THE STANDPOINT OF THE PROLETARIAT

_Candle wax, car wax, moustache wax. Could be anything._
- Johnny Utah, FBI agent trying to trace ghosts in _Point Break_ (1991)

It should be clear by now why the bourgeois economists find it impossible to point out the essence of their science, to put the finger on the gaping wound in the social organism, to denounce its innate infirmity. To recognize and to acknowledge that anarchy is the vital motive force of the rule of capital is to pronounce its death sentence in the same breath, to assert that its days are numbered.
- Rosa Luxemburg, _What is economics?_ (1907)

One could think of that day, as a day when allegorical principles were once again put in motion. It all could have easily taken place inside the structure of an exhausted _mise-en-scéne_, or was it a reappearing parody or repetition of a deeper structure in a Venezuelan or Mexican _telenovela_ of the 1980s, that had been re-invoked?

_Newly awoken from a long afternoon siesta; a woman witnessed a heated discussion between two enraged - formerly sophisticated TV-journalists - about the present furnishings of the world. No possessed subjects were active in this epic at all, nor any amnesiac identities searching for as hollow bodies either, but surely there was something, which welcomed even inner-city spectators to tap into the contradictory haze generated by the pair, as if the uncomfortable spirits of the transmission summoned all._

Deborah: Let’s cut to the chase: What you are saying is all sizzle and no steak really. In order to fathom the present crisis we have to be specific on what is in crisis at first, and what the proportions are. What is this thing called “financialization”
It sounds like you are trying to trace shapeless worm-holes with your dizzy “genealogy” instead of trying to approximate more of an open mouth inspection of a patient that is present and actually sitting on your sofa with tremors - sweating in feverish post-meth deliria.

Bob: Listen; the organs seem to be in good condition, if you now allow me to use the same type of rhetorical tropes that you are throwing at my face. I am not harbouring an alien form of life here you know, so try to be less hostile please. I am neither lured by the beauty of the complexity of the financial system itself nor it’s mind-teasing stagecraft, so I won’t play the role of an occult detective, whom happily deals in fuzzy deductions. What we are seeing here seems to be more of a matter of “intestinal disturbances” rather than the downfall of a civilization. We are talking gases here...

Deborah: All that is solid ossifies, right? The actualization of a foundational and systemic innate that imploded you mean? Some kind of original sin of accumulation rooted in the primitive machinations of the creation of surplus value?!

Once I sort of dabbled in literature and drama. Today I leave such worldly matters to others.

Bob: Sophistry... I was following the same chain of metaphorical ornaments as you. I guess you are succeeding in

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1 Financialization is often described as the process of domination by the finance sector over all other activities in the “realm of the economy”. Many critics see potential problems with such a definition, especially in relation to the current global economic crisis, since it may further mystify real relations and lead to "the omission of the permeation between financial and productive capital just as the other socioeconomic causes at the origin of the contradictions of the crisis in capital valorization". For further development of a critique see Carlo Vercellone’s essay The crisis of the law of value and the becoming-rent profit in the lucid anthology Crisis in the Global Economy: Financial Markets, Social Struggles, and New Political Scenarios, ed., Andrea Fumagalli & Sandro Mezzadra (New York: Semiotexte, 2010), p. 85-119.
pulling me into your orbit of universal interpretative frenzy. Well, I don’t share your anti-commercial emotions simply. No aerial photograph-like allusion of yours can even approach the nuances of these nebulous events.

*A vigorous teenager stumbled away to the kitchen, leaving the dormitory for 7 whole minutes in order to squeeze in a bowl of cornflakes and acidophilus-fermented yoghurt, in-between the intentional misunderstandings on screen. He liked his cereals without the smooth fruitiness that comes with the other less expensive labels. The world was truly his oyster this day, and the eroticism of life lay (for that day) in keratin-infused beverages and chrome-coated Reeboks.*

Deborah: Bob. You are painting me into a corner here; I am the reality principle in this studio. The crisis was not a mishap of an automaton without any indexical relation to the world or the agency of a communion of men that wrecked an old industrious and more tactile capitalism.² The “fuzziness” that you refer to, and the semblance itself is the morphology of a real social and historic relation.³

Bob: So what is that relation you are going over about? Words and finalist rhetoric don’t credit your analysis. You are fossilizing something that is alive and kicking.

² The idea of individually greedy financial players and “out of line” bank executives, as the main causers of the economic crisis is erroneous. Financialization and the creation of the derivative market, securitization, the expansion of credit and other practices such as offshoring seem to be intertwined with accumulation and systemic growth itself. See for example David Harvey’s seminal text on spatial aspects of capital accumulation Notes towards a theory of uneven geographical development in Spaces of Global Capitalism (London: Verso, 2006), p. 69-117 and an illuminating lecture by Adam Hanieh at The School of Oriental and African Studies in London http://soasradio.org/adam-hanieh

³ An interesting and clarifying text on theories of the rule of abstraction is Alberto Toscano’s piece *The open secret of real abstraction*, published in volume 20 (2008) of the journal Rethinking Marxism which is an exposé of historical and present discussions. In the writings of Karl Marx, the first chapter of *Capital*, on commodities - delivers the main material while *Estranged Labour* in the so-called “Paris Manuscripts “ seem to be the most popularly read within practitioners of *kulturkritik*. 
Deborah: Methodological evasion is good for restless souls like you. The residual traces of the tricks and workings of capital can surely be aesthetically appreciated retrospectively from envious eyes that fantasize about ecstatic disembodied existence.

Bob: I’m feeling the stark humidity in the air. Your lapel mic is drenched in saliva and you’ll soon need to hyperventilate. Let’s talk about the actual events of the financial crisis.4

Deborah: Real rebellions and insurrectionary tendencies are washing over the world.5 A crisis might be a state of rationalization and reconfiguration.6 But that also means that the world of capital is weak as a system at this moment. Any new deal or return to a consensus and social democracy seems also impossible.

Bob touches his balding head and relaxes his shoulders before they cut into commercials while Deborah reassures herself that

4 An official and final U.S. government report on the causes of the financial crisis was issued and can be found here: http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/GPO-FCIC/content-detail.html. Even this report still seems though, to have problems with tracing or tracking any individual actors. Recurring figures in the gallery of villains are otherwise: Alan Greenspan, Henry Paulson, Bern Bernanke, Angelo Mozilo and “Dick” Fuld. The later one not so charmingly portrayed in the BBC-dramatization: The Last Days of Lehman Brothers and the documentary The Fall of Lehman Brothers.

5 See David Graebers report on Occupy Wall Street: http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2011/sep/25/occupy-wall-street-protest and Paul Masons speculative analysis earlier this year on the reasons behind the uprisings: http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/newsnight/paulmason/2011/02/twenty_reasons_why_its_kicking.html. Numerous others examples of analysis and entries on current social upheavals after the crisis exists that don’t fit here for spatial reasons. Many contextualize events in Chile, Greece, Egypt, Tunisia, Spain and England to name a few at prima facie.

6 See the devastating use of shock or crisis as the opening up of markets as “reconfiguration” (too put it mildly) in the book by Naomi Klein The Shock Doctrine (2007). In relation to the question of credit and foreclosures, the idea of “accumulation by dispossession” is crucial here. See for example: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3a9TAbQHziQ and The New Enclosures (1990) by The Midnight Notes Collective: http://www.midnightnotes.org/newenclos.html. The “bail outs” could also be seen from the perspective of transfer of public assets into the ownership and administration of private institutions as part of this process. For the phenomena of contemporary forms of primitive accumulation in Stockholm see Kent Wernes articles and writings on the privatization of housing and health: http://kentwerne.se/2010/09/17/508/ and http://kentwerne.se/bocker/du-skona-nya-hem/.
it all went down pretty good against her pithy former bff on prime-time-syndicated-satellite-television. Post-partisan transcendence was now over.

NOTES ON ARTISTIC INSTITUTING – A Practice
I have now for a while been interested in artists and institutions, and the relationship of artists to the rest of society as partial wholes. The immanence of artistic practices and works lie at a close intermediate proximity whenever I work in my studio; participate in exhibitions, symposia or informal research communities.

Most of the time, though, I enjoy the friendship among colleagues the most, the ones where that undefined shared something transcends beyond an obvious intention or direct common denomination. I am all for real antagonisms though; frontal duels and machiavellic coteries among anti-oedipal desperados where social suicide always lies in wait beneath the floor - yearning for the moment when the coordinates of the communal law (of becoming respectable) collapses.

The kinds of leakage in-between us all appear to be the unruly virtual object, which deflects every kind of rationalization, even in the market of appearances and within the late capitalist metaphysics of strategy (and network imperative itself), which we all are subjected to.

The tendency towards a poiesis without a subject and a sort of total consumption of the other drives my artistic leanings. The transversal anomaly (not necessarily the surreal exotic or impressionistic beyond) informs my practice as well.
Sometimes it vanishes into the famous trash bin of depleted gestures as a hesitant signifier without life, other times it disturbs temporality itself.

**Crisis and critique**

I think that there is potentially a massive residue of speculative critique in the turbulence that we are living through at this event of shifting and institutionalization. Governance over artistic institutions, markets, academies and the law is being rearranged once again just as the global art boom peaked itself into oblivion.

In the slightly compressed essay *The Standpoint of the Proletariat* (2011) I tried to reconcile some of the worn but still enriching ideas that I’ve been working with the last two years at Mejan. These are ideas related to economics, philosophy and different forms of research methodologies.

The essay presented at the beginning of this stream of text aims to mimic a kind of delicate machine that potentially generates multiple lines of thoughts in the reader, silly associations and concurrent point of entries that fall on each other, bleed into the signification of each one and form minor semiospheres which invite without the timbre of an open invitation, but still welcomes the generous.

The formal decisions are not all the time set from the beginning in my work. I am all for a loose cause and tendentious impulsion, in spite of time allowing I tend to wait and subject myself to the unstable temporalities of the almost impossible which I’ve come to realize, professionalizes my
practice a bit and disciplines its outcomes by moving me a bit too much to certain regions of production. I hope The Standpoint of the Proletariat does otherwise.

**TWO manners AND one INCLINATION**

**AMOUNT**
Since more than a year I’ve worked with other students continuously. Together we have formed an artistic sovereign called “amount” which is a vehicle for research desires relating to current or impending matters.

Most of the times we meet and read highly interesting new theoretical essays which seem to circulate in many parts around the world simultaneously. Well… mostly in the microcosm of circuits among friends of shared artistic positions. We also use our bodies for experimental practices, which relate to studies of discipline, regimentation and the contemporary form of life that is produced in late capitalist Sweden.  

Sometimes we record and document our works but generally speaking we travel without any recording devices in our horizon.

This summer we kept visiting different places to augment our knowledge and intensify our communal fidelity. Together we’ve been everywhere from Dalarna, the commercial centres of Stockholm to last years Historical Materialism Conference at SOAS in London and back to our research at home which had

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7 Besides my participation in amount, I also from time to time take upon myself small writing projects that are related to other parts of the contemporary moment such as this study material, which I made for the education institution ABF and publishing house Atlas for a book on islamophobia called “Hatet mot Muslimer”. You can find it here: http://www.abf.se/Global/Press%20och%20Nyheter/Nyheter/2011/Hatet_mot_muslimer_-_studiehandledning.pdf
the speciesist and Derridean-inspired techniques of descending into imagined animality in focus.

In the near future we will continue and I hope to personally contribute with a heightened frequency of public screenings, public symposia and workshops, exhibitions and the publishing of texts etc. My aim is be a part of creating a public, an élan civil, communitas, polis, how republican that may sound.

OBJECTS - Cast in roles, no strings attached

During my years at Mejan I’ve studied and taken part in mostly discursive practices – in the original incomprehensible immaterial sense of the word. But more and more I find myself returning to the installation mode, assemblages and kinds of compositions. They work as mazes or puzzles for thought to digest and help me push things a bit further. In all these works I’ve really tried to let things speak for themselves, in their own singularity, as comrade objects.
*Untitled (2011)*, Painting.