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Terms Of Use: Embodied and Empowered Gallery Participation In the Digital Age

THESIS

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

In Curatorial and Critical Studies/ Studio Art

By

Corin Allison Siegel

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

Thesis Committee:

Professor Rhea Anastas, Chair

Litia Perta

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Victoria Johnston

2019

To you, taking time with these words

And to Mom and Dad, makers of time.

Thank you for teaching the value of deep looking, thinking, and sharing.

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Abstract

Terms Of Use: Embodied and Empowered Gallery Participation In the Digital Age

By

Corin A. Siegel

May 28, 2019

Master Of Fine Arts, Curatorial and Critical Studies,

Claire Trevor School Of the Arts

University of California, Irvine, 2019

Professor Rhea Anastas, Chair

 Terms of Use was an exhibition that presented artworks by Katie Herzog, Fiona Connor, and The Archive of Privatized Experience. The works were united by themes of community, information, the archive, the internet, and preservation. A central consideration of the exhibition was the way visitors and artists could use the space. The Archive Of Privatized Experience paid viewers for the time they spent in the gallery. The amount visitors were promised was equal to what advertisers pay social media companies for an equivalent consumer's data.

 I share my experience from the perspective of exhibition

organizer and participant through personal reflections and observations in the gallery. I also describe my professional and intellectual development to provide context for how I made this experimental exhibition. The text introduces the inheritance of the western modernist gallery tradition to outline a convention and a subversion of these rules. I draw relationships between the gallery system and sharing platforms online. Historical, economic, and social legacies play out on participatory platforms. The extent of participation and agency of the user is brought into question through reference to several theorists, design ethicists, and participatory responses from friends and strangers who contributed text and voted in polls about their use of social media. I advocate for the importance of an embodied experience in the gallery, as well as a de-hierachized view of the exhibition space. To use art as a place for radical possibility, the curator must work with and for audiences.

Agreement

1.   You, henceforth known as the reader, agree to start at the first page of this text and cross your eyes from left to right over the rest of the pages until you are finished.

2.   The reader agrees that the arts is a realm and discipline that can be segmented and described.

3.   The reader agrees to participate in various idiosyncratic field specific discourses and insular dialogues about the meaning of art, it's function in society, it's assumed value, as well as the ways people participate in art and conventional gallery spaces.

4.   The reader agrees to participate in a western-centric examination of a specific postmodernist field of culture.

5.   The reader agrees exhibition spaces separate art from life.

6.   The reader will be exposed to statements that proclaim their truth and spell out the terms and assumptions embedded in the display and production of art.

7.   These assumptions will fail.

8.   The reader may have thoughts that run parallel to this text which reiterate legacies of critique, expectations for art, and preferences related to their personal history.

9.   The reader of this text will not be able to contribute, unless they create a new text, or tear this one up, or write in the margins, or sing it, or dance through it, or translate it, or breathe.

10.   The reader of this text gives the author's words power through the act of reading itself, much in the same way the author's discussion of the arts, Internet, and participation give these concepts power, even if they are intending to challenge them.

X_____

I am roused from my slumped reading position by a snort-like snore a few feet away. A slumbering student wearing a UC Irvine sweatshirt rolls over in their beanbag chair and knocks their folder to the floor. The blurred rubbing by Katie Herzog that filled my peripheral vision before comes into focus. I imagine the architecture of a distant building as my sight traces up from the black wax to the ceiling of the gallery I am sitting in. I become conscious of my body, my attention, the novel but faintly familiar experience of day dreaming.

How long has it been since I let my eyes and mind roam around a room like this? Zoning out is something I do in a concentrated way these days, with a mind toward an objective. I flip through social media, emails, and articles like I am looking for some crucial object that I lost but forgot what it was. I lose track of time and space this way. Similarly to zoning out while watching the TV, I have an object of interest, an objective, a task. Counter to the TV however, I feel a sense of control, a level of perceived empowerment around my ability to engage with the Internet. I question this perception most times I see 40 minutes have gone by and I still don't know the time of my scheduled work meeting that I logged on to determine in the first place. My mobile device has become a sort of prosthesis, an object that I carry everywhere, but also something that I think is a necessary mediator for my thoughts, relationships, and work life.

I sense a phantom buzz from my phone, which is locked up 10 feet away. I can feel it calling to me, but I will have to alert a gallery attendant to unlock the safe. I know that the feeling of urgency is just that, a feeling, not a logical conclusion. I wonder if this is how an addict feels, the itching for empty but reliable gratification. I think of a New York Times article that stated alcohol and drug addiction was being replaced by addiction to phones[1]. I want to google that article, but my phone is still 10 feet away. I want to check the time so I walk over to take a look at the digital clock installed on the gallery desk. It has been 30 minutes.

My mind is looping around the work in the room, and my thoughts race. I am thinking about history, the Internet, social space, socialism, Marxism, neoliberalism, grave rubbings, Rodin's and Degas' bronzes as well as the way their estates were handled after their deaths, the library at Alexandria, Michael Asher, expectations of the curator and economic consequences of exhibition making,

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[1]Richtel, Matt. "Are Teenagers Replacing Drugs With Smart Phones?" *The New York Times* (New York, NY), March 13, 2017, Health.

among other things. I watch my thoughts whiz by and wish I could use my notes

function on my phone to record some of these ideas. I wonder if the active condition

of my mind is due to the restriction I have placed on my use of Internet-enabled

devices in the space. I wonder if this state of being without this device is unlocking

the artwork I am surrounded by in a different way. I wonder how Fiona Connor

would feel about a student sleeping under her work.

Over the course of its installation at UC Irvine (UCI) I spent

many hours sitting in *Terms Of Use*, as well as locking up my phone in the exhibition.

For this text I am writing from the viewpoint of my own experience as a curator and

viewer of my exhibition. The embodied experience of the installation and the

personal, social, and economic story of an exhibition is a crucial part of the work.

This cornerstone to the work is often unacknowledged in writing about exhibitions.

Museums are typically designed in such a way that curators' offices are far removed

from the gallery floor. Recent controversy around the Peter Zumthor LACMA rebuild

points to a plan to further isolate museum workers from the building by way of

increased off-site office space[2]. In addition to advocating for the curatorial reflection on an exhibition and its visitor experience, I am also paying homage to feminist and black radical approaches to subject-hood in my writing style. Authors like Audre Lorde, bell hooks, Donna Haraway, Fredrick Douglass, Frantz Fanon, and Fred Moten, among others, use personal stories and invoke lived experience to convey a value system and relay a message. These thinkers assert their voice to the world in which their experience is historically silenced. I am interested in cultivating personal address as way to further integrate the experience of viewers, which is often conspicuously absent, with the authority of the curator, artist, and writer. I want to use a technique of speaking about exhibitions that can be accessible to a person that is not necessarily from an art educated background or of privileged status. In addition, my personal, conversational approach to writing this text mirrors the contemporary trend in digital culture towards sharing one's experience publicly on social media platforms.

Nicholas A. John, In his book, "The Age of Sharing" traces our current digital and social landscape and the trend towards "making private stories into public communicative acts"[3] to counter-cultural movements of the 1970s. He points to Paddy Scannell's term, the 'communicative turn' of post war Western

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[2]Knight, Christopher. "LACMA, the Incredible Shrinking Museum: A Critics Lament" *The LA Times* (Los Angeles, CA), April 2, 2019, Arts.

[3]John, Nicholas A. *The Age of Sharing,*(Cambridge, Polity Press, 2017), 108.

Photograph courtesy Yubo Dong

World[4] and argues that "self-expression was seen by many Americans (in the 1970's counter-cultural movement) as the key to liberation, with 'candor', 'intimacy' and self-awareness especially lionized"[5]. The counter-cultural approach to sharing was informed by therapeutic conversation circles employed by Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), who in turn were influenced by the group confessional instated by a Christian religious organization, The Oxford Group. In the Oxford Group and AA, "Truth is attained via the gaze, and putting our 'sins' into words both objectifies and reifies them, making them real. This enables others to gaze upon our sins and confessions (or upon us) and thus redeem us, or give us value"[6]. He continues "Truth is ensured not by talking to God, but by placing ourselves under the scrutiny of another person. This presages the logic both of talk shows and reality TV, which also have a deeply therapeutic bent, and of social media"[7]. Therapeutic confessional approaches and countercultural strategies of expression have permeated media, which further sculpts and monetizes these expressions of self and relationships between others.

Not only were radical confessional strategies welcomed into the mainstream, the personal computer revolution of the 1990's was directly

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[4] Ibid.,102.

[5] Ibid., 102.

[6] Ibid., 108.

[7] Ibid., 108.

informed by revolutionary politics and the 1960's art scene[8]. Fred Turner states; "To a generation that had grown up in a world beset by massive armies and by the threat of nuclear holocaust, the cybernetic notion of the globe as a single, interlinked pattern of information was deeply comforting: in the invisible play of information, many thought they could see the possibility of global harmony."[9] This utopic quest to transform the military industrial technology of the internet to a decentralized system for all people was informed by radical homesteading movements, psychedelic drugs, and the avant-garde. At the same time these tools and approaches were also taken up by the right wing. Turner states "As they turned away from agonistic politics and toward technology, consciousness, and entrepreneurship as the principles of a new society, the communards of the 1960's developed a utopian vision that was in many ways quite congenial to the insurgent Republicans of the 1990s".[10] The personal computing device provided an unprecedented way for individuals to connect in a global community, but it also enabled companies to access consumers in their private space, outsource their employees work, and deregulate business practices.

Terms of Use, as an exhibition and textual reflection on the exhibition, take up questions around the personal and political as expressed in the

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[8] Turner, Fred: *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism.,* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2006), 5.

[9] Ibid., 5.

[10] Ibid., 8.

infrastructure of an exhibition. Large sections of culture operate under a belief that looking can redeem, and sharing can create radical changes in society. How can we see this reflected in an exhibition space, which is dedicated to looking, and role of a curator and artist who share their work in this forum[11]? How can this particular form of sharing and viewing be deployed at a time when looking and sharing are being transformed and redefined on digital platforms? How can we critically navigate the infrastructure of the internet and gallery to use it towards radical purposes? What are ways to subvert the ongoing commercial appropriation of age old practices of sharing and looking in order to place power back into the hands of the individual or the collective?

The time I spent in the exhibition I curated and installed brought up many more questions than it answered. Each time I sat in the gallery I heard visitor observations that enabled me to evaluate my approach. I also found that I could direct my attention in different ways in the exhibition, resulting in different understandings of myself, the space, and the works exhibited.

There are many ways that institutions, artists, writers, and curators might evaluate the success of an exhibition. For me, the achievements of the exhibition *Terms of Use*, mounted in January 2019 at UC Irvine's UAG galleries, had

[11] Art's role as an agent of change and a way of sharing has been connected to patronage and tensions between private and public since antiquity or perhaps even earlier.

to do with the way the space and resources of the gallery were used as much as what the art looked like or how well the research supporting the exhibition was conveyed to an audience. Crafting an interesting looking exhibition that communicated research to visitors was a specific aim of mine and I was pleased with how it was manifested in the gallery. However, the primary measure of success for me was the multivalent way that the exhibition was used by its audience, as well as the way that the exhibition supported the practice of each artist shown through monetary compensation and other curatorial services, like assistance in writing grants, providing recommendations, and connecting them with other institutions for their future projects.

Photograph courtesy Yubo Dong

Seeing people in conversation with their backs towards work, hearing curious visitors ask the guard where the art was while they stood directly in front of Fiona Connor's work, watching students reading or doodling- completely absorbed in their world, or encountering groups of students taking selfies or videos of the exhibition for their social media feeds were all barometers of achievement for me. These uses of the space (especially as a selfie backdrop) were sometimes in opposition to my intended objectives for the exhibition. The way viewers moved freely through the space and made it work for them, however, revealed a versatile framework that I aim for in my role as an artist and curator. By spending many hours in the exhibition I was able to see how the space unfolded for me as a viewer, as well as the way audiences engaged with the work.

Ordinarily a curator or artist might not measure an exhibition's efficacy by its recession into the background in photographs, or its position as a playroom for children, or reading space for students. However, for me the adaptability of an exhibition for each visitor within the framework of a few key rules and uniting aesthetics, speaks to the way exhibitions can engage audiences to take on empowered forms of viewership, interpretation, and engagement. This is especially important as the words "engagement" "sharing" and "empowerment" have taken on new meanings in the digital age. These utopian terms have most recently been co-opted by social media corporations to frame the free labor and

information "consumers" turn over to corporations as a radical shift towards the empowerment and liberation of the self.

I have experienced first hand art's ability to transform and empower individuals as well as strengthen communities. As a child, art was one of my first forms of communication. I used it to express myself and learn about the world around me. This belief in art led me to study it, its history, as well as ways to make it. I engaged in training in Art Therapy, and worked with homeless populations and populations of children who had experienced abuse to create artwork. As I continued on a professional path I worked in artists' archives, and interned for professional artists. I found I was most driven to share arts with marginalized communities and students so I followed a path towards museum education in order to work with low income schools in order to provide them with museum experiences that they would not otherwise have. Palo Frierie's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*[12] as well as Corita Kent's[13] approach to education were foundational elements that informed the way I saw my relationship between education and the arts. Both thinkers were revolutionaries devoted to nurturing the unique voices of their students.

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[12] 204 Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. (New York, Continuum, 2007)

[13] Kent, Corita and Jan Steward. *Learning by Heart: Teachings To Free the Creative Spirit Edition 2*. (New York, Allworth Press, 2008)

Friere writes "Teachers and students (leadership and people), co-intent on reality, are both Subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge. As they attain this knowledge of reality through common reflection and action, they discover themselves as its permanent re-creators"[14]. I saw my work as an artist as interconnected to my work as a teacher and humanist. In order to create change, I needed to find ways to support artists and viewers to explore big questions. At the same time that I was working as an educator I was attempting to find ways of supporting my artist community. I started an experimental gallery, Actual Size Los Angeles in 2010 with artists Justin John Greene, Lee Foley and Samia Mirza. I was simultaneously creating my own work and research around mapping, diaspora and genocide, and finding ways to share this work publicly in ways that were accessible and palatable to a range of audiences.

While I was working within museums and galleries I became interested in the power dynamics of these spaces as well as the contradictions between what they said they were doing vs what they were doing. I found while running Actual Size I was making many assumptions about how things should be done because of economic and social legacies around western art history. I became critical of my own complicity in this system and wanted to cross-examine my

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[14] Alesandrou, Alex and Sue Swaffield. *Teacher Leadership and Professional Development.* (New York, NY, Routeledge, 2014) 204

motives as well as the efficacy of my approach to making and exhibiting art. I decided to go to grad school to think more about this as well as receive a degree that I assumed and was told I needed to continue my work in museums.

My first exhibition at UCI was a collaborative project with Renee Reizman, Nicolas G. Miller, and Danielle Nieves. The exhibition presented each curator's distinct project and united the works under the theme and title *Presence of Absence*. We decided that we wanted the exhibition space to have a social function so that it could be used by the UCI student community and we programed a series of lunchtime gatherings where we served snacks and facilitated

conversations around specific topics. We set up a living room complete with coffee table, comfy chairs, a rug, and two couches to create a gathering space outside of the framework of an institutional university space. We found that the initial themed conversations we had framed were transformed according to visitor interest and the space became a comfortable host for difficult conversations after the 2016 election.

When I first considered a way to use the UAG gallery space at UCI for my thesis I proposed the establishment and launch of the beta form of MFA LMAO (Manager of Funds For the Arts, Library of Mutual Aid and Obligation). This project was a speculative banking and educational initiative. It was conceived as a community centered platform informed by radical pedagogy, modern banking systems, social networking, and cult economies. My goal was to use the space of the gallery in a multipurpose manner. Rather than mounting an exhibition, I wanted to use the resources at UC Irvine to foster dialogue about the University and students' precarious situation within the University. The gallery space was conceived as a space to strategize ways to work for change in the University and to launch small scale projects that UCI students could participate in.

My logic was that today educational systems operate increasingly like banks, as seen from controversies around USC, Cooper Union and UCI. Educational institutions take up financial considerations and strategies of banks

while at the same time the banks that they base themselves upon cultivate global

financial crisis situations and a growing wealth gap. The shifting economy has pushed

individuals toward a new relationship to work as well as leisure. It has also helped to

popularize sharing platforms, many of which are framed as utopian tools to connect

individuals and boost them financially. However, the corporations are often those

who benefit most from these sharing platforms. They benefit by taking a portion of

profits from the labor or objects their users provide, or by selling their user data.

My question was, what if we can reimagine the role of the

University and the investment we put into it? What if we evaluated our use of time in

the University in order to study the way we assign value? What if we could create a

new financial system, rather than follow the banking model of education? The phrase

"banking model of education" points to the economic drivers of educational

institutions and how this seeps into most aspects of the University- including the

students it admits, the learning that takes place in the classrooms, as well as the support provided to its students. This phrase also evokes Paulo Friere's use of the term "banking" to refer to the misguided view that students are empty vessels that should be filled with knowledge by the educator, rather than complete individuals who are each bringing their unique point of view. What if we could lead the way for future financial systems by creating a collaborative model that recognizes the inherent value of each participant? I wanted to experiment with enacting physical relationships and agreements around sharing in non-digital space. By referring to the project through institutional language and adapting strategies of social media and banking corporations I wished to model the way we are turning over our agency to corporations and banks on a small scale, while also providing a space to reimagine and configure this system.

The idea was received with mixed reviews. Some wondered why I should do this project within the gallery space. I stated because it was a dedicated space available to me. Some wondered how it was a curatorial project, because it included no artists. I argued that artists would participate in the framework and sculpt the experiment through participation. I saw myself aligned with curators like Harold Szeeman, Okwui Enwezor and Hans-Ulrich Obrist, who not only curated exhibitions featuring artists, but also used the curatorial platform as an arena with specific terms of engagement that could invite participation. Some wondered

how it was art and I pointed to projects by artists like Mel Chin, Michael Rakowitz, Krzysztof Wodiczko, Rick Lowe, Adrian Piper, Theaster Gates, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Mark Bradford, and Pedro Reyes who create collaborative systems or environments for their viewers to occupy and interact within. Ultimately the project was not completed because I did not feel I had sufficient time to simplify the model and make something that would function for the community in an open and interesting way. I also realized that in the time that it would take me to produce this initiative I would not be able to eloquently justify why it was in an arts context even though I believed that this was an important component of the work, especially because of art's ongoing relationship to visually manifesting power and social values.

The research I engaged in while generating this project around this new feudalism of sharing apps and banking history led me to Portugal to trace the colonial roots of banking, the country's recovery from the global financial crisis, as well as the role Airbnb and Uber were playing in the gentrification of Lisbon and Porto. Anthony Kalamar, describes this "sharing" zeitgeist as "sharewashing", where businesses hide their quest for profits behind the benevolent disguise of "sharing". In the process, the possibility of a genuine sharing economy –a socialist economy based on communal ownership and a plan of production– is pushed to the side. And while these companies may help reduce waste in a certain sector, on a

societal level they act to expand the market[15]. He continues to argue "It also disables the very promise of an economy based on sharing by stealing the very language we use to talk about it, turning a crucial response to our impending ecological crisis into another label for the very same economic logic which got us into that crisis in the first place...[16]". The language that I was using to think about my behavior online had been determined by corporations who were framing their platforms in idealist terms. However, these terms might actually be pushing me further away from what I believed I was going towards- collectivity, discourse, and sharing.

I began to wonder about my own use of the sharing economy in my online life as well as my role as an economic actor and social being. I was also reconsidering my idea of leisure. I was using my winter vacation to conduct research for my thesis. I felt the need to justify my trip as an educational necessity and to post on social media about the places I was visiting. It seemed like I was working as my own PR agent on vacation, which was also a research trip. I realized at a certain point I was partially measuring the success of my trip from Instagram "likes" and comments.

While walking through the soaring Manuelain architecture of abbeys, churches, and castles I looked up at the gold architectural details and

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[15] Kalamar, Anthony. " Sharewashing is the New Greenwashing" *OpEdNews.com*, May , 13, 2019 *https://www.opednews.com/articles/Sharewashing-is-the-New-Gr-by-Anthony-Kalamar-130513-834.html*

[16] Ibid.

wondered what shapes the metal had been originally formed into. I wondered if it had come from Arabia, or Sudan, or Brazil. I thought of the uncredited labor and devastation that contributed to these gilded halls. I wondered how this financial and social relationship could be compared to the cheap labor that individuals in Africa and India engaged in as they recycled toxic E waste to collect gold to furnish the innards of my iPhone. I removed my hidden gilded palace from my pocket. I took a photo for Instagram on my phone and tagged the location, sharing it with my followers.

I decided to do some research about labor breakdowns in the United States and how they relate to historic breakdowns of labor and leisure and found that "The average American worker takes less vacation time than a medieval peasant"[17]. Then I began to think of the time I spend online, and the habitual and obsessive way I use almost every free moment. I wondered how this time could be monetized. I also wondered why the phone has become so alluring to me over the

[17]Parramore, Lynn "The average American worker takes less vacation time than a medieval peasant" *Business Insider* (New York, NY) Nov, 7, 2016

past 5 years, or even more so over the last year. Why was I giving up so much of my little free time and attention to a screen?

In 1967 Guy Debord presented the concept of the Spectacle[18]. According to his Marxist analysis, authentic social life was being replaced by its representation in film, TV, and news. He called this "the decline of *being* into *having*, and *having* into merely *appearing*"[19]. Debord argued that critical thought, quality of life, social relationships, and a sense of history were collapsed and limited within the spectacular (image-based) society. Mass media and commodity fetishisim (A Marxist concept that navigates the dual state between the object and the social relations that the product produces under capitalism) had centralized representation rather than truly lived experience. Though my Instagram posts were meant to convey an experience of my trip to friends, I did realize how my experience of the trip was being transformed and objectified by votes, likes, and comments about the images of my experience. I thought of the saying "pics or it didn't happen" and the way my experience was literally being filtered through a lens of ever- impeding representation A meta world was emerging, as well as a task I felt I needed to complete. I wanted to document my trip to possess it in some way through the image. I found that this made me favor the scopic (the way things looked)

18 Debord, Guy. *Society Of The Spectacle*. New York, NY: Zone Books, 1994

19 Ibid., 17

in terms of certain decisions on my trip. I wondered if sharing images was holding me back from true experience or if true experience now was about living between digital and embodied worlds.

Three years before Debord penned "*Society of The Spectacle*" Marshal McLuhan proposed that the "medium is the message" in his book "*Understanding Media, The Extensions of Man*"[20] He argued that a medium, also known as technology, or media, is an extension of ourselves that affects the way we perceive and interact with our environment. He stated mediums, rather than the content they convey, are the most transformative components of culture. They take on qualities of previous mediums, for example print, TV, film, theatre, to become their own language that has "psychic, and social consequences". I thought my relationship with Instagram was eclipsing the relationships I was having on it. Its usefulness as an image aggregator and social network was being far outweighed by its adverse effects- jealously, FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out), distraction, and emphasis on what other people saw or how highly rated my images were rather than my own preferences. The way sharing platforms had integrated themselves and transformed my life came into focus. It was not the content of friends' posts that affected me, but the way this content was being delivered to me, the impersonal scrolling and

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[20] McLuhan, Marshall and Lewis H. Lapham. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994

sometimes involuntary viewing of story feeds was changing the way I interacted and took in information. How I used this platform was altering my relationships and way of thinking. Nicholas Carr stated in his 2010 book *The Shallows:*" [if] you were to set out to invent a medium that would rewire our mental circuits as quickly and thoroughly as possible, you would probably end up designing something that looks and works a lot like the Internet"[21]. Interviews I conducted with Uber drivers, AirBnB hosts, artists and cultural workers in Portugal indicated that not only were apps and internet transforming social and psychological relationships, they were also changing the economic and social landscape, as well as the skyline and streetscape of the city.

In the sharing economy ownership is transitory and transferable. Millennials increasingly value experience over ownership[22]. The transition to the spectacle in cultural spaces has been greatly affected by the experience economy. It affects the food consumers eat, the make up they wear, the way social relations are mediated, and the places they travel to. I started to think about the way I was fueling this system, and if I could use the time I spent in it in a way that could challenge it, in a similar way to which I hoped I could challenge and expand educational systems with MFA LMAO.

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[21]Price, Catherine. *How To Break Up With Your Phone.* New York, NY: Ten Speed Press, 2018 pg 53

[22]Morgan, Blake "NOwnership, No Problem: An Updated Look At Why Millennials Value Experience Over Owning Things" *Forbes* Jan 2, 2019

I thought that a Situationist approach of Détournement, a method of appropriating tools of industry and capital in order to upend the system could engage viewers outside of an arts context. In this way the project could function like Adrian Piper's early catalytic works, in which the artist walked in public with wet paint on her clothes, stuffed her face with cotton balls, and tied balloons to herself. She presented these works without framing them within an arts context. Adrian Piper wrote in reflection on these works "The strongest impact that can be received by a person in the passive capacity of viewer is the impact of human confrontation (within oneself or between people). It is the most aggressive and the most threatening, possibly because it is the least predictable and least controllable in consequences".[23] I wondered if I could confront social media users on the platform in a transformative way. At the same time I wanted to confront the viewer about the ingrained behavior and belief systems I assumed they carried, I also wanted to convey that I felt stuck in the system I was questioning. Adrian Piper stated in relation to her early work "I exist simultaneously as the artist and the work. I define the work as the viewer's reaction to it. The strongest, most complex, and most aesthetically interesting catalysis is the one that occurs in the uncategorized, undefined, non-pragmatic human confrontation. The immediacy of the artist's presence as artwork/ catalysis confronts the viewer with a broader, more powerful, and more ambiguous situation than discrete forms or

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[23] Piper, Adrian *Adrian Piper, Out of Order, Out of Sight, Selected Writings in Meta-Art, 1968-1992* (Cambridge, The MIT Press, 1996), 32.

objects"[24]. Could making a creative project on Instagram, an assumed digital extension of myself make it more successful than creating a project within an arts context?

I decided to use my personal Instagram as a way to ask questions to my friends about their usage of the platform. The series of questions that I asked were posted over the course of 3 months on the Instagram story app. Each question was meant to elicit interaction, either by asking a question through the question feature, or hosting a poll through the poll feature. The question feature enables participants to answer as well as for the question-poser to post the answers to their story. The poll enables viewers to choose between two buttons and see a live feed of how people are voting.

It was essential to the project to ask the questions along with an image or video from my life that I might normally post on Instagram stories, so that the poll was personal and that I implicated myself through my usage of the platform. I hoped that I could demonstrate the way Instagram was functioning on two separate levels in text and image. This method was also a way to further engage viewers who might have been interested in using stories for its assumed use, the dissemination of glimpses of other peoples' lives.

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[24] Ibid, 43.

The response I had to the stories project was overwhelming. Many people reached out to me on Instagram and outside the platform to say how the project had helped them to reevaluate their relationship to social media. On the other hand, some friends were frustrated and angry that the response to the polls were unfavorable about social media and they felt the need to write me personally about the good that the platform had done for them. I found that my time on the app skyrocketed while conducting the survey, even as the experiment seemed to indicate that the app was not a particularly healthy tool as I was using it. Polling and answers from my follower base concluded that the app made people feel worse about themselves and harmed social interactions. I was struck by the heartbreaking honesty that some friends used to answer the questions, and also the responses that some of my Instagram followers had to the answers I posted. After the success of this project I wanted to spend more time thinking with others about the manner in which this tool was changing how we viewed and participated in my life.

As relationships to labor, privacy, the spectacle, and engagement are shifting in the Internet age, museums and galleries are also changing. In 2016 Ben Davis coined the term "Big Fun Art" to refer to experiential exhibitions centered around providing interactive immersive spectacle for its audiences. Though the spectacle of panoramic paintings and blockbuster exhibitions aimed at mass viewership has partially sculpted exhibition spaces since the mid 19th

century, new relationships to viewing in the social media era are popularizing specific forms of exhibition making and viewer engagement. Davis points to examples such a "Meow Wolf", "29 Rooms" and the "Museum of Ice Cream". These spaces were designed to attract viewers with spectacle, as well as a be a backdrop for selfies. He states "Big Fun Art doesn't require any historical knowledge, context, or even patience to be enjoyed (except the patience of waiting in a line). On the other hand, that also means you don't really need something like a museum to vouchsafe it."[25] He also points to the way artist work created before the Internet, like that of Yayio Kusama, has changed in the Instagram culture of arts' viewership. These exhibitions can draw crowds and democratize the viewing experience, however they can also minimize the importance of critical research, depth, and slow looking. Davis states, "this kind of art's influence is likely going to spread quickly from the margins, putting pressures on museums to embrace it or define themselves against it"[26].

Whether a consumer owns a smart device or uses social media, the way these platforms function has radically altered our political and social landscape. Examples include the election of reality TV star Donald Trump, the rapid news cycle and shift in journalistic standards, the sheer amount of photographs individuals take, our hasty access to information and misinformation, the way radical

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[25] Davis, Ben " State Of The Culture, Part I: Museums, 'Experiences,' and the Year of Big Fun Art" *artnetnews* December 27, 2017

[26] Ibid.

movements have changed, the growing amount of marginalized voices that have a

platform, as well as increased distribution of videos of police violence against people

of color, to name a few. The way we interact, learn, and look is sculpted by social

media and collaborative platforms, however in an age when Silicon Valley companies

make statements about how we each should share our unique voice, we are working

within a system determined by a select few. Tristan Harris, a former Google employee

and design ethicist has stated "Never before in history have the decisions of a

handful of designers (mostly men, white, living in SF, aged 25-35) working at 3

companies had so much impact on how millions of people around the world spend

their attention."[27]

Terms of Use agreements are forms and structures that

partially determine the agency of individuals and consumers. There is no way to

negotiate, users must consent to the complete set of rules in order to participate. In

the Internet era these terms of use change regularly, often are written in small print,

and contain such a volume of text that they are difficult[28] and time consuming to read,

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[27] Price, *How To*, 28.

[28] "Among the 500 most-visited websites which use sign-in-wrap agreements in September 2018,[7]"
70% of agreements had average sentence lengths over 25 words, (where 25 or less is needed for
consumer readability)
  - median FRE (Flesch Reading Ease) score was 34 (where over 60 is considered readable by
    consumers)
  - median F-K (Flesch-Kincaid) score was 15 years of school (498 of 500 had scores higher than
    the recommended 8th grade)
Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, "Terms Of Use", (accessed May 7, 2019) https://
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terms_of_service

and often are written in opaque obtuse legalese language that blankets the consumer with words meant to entrap, or if not entrap, create opportunities for corporations to escape legal action. According to a calculation in The New York Times "The average person would have to spend 76 working days reading all of the digital privacy policies they agree to in the span of a year. Reading Amazon's terms and conditions alone out loud takes approximately nine hours"[29].

As an exhibition title, *Terms of Use* is meant to convey a layered meaning to the reader. Firstly, It refers to the agreements that we are required to sign in order to use services through corporations. Secondly, it indicates the significance of language. Thirdly, it points to the way objects and the use of these objects shape the world. And finally, the exhibition and title intend to turn a critical eye toward expectations of usage and behavior of a visitor, artwork, gallery attendant, and curator in in an exhibition space. The exhibition attempts to use the gallery space, which holds a legacy and relationship with power, in a way that de-hierarchizes the viewing experience and recognizes the essential labor of viewers.

The exhibition *Terms of Use* attempts to address the way Internet platforms such as social media value personal data and user attention, as

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[29]Editorial board "How Silicon Valley Puts the 'Con' in Consent" *The New York Times*
(New York, Feb 2. 2019)

well as the manner in which art can address systems of knowledge and interaction in

a way to make them tangible, or at least to transfer them over into some sort of

physical realm. It does this through the varied approach and social political

landscape each artist and curator in the exhibition occupies. It also does this through

the exhibition's extension into the digital landscape, including an Instagram take over

in conjunction with the exhibition.

Photo courtesy Yubo Dong

Terms are defined as "a word or phrase used to describe a

thing or to express a concept, especially in a particular kind of language or branch of

study"[30] The word derives from the Latin origin, "terminus", denoting a limit in space and time. Terms refer to a specific referent, and they also connote personal boundaries or requirements. Language is something we use to extend ourselves and our wants, needs, and ideas. We use it to describe, interact and transform our world. We can use language to physically change a situation or a feeling, like yelling "Fire!", in a theatre, saying "I do.", or signing a check. Language is part of the physical world; it needs the physical world, a tongue to shape a sound, a key to send a signal, a referent to describe. Language also seems to float above the world. Objects also can become a language; a signifier; objects can shift in use and meaning. One could point to Saussure[31], and talk about signs and use, one could point to Barthes writing on Myth[32], but simply, art is a way that we use objects differently, or at least can use objects differently. Especially when objects are cast, depicted, or removed from normal use, when they are found, appropriated etc. They make us see those objects as having a different use value (to follow the Marxist concept of the tangible usage of an object), as invested in an idea of the thing rather than the thing itself. This opens up possibilities of meaning and value.

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[30] English Oxford Living Dictionary "terms" accessed May, 2019 https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/term

[31] De Saussure, F.:*Course in General Linguistics*(McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, NY, 1915)

[32] Barthes, Roland: *Mythologies* (Hill and Wang New York, NY, 1957)

Terms of Use

Fiona Connor
Katie Herzog
The Archive of Privatized Experience

Curated by Corrie Siegel

January 19- February 16, 2019
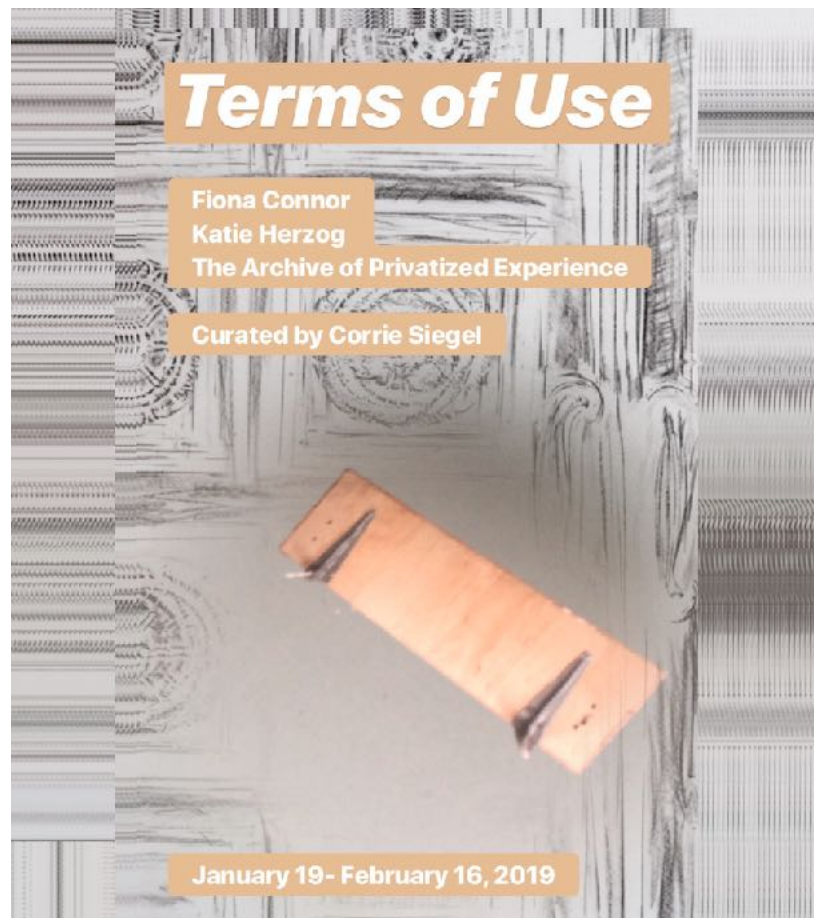
"Use" is defined as "take, hold, or deploy (something) as a means of accomplishing a purpose or achieving a result; employ."[33] In this understanding, use is about owning or possessing a tool. It is about being and acting in the world. The works of art in the exhibition subvert the expected use of the object which they depict. In turn they perform another use. They also provide an opportunity to investigate the aesthetic and conceptual implications of architecture, code, value, and furniture, and the implications of these systems. While they are performing this function the works are also interacting with the architecture of the gallery in specific ways to transform viewer's relationship with the space and with each other.

[33]English Oxford Living Dictionary "use" accessed May, 2019 https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/use

Photo courtesy Yubo Dong

       The experience of an exhibition is formed not just by the objects and their placement and use in the gallery but the conventions of the gallery space itself. An exhibition relates to the boundaries and terms contained within arts' discourse as well as arts' spaces. In order to speak about how a particular exhibition works, it is helpful to have a framework around how exhibitions are conventionally expected to work. To do this we need to discuss and define the terms and usage assumed in an art gallery space. Like the long Terms of Use statements shared by online corporations, galleries have invisible contracts of visitor behavior that are often implicit; embedded in the viewing experience. These conditions are present in the

way exhibitions are documented, funded, hung, and monitored. Museums may have

signage that restricts or encourages photography, prohibits food or drink, or dictate

how much space an individual should leave between themselves and a work. In

addition many unspoken rules of behavior exist, and visitors willingly enter a

Foucaultdian panopticon of normalizing behavior[34] in gallery spaces.

Photo Courtesy Yubo Dong

Like the invisible infrastructures and laws that shape daily

interactions, many of these expectations are present but hidden to the viewer.

However, in the western modernist tradition, art is often cast in the role as a

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[34] Foucault, Michel: *Discipline And Punish, Second Vintage Books Edition. (*New York, NY: Random House, 1995)

transgressive system that provides space for considering rules and violating them.

What does it mean to enter into a contract that has so much baggage, yet also

presents itself as a realm of possibility? In subverting some normal means of use of the

gallery, and economic dynamics usually expected of the viewers, the exhibition *Terms*

of Use attempted to highlight and contradict ordinary expectations within art gallery

and museum contexts.

Here are a few expectations for a white cube gallery[35]:

Walls are white. Floor is neutral, grey or brown, a surface that is supposed to be

taken as invisible. Electrical outlets, light switches, and other functional parts of the

building should be deemphasized, recede to a point that they are imperceptible to

the viewer. The gallery should be a dedicated space for the work. Installation shots

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[35] In this thesis I attempt to define my terms as well as expectations in the gallery setting in reaction to the lack of clarity and ethically dubious way social media companies hide their rules, or make them so long that individuals often don't read them. While I am finding that it is difficult to list the terms and conditions of a gallery space, by attempting to record these expectations we can cross examine these ideas and move beyond them. I don't want to reduce an art space to a set of rules. I want the arts to function outside of rules, to make new things possible. But when I think that not providing these guidelines directly mirrors the logic and utopian rhetoric of social media corporations definitions become necessary. I don't want my unwillingness to define arts spaces and expectation of these spaces to release the arts from responsibility, to give it freedom as a discipline, rather than liberate the individuals that are viewing or experiencing it.

In order to expand the space of the gallery for those who view, make, and think about art, one must first understand the aesthetic of gallery spaces and underlining ideologies of these spaces. Yet by speaking about these rules the thinker can reify one way of looking at art and arts spaces that denies many historical movements and cultural traditions. Also reductionist tellings of history can erase pasts and nuance. I don't want to do this. However, I want to point to certain codes of behavior that replicate themselves across multiple arts institutions and the biases inherent to these patterns so that we can recognize certain silent agreements visitors and practitioners make when they enter arts spaces.

often indicate this value judgment, frequently showing the exhibition devoid of people, almost as if in an ideal state the gallery is empty; a platonic object or experience, untarnished by an audience. The works should be hung at an institutional height, tall enough for an adult of average size to see the work straight on. Gallery attendants and guards should recede like the necessary electrical and architectural elements of the space. Works should have even empty spaces of blank wall or floor between them. Viewers should stand, though options for intermittently resting on hard benches may be presented. Viewers are interchangeable, unnecessary to the works themselves. Photographs are restricted or encouraged; there is a fetishization around the camera and usage of it. Visitors are supposed to direct their attention to the objects artists have made and their arrangement in the space. There is a sacredness to the so called third space of the gallery, where a directed exercise of looking and thinking is expected. The gallery should be quiet, except for the art if it makes sound. Visitors are expected to speak in hushed tones, if they speak at all, their attention and vision directed at the art. The art, in a way, is framed as if it would exist with or without the viewer and the space it exists in. The gallery is transitory.

                            Alexander Galloway refers to thresholds as "Mysterious zones of interaction that mediate between different realities"[36]. Art spaces are often referred to as third spaces or middle spaces, in these "thresholds" we can question

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[36]Galloway, Alexander R. *The Interface Effect* (Cambridge, UK, 2012, Polity Press), viii.

different layers or realms of reality. Galloway goes on to say "interfaces are not simply objects or boundary limits. They are autonomous zones of activity. Interfaces are not things but rather processes that effect a result of whatever kind"[37]. When the exhibition is approached as an interface or third space we can cross examine its rules of engagement. It can become a forum for experimentation as well as directed thought and action that can then be used as a model outside of this limited context.

Photo Courtesy Yubo Dong

Exhibitions have different demands and time scales that they must be viewed at as determined by quantity of work, average viewing time,

[37] ibid, viii.

length of text- not necessarily on the pace a viewer decides. The exhibition is not meant to be comfortable or hospitable to the viewer. Most choices are made in favor of aesthetics, making the art look good rather than making the space feel good for a body. The sense of seeing (scopic) is often the most privileged, and the way an exhibition will be documented often takes precedence over the embodied experience in the gallery. The gallery postures itself as neutral in form, as mentioned above but also as an informational body. Texts often try to present works in a way that don't overtly make a political, historical, or social statement, though each statement or lack thereof is a statement in itself. Guests should not touch the artwork. Visitors should not change the exhibition. Viewers experience the exhibition as a privilege, one that they often pay for. They turn over their attention, autonomy and money to encounter a room with art arranged for an idealized viewer.

The exhibition *Terms Of Use* was born out of a necessity to fill a large gallery space on short notice, due to a scheduling miscommunication, which left me with three months' notice before the opening date. Initially my impression from my second year review was that I would not be provided an exhibition space and that instead I would continue my work on social media platforms as well as the exhibitions at my 9 year old gallery Actual Size which I had been directing independently for the last 3 years. The moment I realized this was not the case I wondered what work I could present which I had thought enough about, had

not been shown many times, took up enough space, and shared a voice that I wanted to amplify. I was also interested in artists who I thought would appreciate experimenting with the way their art was shown, and artists who historically have been marginalized from participation in gallery spaces.

It was not more than a few minutes when I thought of Katie Herzog's *Rubbing the Internet Archive*, a 10- foot- high, 84- foot-long work that records the architectural details of the exterior of San Francisco's Internet Archive building. I saw this work when it was shown at Klowden Mann gallery in 2017. I have collaborated with Katie and followed her career for the last 9 years. The content and

approach of her work seemed well suited for the UC Irvine audience and also spoke

to my recent research around the Internet and sharing.

Katie Herzog has an expansive conceptual painting

practice that often centers around the preservation and dispersal of knowledge. Her

work is informed by a study of library sciences and an interest in information

technology, as well as the way this crosses over in psychic social and political

landscapes. Though she primarily creates paintings, her work has also encompassed

textile, text- including a book composed of essays and artist work called *Feng-Shuing*

the Panopticon, community projects- including a performance and residency as part

of Occupy LA- where Herzog recreated Dieter Roths "literaturwust" and crafted book

sausages on demand for visitors, as well as performances as a drummer as well as a

song leader.

I collaborated with Katie to transform the exhibition space

of Actual Size (my gallery) several times with alternate uses and experimental

interventions. For her solo exhibition at Actual Size we hosted a special day where

we invited visitors to come to the gallery and read to trained therapy dogs. This event

was inspired by Katie's work as a librarian as well as educator. A trend was

sweeping libraries across the country to host therapy dogs trained to listen to kids

read out loud. The logic was that kids were enticed to read longer if someone is

listening to them, but when adults listen they correct pronunciation and make children feel self-conscious. With a dog as an audience children would be more likely to read with confidence. The selection of books that the therapy poodles at Actual Size dutifully listened to included such titles as *When Pigcasso Met Mootise* as well as Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit*. This event unlocked new ways of spending time in the gallery, As well as ways of experiencing Katie's paintings about language, libraries, and learning institutions.

Another event that Katie participated in was *12 Hour Song*, a continuous song, hosted in the gallery, which began at 12 midnight and continued till 12 noon the next day. Over 200 artists collaborated to create an uninterrupted soundscape. Katie Herzog participated by way of Skype. At the time she was at a cross-European biking convention for librarians. She led the group of 100 librarians in several songs that were streamed live in the gallery. Katie also curated an exhibition of work by the artist Jean Lowe, who creates paintings of fictional books and found imagery. I knew that Katie would be open to thinking through new ways of exhibiting her work. In my email I mentioned I wanted to pay visitors to view the work without Internet enabled devices. Katie enthusiastically replied to my email within a few minutes.

I had a fantasy about exploring Katie's large rubbing as a work in itself and as a backdrop for other work. I was considering historic legacies of wallpaper and ways of transforming the exhibition space. My thoughts drifted to academy style hangs on ornate velvet wallpaper, and exhibition models that used wallpaper like Yayoi Kusama, Ai WeiWei, and Andy Warhol. After considering several works that dealt with architecture and Internet communities I decided to reach out to Fiona Connor to participate in the exhibition.

I met Fiona many years ago after seeing her present a collaborative work she had done as a part of a friend, Amy Howden- Chapman's speaker series at the gallery Favorite Goods. I followed Fiona's career and was interested in the aesthetic impact of her objects and their conceptual implications, as well as her work as a gallery director and collaborative maker. In addition to creating simulacra of everyday and civic objects that hearken back to the legacies of Michael Asher, who once taught at Cal Arts where Connor received her Masters degree, Fiona Connor has also created three arts spaces including "Special" and "Gamia Castle" in Auckland, New Zealand as well as "Laurel Doody" in Los Angeles. She started projects including "Newspaper Reading Club", a collaborative project with Michael Paludan, and "Varese group" a loose collective of artists who meet once a year in Northern Italy. Her interest in creating social forums for the exchange of

information seemed to mirror her interest in preserving or recreating objects from public space.

Though I did not know her personally I thought we might have a similar ethos around the possibilities of a gallery space. Her bulletin board casts and re-creations of doorways from defunct communal spaces were applicable to my recent research. Fiona Connor's *Closed Down Clubs* employs meticulous replication techniques to create archival reproductions of doors from shuttered community establishments. Presented as freestanding sculpture in the gallery context, the doors stand as symbolic relics for community oriented spaces like bookstores, bars, clubs and performance venues. These simulacra are displaced from their original location, use, and place in time. They are presented apart from the walls that they originally provided passage through. Removed from their primary usage, the doors become threshold forms that represent access and lack thereof.

A central question guiding the exhibition was: How can we rethink systems of community and sharing in a shifting landscape where collectivity is as much about gathering as bodies in space as it is about interfacing online? My chosen approach was to show Katie and Fiona's work alongside the incentivized looking program to present strategies for embodying or providing new shapes to community infrastructures.

Both Katie and Fiona pay close attention to the crafting of objects and employ careful reproductive techniques to honor, question, and meditate upon material and its immaterial possibilities. I was interested in the way both artists employ a one-to-one relationship to map their subjects. By casting, printing or rubbing, each artist introduces an element of removal as a vehicle for extended observation and contemplation. This approach creates a collision of past and present, as well as elevates their commonplace subjects. The strategy can also bring to mind gravestone rubbings, and provide a sense of historicity to community spaces that may be drifting towards obsolescence as we spend less time in public space and more time communicating online in what we perceive to be private space. These objects also invoke other places while bringing attention to the current space the viewer is inhabiting with the work.

Fiona Connor accepted the exhibition invitation, but was not particularly excited about exhibiting the work that I inquired about. She mentioned that she was experimenting with bronze casts of shelves and cutting boards. After discussing the shelves I felt that this project could speak to infrastructure, community and stewardship of knowledge in a way that complemented Katie's work and my research. The sculptural element would be a counter to the flatness of the rubbing. I saw the exhibition as an opportunity for me to support an

artist project through providing material and monetary resources and helping her to

apply for another grant to produce the work for the exhibition. The mounting

requirements of the sculptures meant that the wallpaper concept would need to be

tabled and I began to think of the possibilities for showing both artists in discrete

spaces to make for two formally compelling exhibitions with physical and conceptual

space between the works.

By replicating the support systems for individuals' private

spaces Connor transforms the functional and commonplace into reverent objects.

Doubling and reproduction are common approaches in the artist's practice. Recent

projects by Connor employ methods of casting and duplication of infrastructure like bulletin boards and doorways. There is a sense of archiving or preserving and memorializing physical remnants of communal spaces. These zones were once important gathering spaces or informational depositories but they are now lost as geographical nexuses for social interaction. The facsimile objects invoke the source of the original while bringing attention to the current space the viewer inhabits with the work. By casting domestic objects like cutting boards and shelving units into bronze, Connor conjures a presence and absence of the source and enables the viewer to study the surface, shape, and structure of the object in a new light. She also replicates

Photo courtesy Yubo Dong

aesthetic strategies of institutional critique in the placement of her object in a gallery as well as a similar material approach to Michael Asher.

Terms of Use, in conventional terms was a formal exhibition consisting of rather austere quiet grey-scale objects that functioned as artworks are expected to function in exhibitions. That is as privileged objects, given space for formal viewing, and arranged in a way that would appear well in documentation. However, there are components imbedded in each work and artist approach that subvert some of these expectations.

Photo courtesy Yubo Dong

The works by Fiona Connor, Katie Herzog, and *The Archive of Privatized Experience,* were each presented in a specific area of the gallery as if they were separate exhibitions. A sight line and color palette united the work but each project was shown with several feet of separation as discrete works, set apart from the others. *The Archive of Privatized Experience* project extended into these exhibition spaces in the form of seating and migration of objects. Each object displayed used strategies to embody infrastructure at a human scale, whether by way of rubbing, casting or transferring algorithmic data into a printed questionnaire. One to One models gave form to public and private systems that shape the way individuals act in physical space as well as the digital realm. The artworks represented functional forms but did not fulfill their original use. In this manner, the artists created new visual terms that can be used to approach the unseen ways objects and institutions affect the individual. The works were placed together in order to facilitate a consideration of sharing systems in a landscape that may be determined as much by participation online in URL space as it is IRL (in real life).

Fiona Connor's *Support Structures* are bronze casts of shelves that transform functional and commonplace furniture sourced from her friends into fine artworks by casting the shelf, screws, and brackets as one complete article. Each artwork hangs at the height at which the originals were installed. Through placement Connor brings attention to the specific way spaces are

transformed and organized by the objects they contain. In organizing the objects in the space Connor made sure to take into consideration the light switches and outlets and intentionally placed a shelf close to the outlet to give the object a functional feel. In opposition to traditional exhibition design, which seeks to make electrical outlets recede into the background, Connor calls attention to them. In the placement of the artworks she also strayed from conventions of hanging objects in galleries at the so called institutional height of 57 inches, which is supposed to reflect the eye height of the average person. Some visitors to the exhibition walked past the shelves, as if this part of the gallery was not exhibition space, because of the implied functionality of

the objects and the quiet sparse arrangement of the works. Some asked when the

work to be displayed on the shelves was arriving, or why the artist spray painted

them gold. A few visitors marveled at the texture, not knowing that it was bronze,

and appreciated the way the "metallic paint" highlighted the surface elements. Other

visitors were taken with the way the shelves would magically hover over the walls,

with the "functional" brackets, which ordinarily would secure the shelf, floating away

from the wall.

Photo courtesy Yubo Dong

Katie Herzog's monumental rubbing of the exterior of the

Internet Archive building wrapped around the walls of the back gallery, transforming

the facade into a u shaped courtyard. Through the surrealist/ automatic art tradition

MAKE MONEY! EXPERIENCE ART!

Take ownership over your time and make money

Social media companies generate billions of dollars a year from sharing your data. For a limited time only you will be able to profit from resisting the use of social media. Visitors to the UAG CAC Gallery can opt into a program to enjoy art, and each other in a comfortable space without distraction from social media. Participants will need to fill out a simple questionnaire and check their devices at reception. Visitors who log time in the gallery will have the option of cashing out their earnings at the end of the exhibition with the equivalent amount of money social media companies receive when they sell your data or they can choose a unique work of art of equivalent or more value.

What: Earn points by experiencing art and existing in an internet device free environment

When: January 19- February 16 2019

Where: UAG Contemporary Art Center

of frottage, Herzog reproduces the material qualities of an institution that is largely encountered online. The Internet Archive is a digital library that gives free access to the public, provides a platform for individuals to upload content, archives web history, and advocates for a free and open Internet. Herzog created the to-scale image of the headquarters of the institution by rubbing wax over textile interfacing on the exterior of the building. Variation in darkness and line quality simultaneously record the facade and methods of the record maker. By way of analog process, Herzog traces a legacy of the stewardship of knowledge from care-taking of objects and manuscripts to the preservation and dissemination of digital artifacts.

Photo courtesy Yubo Dong

Visitors were invited to lounge, read, or socialize in the exhibition during gallery hours. Guests could elect to check their internet devices at the reception desk to experience the artwork without digital distractions. For the duration of the exhibition *The Archive of Privatized Experience* offered to pay participants for each hour they spent with the work without Internet-based technology at the same rate advertisers on social media pay sharing platforms for that unit of an individual user's time, which is a rather trivial amount of money. Audiences could also engage in the project on UAG Instagram stories @uag_ucirvine. Viewers were invited to participate in this research-based performance through voting and contributing text to the project.

The Archive of Privatized Experience is a project that exists on line and in physical space. The online component of the project uses Instagram stories as a way to elicit dialogue with its users about their relationship to the social media platform. The in person component of the project consists of a paid, incentivized program for Internet-free viewing of an exhibition. In order to determine the value of the time spent in the gallery participants who opt into the program must fill out a questionnaire with rather invasive questions, that approximates the value of their data as consumers to advertisers who pay social media companies for user information. Each gallery attendant; Shelby Thach, Alejandra Gonzalez, Andrea Guerra, Arturo Cortes, Arianna Arias, Ashley Alvarez, Brianna Orozco, Christy Tran,

Jasmine Huerta Lara, Leanne Quon, Nhu Vo, Valeria Miguel, and Xitlalitl Moreno, who worked in the exhibition, was trained to serve as an archivist for the project. They were given a badge representing that they were an official part of the archive, a training that explained how consumer data is valued online, and an invitation to participate in the project while they gallery-sat.

Photo courtesy Yubo Dong

Though the project was an initiative that I founded, I was interested in how it would change when it was facilitated by a team other than me. Creating an institution was a strategy for me to consciously divide my role as curator

and artist in a way that highlights the artificial binary between these acts. Attributing an organizational name to the project framed it as a distinct unit that is legible as a creative intervention. It was important for the project to have a fairly impersonal title that implied a level of institutional authority because the project was speaking directly to the way corporations are serving as interlocutors, mediators, and beneficiaries of user experience.

Photo courtesy Yubo Dong

The title *Archive of Privatized Experience* refers to the way companies like Instagram, Facebook, Google, Snapchat and others amass data and take up ownership of it so that they can sell it. This data includes some of its user's

Paid Participant Form

Name: _____ $0.00003

Relationship status: _____

Date of birth: _____

Are you recently divorced?: Yes / No   Y +15%

Gender: _____

Are you engaged?: Yes / No   Y +33%

Place of Residence: _____
Divide by 4 if not a US resident

Are you seriously ill?: Yes / No   Y +130%

Make a check mark next to the conditions you have: +114% for each condition

ADHD __	Asthma __	Heart disease __	Headaches __
Acid reflux __	Depression __	High cholesterol __	Diabetes __
Arthritis __	Back pain __	Osteoporosis __	Heartburn __

How many followers do you have on social media?:_____

Do you have children: Yes / No   Y +2%

How much time do you spend on the internet each week?:_____

Are you expecting a baby: Yes / No   Y +30%

How many things do you buy online each month?:_____

Do you own a home?: Yes / No   Y +30%

What is the last webpage you visited?:_____

Are you a gym member?: Yes / No   Y +30%

Do you own a fancy car: Yes / No   Y +25%

Do you limit tracking cookies?: Yes / No   Y -60%

Have you traveled on a plane or boat recently?: Yes / No   Y +30%

In the last week how many times have you searched:

food __ +10%	car __ +28%	social issues __ +10%	insurance & other
social influencers	gaming __+16.9%	education __+17%	financial products __
__+10%	political topics __+25%	phones __+174%	+14%

Are you a millionaire?: Yes / No Y +50%

Is there a fireplace in your home?: Yes / No Y +10%

Do you exercise to lose weight?: Yes / No Y +82%

SIGN HERE

Do you have loyalty accounts?: Yes   / No Y +14%

_____

THE ARCHIVE
OF PRIVATIZED
EXPERIENCE

most private experiences. The title also refers to the way that this material is available for viewing like that of an archive. "Archive" implies an accumulation of material, something that is usually less accessible than the collection of a library and in some ways less consciously arranged and presented. Many Archives have an aura of privacy that is resonant to the public/ private relationships that can be achieved online. There's an element of study to the archive as well as a sense that all elements of the collection make up a body of knowledge that will be available when new questions or strategies toward a topic emerge. Archives contain materials that have not been published, as opposed to user experience of the internet, where every little thing that is posted is "published". However, there is such a mass of information and such little vetting that many people do not see posting on a social media platform as a form of legitimate publication. By reframing projects dealing with social media as an archivists initiative I am able to collect data and anecdotes about user experience of these platforms that have already accrued so much data about its users. The poster for the exhibition as well as logo for the Archive of Privatized Experience were designed using primarily the digital editing software provided on the Instagram stories platform. This was an attempt to turn the tool back towards itself as well as use a free platform in replacement of photoshop a paid-for software.

The distinction between private and privatized is blurred, the notion that our information is owned by the companies that we share it with is often something buried in the terms of use agreements we sign up for. Often very personal and private matters play out on my usage of social media platforms to the point I forget the emotional, creative, and social labor I am putting forth is now partially owned and fully profited off by corporations. If these businesses are so effective at making someone who is reading, and writing, and (hopefully) thinking critically about this platform still use it, their strategies must be effective. I am interested in appropriating strategies that make social media appealing. These include employing forms of direct address in advertisement language, using questions as a strategy of engagement, acknowledging each individual's specific interests and intents, as well using small print that clearly lays out the rules and dynamics, but is tiny enough for the reader to skip over it. The printed, gallery attendant facilitated surveys provide a different social relationship than using a service online. There is something more vulnerable about handing over a written questionnaire that you can imagine in the hands of another individual than inputting information online, even though this action can be widely shared. There is also something disjunctive about reading questions about ones use of instagram in an immersive backdrop that could be used for a snapshot that could end up on one of these social media platforms. The project aims to personify an institution on a human scale to hopefully challenge our

relationship to time and money and the way we give labor and privacy over to social media corporations when we probably would not hand over the same information to a stranger.


I am interested in revealing that the project is a construction made and facilitated by individuals. My state of ambivalence about social media is rooted in certain losses of community, and personal coping strategies that have increased my dependence on "free" services like Facebook, Instagram and Gmail. Even if I were to leave social media my social and political world would still

be partially determined by these platforms. I was interested in seeing if an initiative

like this could exist outside of my direct facilitation, and if I could create a marketable

program that could travel into other institutions and exhibitions.

Upon entering the exhibition the viewer would be invited

by the guard to participate in the incentivized viewing program. Guards told visitors

that they could earn money by checking their phones and having a digital-free

viewing experience of the exhibition. After handing over their phone to the gallery

attendant/ archivist, the phone would be locked in a safe. Visitors would receive a

baggage check tab so that they could reclaim their phone. Participants would then

fill out a form that included a range of questions. Each question elicits information that

can place a monetary value on that individual's data. For example; if someone

suffers from a serious illness their data is worth about 130% more than a healthy

consumer. The assumption here is those who suffer from illness, are expecting a child,

are recently divorced, or soon to be married, or trying to lose weight, spend more

money as consumers than the baseline population. On these forms, visitors can see

the percentage that their value increases with each question. They can also see that

corporations are looking for individuals who are sick, heartbroken, soon to be

married, or wealthy. After filling out the form individuals can arrange and sit in

beanbag chairs with no directions or restrictions on what they choose to look at or do

while they spend their "compensated for" time in the gallery. After the individual

spends as much digital-free time in the gallery as they choose, they clock out their time, hand the over their claim tab to the gallery attendant and then the attendant unlocks the safe and gives their phone back to them.
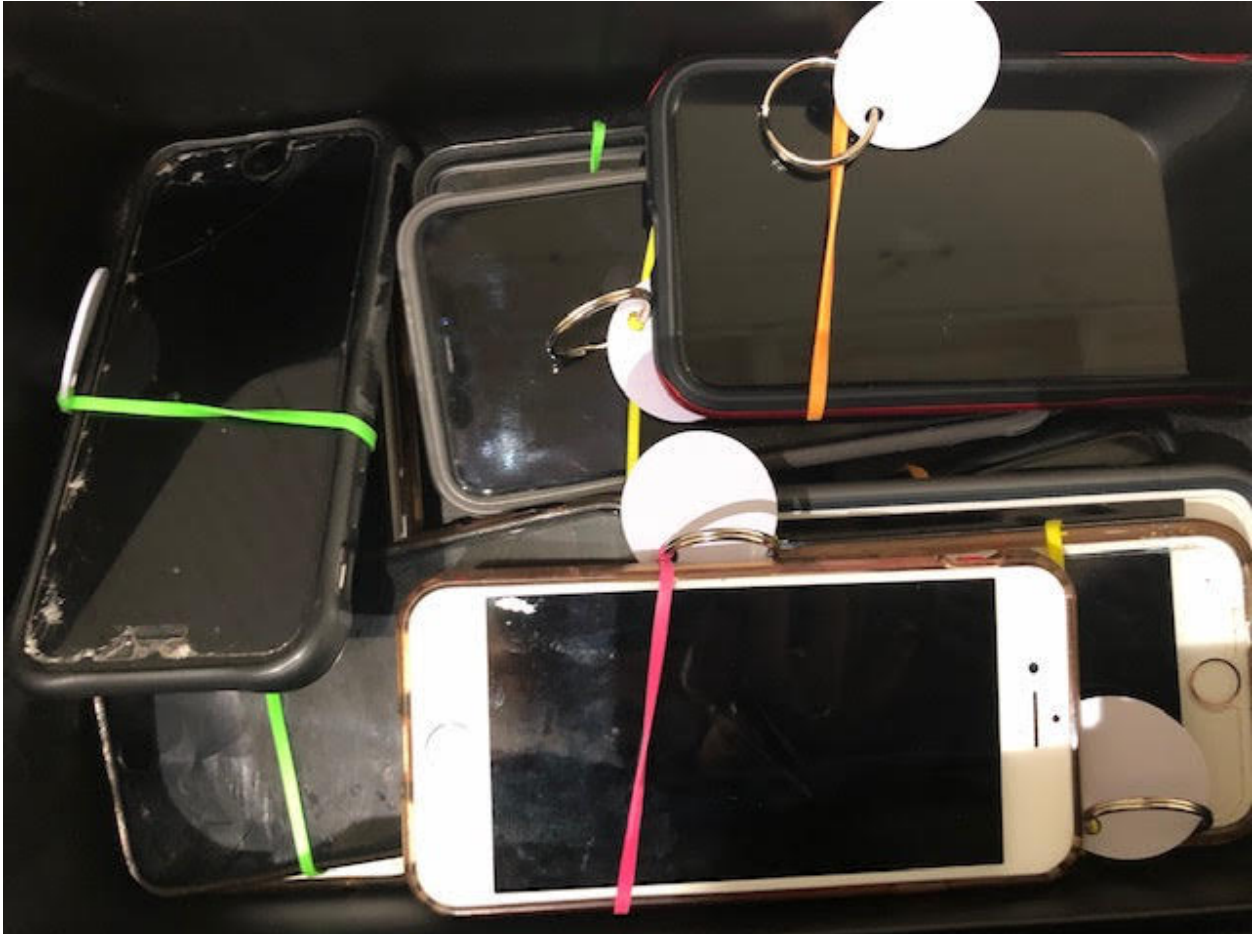
The amount of money that an average user would make in the gallery, were they to spend all of their time that the gallery was open, a total of 134 hours, without their phone would be about 30 cents. The absurdity of paying someone such a nominal fee for viewership is meant to both value and devalue time spent in the exhibition. The gesture of quantifying each individuals consumer value

was a means of pointing to the way consumers are participating in a market that they

are not financially benefiting from.

In the realm of real-world data mining user data is sold in

mass to advertisers in a stock market style daily bidding game. The specific value of

different user data shifts and is cloaked under the secret economic dealings of the

platforms that advertise that they are platforms dedicated to sharing, connecting, and

empowering people. Because user data is sold in large clumps each individual's data

is worth relatively little. *The Archive of Privatized Experience*, takes up an additional

"one to one" function here, demonstrating the equivalence of time and agency spent

in looking in a gallery to time spent looking on the internet. Visitors to the gallery

experience a "free space"- just as the internet appears to be a "free" space to intake

and exchange information and images. The experiential tools of the questionnaire

and phone safe, however, underline the reality that our freedom to use these tools is

only within a determined system in which the rules are covered by the service

provider. This brings into focus the concept "If you're not paying for something,

you're not the customer; you're the product being sold"[38] We are the product being

sold to the advertisers, while at the same time we are consuming and using a product

or platform that we are told exists for us. Like the serfs of late antiquity, we are being

---

[38] John , Nocolas, *Age Of,* 65.

provided a space to live, but conducting far more labor than the initial offering is worth.

Paying the arts spectator suggests that there is a value that viewers add to the exhibition by being present, rather than that the exhibition is inherently valuable. Paid admission to museums or galleries further advance the idea that the visitor is gaining enough of a reward from the spectacle, edification, or atmosphere of the gallery to justify the cost. Advertising an exhibition as a way for visitors to earn money also might imply a level of distrust in an audience, that participation in the program must be incentivized or else no one will come. In addition to this, the incentivized program mirrors the side-hustle culture that many individuals must engage in in our current economy, suggesting that viewing art can be another form of work. *The Archive of Privatized Experience* appropriates social media strategies in placing value on visitor experience by echoing a consumer model, rather than an experiential one. By amassing data about viewership in the exhibition, including the socioeconomic position and health condition of each viewer *The Archive of Privatized Experience* provides an image of the types of consumers who have visited the exhibition. This project is influenced by works of institutional critique by Martha Rosler, Michael Asher, and Andrea Fraser, as well as sociological studies and visitor surveys of museum populations.
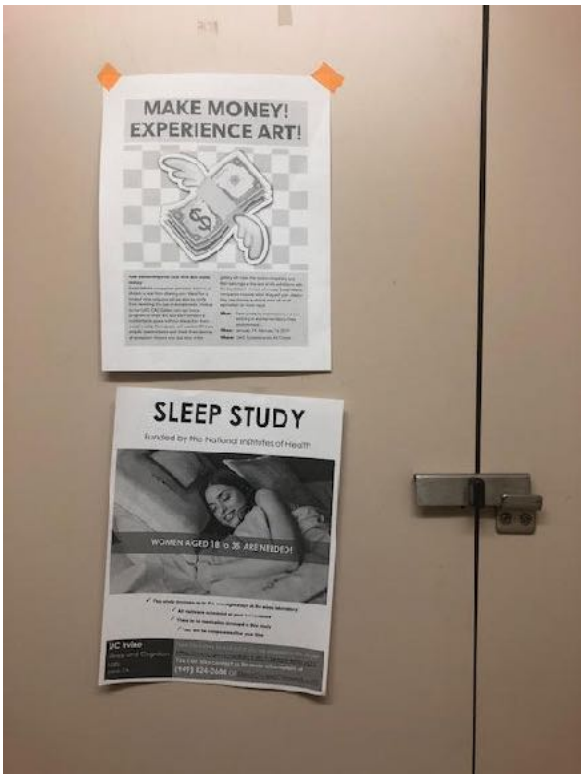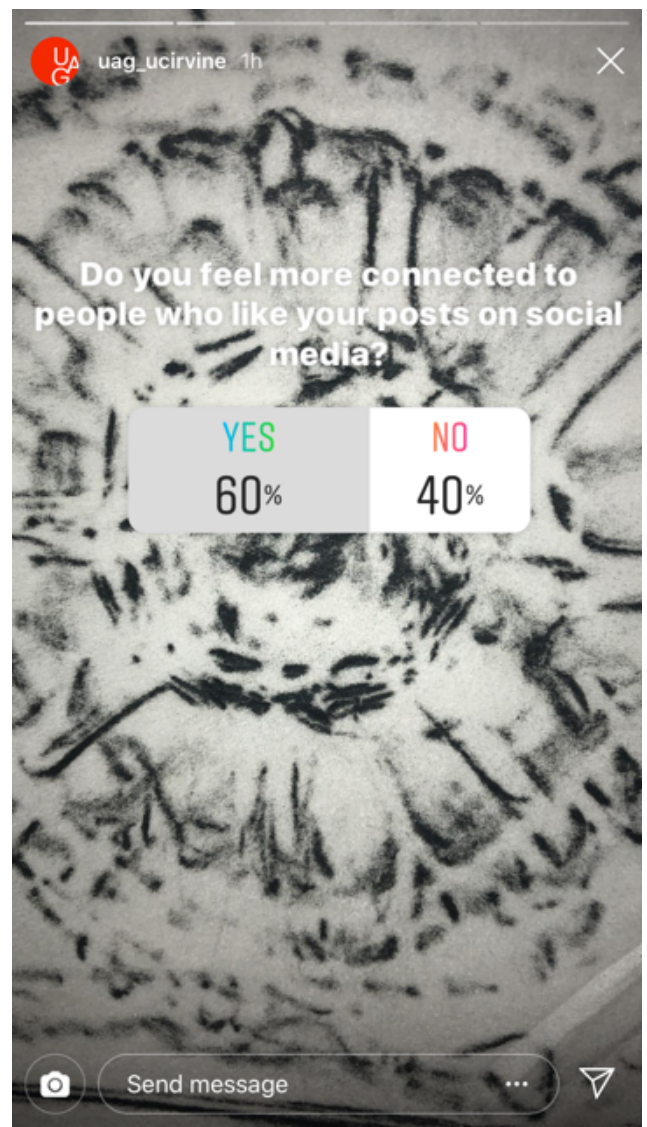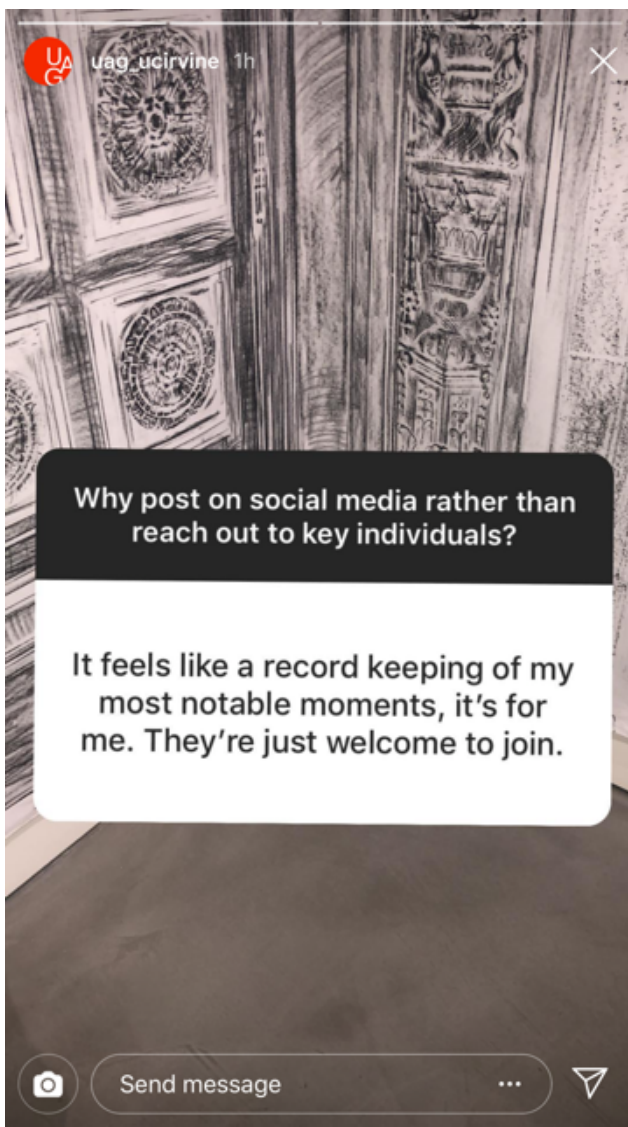
        The act of paying a visitor to spend their attention in the

gallery was a way of recognizing visitor time and attention as a valuable component

of an exhibition. I considered the way Nkisi Nkondi figures from the Kongo gain

power with each use, as visually represented by an accumulation of nails, textiles,

beads, oils and other traces of use. I also considered Tom Friedman's work 1000

Hours of Staring, A blank page that the artist proclaimed he had looked at for that

amount of time. If this time was measured in an average work week, he would have

spent 25 weeks of non stop staring[39]. I wondered how many additional hours of

gaze had been contributed by the viewers of this work.

---

[39] Knight, Christopher, "Art As A Shared Experience"Los Angeles Times, Los Angeles November 2006, Arts

At the same time I was thinking about conferring value on an object through sustained attention and usage by an audience I was concerned that the act of monetizing the viewing experience might dismiss it as solely an economic relationship or take attention away from the intrinsic value that looking at art might provide to visitors to an exhibition. I did not want the artists to think I was devaluing the intrinsic worth of spending time with their work. I was reassured from my relationship and clear communication with Katie Herzog and Fiona Connor. I compensated them for participating in the exhibition as well as helped Fiona Connor

uag_ucirvine 1h

Why post on social media rather than reach out to key individuals?

It feels like a record keeping of my most notable moments, it's for me. They're just welcome to join.

Send message

uag_ucirvine 1h

Do you feel more connected to people who like your posts on social media?

YES 60%   NO 40%

Send message

to produce the work. I felt this economic relationship and recognition of the artists

value also changed the dynamic of the exhibition.

The other component of the *Archive of Privatized*

Experience was an Instagram take-over using the story feature of the platform. This

"take-over" asked the same questions that I had asked on my personal Instagram the

previous summer. The takeover was conducted by Ariana Arias, a UC Irvine forensics

student and gallery attendant. She was credited as an artist in the exhibition on the

press release. On the Instagram story feed Arias asked a system of questions that had

been provided to her by the *Archive of Privatized Experience*/ me, in whichever

order she thought best. With each question she posted she was asked to include a

photograph of the UCI UAG galleries, or another thematically connected photo from

her camera roll for the background. I was curious to see what would happen when

another individual with a different relationship to social media would facilitate this

project, and how it would change the outcome of the project. I was also interested if it

would have any effect on the person facilitating the study. How would the the shift

from personal account to institutional voice transform the project? In the previous

iteration, the questions were posed by me personally to my followers on Instagram,

but in this case they came to the viewers on a university gallery sponsored Instagram

account authored from *The Archive of Privatized Experience.*

Each participant in the Instagram stories, who voted or answered a question was invited to include *Terms of Use* as an exhibition that they participated in on their artist CV's. This was messaged in the press release, Instagram feed, and Instagram stories. This was an absurdist attempt of democratizing exhibition making and credit, blurring the relationship between viewer, artist, and participant. At the same time, it further supports the currency of exhibition credits in the arts-value economy. My goal was to incentivize and recognize the labor of those who participate in and view an exhibition both in URL and IRL space. I wanted to acknowledge the participant/ viewers' integral role in generating language and experience around an exhibition form. The exhibition and project extended out of the gallery through this digital forum, as well as a flyer campaign through UC Irvine restrooms, and public space such as walkways, and bulletin boards.

The material extension of the project into space, in form of flyers and physical questionnaires was essential to the project. The printed questionnaire challenged the viewer to disclose very personal information to a stranger, facts that are regularly given out without consideration in digital space. Most information asked on the questionnaire is something that can be obtained through a detailed google search or social media survey on each participant, but on an algorithmic scale most information is already known by companies. There is a tension between public and private, embodied and disembodied in this project.

Response to the *Archive of Privatized Experience*

Instagram stories questions seemed slightly less serious and less regretful about the use of the Instagram platform thank they had been on my personal Instagram. There was a wide range of responses, some very confessional, and some quoting pop cultural memes. The response to the questionnaires and use of the gallery by incentivized participants also differed greatly, from individuals choosing to share explicit details about their health conditions, to participants refusing to share their names. Many visitors decided to write lengthy responses to the questions which differed from jokes to earnest reflections on their internet use, behavior as a consumer, or personal dating history. One participant even asked me on a date through the survey. Visitors moved the beanbags throughout the space, and each time I entered the exhibition the seating was in different orientations. Children dove into the beanbag chairs and ran around them. Some visitors spent their time looking with concentration at the art, others read a book, slept, had quiet conversations, or posted photos on their social media accounts.

Erin Glass
this looks amazing! i'm going to try to make it and bring students if i can have been really interested i figuring out how to resist exploitative terms of service in edu https://www.hastac.org/blogs/erin-glass/2018/12/27/ten-weird-tricks-resisting-surveillance-capitalism-and-through-classroom

Ten weird tricks for resisting surveillance capitalism in and throu...
hastac.org

18w   Like   Reply   👍1

Corrie Siegel
Thanks for sharing this article, lots of helpful tools here!!

18w   Like   Reply   👍1

Erin Glass
Corrie Siegel thx for curating the show - it's so exciting to see art that grapples with these issues! would be great to meet you at the opening!

18w   Like   Reply

Corrie Siegel

Write a comment...   GIF ☺

67 likes

newuniversity The exhibition "Terms of Use" is giving visitors the opportunity to check in their phones and get paid to experience art without distraction and contemplate their "terms of use" with the outside world.
...
📝 : Eashan Reddy Kotha
📷 : Kate Rutz-Robbins
🔗 : www.NewUniversity.org

newuniversity #art #exhibition #termsofuse #socialmedia #artgallery #uci #ucirvine #irvine #orangecounty

ingenieroboss olé!

FEBRUARY 16

radredhead · Following
University of California, Irvine   ...

Liked by **mariosartworld**, **mirandajavid** and **56 others**

radredhead Congrats to my favorite curator @corriesiegel and her thesis Terms of Use! I surrendered my phone right after this photo, I swear... more

corriesiegel Pahahhaa. Thanks darlin!

FEBRUARY 7

ariasshh Terms of Use curated by Corrie Siegel
13w

joericcio_ Explain please
13w   Reply

—— Hide replies

ariasshh @joericcio_ these bronze casts of shelves, including screws and bolts, are one complete sculpture. They bring attention to the way spaces are transformed by their objects... & other artistic yada yada
13w   1 like   Reply

joericcio_ @ariasshh well, that is quite dope. Me check it out soon
13w   1 like   Reply

ariasshh @joericcio_ it's interesting! The whole exhibition is about merging art that explains our place in the physical and digital realm so there are a lot of other works to check out in the gallery!!
13w   1 like   Reply

ariasshh @joericcio_ I just liked these

❤️   💙   😘   🔥   👀   😉   🤗   👌

Add a comment as corriesiegel...

Ariana Arias, the student attendant who facilitated the
Instagram stories take-over reflected with me about her experience in the gallery as
and attendant and phone checker as well as the artist in residence on line. She
relayed that visitors were surprisingly enthusiastic about the invitation to check their
phones and the majority of people who visited the exhibition locked their phones
away, at least for a portion of their visit, because it was a unique opportunity that
had not experienced before. The viewers relished an invitation to disconnect from
their devices so they could connect with the art, and she said it was powerful thing to
witness how behavior shifted in the gallery. She stated a few people were "very
leary " about handing over their phones and she was not sure if it was about putting
their phone in the hands of someone else, or the fear of being without it.

As the artist in residence on Instagram Stories she enjoyed the different
perspective that posting as an institution afforded her. She had never been in charge
of any instagram other than own and she said the role provided her insight on ways
Instagram functioned outside of her personal usage of the platform. By seeing the
way Instagram worked for an institution from the other side, she felt certain dynamics
and structures of the platform were laid bare. She saw herself as a business trying to
get attention from consumers. She said she realized that she usually was the one
playing the role of consumer but here it was reversed. She was aware of the tactics

she was using to draw attention as well as their effects. The images she took were determined by the tools of the platform she was sharing the images on. She chose to photograph details of works in the gallery, things she saw walking to and from work, and anything that was simple enough with an interesting pattern to serve as a backdrop for the text. The more impersonal way that individuals related to the UAG Instagram helped her see her feed in a different way.

She found that the answers she received to her questions were more serious and less humorous than she would usually expect from her personal account. She believed the seriousness had to do with the anonymity of herself as the question poser since she was behind the mask of an institution. She also determined most people answering her poll were artists and art students who had a specific way of talking about their creative persona, and therefore more prone to giving certain answers. She told me she enjoyed posting for *The Archive Of Privatized Experience* but a very small percentage of the time it was a chore instead of leisure. She stated that there was a tension between the feeling that she was learning about other individuals Instagram usage, and usual idle time she spent on her personal account. On her personal account she felt like she was wasting time when online, whereas in her role as a facilitator of the Archive she felt that her time was more meaningful and purposeful. In terms of engagement she noticed repeat people responded to almost every question, and some individuals who did not actively engage in voting or answering questions viewed all posts. She told her friends that they should follow the Instagram stories, and saw they were viewing, though they rarely answered the questions she posed. She wondered how many friends checked how long they spent on Instagram a week after she provided instructions to monitor use on Instagram Stories. She stated she checked her own usage after posting the directions how to do that on the Instagram account and was surprised by the amount. She did not think she would have sent her answer to that question to a university art gallery, but it was

striking information. We discussed how we both had a level of shame at our level of

usage of the platform. "Yes, we can know all these dynamics and the way the

company is using our information, but the Algorithm has a way of sucking you in" she

said as we said goodbye.

Photo courtesy Yubo Dong

Over the course of researching the way social media corporations work

I have been thinking about legacies of social exploitation and legal loopholes that

restrict consumer freedom. I have considered how the gallery can facilitate

conversations around the power structures present in the viewers lives. They also exert

some power relations that can be subverted and used as models for considering how this can happen in other threshold spaces. *The Archive Of Privatized Experience* was a communal experiment that ran counter to the trend in museums of hash tagging and encouraging selfies, to a more slowed down way of engaging with work, outside of the mediation of the photograph. This approach may be more aligned to mindfulness programs that are being introduced in cultural institutions across the country, however the incentivized program is also tied up in concepts of labor and value.

I thought I would gain something from the experience of publicly and performatively restricting my use of devices, but I was not sure if visitors would participate in the program at all. I justified this gamble, because I thought if people did not participate, that would be another type of telling interaction with the work. However, over the course of the exhibition about a hundred visitors participated in the program and some participants spent hours in the exhibition without their devices. There were a few moments in the exhibition when students were lined up out the door to participate in the program and visitors who I knew relayed to me the anxiety, curiosity, or amusement that the questionnaire caused for them as well as the revelatory aspects of checking a phone in the exhibition. A student wrote an article about the exhibition for the New University Press Others apologized to me about tagging my show on their Instagram.

REFORMING THE DIGITIZED EXPERIENCE: MFA THESIS EXHIBITION EXPLORES "TERMS OF USE"

by: Eashan Reddy Kotha

Visitors of the Contemporary Arts Gallery on Jan. 26 found a glimpse of a few thought-provoking works of art. The space was set for the Critical & Curatorial Studies MFA Thesis Exhibition: "Terms of Use," curated by Corrie Siegel, and containing the works of Fiona Connor, Katie Herzog and The Archive of the Privatized Experience. Shortly after entering the exhibit, an unusual proposition was presented by the Archive of Privatized Experience: volunteer to check in your phone for the duration of your time in the exhibit and get paid. The concept is straightforward. In a sort of reclamation of consumer leisure, The Archive, which was founded by Siegel herself, represented the fight against the ever so dominating presence of social media platforms in our daily lives. The remuneration for checking electronic devices reflected the rates that advertisers would dole out for user information and time. In this way, participation in the survey is a revitalization of an experience. Often times, viewing exhibits includes social media sharing, but this comes at the cost of truly appreciating the curated works and experiencing them in their immediacy.

The range of reactions and different terms in which individuals engaged in the exhibition as well as the way the space was used was emblematic of the manifold possibilities I see in arts spaces. Frierie writes "[T]he more radical the person is, the more fully he or she enters into reality so that, knowing it

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better, he or she can transform it. This individual is not afraid to confront, to listen, to

see the world unveiled. This person is not afraid to meet the people or to enter into a

dialogue with them. This person does not consider himself or herself the proprietor of

history or of all people, or the liberator of the oppressed; but he or she does commit

himself or herself, within history, to fight at their side"[40]. The way the structure of the

exhibition unfolded for me as a dialogue with myself and others, and a platform that

people used how they saw fit will serve as model as I continue my work to make the

gallery a dynamic environment that can facilitate transformative relationships with

people, space, and ideas.

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[40] Friere, *Pedagogy of,* 13.

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