

INTRODUCTION TRADING IN SOCIAL GOOD

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Public markets are as ancient as they are universal. Zones for civic and other activity, they host buying, selling and socializing. In 2017, the Greater London Authority (GLA) identified around 280 retail markets in the UK's capital city. Some specialize in particular goods and services (antiques, fish, etc.), whilst others offer wares of all sorts. Roughly half are run by local authorities and half are privately operated (GLA 2017a: 34). London's oldest market was also once one of Europe's largest markets. It was located on the site of the Roman forum, not far from where the magnificent Leadenhall Market is today, which dates back to the fourteenth century (GLA 2017a: 33). In recent years, pop-up markets have used flash-retailing to launch trends in fashion, food and more. For London's current mayor, Sadiq Khan, 'London's bustling markets symbolize our openness to the world' (GLA 2017a: 5). Witness the range of goods they trade, the traders who work in these many markets and the diverse communities they serve (GLA 2017a: 13). This makes the health and vibrancy of London's markets essential to the city's status as a hub for international trade.

In the wake of Brexit and its uncertain consequences for the UK's trade relations with the EU and beyond, more questions are raised than are answered. Whilst it is difficult to compare the restructuring of international trade agreements to evaluating the costs and benefits of local markets, tackling the latter may well yield results that are more immediately meaningful for the stakeholders involved. This and growing concerns about the health of high streets (GLA 2017b) helps to account for the founding of London Markets' Board in 2017, the first ever strategic vehicle to oversee the capital's markets (GLA 2017a: 6).

More immediately relevant than *why* this body was established is *what* its formative findings have brought to light. Research like that published in *Understanding London's Markets* (GLA 2017a) broadly chimes with work done on markets by the Institute for Place Management at Manchester Metropolitan University (2015) and, more recently, the Markets 4 People research project through the University of Leeds and the New Economics Foundation (2018–20). As global markets expand and local markets struggle in the face of online shopping, this burgeoning body of research keys into growing awareness that markets generate value that far exceeds economic return. In the shorter term, they are more than just opportunities for employment and consumption; markets are also places for individuals to assemble and interact. In the longer term, markets do more than prime property prices through regeneration and gentrification; they also contribute to a sense of community and place. Simply put, there is growing appreciation for retail and other local markets as generating a much broader and more nuanced range of values, especially those connected to social good.

#TransActing: A Market of Values anticipated this re-evaluation of the market, not through desk or field research but through creative practice. As a culmination, *TransActing* marked the end of five years of collaborative research on value, values, valorization and evaluation that was realized by Critical Practice (discussed below) in association with University of the Arts London. As an event, *TransActing* took place in central London in July of 2015. It is perhaps best described as a 'meta market' because *TransActing* used the market's format (traders/stallholders, stalls and a milling crowd) to evaluate its many and varied benefits as a social form. These include, for instance, the ways in which a market's cultural, locational, inclusive and economic aspects interrelate, with this

nexus being a growing source of interest for research on markets more generally (Watson and Studdert 2006). Only a few of *TransActing's* sixty plus stalls offered goods or services for sale. The exception being food and drink to be enjoyed onsite and one stall that rented a pitch to sell toys at market price. Most traders were explicitly focused on exploring ideas and practices of evaluation. These were designed to critically reflect on and challenge the growing monoculture of economic value, replete with a meshwork of transactions that may become increasingly abstract but have very real consequences for all the stakeholders involved, the people – human stakeholders – but nonhuman ones too: the environment, the public infrastructure, etc.

By activating *TransActing* as a market, Critical Practice joined an illustrious set of artists who have used the market as a template for creative practices. We can think, for instance, of Surasi Kusolwong's *Market* (1999–present). A popular spectacle on the biennial circuit, *Market* uses music, materials and movement with kaleidoscopic effect to heighten the retail experience. More recently, Kathrin Böhm has deployed the trade show format to explore group exhibition and art as exchange (2019). *Trade Show* comes under the umbrella of the Centre for Plausible Economies and its preoccupation with the economy as a site of artistic intervention (*Company Drinks* 2019). Most iconically, between 1973 and 2012, Martha Rosler toured different iterations of the installation/performance *Meta-Monumental Garage Sale* (1973–ongoing), exploring how 'our cultural and aesthetic transactions' are differently anchored by economic values (Deutsche et al. 2018: 80). Varying selections of second-hand objects filled the flea-market-like stalls and customers were invited to haggle and engage with the potential narratives suggested by the items for sale. Rosler retained authorship of the project and control of the trade. Moreover, transactions were limited by the conventions of 'real world' garage sales.

Instead of competing for sales, the traders in *TransActing* competed for the attention of the milling crowd. Both groups exchanged the local currency made from bespoke coins in wood, felt and other tactile materials, which represented units of time, wellbeing, knowledge and creativity. The stalls were unconventional too: a fablab, organ donation, commoners, a skillshare, bricklaying, an economy of promises, bring your own BBQ food, a speakers' corner – even a kiosk buying tears. As the milling crowd

moved amongst these stands, they transacted into being this non-commercial market as a socio-cultural-spatial-epistemic-economic phenomenon that was above all deeply experiential.

In 'Statement of value for London's markets' (featured in the report, *Understanding London's Markets*), the GLA identifies the 'social value' of markets as residing with their 'good growth'. This includes the environmental sustainability of their trade as well as the distribution of benefit amongst all the markets' stakeholders (GLA 2017a: 13). According to the GLA, the benefits of this value/growth in combination are most immediately dispersed across three key aspects of markets: their people, their place and their prosperity. Using these same categories, this introduction describes *TransActing* in order to locate it as art and design research that is part of the expanding body of interdisciplinary work on the social and other values that markets produce.

People

'People before profit' could well be the battle cry of those who convened *TransActing*, Critical Practice Research Cluster. Critical Practice is an international network of artists, designers, curators, educators, academics and other researchers who share a commitment to the critical practice of art, its organization and its education as public goods. The cluster recognizes that governance emerges whenever the deliberate interactions amongst people are organized. Critical Practice strives to be an open organization and to make all its decisions, processes and production accessible and public. Agendas, minutes, budgets and decision-making processes are posted online for public scrutiny at criticalpracticechelsea.org.

Critical Practice was established in London in 2005 by recent graduates and others affiliated with Chelsea College of Arts, a constituent college of University of the Arts London (UAL). At the time of writing, members of Critical Practice range in experience from college freshers to esteemed professors. In fact, one of the defining qualities of this open organization is that its diverse membership spans students, faculty and staff of UAL, as well as those without any university affiliation, from UAL or otherwise, many of whom came to art and design later in life.

The growing diversity of genders notwithstanding, art schools seem to attract more female than male students. Seventy-five per cent of UAL's student body of 18,000 recently self-identified as female (UAL 2017: 7). Despite this (or perhaps because of it), the founders of Critical Practice were all male (see 'Partial self-portrait' in this anthology). But this soon changed and for more than a decade, the gender balance has been roughly fifty-fifty (no records have been kept regarding members who identify with a gender different from that assigned to them at birth).

Most members of Critical Practice enjoy enough middle-class security to be able to volunteer. More diverse are the members' nationalities: American, Austrian, Canadian, Chinese, Egyptian, English, German, Norwegian, Polish, Slovenian, Welsh and others besides (see 'Partial self-portrait of Critical Practice' in this anthology). Furthermore, the experience of the cluster is just as varied. There is a retired medical doctor who also holds a practice-based/led Ph.D.; an artist who has handy experience managing one of London's key food markets; artists whose work is steeped in collaborative practice, a curator with expertise in economics and another who has since gone on to work in political campaigning, amongst others.

Given this diversity, it should come as no surprise that the cluster has a track record for creating and curating interdisciplinary platforms that host heterogeneous practices. The one featured in this legacy publication, *TransActing*, was a vivid case in point. It showcased artists, designers, economists, civil-society groups, academics, ecologists, activists and others (see 'Stallholders' reflections' in this anthology for a more detailed account).

Long before all the participants were confirmed, plans were afoot to meaningfully host and effectively attract a diverse public. Every market's lifeblood, this throng creates and circulates value as its members interact with stallholders and each other.

Several publics composed *TransActing's* milling crowd, such as the local residents of Millbank, the Westminster neighbourhood where *TransActing* took place. Some had observed Critical Practice and its collaborators (including the critical design practice, public works) building the infrastructure on the Rootstein Hopkins Parade Ground at Chelsea College of Arts in the weeks preceding market day. Other locals had learnt of *TransActing* from flyers pushed through their letter flaps. For many people who live and work in the

surrounding area of Millbank, this was the first time they had been invited on campus in the ten years that Chelsea had called this neighbourhood home, having moved there in 2005.

Other visitors to *TransActing*, especially those on their way to Tate Britain next door, moved through the market by following an age-old right of way cutting diagonally across the Parade Ground as a shortcut. The value of the paintings, sculptures and other artworks on display at Tate is well established as part of the UK's national collection. *TransActing* featured socially engaged practices that variously explored how values are produced and brokered by the marketplace. The proximity of the market to the museum helped to highlight the overlapping but also contrasting value systems of these socio-cultural structures.

Some enthusiasts of critical contemporary art came to the market for stalls run by specific artists or other cultural producers. More than one of these expert visitors expressed their appreciation for *TransActing* as a 'truly alternative' art fair. It was alternative not because it was running in parallel with a similar but more commercial event (as is often the case, for instance, with critical activity that parallels Frieze, an annual international art fair that takes place in London's Regent's Park). What made *TransActing* alternative was that it looked, smelled and tasted like a market and used art as a space for exchange but without selling it. *TransActing* was both an art market and opposite of the art market, at least as a place for acquiring paintings, sculptures and the works.

One of *TransActing's* largest publics came from London's art schools, especially the constituent colleges of UAL, including Chelsea College of Arts where the market took place. Many of us working in higher education struggle with the way teaching and learning are increasingly pitched as commodities for sale. This does not set students up for success by negating the obvious but important fact that knowledge acquisition occurs in the body and the mind and between them. Insight and understanding are hard won through experience and critical engagement. Instead of an education fair pitching the student journey as a future-oriented and abstract proposition, *TransActing* offered rich and complex forms of experience-based learning in the here and now. Each stall was a unique opportunity to co-produce knowledge through discussion and further types of exchange between the stallholders and members of the public (see 'Stallholders' reflections' in this anthology).

Place

There is ample research on the value of markets to placemaking and much of it connects with their slippery role in regeneration and gentrification. Markets are inclusive because by definition they are free to enter and open to all to visit (GLA 2017a: 27). But as such, they can also generate exclusive value and exclusive neighbourhoods when markets push up the price of property and push out the very people – local residents and traders – who created this value. This reflects the changing relationships that markets have with the communities they serve. It also speaks to the way social and other forms of collective value are extracted and privatized.

Changing fortunes like these are not of course unique to markets. Higher education also moves in complex cycles that are riven with competing values, many of them stretching between the interests of the market and those of the state (Nowotny 2011: xxv). In learning for art and design, recent trends include collaboration and/ as social practice on the one hand; and on the other, practice-based and practice-led research. These developments contest the romantic ideal that making art is first and foremost an act of individualized self-expression. In 2015, the same year as *TransActing*, the art, architecture, design collective Assemble won the Turner Prize. This was only the second time this prestigious award had been given to more than one person and the first time it had gone to an architecture and design studio. Something that sets Assemble and Critical Practice apart are their interdisciplinary moves. If Assemble moved the built environment into art and vice versa, Critical Practice moved art, architecture and design research into a blurred and shared space that was, literally, outside and in public view.

TransActing's infrastructure – its stalls – were constructed *en plein air* on the Rootstein Hopkins Parade Ground. Dubbed 'the gallery without walls' (Cleary 2008: n.pag.), this 3500 square meter site was reconditioned in the noughties as the premier showcase for public sculpture in central London but it remains vacant most of the time. This changed for several weeks in late June and early July of 2015; the Parade Ground was transformed from something to be crossed to arrive at college or Tate Britain into a destination in its own right.

Figure 0.1: Under construction – the stall infrastructure for *TransActing* (July 2015, Chelsea College of Arts). Photo credit Marsha Bradfield.



The site began to buzz – literally – when Critical Practice set up shop, with the hum of power saws cutting up wood to make the bespoke stalls with upcycled materials using the Italian designer Enzo Mari’s principle of *autoprogettazione* (see ‘Glossary’ and ‘Taking Enzo to market: Open stalls’ in this anthology for more information). In the days that followed, the stalls proliferated, resembling a swarm of mysterious stick insects, especially when attracting interest from helicopters hovering above. And then on market day, *TransActing* welcomed a thronging crowd of a 1000 visitors, give or take. They participated, either knowingly or unknowingly, in an exquisitely choreographed performance of informality as they moved, here and there, amongst the stalls, engaging in diverse acts of window shopping without windows. After market day, traces lingered with purpose. Stalls became benches and tables to provide much-needed public furniture, encouraging passers-by to spend time in the Parade Ground.

How did this programme of placemaking happen? The obvious but also most important answer is that it happened with a lot of help. In addition to public works, the critical design practice that led on the market’s infrastructure, many stallholders collaborated with Critical

Practice on the build. Whilst the cluster is generally associated with Fine Art at Chelsea College of Arts, it often collaborates with other parts of the university. Students on the Interior and Spatial Design courses at Chelsea College of Arts also rolled up their sleeves to help with *TransActing*. Many were delighted to be building something that is subject to natural laws instead of the computational ones of virtual space. Whilst there are myriad benefits to design and fine art students working together on placemaking activities as well as other collaborative and interdisciplinary projects, an important one relates to the changing nature of work and how it is forging hybrid subjectivities that span individuals and groups. To keep pace with the job market's dynamic demands, cultural producers must engage in an ongoing programme of learning after higher education, an enterprise that increasingly unfolds through peer-to-peer exchange on projects and as part of teams (Nowotny 2011: xx-xxiii).

The sheer scale of *TransActing* demonstrates its ambition, outstripping what any one person could produce on their own. Working together can also promote experimentation when both the risk and reward are distributed amongst those involved. At the same time, cultural producers *qua* social commentators are uniquely placed to educate others about the complexity and implications of transformation when they are accustomed to experiencing this through their own work. In the case of *TransActing*, and in keeping with the critical practice of the cluster, this involved using the public market as a cultural form to activate public space. Moreover, and importantly, *TransActing* aimed to activate its publics by firing their imagination and sense of wonder and possibility. As the market convened heterogeneous practices to question existing systems of evaluation and actively produce new ones, a feeling of excited belonging began to emerge. This was not so much with reference to place as a geographical location – Chelsea College of Arts, UAL, London or the even the UK. It was closer to a sense of belonging – of finding one's place – in an unfinished and transformational project that was so much greater than the people involved, their practices, or *TransActing* as a one-day event.

Prosperity

It is striking that the GLA's report on markets explores loss to illuminate prosperity, specifically the loss of ageing traders and the barriers to recruiting new ones (GLA 2017a: 106). One of the recommendations of this research for mitigating these risks to the sustainability of local markets is to reframe – or perhaps refresh – their function by shifting it away from the market as a zone for buying and selling and towards it as a laboratory or studio for innovation:

Markets are the original business incubators and as accessible open workspace they offer a unique, low-risk opportunity for people to test business ideas and learn new skills; they can provide the initial step into employment and open routes to different types of work. (GLA 2017a: 49)

As interfaces for learning through practice and for testing and experimenting, markets align with research, which has in recent decades been significantly broadened in Europe under the Bologna Process to include the disciplines of art and design.

This comes onto the prosperity that is made possible when art is unhooked from the impoverished sense of art for art's sake as the only purpose of art. In the case of art as research, art's expansion as an epistemic enterprise (i.e. that it produces new knowledge) is as exciting as it is controversial. Though not the place to explore this at length, it is worth observing Helga Nowotny's wise insight that 'productive contestations are also the defining characteristic of any significant innovative enterprise' (2011: xvii). In the case of Critical Practice, the central 'contestation' often relates to disseminating the sensuous experience of working with the cluster – of doing Critical Practice – with this enacted through its creative practices and embodied in its artistic publications, objects and events. The challenge being: the content of this experience can elude direct access. It is resistant to being captured and conveyed through language. There is nothing, however, especially unique about this conundrum.

Henk Borgdorff is certainly not the first to nuance this point as follows: 'The subject of the research is partly the *je ne sais quoi* of artistic research, aesthetic experience; as a matter of principle, it

refuses every explanatory gaze' (2011: 47). Yet for Critical Practice, to leave art stuck here is to reinvigorate the myth of its autonomy by excluding art from participating in and contributing to other spheres of life, including research. Ergo the sense of research that Critical Practice works through, works for and works into (Frayling 1993) seeks to overcome this exclusion by bridging various perspectives, some more rigorously thought through and others more tacit, embedded in the cluster's methods. Borgdorff's thinking is helpful here when he highlights two perspectives in particular as prime to cultural production as research (2011: 61).

The first of these is the constructivist perspective: turning imagination into reality through experiments. This is non-representational when instead of *representing* something, this perspective seeks to *present* it (Borgdorff 2011: 61). *TransActing*, for instance, was not a symbol of a market. It *was* a market. Research generated through a constructivist perspective can often be described as applied. It is also often visionary, because in Borgdorff's understanding it is about 'making the world into what it could be' (2011: 61). This manifested in *TransActing* as a community of evaluation that was assembled by the market's infrastructure and given voice through the stallholders' contributions. Central here was imagining a world that gives social value – care, trust, generosity, loyalty – pride of place (see 'Stallholders' reflections' in this anthology). Critical Practice is necessarily driven by a constructivist perspective with the cluster prioritizing critical practice as a public good. Yet this alone fails to capture the rich experience of its work or why this qualifies as research.

For Borgdorff, plumbing the experiential aspects of creative practice in the service of research involves a hermeneutic perspective. This interpretive revelation is also phenomenological when art not only draws out our familiarity with the world and our distance from it but also critically discloses the world as it is, whilst proposing what the world might be (Borgdorff 2011: 60–61). Whilst Borgdorff describes this as the 'realism' of artistic research (2011: 61), Critical Practice regards it as closer to 'apprehension', with this understood as the telos of art as an epistemic enterprise. This is in keeping with the influence of Stephen Scrivener; an expert in research in art and design through practice, he charged up Research at Chelsea College of Arts in the formative years of Critical Practice. In Scrivener's influential view, which chimes with Borgdorff's, art

as research is an 'original creation undertaken in order to generate novel apprehension' (2002). This goes to the heart of *TransActing* as collaborative practice-based/led research that challenges us to differently apprehend the market as a social form.

By now it should be clear as far as Critical Practice is concerned, the act of making and brandishing a placard that says, 'All markets are bad!' is preposterous. This is not only because doing so denies the myriad ways the very fabric of contemporary life makes us complicit in reproducing market structures. It is also because this act alone can leave us, well, brandishing a placard. For those in Critical Practice, one of the obvious and immediate problems of this is captured by Carol Becker when, echoing Borgdorff and Scrivener, she asserts that if we settle for what exists and assume it is inevitable, 'there is no space for art' (2012: 68). Instead of dispensing with markets, the critical provocation is to reclaim their form to challenge their increasingly singular function. This novel apprehension was at the heart of *TransActing* as research, prompting it to explore the market's potential through alternative forms of exchange.

In keeping with the cluster's ethos and approach to project making, *TransActing* was a platform: an opportunity to both work with and showcase the critical practice of others. From this perspective, the event was conceived in the first instance for the benefit of the organizers and the participants themselves. Together, they aimed to fulfill the first of Critical Practice's articles of association: 'We will explore the field of cultural production as a site of resistance to the logic, power and values of the ideology of a competitive market – Our political economy' (2018: n.pag.).

This and the cluster's other aims and objectives state the political and philosophical values of Critical Practice. *TransActing* embodied and materialized these values in a sharable performative manner by questioning and mapping the value transacted in daily, artistic, social and economic practices. For *TransActing*, the value of art resides with its capacity to grasp complex conglomerations of value(s). This is performative, which is to say it produces additional and potentially different value(s). This emphasis on production foregrounds art as a social process in addition to being an outcome. By developing this particular kind of critical practice, *TransActing* engaged with the ways in which the economies of art practice shape and impact the wider social, cultural and financial context to the extent that they have a performative effect. At the

same time, *TransActing* drew attention to art – replete with its complex codes of appreciation – as purpose-built for examining systems of value more generally. In the season of research leading up to *TransActing*, and in the event itself, this examination spanned numerous markets, amongst them the education market, the primary and secondary markets of art, the creative industries, the knowledge economy, the economies of health, gentrification and wellbeing to name a few.

Overview of this anthology

This legacy publication is part manual, part document, part critical and contextual reflection. A combination of practical and theoretical writing, it presents hard-won insights from the perspective of practice-based/led and other researchers on reclaiming the market as a technology for shared reflection through heterogeneous exchange. The articles featured here are marked by disparate sensibilities, disciplines, desires, aspirations and concerns that chime with those of Critical Practice. The publication mirrors the processes of the cluster itself and of *TransActing*. Concepts and perspectives emerge in conversations, dialogues, analyses, portraits and reflections to be experienced, exchanged and metabolized together. No single text definitively introduces or reports on *TransActing* as a process or as an event. This unorthodox approach to a legacy publication fulfils a number of the purposes that a smooth narrative and direct critical analysis would not. Three texts in particular showcase alternative methodologies and structural approaches – ‘Partial self-portrait of Critical Practice’, ‘Stallholders’ reflections’ and ‘Taking Enzo to market: Open stalls’.

Introduced by Marsha Bradfield but collectively authored by the cluster, ‘Partial self-portrait of Critical Practice’ is a timeline. This descriptive instrument tracks a trajectory of research and production by charting the amassing activity of the cluster like pencil lines marking growth spurts on the kitchen door frame. As a method for practice-based/led research, this tool traces the events that have constituted and transformed Critical Practice as well as the uneven flow of members, decision-making and intensity of the cluster’s

research activities. It offers one of many possible narratives of how value, values, valorization and evaluation became leitmotifs over the cluster's first decade of practice. The timeline starts in 2004 to anticipate the founding of Critical Practice in 2005. After describing the cluster's early activity, the chronology traces the long season of value-related research (2010–15) that led the cluster to *TransActing* as a project (2013–15). A list of the people who at one time or another have been part of Critical Practice caps off the self-portrait to acknowledge the cluster's extraordinary membership.

The next section, 'Stallholders' reflections', offers the market's participants the opportunity to voice their own positions in print to mirror the eclectic complexity of the original event. It also offers the reader the freedom of 'walking through' the pages in a way that evokes physically moving through the concourse during *TransActing*. In this way, the reader can act as editor, deciding to give more time and attention to one voice and not another, once again accepting the offer to transact. 'Stallholders' reflections' considers *TransActing* as a one-day event by re-assembling the market in textual and visual form, conjuring it up as a community of evaluation. Reflections and images provided by the stallholders evoke moments and issues that were particularly meaningful for those involved. Members of Critical Practice complement these with brief descriptions of the stalls whose holders were unable to provide their own voice. This section is introduced by Amy McDonnell's analysis of the market as a social technology.

In a similar vein, 'Taking Enzo to market: Open stalls' enacts in print an instance of the combination of eclectic methodologies that Critical Practice adopts in its day-to-day workings and project making. This practical text by Neil Cummings and Andreas Lang lays bare the collaborative procedures and critical operations that contribute to the final configuration of the event. As is well known, accounts of practice-based/led research can be flattened by theory when the materiality and specificity of processes give way to conceptual insight that can be more easily generalized. The list of practical questions that opens the text reveals consideration for care, hospitality, sustainability, ethics, inclusivity, thus reflecting the dynamics of diverse systems of evaluation enacted in practice. As is in the nature of practice-based/led research, this account leads to knowledge that has operational and critical significance for an understanding of the project. As a textual approach, it resists the

Figure 0.2: Making the market in public. From the left: Angela Hodgson-Teall, Elena Cologni, Claire Mokrauer-Madden and Metod Blejec (July 2015, Chelsea College of Arts). Photo credit Marsha Bradfield.



common practice in academic, critical and analytical work to hide these processes and give centre stage to posthumous narratives of logical and coherent progress.

We can of course recognize the unresolved mess that is typically othered by research outputs in our lived experience. If anything is symptomatic of the contested post-post-capitalist sphere where 'goods' become false agents, with people being somewhat drawn into a plot of insecurities, isolation and commerce, it may be precisely the continuing call for participating in economic life. By demand, capitalism is "a sphere of circulation" – literally, a super-market – which brings to mind Henri Lefebvre's statement, that capitalism, like an artificial intelligence, has learned to survive its crisis through the consumption and production of social space' (Andreasen and Larsen 2012: 24).

Survival through flexibility, specifically organizational and interpersonal flexibility, is something Marsha Bradfield explores as she traces value beyond econometrics as a long-standing preoccupation of Critical Practice. Taking its tenth anniversary as her departure point, Bradfield reflects on the cluster's work, including its self-organization and its projects, amongst them the four markets convened by Critical Practice to date. This opens the subsequent

section of this publication, which is composed of commissioned articles. These discussions use dialogue, narrative and analysis to contextualize the market from cultural, historical, sociological, philosophical, political and other angles. Latent in this collection of texts is the desire to produce social space via non-monetary exchange that is free of austerity and other forms of inequality.

Kuba Szreder draws on the feminist economics of J. K. Graham-Gibson to liken the market to an iceberg. The vast majority of transactions took place below the surface, behind the scenes of the project. Szreder presents *TransActing* as a community economy that seeks to resist the managerial framing of art, research and education. Nicholas Temple uses architectural theory (past and present) to trace the transforming nature of the public market: from nourishing and celebratory places for collective participation and memory to today's amnesic environments of shopping malls. Temple compares the historical intertwining of money, trade and religion to the sterility of today's virtual transactions.

The poverty of this predicament contrasts with the richness of Emily Rosamond's account of a 'big felt coin', an instance of *TransActing's* alternative currency, as it circulates. This serves as a point of departure and return for reflecting on the effect of markets as socially engaged art practice, touching on ways this overlaps with but also diverges from the financialized market. A conversation between Andrea Phillips and Verina Gfader speaks to key dynamics within the art market and/or the markets of art. Drawing on her collaborative research project (*Aesthetic and Economic Impact of the Art Market* [2010–ongoing]), Phillips identifies artistic practices concerned with value (SUPERFLEX, Vermeir and Heiremans and others), hinting at the values of artistic knowledge.

Stephen Shukaitis's manifesto-type notes imagine publishing as much more than an apparatus for distributing truth claims. He proposes that publishing should actively support the co-production of meaning as a dynamic and distributed social process. The penultimate text in this collection considers *TransActing* as a built environment. Amy McDonnell and Eva Sajovic explore how the structures of shelter and platform are specific to the market and support distinct types of exchange.

Finally, a glossary aggregated by Cinzia Cremona rounds off and opens up the publication as a resource. This compilation of key

terms nuances the language used throughout this publication to indicate its resonance in the discourse of Critical Practice.

This publication re-performs as a printed text the live event that was *TransActing*. The authors' shared aim is to inject in the published word at least some of the market's original depth and dynamism. Holding fast to the experimental ethos of Critical Practice, this anthology does not shy away from risk when the critical aim is expanding the fields of art and design research. The authors' distinct and overlapping forms (practical, poetic, analytical, etc.) track with the plurality of voices and processes that have nurtured the cluster as it has worked internationally to produce unique projects for more than ten years. Together, this collection of texts identifies the often messy and unpredictable outcomes that result when material and immaterial systems interact in markets and beyond.

There is no such thing as a transaction-free space. This myth compels the authors to understand their lived experience as above all transacted, riddled with a growing range and intensity of exchanges. Hence, one way of addressing the question, 'how can we live together more meaningfully?' is to pay more attention to how we transact and consider why and how this could, perhaps, be otherwise.

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The background of the entire page is a dense collection of small, irregularly shaped wooden tokens. These tokens are in various colors: natural wood, red, yellow, and green. Many of the tokens have text and symbols embossed on them. Some of the visible text includes "Critical Practice", "#TransActing: Time", "#TransActing: Knowledge", and "TransActing". There are also symbols like a heart, a leaf, and a stylized infinity or figure-eight shape.

TRANSACTING AS ART, DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE

A NON-COMMERCIAL MARKET

Edited by

Marsha Bradfield

Cinzia Cremona

Amy McDonnell

Eva Sajovic

**TRANSACTING
AS ART,
DESIGN AND
ARCHITECTURE**



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Marsha Bradfield rides the hyphen as an archivist-artist-curator-director-educator-researcher-writer. Marsha's post-doctoral fellowship at Chelsea College of Arts (2013–15) focused on economies and ecologies of collaborative cultural production. This research propelled *#TransActing: A Market of Values*, the project discussed in this publication.

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Cinzia Cremona is an artist and researcher focused on performative mediated relationality. She experiments with the materiality of the screen and remote intimacy in relational, networked and video performance practices. She is visiting fellow at Macquarie University in Sydney and research fellow at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design (University of Dundee, Scotland).

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Neil Cummings has evolved a multidisciplinary practice that relates to the specific contexts in which art is produced, distributed and encounters its audiences, working directly with museums, galleries, archives and art schools. Examples of his work include the exhibition *Enthusiasm* at the Whitechapel Gallery, the film *Museum Futures: Distributed* (2008) and the publication *The Value of Things*.

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TRANSACTING AS ART, DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE

A NON-COMMERCIAL MARKET

An interdisciplinary anthology exploring alternatives to the principles of commercial markets that dominate contemporary life.

This book applies an experimental ethos to collaborative cultural production. Expanding the fields of art, design and architectural research, contributors provide critical reflections on collaborative practice-based/led research. The volume builds on a pop-up market hosted by the London-based arts cluster Critical Practice that sought to creatively explore existing structures of evaluation and actively produce new ones. Assembled by lead editor Marsha Bradfield, with help from other members of Critical Practice, the chapters contextualize the event within a long history of marketplaces, offer reflections from the stallholders and celebrate its value system, particularly its critique of econometrics.

Marsha Bradfield rides the hyphen as an archivist-artist-curator-educator-researcher-writer. She has been affiliated with Chelsea College of Arts at University of the Arts London since 2006. **Cinzia Cremona** is a Sydney-based artist, researcher, writer and curator who works with video, performance and digital technologies from networked practices to expanded reality. **Amy McDonnell** is a London-based curator in socially engaged art practice and an environmental campaigner. **Eva Sajovic** is an artist and a senior lecturer at University of the Arts London.

