated gallery signage. Visiting the exhibition, arts education specialist Bridget McKenzie (2013) compared BP's domineering presence to the paucity of contextual and interpretive information available about the exhibited artworks. The implication that Tate was 'a place of escape from having to think about the world and from the worst of the

news' struck McKenzie as especially problematic, given BP's perpetuation of environmental damage and global inequities.2

Cash-strapped institutions fear alienating potential patrons. At a recent Frieze Art Fair discussion on high property costs' impact on London artists, Katharine Stout, Head of Programme at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, which co-organized the talk, defended non-resident property investors for their generous arts patronage (Shaw 2015). Meanwhile, with numerous collectors opening private foundations and museums, competition for their support amongst non-profits is intense. Curators, fundraisers and institutional directors put their affective resources of affability and companionship, persuasiveness and vision to work as they befriend wealthy individuals and business contacts. The language of the 'friend of the gallery' also dominates membership and fundraising schemes. This internalization of market logic echoes the neoliberal demand that people devise individual solutions to collective problems by monetizing personal resources, including homes (Airbnb), cars (Uber), relationships (Facebook) and contacts (LinkedIn).

Some arts workers argue that securing private finance is less onerous, and the results more enlightened, than obtaining public funds: requiring less red tape, box-ticking, reporting and monitoring (Gordon- Nesbitt 2011). Grant writing is certainly physically demanding. It also often asks applicants to demonstrate affective bonds with individuals, groups and institutions with whom they can maximize resources and exposure. But, to me, the more clear, legally binding and temporally fixed nature of public grants makes their acquisition much less affectively demanding than that required to secure private investment.

To network benefactors into art world social scenes, and to generate earned income, museums now double as event and entertainment spaces. New museum buildings typically include vast atria and auditoria in which to host large-scale gatherings. Lane Relyea asserts that today's digitally networked world means not a diminution but a 'greater emphasis on individual "human capital" and its embodied, improvised

performances', with subjectivity more thoroughly put to work than ever (2013: 4). In galleries' and biennials' panoptic environments, patrons can be seen to be part of a scene, mixing with well-connected curators and celebrated artists while rubbing shoulders with other members of social and business elites.

Private Patronage at *The Power/Color Ball*

An exhibition by Scott Lyall at The Power Plant, a non-profit gallery in Toronto, presents a compelling case study of private patronage's pervasive influence on curatorial and artistic production. I was part of the curatorial team during its development and realization and my autoethnographic account draws on my memory of that process.3 Despite Canada's reputation for strong public arts funding, non-collecting institutions such as The Power Plant rely increasingly on private and corporate donations and earned income. The institution's long-running annual fundraiser, Power Ball, transformed the galleries into party-friendly art installations and performances. While the gallery distributed some free tickets to local artists each year, at $160 per head they were beyond most artists' financial means. Business people were the party's largest constituency. In 2010, Jess Dobkin, attending on an artist's ticket, distributed business cards reading: 'Power Ball: Blow Jobs by Jess Dobkin. A performance where sexual exchanges are exchanged for money. www.jessdobkin.com. $100. Where the artist performs sexual favours.' Dobkin's furtive entrepreneurial act suggested that it was not just the gallery that needed an injection of private finance.4

Lyall derived his installation's name, *The Power/Color Ball* (2008), from the party's title, with the words 'Power' and 'Color' superimposed, creating a phrase that was difficult to print and impossible to say. Entering his exhibition, visitors felt like they had arrived at a party that had either not yet begun or was already over. Spotlights roamed the large gallery, creating a spooky, unsettling atmosphere. Amid generic art-like objects (crumpled striped prints, triangularly-arranged styrofoam and MDF floor pieces), Lyall placed shrink-wrapped catering supplies rented from Exclusive Affairs, table linens, liquor bottles, a floral wreath, a plastic owl and a VIP sign. The exhibition title underscored this unstable ambience. By overlaying 'Power' and 'Color', Lyall seemed to

ask if the art organization's 'power' had been usurped by its provision of 'color' in gala events, the American spelling of 'color' underscoring the implication that the institution had adopted US-style reliance on private finance. Suggesting the incommensurability of the terms and the difficulty of keeping them in tension, the title was the kind of antagonistic gesture that Shannon Jackson (2011) argues exposes the precariousness of socially defined roles.

A group of female arts patrons called Partners in Arts (PIA) sponsored *The Power/Color Ball*. PIA takes a hands-on approach to philanthropy, each year choosing an arts organization to work with and a project to support. Positioning themselves as 'partners' was a response to their earlier experience as a women's support group at the Art Gallery of Ontario, where they had been assigned limited roles (including, it was said, volunteering in the gift shop). PIA's attitude recognizes that philanthropy is a form of 'subsidizing activity' rather than 'buying product', in Relyea's terms, and that 'the assets being acquired are not just material but also immaterial and social' (2013: 16). PIA's stance thus signified a desire for a more creative, collaborative and less negatively feminized relationship with arts organizations than that which they had previously experienced.

Lyall's role encompassed several tasks that might be considered 'curatorial', and which underscored the curatorial nature of much current artistic labour, as well as vice versa. Beyond devising his installation's mise-en-scène, he commissioned the production of sculptural objects and a lighting design; coordinated adaptations to the gallery; ordered catering equipment; wrote gallery text; and invited another artist to make a performance. The exhibition's curator, The Power Plant's Director, Gregory Burke, worked with Lyall on the exhibition and catalogue's conceptualization, and took the lead in managing relations with PIA. Just as Lazzarato stresses the central role of communication within immaterial labour, describing how, even in heavy industry, 'prior to being manufactured, a product must be sold' (1996: 140), Burke managed sponsor relationships before work on Lyall's exhibition could begin and while it was underway.

PIA funded the commission by selling tickets for a cocktail party called Artrageous, at which a multiple by Lyall – a glass ball filled with pigmented bath salts – was demonstrated by 'the most "artrageous" gesture of all, a bathing woman' (Partners in Art 2008). The multiple's name reiterated Lyall's disdain for the pronounced conviviality implied by these group antics: it was called seul/alone (although an accompanying text noted that it came in five colours and could be exhibited individually or in groups).5 Thus, from its inception, Lyall's exhibition was imbricated in instrumentalized socializing and feminized patronage, a dependent state that it simultaneously performed, reflected on and, to some extent, resisted.

Lyall's reluctance to turn his exhibition into a social arena was thrown into relief during the exhibition's final weekend, when Ei Arakawa created a performance within his installation. Compared to *The Power/Color Ball*'s restraint, Arakawa's performance felt exuberant and unruly. Finally, this party had started. Volunteers unpacked catering equipment, serving warm, bright blue cocktails and balancing furniture into precarious towers. Film scenes selected by eight of Lyall's friends from outside Canada were projected onto a temporary screen. By linking the exhibition to artists and art scenes outside Toronto, Arakawa underscored Lyall's reluctance to infuse the installation with his living labour. While the financial and institutional support for his exhibition was local, Arakawa suggested that Lyall drew his emotional and creative sustenance from 'elsewhere'.

The week that Lyall's show opened, the US financial services firm Lehman Brothers declared bankruptcy, sending shockwaves through the global economy. The financial crisis had come to a head. The ambivalence of Lyall's superimposition of terms in *The Power/Color Ball* took on new dimensions as many of the Power Plant's private supporters reported their investments' overnight reduction. Maybe, as *The Power/Color Ball* hinted, the non-profit art sector's reliance on private funds was a thing of the past. The party was really over, and the work required to secure philanthropic support for cultural projects threatened to become more affectively demanding than ever.

From Gallery to Behind-the-Scenes

Over the past decade, practices of care and support have inspired several curatorial projects, ranging from long-term research inquiries to artist-led endeavours and museum surveys. In imagining possible futures, these initiatives often revisit earlier collective projects: from nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century feminist experiments in communal living to Dada, Fluxus and feminist explorations of hospitality and conviviality.6 The ecological challenge of how to sustain multiple life forms motivates the *Ensayos* ('Essays') curatorial initiative, which has hosted residencies with artists and scientists in Karukinka Park in Tierra del Fuego, Chile since 2011. The concern with survival and sustainability informing these projects recalls Jill H. Casid's (2011) observation that, in addition to its associations with curing, caring also has etymological roots in 'Germanic and Old English caru for trouble and grief, as well as the Old Norse kör for "bed of trouble"'. These projects reflect the anxiety that is built into curatorial care.

Concern with the conditions under which cultural production occurs inspired the long-term artistic collaboration between Céline Condorelli and Gavin Wade, *Support Structure* (2003–09), which foregrounded the architectural and design structures and social and infrastructural systems whose importance the art world typically disavows (see Condorelli and Wade 2009). Growing out of this research, in 2008 Condorelli and Wade formed a collective with Simon and Tom Bloor, Ruth Claxton and James Langdon to found the non-profit gallery Eastside Projects in Birmingham. Considering design, organizational structures and architecture integrally linked, and rejecting the idea of the gallery as a neutral container, the founders devised a programme based on principles of 'upcycling, rethinking, adapting and working within and around' (Wade 2013). They announced their interest in the political and aesthetic implications of sustainability in their opening exhibition, which quoted from Peter Nagin Gallery's 1979 statement: 'We have joined together to execute functional constructions and to alter or refurbish existing structures as a means of surviving in a capitalist society' (Wade 2013). In a cumulative process that resonates with Nora Sternfeld's (2010) account of the reflexive turn in curating, subsequent gallery projects have responded to, built on, and made visible earlier interventions. Eastside reports on its programme in an online manual, which they

regularly update, overlaying previous drafts in a demonstration of their upcycling ethos.7

In 2014, Condorelli turned her attention to friendship, an aspect of intimate support that she felt she and Wade had overlooked. Her exhibition, *The Company She Keeps* (2014), featured semi-functional works dedicated to women whose friendship had sustained her. For the exhibition's Milan iteration at the Pirelli-owned art foundation, HangarBicocca, Condorelli made two works that referenced the corporation's activities: one responding to materials in their archive about the history of rubber production, another made out of tires with some of the factory workers who manufactured them, and whose names she listed on the wall.

Efforts by Condorelli, Wade and Eastside Projects to acknowledge background cultural labour and activity are rare. Generally, the art world operates on the principle that the work involved in mounting cultural projects should be obscured in order to let the work of art shine. In his 1982 study of art's inter-dependent nature, sociologist Howard S. Becker contested the notion that artists work independently, asserting that works of art result from collective efforts. He urged the art world to look to film credits as a format that better recognized the myriad activities that comprise cultural production. In addition to art supply manufacturers, arts professionals and audiences, Becker listed earlier artists, critics and aestheticians as among those who construct the traditions that make contemporary art legible. Becker also noted the role played by the US tax system in incentivizing collectors to donate works to museums. While less overtly polemical, Becker's book anticipates Gregory Sholette's (2011) study of the 'dark matter' of exploited artistic labour, including that of failed and aspirational artists, without whose activities the system would collapse.

These efforts to foreground material and affective support resonate with feminist scholarship that challenges the rhetoric of artist geniuses and masterpieces to place emphasis on the discursive and collective contexts out of which art is produced (Pollock 1980; Battersby 1989). Also informed by feminist, as well as Marxist, perspectives, Carol Duncan's study of modern art museums' formation examines the ideological implications

of gallery display and architecture. Pointing to presentation strategies that isolate individual works and keep background distractions at bay, Duncan (1995) argues that these practices assert the image of the artist as solitary creator and the viewer as lone perceiver. Meanwhile, the numerous depictions of female bodies in artworks on view in these galleries reinforce the assumption that art's 'universal' creator and viewer alike are in fact male.

The art world's denial of supportive and emotional labour is highly gendered, given male artists' longstanding reliance on women – from wives and lovers, to models and muses, gallery owners, collectors and critics – for sustenance and inspiration. Lucy Lippard, writing in 1971, noted that 'It is far easier to be successful as a woman critic, curator or historian than as a woman artist, since these are secondary, or housekeeping activities, considered far more natural for women than the primary activity of making art' (quoted in Bryan-Wilson 2011: 164). A decade later the former art critic and feminist organizer Carla Lonzi rejected the supportive, complementary role expected of her as partner to a male artist. Her dialogic book, *Vai pure* ('Now You Can Go') (1980), documents her termination of her relationship with the sculptor Pietro Consagra, and her choice of autonomy over romantic love (Melandri 2010). By making public this account of her private life, Lonzi breaks the taboo by which unpaid 'labours of love' remain invisible.8 Curators who have internalized the idea that they must work selflessly in the service of culture might heed Lonzi's refusal to accept the superiority of 'art' over 'life', and her subsequent withdrawal of emotional labour.9

Performance theorist Shannon Jackson (2011) relates the art world's denial of support to modernist tenets of artistic autonomy and disinterested spectatorship. She asserts that the fiction of autonomy reflects widespread social disavowals of dependency on numerous activities and systems: from domestic, caring and maintenance labour to the state provisions of tax breaks, military pensions, public schools and such financial systems as offshore banking. Jackson's work resonates with feminist social reproduction theory that prioritizes life-giving and sustaining labours, from child and elder care to sex, education and the maintenance of interpersonal relations. Social reproduction theory attempts a

double movement: at once revaluing caring activities while also refuting their naturalization and exploitation as 'labours of love'.10 These insights are relevant for curators who are susceptible to performing what Brian Holmes (2001) calls the 'flexible personality' that neo-liberalism requires, and who often provide their free or under-remunerated labour to compensate for shortfalls in public funding. The danger is that curators' efforts provide the socially reproductive lubrication that maintains capitalist relations, inadvertently justifying and neutralizing government cutbacks and perpetuating the status quo.11 Meanwhile, many arts workers struggle to derive their livelihoods from the sector.

We Can't Live Without Our Lives: Curating and Social Reproduction
The need to examine the relationship of infrastructure to forms of dependency and precarity informed the 2015 curatorial project *Episode 7: We Can't Live Without Our Lives*, organized by the Edinburgh-based cultural group Arika. By supporting and sharing collective practices that centre on caretaking and social reproduction, Arika (2015) asked: 'If contemporary life leaves us feeling ill, exhausted and uncared for, how might we care for each other differently?' Through workshops, performances, film screenings, discussions and a radio show at The Tramway in Glasgow, the episode profiled radical communities of care.12 These included S.o Paolo's Ueinzz Theatre Company, whose members comprise former and current psychiatric patients and workers; La Borde psychiatric clinic in France, which is co-run by residents; and New York artist Park McArthur's informal Collective Care project, which comes out of her lived experience of disability. The phrase 'We can't live without our lives' derives from lines by Audre Lorde and the black feminist Combahee River Collective (De Veaux 2004: 224). Lorde's insistence that self-care is a revolutionary practice was a touchstone of Arika's episode. The lineage Arika traced to Lorde encompasses other black feminist perspectives, including those of Patricia Hills Collins and bell hooks, which reimagine social reproduction's realm as a radical homeplace in which to forge solidarities and replenish collective as well as personal resources (Barbagallo 2014).

Activities in Glasgow centred on embodiment and intimacy, which were characterized by

vulnerability and contingency rather than athleticism or prowess. A workshop led by Ueinzz included a group exercise based on falling and collapsing. The company's open rehearsals also foregrounded indeterminacy, as Arika (2016) explained:

> Ueinzz's performances could be seen as heightened moments with different energies in their being together. [T]he performance started a long time before the doors opened to the public and 'finished' a long time after those doors were shut. So it's more that the energy began to change.

The episode's foregrounding of debility alongside capacity resonates with Judith Halberstam's (2011) writing about refusing mastery in the guise of queer practices of failure. Artists Park McArthur and Constantina Zavitsanos read a text about care as infrastructure for an evening event they called *It's Sorta Like a Big Hug*. A video projection behind them showed a pyjama-clad McArthur being carried and lifted onto a bed by a group of people. Scenes of participants engaged in foot-rubbing, chatting and laughing also visualized caretaking's relational and somatic nature. Following their presentation, McArthur and Zavitsanos invited audience members to cross the legs of someone else in the auditorium, an exercise that raised issues of corporeal boundaries and consenting relations. Such images and actions opened a space for care to be practised on site and emerged from months of dialogue between the artists and the Arika organizers. McArthur contrasts the preparation for her visit with the typical curatorial care that goes into packing and transporting artworks, while the artist is somehow expected to transport herself (Ainley-Walker 2015). The proliferation of many languages during the event, including translations to and from Portuguese for Ueinzz and live subtitling and British Sign Language interpretation for presentations, reflected Arika's attention to participants' differing needs. When introducing sessions, Arika's curatorial team stressed the audience's shared responsibility for creating the episode's affect. The schedule included ample free time between activities in which participants could think, gather and rest. As workshop numbers were limited, sharing information about the different activities became a collective effort.

Arika's call for new practices of care and empathy with which to confront contemporary ills of exhaustion, sickness and self-neglect resonates with current thinking about the subjective and affective dimensions of precarity.13 The Institute of Precarious Consciousness (2014) diagnoses anxiety as neo-liberalism's dominant reactive affect and a widespread open secret. The authors argue that late capitalism provokes anxiety by insisting that individuals constantly perform and communicate under the gaze of virtual others. As the interaction and communication required by networked media are banal, preformatted, largely self-promotional and self-censoring, subjects feel alienated from their own social and expressive efforts. Yet people can afford neither to stop communicating nor to withdraw from visibility. As neo-liberalism reminds them, they are easily disposable and must constantly demonstrate their relevance as part of a network. In order to defeat or dissolve the dominant affect of anxiety, the Institute of Precarious Consciousness proposes the adoption of precarity-oriented consciousness-raising. By enabling participants to name their anxiety, and see it as symptomatic of wider social structures, consciousness-raising might engender more vital forms of communicating, socializing and sharing. The authors draw on affect thinking's conceptualization of potential, of the kind theorized by Patricia Clough as 'bodily capacities to affect and be affected or the augmentation or diminution of a body's capacity to act, to engage, and to connect, such that autoaffection is linked to the self-feeling of being alive – that is, aliveness or vitality' (2007: 2). By implementing consciousness-raising tactics, they suggest that participants might transform the 'blocked reactive' affects produced by networked capitalism into those of 'active' liberation.

As paradigmatic precarious workers, whose livelihoods depend on mobilizing relationships, curators could learn from Arika and the Institute of Precarious Consciousness's warnings about the ubiquity of instrumentalized sociability and communication at the expense of collective care. In the wake of public disinvestment from the arts, numerous curators in the United Kingdom have talked to me about how the institutions they work for try to 'save face' by reducing budgets for activities, such as wages for support staff and gallery technicians, which they think will attract minimal public attention. Interns, volunteers, part-time and temporary workers replace permanent

employees, putting remaining workers under increased pressure. Meanwhile, in efforts to maintain the institution's public image, more visible activities like exhibitions and public events continue as if little had changed. As the Institute for Precarious Consciousness argues, under neo-liberalism '[i]mage management means that the gap between the official rules and what really happens is greater than ever' (2014: 5). Describing the prevalence of face-saving tactics in galleries as 'smoke and mirrors', one curator recently confided: 'If my exhibitions reflected the parlous state of our finances, I'd never get hired again'. After all, reputations are vital commodities, not least for immaterial labourers and volatile arts institutions seeking to impress potential audiences and supporters.

Various current efforts by cultural activists aim to counter these exploitative work conditions. In the United Kingdom, these range from collective endeavours such as the Precarious Workers Brigade's campaign against unpaid arts internships, to such individual projects as 'The Invisible Spaces of Parenthood', in which artist Andrea Francke creates temporary childcare centres in art schools. In the United States, since 2008 Working Artists and the Greater Economy (WAGE) has mobilized to regulate the artist fees paid by non-profit arts organizations. They issue a certificate for non-profits that follow models of best practice, and have also agitated for related demands such as compensation for digital artworks and resale artists' rights from secondary market sales. WAGE operates in a tactical, infrastructural manner. When invited to take part in the 2010 show Free at the New Museum in New York, WAGE negotiated fees for participating artists, rather than making artwork to be displayed in the exhibition itself. WAGE's certification programme grew out of a talks series they organized at Artists Space in New York, where one of its founders, Lise Soskolne, was a grant writer. Familiar with Artists Space's funding and budgets, Soskolne (2015) was thus ideally placed to research behind-the-scenes non-profit activity.

In 2014, growing out of their work on the *Grand Domestic Revolution* and their collaborative relationship with migrant domestic workers, on the occasion of their move to a former convent in 2014, the non-profit art space Casco initiated the project exhibition *New Habits*, which included a collaboration with the artist Annette Krauss, *Site for*

Unlearning: Art Organization. In an effort to unlearn ingrained institutional behaviour so that the organisation's public 'front', which was committed to practices of commoning as an alternative to capitalism, was reflected in its 'back', Krauss and the Casco team drew inspiration from Mierle Laderman Ukeles's 1969 *Manifesto for Maintenance Art* to reflect not just on who handles maintenance labour, but what this labour constitutes.14 Challenging art institutions' emphasis on 'busyness', and the concurrent low status that they give to maintenance tasks, they initiated weekly collective cleaning sessions and regular unlearning exercises through which they sought to expand their understanding of reproductive activities as part of a caring network.15 At once campaigning and performative, these projects expose institutional conditions that typically remain hidden or under-examined. The gallery educator and activist Janna Graham (2015) characterizes embedded forms of cultural activism like this as 'parasitic'. Such approaches carry risks, as Graham recognizes. Working 'para (ie alongside), within, and as other' to mainstream institutions, they have the potential to exist 'in benign silence, to multiply or to irritate, to usurp resources or to completely take over its host, or to have the latter do the same'. Growing out of practitioners' everyday experiences, and responding to the conditions within which they operate, these undertakings are inherently unstable and relational.

Initiatives like *We Can't Live Without Our Lives*, WAGE and *New Habits* shift attention away from art as something that is exhibited to reflect on the circumstances under which its production occurs. These projects also foreground the importance of rethinking and reallocating cultural and institutional resources. This reorientation is necessary, given how adept arts institutions are at presenting challenging content while remaining impervious to that work's political and affective implications. The curator Marion von Osten comments on the difficulties she experienced in translating the radical politics that inform exhibitions into more lasting institutional change. Of her work in Austria in the 1990s, developing project exhibitions informed by feminist, postcolonial and queer concerns, von Osten writes: 'These heated conflicts found entrance into art theory and the work of artists, but ultimately failed to bring about any decisive changes in the institutional framework conditions' (2011: 59).

Arts organizations regularly commission artworks and present exhibitions that celebrate alternative forms of collaboration and collectivity. Yet, as Andrea Phillips (2015) argues, by funding these initiatives through private patronage and promoting them as traditional examples of authorship 'through and as an individuated core', institutions fail to take on board the challenge posed by their own programmes. Phillips identifies the fault lines that ran through the 2013–16 collaboration *How to Work Together*, which was developed by three small non-profit London art galleries: Chisenhale, The Showroom and Studio Voltaire. While initiated on the premise of sharing institutional resources, the collaboration's funding by the Catalyst Grant, which the Arts Council designed in order to make non-profit arts institutions less reliant on public funds and better at obtaining private finance, undermined its purported values. In cases like this, the 'crisis' of public arts disinvestment masquerades as an 'opportunity' for organizations to develop new forms of sharing, while suppressing the brute facts of what Lauren Berlant calls the slow death of just 'getting by' and 'living on' (2007: 759).

Insights from von Osten, Phillips and others underline the limitations of curatorial and institutional initiatives that perform radicalism on a discursive or representational level, without addressing or transforming the political conditions under which they operate (see Vishmidt 2015). To redress this tendency, a shift in focus is needed from the gallery to behind-the-scenes. Drawing on feminist social reproduction theory, such a framework would entail more than scrutinizing the numbers of women or artists of colour exhibited, important though such concerns are. It would look at how cultural projects deploy human, economic and material resources, and at what cost. Such an approach would question the sustainability of activities that, for example, rely on shipping objects around the world at vast environmental cost, or in the carbon footprint left by people keeping up with the art world's itinerant calendar. Recognizing that the art world is unsustainable if those working in it cannot reproduce their livelihoods, it would prioritize the need for support systems that sustain cultural production, from childcare, parental leave and provisions for people with disabilities, to fair pay and employment practices.

Taking the affective dimensions of curatorial labour seriously, such a framework would

nurture the work of social reproduction while guarding against its exploitation. The sociologist Emma Dowling distinguishes between how social reproduction is 'valorized' under capital, and 'valued' in practices of commoning. Dowling (2016) outlines the contours for the creation of new subjective conditions that challenge processes of capitalist accumulation and enable political change. Her observations resonate with the Institute of Precarious Consciousness's (2014) call to transform affects that have congealed under networked capitalism into those of vital becoming. They also highlight cultural workers' need for downtime during which they can redirect their energies away from professional ends and restore their intimate bonds and resources.

Given patrons' and collectors' fondness for attaching their names to high-profile artists and events, a socially reproductive shift in attention is unlikely to attract extensive private support. Certainly it would require that arts institutions initiate different conversations with their supporters about where their help is most needed. Such a reorientation is likely to prompt a move amongst curators and institutional directors to doing less, more thoughtfully, and with more concern for developing the commitments and relationships that sustain collective affects and energies. Instead of accepting the logic of ever-greater expansion of audiences and programmes, buildings and budgets, this approach would develop different understandings of sustainability, value and social investment.

Rejecting the neo-liberal pressure to solve problems individually, such tactics would occur as part of a collective process of caretaking. A change in orientation is certainly overdue, given how the art system generates vast amounts of capital on the one hand – be it through the art market, or from the economic benefits of cultural activity and regeneration – while making it difficult for many in the sector to support themselves. Curatorial care could then be reconceptualized to prioritize the field's overall sustenance over its most visible, prestigious or lucrative aspects. Such revaluations could extend love and care beyond the high-status objects, artists and patrons generally considered worthy of curatorial custodianship and, instead, devote attention to nurturing the reproductive labour that sustains the living processes of cultural production.

Footnotes

1. See Paul O'Neill and Claire Doherty on the 'charismatic agency' and 'vision' performed by commissioners of long-term art projects (2011: 7). For a discussion of the impact of personal warmth, empathy,'active listening', 'cheer, positivity and belief' by developers of collaborative public artworks, see Kirsten Lloyd (2015: 151–52).
2. As this text was going to press, BP announced that it was ending its Tate sponsorship (Khomami 2016).
3. I was Senior Curator of Programmes from September 2006 to July 2010.
4. Among other interventions to the annual Power Ball, Dobkin offered to sell her artist's ticket at the gallery's entrance, as a signed artwork, but found no takers.
5. See The Power Plant (n.d.).
6. On experiments in commoning and communal living, see *The Grand Domestic Revolution* (Casco, 2010–12); on conviviality, see *Feast: Radical Hospitality in Contemporary Art* (Smart Museum, 2012).
7. For a critique of how reflexivity itself is harvested as value, see Vishmidt (2012).
8. For a discussion of female artists who have incorporated the legal contract into their artworks, in order to expose and reject the rhetoric of artistic self-sacrifice, see Dimitrakaki (2015).
9. Lonzi was the starting point for the feminist programme 'Now You Can Go' that I co-organized in London in 2015 (nowyoucango.tumblr.com).
10. See Rivolta Femminile (1991 [1970]), Dalla Costa and James (1972), Federici (1975) and Fortunati (1995 [1981]). For a recent consideration of the economics of domestic labour, see Mitropoulos (2012).
11. For a related discussion of surplus artistic labour, see Sholette (2015).
12. Participants included Valentina Desideri, Denise Ferreira da Silva, Park McArthur, Peter Pál Pelbart, Laurence Rassel, Howard Slater, Hortense Spillers, TerreThaemlitz, Ueinzz Theatre Company and Constantina Zavitsanos.
13. See Lazzarato (1996), Berlant (2007) and Lorey (2015).
14. See Krauss and Casco Team (2014). Ukeles's thesis on the overlapping issues of gender, class, ecology and labour has inspired other curatorial efforts such as *Beyond Re/ Production: Mothering, Dimensions of Social Reproduction in the Age of Neo-liberalism* (Art Space Kreuzberg/ Bethanien, 2011) and *Maintenance Required* (The Kitchen, 2013).
15. Unlearning exercises included Off-Balancing Chairs, Assembly, Cleaning Together, Digital Cleaning, Reading Together, Care Network, Mood Colour, Property Relations, Time Diary, Passion and Obstacle, and rewriting Ukeles's *Maintenance Art Manifesto* (Krauss and Casco 2014).

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