

The Concept of Collectivity as a Figure of Thought

by Mirjam Kroker
Madrid, August, 2016

To decide to be part of a collective¹ you have to be an individual.

Draft of a possible Manifesto:

This is gonna be hard, but interesting Manifesto: A public declaration of your aims. we (:) do not know how valid or convenient is still today a Manifesto.... It takes you back to the first half of the XX century (exactly) and there were bit expectations of the renewal of life...do we have them too? Do we want to change things out there? Or should we be more humble? The last I read about a collective trying to get organized to do a change in the public realm through activism, theory, politics and art (working on the on/off line dynamic, attending local problems from global perspectives), they just found out they were still too young....and dreamy. Maybe it is not about changing the world but changing yourself (exactly: modes of doing becomes modes of existence) and the world around you. Actually today is necessary to think in the sense of micro-modifications, alternate forms of community. We are not naïfs, in the sense above, and the term Manifesto (of course very avant garde) it is used differently today. Writing a Manifesto (nowadays) is valid. Because expresses modes of doing: coherence between artistic production, distribution and (I love how this "and" opens to other possibilities of the chain of production) Working within a collective is to sacrifice, you sidedness for some unimaginable, is to forget about yourself as just 'being' and think in terms of 'being with' (the only way of being according to Jan Luc Nancy) It is in this case the conviction of a radical idea that it is art as a commitment to life is something we have to.....in a collective way So, how is our "being-together"? Or what do we expect from it? There are many ways of 'being-together', we can collaborate (co-labour) or we can cooperate (cooperate). (:) In co labour all activities are aimed towards a single aim or purpose, there is common goal. In co-operation there is no common goal, just a shared enterprise; people work together but toward their own goals. One is a collectivity, the other a network. Do we want a network or a collectivity? Probably both. Networking and collaboration are not necessarily opposed terms. Collaboration is (should be) what we do. That has certain extension (those who actively and horizontally co-work with us), this also may create networks which might also be of different levels of participation. One example is that today there are networks that helps only with dissemination (?), this is what occurs with social networking, for instance. A Manifesto (in itself) is an expression of collectivity. (Especially this one where we are literally co-labouring) We don't care about networks and co-works and entrepreneurs and co-lap or better collapse (jajaja). There is something else behind a commitment to what? For what? A manifesto is a collective birth of a pregnant idea (love it!) with strong contractions. It is not a want it, it is a must. The condition is the same. Something is coming, which you don't know, you can't even control but you have a [...] This "something coming", is what defines what a Manifesto is: coming to an idea which extends a possible future. In that way art is understood as a commitment to life a commitment to the life of others. You don't care the pain and the effort because that is the doing to get it out. Actually it is ? There is nothing new but the collective work is the persuasion to find slightly different facts and things/experiences/concepts? something out together? Cause if it is not labour, in a productive way... is it in a personal way? Maybe it can be counted in the realm of bio-political labour (labour that reproduces forms of life characterized by its potentiality and not by what can be quantified)? Which forms of life/doing are we reproducing or questioning in particular? OnOff line communication that leads to onoff line communities that can be independent from (capital) value.

While we understand that the information is not knowledge, computer see the "complexity" informatics and data exchange as steps for dimensionless, nonlinear and asymmetrical conversations. To consider a new concept of information as a device to switch On and Off in art and in the technosphere, where science and art transform and create new realities. We welcome the conversation at many levels Online and various forms of current interaction as well as the Offline conversation, but also in the post-Internet and "practice hospitality" that go beyond computer systems and paradigms of the logarithms of human behaviour.

The only way to understand singular and collective life in the digital era is by identifying new connections and new ways of acquiring and organizing information (Camnitzer)

Actually we are the uncritical mass we have no proper name, no proper idea no proper goal

Reddit Community!

we are the super suspicious suspects [!!!] the ones you better don't trust, we sometimes talk without thinking, eat without appetite and sleep without dreaming we are the jokers who try to say the truth about the lies.

(We are the super suspicious subjects in labour)

Sounds nice, but... are we? I liked the idea of not wanting to just reproduce our lives, but how to become jokers? The joker is the wild card/cat, the one that can be any other card. We are the uncountable the number is the variant and always replaced. That is against the system of the *super machine* but machines (are) unintelligent by nature (by programming). So the machine has to confront its imperfect conditions. Hence, the idea of "Nature" puts it in question. Since the concept of "nature" is imposed for centuries by religion or fundamentalism, we propose instead a "liquidity" artistic research practice in a constant feedback and reconfiguration. Finally we arrived here... the imperfect world. There is no perfect system/world, so probably we should not be also wanting it, but accepting it. Working from and with it. But the manifesto is something else, it is not the super machine. It's rather the antivirus system of the supermachine itself. It tries to defend the destructive nature of the machine. Discovering through the failures and chaos a (...) system, the supermachine doesn't need a convenient system, the inconvenient is the convenient system itself. That is why it is always reproduced in circles and loops without an ending. How does an antivirus then work like? Disturbance is its best diet. The antivirus scans the complete system and attacks it (sometimes permanently) to help recovering it. Sometimes the antivirus mimics the real system, to distract, and/or to empowers itself.

No action is its addiction but sometimes it is disobedient.

coffee break (10 mins)-
ok-ok-okok-
thanks-back-
tanks-
Haha-
we-can-skype-now?-or?-

Fig. 1: From the Archive of ON/OFF COLLABORATION. Draft of a Manifesto written online (January 2016) by the 5 of us via a shared online document without talking. Jimena Mendizábal del Moral, Amsterdam; Alejandro Orozco, Mexico City; Juan Toro, Berlin; Carolina Alba, Mirjam Kroker, Berlin.

¹ Even though a lot has been written and said about art collectives/collaborations/cooperations/communities etc., there is little opacity in how collective art is produced.