The Art of Instituting

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It was a cold December day, 2011. In a somewhat damp, freshly painted basement space in Sankt Hans Gade, Copenhagen, a small group of artists, researchers, media-makers, programmers, technologists and friends gathered (a co-author of this essay, Jamie Allen, was in attendance). With a downloaded form from a Danish government website, available as a set of role descriptions and mandate templates called *vedtægter* ('listing of statutes'), the attendant group performed a particularly Danish kind of social and organizational alchemy: a few quick signatures founded and instituted a *forening*, a new association or fellowship of artists; a union with a legal, financial and temporal standing in Denmark. Crafted from the standard *foreningsdraft* (literally an 'association draft'), a new collaborative entity called Science Friction came into being. Over the next weeks, a public website was designed and built by its membership (sciencefriction.dk), and rather quickly, Copenhagen, Scandinavia and the world had a new arts organization; in this case, one devoted to technological and media experimentation, and attending to forms of mutual research, support, solidarity and heterogeneity in collaboration.

Section §2 of Science Friction's *vedtægter* outlines its *raisons d'être*: 'to create a foundation for art and culture in the field of art and technology, with particular emphasis on critical attitude towards the same', and to 'operate an office and workshop community for use by active members and other tenants if the space allows' (Science Friction *foreningsdraft*). As Swedish artist Katja Aglert reflects regarding her own interdisciplinary practice in her testimonial in this book, Science Friction attempted experimental institution-making that 'can be imagined and performed without reproducing the static order it attempts to critically reflect' (Science Friction *foreningsdraft*); an attempt to develop collaborative solidarity in study and research, and a means of production that re-envisions the terms of these activities in contemporary art and beyond.

This very Danish, public and relatively common process of self-initiating a *forening* requires no lawyers nor application processes. Unlike other organizations in Denmark and Scandinavia, it invokes no special laws and requires little registration or oversight. Yet it creates a legal entity – one with social and political standing, and a consistency in time and purpose. Importantly, it can be associated with bank accounts and immediately apply for public money in the Nordic region. It is an instaurative act that requires only the time and effort of a set of individuals voluntarily agreeing to its characteristics, and to the fulfilment of some generally accepted criteria for annual meetings and division of roles. To the non-Danish people present at the signing of this particular *forening*, the simplicity and lightness of the entire process was compared to similar activities in other parts of Europe and the

Americas, which would not be as effortless. What culture, what tradition, what bit of Nordic magic allows for such an arrestingly straightforward *instituent* act, the analogue of which might not exist in many other, non-Nordic places in the world?

Illusory Institutions

Institutions – artistic or otherwise – may be real, but they are not entirely *actual*. Rather, they are part of a vast array of imaginary tools and mediums that enable human collectivism. They do not exist as singularly physical, geographical, organizationally constituted entities; they are instead *instituted* – historically, processually, continuously – into our variable present by the stories that we devise for ourselves and relay to one another.

As a noun, the English term 'institution' implies established laws and organizations; in verb form, institute infers practices that are continuously instantiated through belief and action. One example would be the 'institution of marriage', which perhaps captures the dynamic yet perpetual nature of institutional forms more accurately than organizations such as post offices and museums. This example calls to mind those things in the world that are produced by love and commitment, desire and intention; performed acts of restoration, inauguration and speech, projection and imagination; real yet often intangible things that persist, hopefully, almost mystically, through time.

In his leapfrogging deep history and anthropology *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, Yuval Noah Harari writes: 'There are no gods in the universe, no nations, no money, no human rights, no laws, and no justice outside the common imagination of human beings' (Harari 2015: 178). As with the corporate and governmental entities Harari cites, institutions such as cultural collaboratives and even temporary collective bodies are fundamentally derived from the customary mythologies that exist mostly (if not only) in the imagination of collectives of peoples. These instantiations – evidential forms of collective consciousness – can be large or small in scale. If institutions must be ascribed to a particular domain of existence, they are extant as *fictions:* imagined composites of official policy, built infrastructure, cultural and social tradition, commitment, personal promise, and operational tactics and methods. There is apparent, if not at times inordinate, power and efficacy deployed through these non-real things. Institutional fictions are key to cooperation, incorporation and operativity; when these fictions are enacted, they can result in large numbers of strangers working in concert. As Bruno Latour points out, fictional beings are not only the result of subjective creation – they create us as subjects; as fictions, institutions demand that we 'insignificant amateurs, brilliant interpreters, or passionate critics, become part of [their] journey of instauration' (Latour 2013: 241). Collective myths of common purpose and function are responsible for the vast majority of human endeavour at practically all levels beyond individual, utilitarian action (i.e. we work *for* nation states, neighbourhood watch programmes, corporations, universities and community arts organizations). From the art museum to the activist group, from the Los Angeles Police Department to a tribal village

council, orchestration is the result of often invisible conductors at many levels. Harari uses the example of a commercial institution, namely the car company Peugeot, the oldest and largest of Europe's car-makers, to drive this point home:

> In what sense can we say that Peugeot SA exists? There are many Peugeot vehicles, but these are obviously not the company. Even if every Peugeot in the world were simultaneously junked and sold for scrap metal, Peugeot SA would not disappear. It would continue to manufacture new cars and issue its annual report. The company owns factories, machinery and showrooms, and employs mechanics, accountants and secretaries, but all these together do not comprise Peugeot. A disaster might kill every single one of Peugeot's employees and go on to destroy all of its assembly lines and executive offices. Even then, the company could borrow money, hire new employees, build new factories and buy new machinery. Peugeot has managers and shareholders, but neither do they constitute the company. All the managers could be dismissed and all its shares sold, but the company itself would remain intact.
>
> (Harari 2015)

It is hard to deny the effectiveness and real-world impact of this real thing called 'Peugeot', or any other really real creative and imaginary projection just like it. What makes its whole greater than its parts is precisely its enigmatic existence as a kind of multiply transubstantiated aggregate, condensing out of an ether – here and there and now – quintessentially and fundamentally qualifying that which is institutional. These highly conceptual and complex projections – manifested through various media and interfaces, physical actions and material aesthetics, maintaining difficult to define relations to one another – establish themselves in oft-studied consistencies of form, and undergo constant internal and external change. Even the presupposed membrane between the internal and external can be hard to define. It is in the creation of institutional forms, or in the modulation of institutional interfaces, that the projective imaginary of the corporate CEO, the politician, the religious leader or the avant-garde conceptual artist can be said to find common, if somewhat slippery, ground.

In the late nineteenth century, Émile Durkheim famously inaugurated a new science – sociology – as the 'science of institutions, their genesis and their functioning' (Durkheim 1938). Since then, the social-scientific tradition of institutional analysis has given way to political science and theory: economic, legal and humanities-based interpretations (art, history, literature, philosophy, art criticism and art history) of the interactions between institutional bodies, and the various actors and agents 'external' and 'internal' to them. And yet there is at least one question that remains ever-salient: what *is* an institution?

What is the Copenhagen *forening* Science Friction? And what became of its future? Its membership has changed numerous times; its focuses and activities are always shifting; and its means and types of operations (i.e. its physical and decision-making structure) has been in near constant flux throughout its years of existence. Science Friction continues to exist in

numerous ways, both online and off. And yet, it is the kind of thing that is difficult to point at, difficult to identify, impossible to simply define.

Critical Impressions and Artistic Critique

For many, the term 'institution' evokes or represents nothing but the worst forces of repression. Diverging responses and associations, anxieties and discomforts abound, and relations of trust and responsibility vary from individual to individual, culture to culture, encounter to encounter. Institutions can both afford and limit individual power and possibility; they are collective social fictions that can produce affects and effects, responses and reactions, ranging from a kind of psychic claustrophobia to sensitively scaffolded creative expression. Perhaps as a result, the indeterminate and indistinct institutions of government, education, art, culture and economics seem perpetually 'in crisis', always anachronistic and failing 'us' in all sorts of ways. Immigration services and government licensing centres are institutional fronts with notoriously recalcitrant, opaque façades that tend to put strategic distance between power and individual people. Within the Danish context, we might ask if it is even possible to develop a critical institutional practice in the context of well-oiled, widely accepted and lauded *forening*-style institutionalism. If the energies required for critical institutional practices come, at least in part, from the inevitable frictions against or within state or societal organizational structures, can these really take root in contexts rife with such smoothly operating institutions, and sophisticated outlets of institutional frustration? What artistic, mediatic or technological frictions can be articulated through such easily and readily instantiated artist-run organizations like Science Friction, in the Danish context?

From Dada and Fluxus to conceptual art and latter-day media and digital art, artists have always had newly invented tools, media strategies and artistic perspectives for creating, questioning, manipulating and representing institutional forms and milieux. The anti-commercial and anti-art sensibility of Marcel Duchamp's *Boîte-en-valise* (1935–41), a self-curated museum in a suitcase, and the artistic form identified as Institutional Critique that began in the 1980s, bookend what art history canonizes as strategies for the production, modulation, *détournement*, critique and deconstruction of cultural institutions. A confluence of cultural, artistic, educational, political or nationalistic mandates has made institutions – and particularly arts and cultural institutions – 'potent material for manipulation' (Bronson and Gale 1983: 7). These strands each evolved to focus on conceptual, critical and research-orientated practices. The post-war period witnessed several waves of critical institutional artistic practices, from those 'challenging the authoritarian voice of museums, corporations, and governments' to those asserting institutional collectivity in opposition to the 'authority of the [artist's] voice itself' (Deutsche 2009: 67 paraphrasing Foster et al., 2004: 624).

Buchloh describes a trajectory of 'moving from the aesthetics of administration of conceptual art to the administration of aesthetics of institutional critique' (Buchloh 1990). In

expanding artistic intent away from material art objects and studio production, conceptual art strengthened both the research orientations of critical art theory and the predominance of institutional power, allowing artistic practice to be 'performed by administrative aestheticians, i.e. museum directors, curators etc.', thereby echoing the motivations behind the New Institutionalism in art (Sheikh 2009). In the 1960s, conceptual artists explored the necessity for their work to exist within a 'post-medium-condition' (Krauss 2000), evoked by late-capitalist conditions of art production and the mainstream global art market. By unhinging the dictates of the art market, conceptual artists made 'ideas themselves the machines that make the art' (LeWitt 1967). Aligned with this kind of thinking were early systems and cybernetic arts, which saw the possibility to render immaterial, distributed, transparent and immediate the way both artists and institutions engaged with polity. Conceptual art and emerging computational networks then colluded to provide the conceptual scaffolding for meta-critical perspectives on art, and infused popular, online culture with the brand of ambiguous, neoliberal creative libertarianism that has come to define culture in the West. Genealogically related initiatives and events like Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.) from the 1960s and anti-institutional technocentric developments gave birth to movements such as net art in the 1990s (Allen 2011). In *The Democratic Surround,* cybernetic historian Fred Turner charts the related and parallel proliferation of nonlinear technologies, multimedia environments, and networks that gave rise to the 'alone together' democratic subjectivity of neoliberalism, and the disruptive, almost apocalyptic innovation and digital utopianism that completely transformed cultural, political and scientific institutions (Turner 2013).

One example of this transformation is the aforementioned artistic movement, Institutional Critique – often associated with the works of artists like Marcel Broodthaers, Andrea Fraser, Fred Wilson and Hans Haacke – whose evolution enables a systematic inquiry and exegesis of the inner workings of cultural institutions, archives, museums and academies. Art historian Rosalyn Deutsche has attempted to differentiate between distinct phases of the Institutional Critique movement, showing how the 'first wave' of artists drew 'attention to the presence of economic and political power present in the seemingly pure and neutral spaces of the museum' (Deutsche 2009: 66) by integrating the language, interfaces and constructs of institutionality into their works. Here, art was a vehicle to explicitly expose present relations with the shifting, boundless contexts of cultural institutions. The so-called 'second wave' (Holmes 2009) of Institutional Critique work of the 1990s, furthered by artists like Fraser and Wilson, extended the very scope of art into multidisciplinary research, while inversely questioning the authority and role of individual artists, curators, archivists and educators. These artists opened up particular modes of sociological and ethnographic research into the arts; they probed new institutional-individual relations, and challenged the contradictory autonomy and sovereignty claims of critical artist-labourers working in the authoritarian, corporate and agenda-laden contexts of institutions like national(istic) museums. Raunig terms 'instituent practices' as the very possibility of 'practices that conduct radical social criticism, yet which do not fancy themselves in an imagined distance to institutions' (Raunig

2009: 11); those which subvert or break from rigid institutional relations while drawing on the inventive avant-gardism of the 1960s and 1970s (Holmes 2009).

A great deal of evidence supports this renewed sense of the historic import and current relevance of Institutional Critique, including: *The Museum as Muse: Artists Reflect* (McShine 1999), a large-scale, retrospective group exhibition in the 1990s that included seminal works by Hans Haacke, Michael Asher, Louise Lawler, Andrea Fraser and Marcel Duchamp; a 2016 mid-career solo exhibition of Andrea Fraser's work at MACBA, Barcelona, entitled *L'1%, c'est moi*; as well as recent art theory writings that address and compose the movement's lineage (Martinez 2014). Typifying the Institutional Critique genre, Fraser's solo exhibition used *détournements* of institutional communications media formats (e.g. interviews, museum tours, posters, art magazine essays and organizational diagrams) to present the genealogy of the marketization, globalization and callousness inherent in institutional art environments. In Denmark, a place where cultural welfare and institutions are relatively uncontentious and thought to be well managed, there are those who have claimed that Institutional Critique 'never really found any fertile ground in the specific Danish or Scandinavian context' (Sander 2004).

Artificial Hells (2012a) by Claire Bishop emphasizes how artists' concerns with breaking down cultural-institutional boundaries can wind up exacerbating dominant economic and administrative regimes. For Bishop, the activities of groups like the Artist Placement Group (APG) in the 1960s provide examples of the ambiguous inversions of relationships between artists and institutions. Instead of pulling audiences into the work, organizations like the APG operated on the 'inverse principle of pushing the artist out into society' (Bishop 2012b). By placing artists in institutions of industry and government, the APG proposed a practice of art 'that can cause both business and art to reevaluate their priorities' (Bishop 2012b: 177), thereby pragmatically reinventing creative agency and acting as precursors to these agencies becoming economic commodities. The institutions governing modern human life are always a confluence of educational, governmental and economic interests, and so the APG developed the notion that interrogating or developing new relationships in institutional contexts was 'half the work' (APG's slogan was 'the context is half the work' [Bishop 2012b: 166]). The extension of artistic practices to realms outside of art resonates with Buchloh and Krauss' positioning between those of the Institutional Critique and those of the APG, neither of whose work relied solely on subjective autonomy, tradition or pragmatic adoption of survivalist economic strategies. Instead, they combine intellectual and aesthetic strategies to allow for continual and active questioning of 'what it is we really want from art' and its institutions (Malone 2007). Bishop's research into the APG illustrates how individual agencies can be extended by blurring the always imaginary and projected boundaries between institutional types, yielding metaphors of action and influence in the world that go far beyond 'art'.

The rich set of experimentations, negotiations, investigations and discussions brought to bear by Institutional Critique and groups like the APG have had profound impacts on the bureaucratic and organizational structures of traditional cultural institutions. Ironically, Institutional Critique has become thoroughly institutionalized (Fraser 2005: 278),

leading to a transformation of the cultural institution itself. As a result, curatorial and archival practices have shifted to 'follow the artists', as described in the 1990s by the New Institutionalism in art (Kolb and Flückiger 2013). Cultural institutions have assimilated the artistic propensities for fluidity, unpredictability and risk as explored by twentieth-century artistic avant-gardes and Institutional Critique practitioners. New Institutionalism – not to be mistaken nor entirely divorced from related, aforementioned and homonymous developments in social science – underlines how cultural institutions have been reconfigured, reshaped and reactivated as interactive 'agents for change' (Casey 2001) that attempt to build more active, democratic and egalitarian public spheres. Cultural institutions throughout the 1990s and 2000s were inspired by 'participatory' (Simon 2010), 'interactive' and 'interpretational' formats, often enabled through media and the Internet (Allen and Lupo 2012). Later, itinerant and localized gestures of these dynamic, intentionally inclusive and accessible principles included institution-led initiatives like the Centre Pompidou's mobile museum project in 2013, or the artist-led Musée Précaire Albinet, a makeshift museum in a Paris suburb that was initiated by artist Thomas Hirschhorn and run by local residents. The Vietnamese-Danish artist Danh Vō, based in Mexico City, has articulated a number of individual-institutional 'Trojan horses', including exhibiting the collections and work of other artists and non-artists. *I M U U R 2* (2013) at the Guggenheim Museum in New York saw Vo presenting Chinese-American artist Martin Wong's collection of tchotchkes, destabilizing and deferring authorship and accountability of the individual artist to the museum. Continual conceptualization and attempts to revive intra- and trans-institutional developments of this kind are analysed in the literature (Voorhies 2016).

The inspiring and still contemporary rubric of 'extra-disciplinary investigations' (Holmes 2009) is borne from thinking about the tools initiated by Institutional Critique. Moving beyond the 'systematic exploration of museological representation' (Holmes 2009: 57) that examines correlations between arts organizations and economic power as a postcolonial science, extra-disciplinary practices assume interventionist tools and the expansive, boundless scopes inaugurated by artists engaged in Institutional Critique to expand the horizons of research and practice still further:

> The extra-disciplinary ambition is to carry out rigorous investigations on terrains as far away from art as finance, biotech, geography, urbanism, psychiatry, the electromagnetic spectrum, etc., to bring forth on those terrains the 'free play of the faculties' and the intersubjective experimentation that are characteristic of Modern Art, but also to try to identify, inside those same domains, the spectacular or instrumental uses so often made of the subversive liberty of aesthetic play.
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> (Holmes 2009: 55)

N55 is a Copenhagen-based Scandinavian art collective, emerging in 1994 as a way of developing projects in the public sphere outside of conventional and mainstream galleries and *muséal* arts practices. As an arts practice focused on using open-source tools and

methods, N55 makes no intention towards typical art-object sales but instead uses the artwork as a means to develop a set of practices and relations. Furthermore, the group is ambiguously tied to the artistic identity of several individuals, using the institutional and organizational moniker 'N55' to garner international attention for numerous projects in urban planning, architecture and public space reconfiguration. All of N55's ideas and designs are freely accessible and available for no charge to the public, and so their main acumen and aura – if we can call it that – comes from their institutional form: a kind of illusory and effective hybrid entity that makes products, but is not *for* the making of products. N55, as an institutional form, exists, in part, in order to keep existing. In working like this the group articulates the ways that artists can become and remain extra-disciplinary, veering towards any field of knowledge. N55 is an artistic practice-cum-institution, artists-as-organization; administrative and institutional language, tropes, interfaces and communications styles probe the boundaries of their artistic practice via a sort of 'administrative sublime' (Holte 2006).

This kind of *institutional becoming* is part of an extra-disciplinary stylistic and tactical mandate, often integrating unstable, ad hoc architectures (e.g. field tents and mobile museums), as well as social science-inspired research methods (Miessen, Hirsch and Misselwitz 2009). Reminiscent of strands of avant-garde conceptual art in terms of lack of concern for formal or media-specific outcomes, these elements give social-scientific and journalistic inflections to art as practices of research. The artistic interest in aping institutional forms also lies in how media and communications interfaces (i.e. the design of logos, websites, digital publication formats and the equivalency of communications afforded with e-mail) allies this type of activity with what has been termed 'post-digital art practice', or practices that employ digital media not for their own sake, but for their symbolic, organisational and cultural potentials. The artist-becoming institution imitates digital tropes in order to create imaginaries around creative projects through the skilful deployment and modulation of digital, cultural norms (Cramer 2014). They can act and communicate in ways that the general public and established institutions of natural science, social science, politics and art recognize, understand, or purposefully or productively misunderstand, but are nevertheless attuned to and respond to.

In seeking detailed interpretations of the operation of these entities, sociological studies of institutions have cross-pollinated their methodologies with what might be termed 'artistic' (or, alternately, 'representational') methods, media-derived insights, and visual and sensory translations of the lived experience of institutional-individual relations. In the wake of the APG and developments like Institutional Critique, social science has assumed ways of recomposing, reperforming and reconstituting art and media-making as critical knowledge work. In the Nordic context (amongst others), this has given way to highly influential cultures of artistic research, both inside and outside the institution. Annette Arlander cites Esa Kirkkopelto, professor of artistic research at Theatre Academy Helsinki, who links artistic research back to the importance of instituent practices:

> Artistic research done by an artist outside institutions is worthy of its name only if it has institutional consequences and if it can articulate itself in relation to institutions […]. As a consequence, the criteria for evaluation would consist of considering to what extent an artist-researcher is able to present their invention as an institution. If they manage to do that, their research has significance to everyone, it produces knowledge.
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> (Kirkkopelto cited in Arlander 2013: 157)

Post-Digital Institutions as Artworks

Since the 1980s, close attention has been paid to hegemonic western, nationalist and patriarchal narratives and constructs of the museum. Described as the 'post-reflexive turn' of the 'new museology', this focus has developed into a self-reflexive discourse critiquing the ascendency of artistic and cultural institutional power (Vergo 1991). Throughout the 1990s, museums began to function more as increased public information hubs and digital access points. The administrators and curators of these institutions reacted to this by starting to include multiple voices, non-expert communities and individualist approaches to those collectives formerly known as 'audiences'. Many museums developed into spaces for the enactment of possible futures and became models for extra-artistic social dynamics. Susana Smith Bautista's *Museums in the Digital Age: Changing Meanings of Place, Community, and Culture* (2013) charts the experiments in permeability undertaken by museums to become 'citizens' of the communities they were seeking to engage and communicate with. Bautista cites examples in which the *voice* of the museum is articulated on social media platforms in dialogue with individual community membership. Other examples include projects like the Brooklyn Museum's early 2000s exhibitions, in which publicly sourced online photo feeds were displayed in the museum to provide a kind of collective visual-ethnographic community portrait. A further example from 2013 saw the National Gallery of Denmark issuing advertisements in Danish newspapers to ask the public 'What's SMK to you?' inviting readers to submit answers via Facebook.

The proliferation of communications networks and the Internet in the 1990s exacerbated many aspects of the contradictory conservative inertia and dynamic resilience apparent in institutions. Although institutional change occurs, it is often much slower than other technocultural dynamics. Moreover, the relative stability of institutions appears as an impediment to that which 'makes it possible for human groups to take effective action' in technologically advanced societies (Lustick et al. 2011: 2). Traditional cultural institutions persist, but shifting societal conceptions and expectations constitute and instigate rapid and responsive change, often fomented and exacerbated by changes in media and communications technologies. Artistic and cultural institutions play the role of leading-edge transformational institutions, acting as relatively malleable sites for prototyping institutional styles of engagement. Technological coercion toward the forming of new institutional

interfaces is underlined, for example, by the tension between how museums, galleries and other traditional cultural and archival institutions treat the Internet as a secondary space for research, documentation or context. Others simply see it as a distraction, when for many people the normal way to access art and culture is through the Internet. For Zachary Kaplan, an editor and the director of the digital arts organization Rhizome, technological disruption continues to demand a 'rethinking of institutional practices: acts of representation, modes of address, curation, metrics, use of scale and the primacy of the traditional white cube itself' (Kaplan 2016).

Nordic Techno-Institutionality

Examples of the contradictory form that is the anti-institutional institution abound in contemporary artistic practice. Experimental spaces and places for thinking and production that are loosely linked to topics in science, art and technology (i.e. hacker spaces, DIY technology groups, artist-run project studios) are the benefactors of an energizing genealogy of para-academic, anti-institutional and collective forms. The history of these kinds of projects and collectivities roots these often paradoxical *dis*organizations in a tradition spanning twentieth-century avant-gardes, art and technology pursuits, and the digital and post-digital potencies wrought via online, virtual and variegated kinds of belonging and acting together.

Such tendencies are manifested in the Nordic region through the work of groups like the aforementioned N55, whose anti-institutional strategies are focused on building up 'a non- institutional praxis financed by the production and distribution of things, like cargo bicycles' (N55, artist testimonial in this volume: 86). Similarly, as Laura Beloff notes, technologically inclined works are manifested by a 'subcultural art scene – and typically initiated with small-scale associations and organizations' (Laura Beloff, artist testimonial in this volume: 87). These groups have included the stalwart media production crew at Dark Matters and the Copenhagen research, art and pedagogy collective Science Friction, whose foundational story began this chapter. These groups orient their practices towards the disruptive potential of technologies and technological questions, as well as their historical and contextual effects on creative practices. Scandinavia-based artist Alberto Frigo notes how the frames of cultural organization at one point limited his ability to employ or use technological elements in his work:

> No longer constrained by the spatial and temporal framework of cultural institutions, I have come to develop a whole encompassing practice, which, through a constant engagement with several aspects of my life, provides me with a new framework of artistic operation. I do not so much play around with algorithms but perform as an algorithm.
>
> (Alberto Frigo, artist testimonial in this volume: 50)

Here, Frigo renders palpable and personal the institutional frame as both inspiring perceptions of limitation and constraint, as well as productive of a reactionary or frictional, avant-garde creative impulse.

Reinstituting Institutions

Although critical, artistic cultures have often treated institutions and their interfaces as impasses to be confronted or surmounted, we also find great promise in the extrapolations and derivations of new orientations, placements and hopeful reconstitutions of institutional forms. Drawing on traditions of assembly, organization and self-led, progressive institutionalization in the Nordic context (particularly in light of technology literacy and sensibilities towards skills in digital design), artists and the arts are poised to enact the transformative power of institutional forms. This lies in a particular flexibility to diversify responsibility across collectives; to proliferate and adopt methods while helping to equalize agencies, energies and temporal resilience. New institutional forms show promise, acting as countermeasures to a contemporary landscape that is marked by the creative destruction wrought through austerity, conservatism, supervision and economization. Cybernetics historian Fred Turner calls for the formation of 'intermediary institutions through which we can act', emphasizing how 'networks are not enough. Individuals are not enough' (Turner 2014). He poses the question: 'Where is the middle range? The credible institution that gives me credible information on which I can take action?' (Turner 2014).

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