

That you can't fight City Hall is a  
*rumor being spread by City Hall.*

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*That you can't fight City Hall is a  
rumor being spread by City Hall*  
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*Front cover*  
Quote by Audre Lorde, quoted in  
Sarah Schulman, *The  
Gentrification of the Mind:  
Witness to a Lost Imagination*,  
2012, p. 52.

*Back cover*  
Excerpt of flyers by Wages For  
Housework Collective New York  
City, 1970s

## THAT YOU CAN'T FIGHT CITY HALL IS A RUMOR BEING SPREAD BY CITY HALL

Transcription of a discussion on artist fees  
and working conditions  
organized by Ramaya Tegegne

with  
Jay Chung  
Michèle Graf  
Selina Grüter  
Jason Hirata  
Ghislaine Leung  
Jason Loeb  
Q Takeki Maeda  
Cassidy Toner  
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swiss arts council  
**prohelvetia**

[wagesforwagesagainst.org](http://wagesforwagesagainst.org)

Difference must be not merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic. Only then does the necessity for interdependency become unthreatening. Only within that interdependency of different strengths, acknowledged and equal, can the power to seek new ways of being in the world generate, as well as the courage and sustenance to act where there are no charters.

Within the interdependence of mutual (nondominant) differences lies that security which enables us to descend into the chaos of knowledge and return with true visions of our future,

*vival is not an academic skill.* It is learning how to stand alone, unpopular and sometimes reviled, and how to make common cause with those others identified as outside the structures in order to define and seek a world in which we can all flourish. It is learning how to take our differences and make them strengths. *For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.* They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change. And this fact is only threatening to those who still define the master's house as their only source of support.

## INVITATION TO DISCUSS TOGETHER AT FRI ART

1st October 2018, 12:40

ramaya tegegne <ramaya@ramaya.ch>

Dear ~~Myself~~

I hope this finds you well

I'm writing you today because you're going to take part in the exhibition *October 12 - November 25, 2018* at Fri Art Fribourg like myself. And I would like to invite you to a discussion between all the artists—and only the artists—of the exhibition on Thursday October 11, the day before the opening, at 5 pm at Fri Art.

I wish to discuss with all of you artistic work focusing on financial questions. The idea is to gather our thoughts, having all of our experiences as the base, and speculate on what could be improved for our own respective practices. I'm hoping to share tips and also exchange about the actual show at Fri Art and its working conditions. This meeting is happening in the context of a campaign I launched a year and a half ago for the remuneration of artists in Switzerland—and elsewhere—inspired by W.A.G.E. in the US.

I would like as well to accompany our discussion with a ritual initiated by the witch and activist Starhawk, who I was lucky to meet this summer. The ritual is called "Waters of the Worlds" and she started it 30 years ago. One morning Starhawk was meditating beside a beautiful lake, listening for whatever messages the water might have for her. The lake then said, "All water is connected. All water is in constant communication with all other water. The waters of the worlds are one—one consciousness holding the world in liquid embrace. What you do to any part of the waters affect them all." She then introduced and practiced a new simple ritual with her extended spiritual and political community named Reclaiming. Everyone started to collect water—from sacred springs and from their household taps, from significant places and from the sites of significant events—and combined it when they came together, often keeping a bowl of it infused with their energy. They began every ritual by honoring and invoking the four sacred elements—earth, air, fire, and water—with the fifth, the spirit. And they ended every ceremony by thanking them and bidding them good-bye, reminding themselves again and again of our deep dependence on the natural world. Then, when they separated, each of them took a small amount to perpetuate the ritual. Their "Waters of the Worlds" contain water from every



continent and ocean, even from Antarctica, and from many political actions they've done to save and preserve water. It became a living embodiment of the message Starhawk heard from the lake—that all water is one. This ritual is acknowledging and celebrating the deep unifying life force that sustain us, and water's power of cleansing and connecting.

I wish to initiate with all of you a new "Waters of the Worlds" ritual. I would like that each of us brings a bit of water from where we live or from any significant place. We will then mix them before our discussion. The idea is that this ritual could be perpetuated by each of us as we will all take a bit of water from our own "Waters of the Worlds" at the end of the discussion. I wish this will spread and become a ritual among artists: to exchange about money and share information on working conditions.

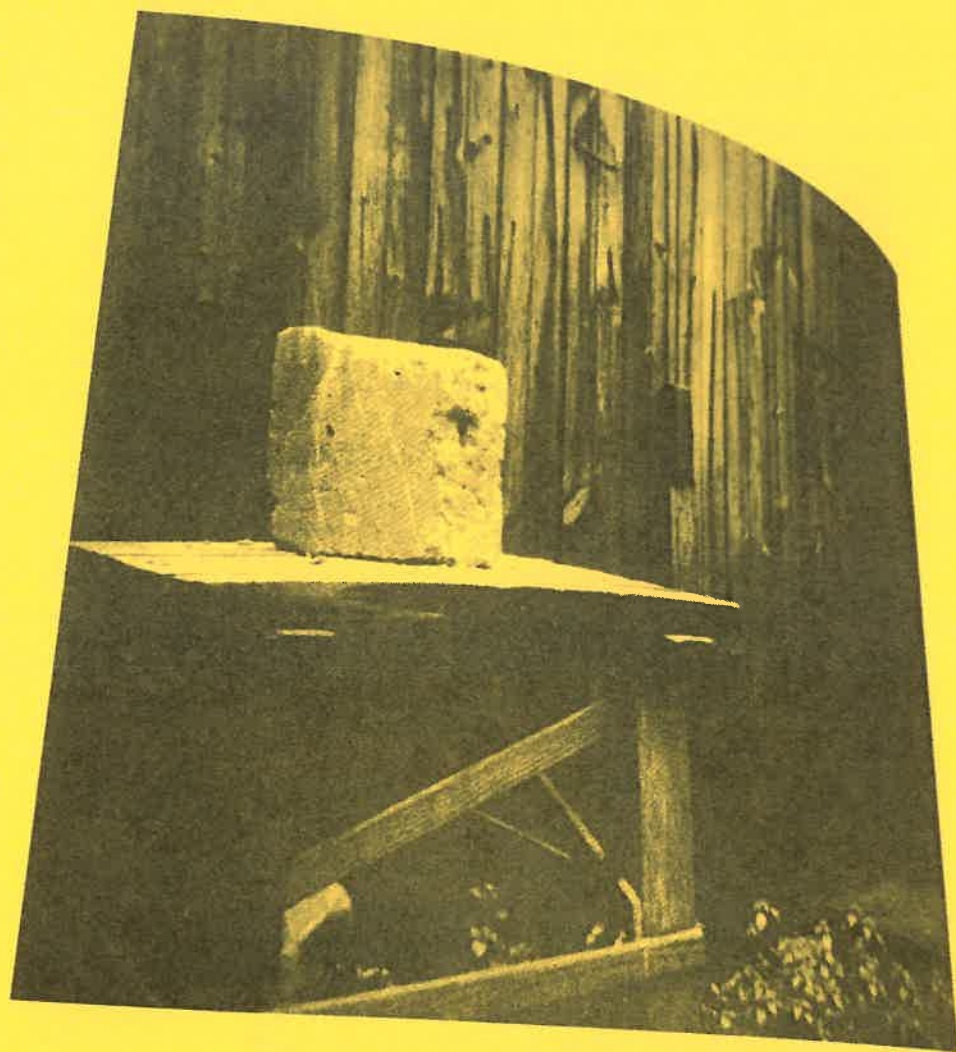
I sincerely hope you will be able to come for this discussion and bring a bit of water along.

Looking forward to meet soon

Waterly yours,  
Ramaya

Throughout history it has been artists and art workers, more than any other actors, who have subsidized art production. Most do so by concocting mixed-income schemes in which, simply speaking, some form of wage labor (or other income) funds art-making. But more generally, everyone involved also contributes in all sorts of other ways to art's circulation, thus making it stronger as currency. Even artists who live "off their work" subsidize the market by way of enormous commissions in relation to other industries. But why should one sponsor VIP pre-previews, bespoke museum extensions without any means to fill them, art-fair arms races, institutional franchises built under penal-colony conditions, and other baffling bubbles? This bloated, entitled, fully superfluous, embarrassing, and most of all politically toxic overhead is subsidized by means of free labor and life time, but also by paying attention to blingstraction and circulating its spinoffs, thus creating reach and legitimacy. Even the majority of artists who cannot afford to say no to any offer of income could save time not doing this. Refusing sponsorship of this sort might be the first step towards shaking the unsustainable and mortifying dependency on speculative operations that indirectly increase authoritarian violence and division.

If art is an alternative currency, its circulation also outlines an operational infrastructure. Could these structures be repossessed to work differently? How much value would the alternative currency of art lose if its most corrupt aspects were to be regulated or restructured to benefit art's larger communities? How about even a minimum of rules in the market—gallery contracts, resale-time minimums, artist fees,<sup>12</sup> remunerated internships? Introducing blockchain public records for the production, transaction, and locating of artworks in order to reign in tax fraud and money laundering?<sup>13</sup> Declining the most mortifying sponsor and patron relationships instead of artwashing fossil extraction, weapons manufacturing, and banks bailed out with former cultural funding? How about asking for fees on resales or on any off-shore art-related transaction?



## DISCUSSION ON ARTIST FEES AND WORKING CONDITIONS

11 October, 2018, Fri Art Kunsthalle Fribourg, Switzerland

Jason Hirata Does anyone want wine?

Constantina Zavitsanos (on the phone)  
Yeah!

Ramaya Tegegne Hey everyone, thank you for being here. I'm really happy that so many of us made it this evening. I know some of you, some not yet. This discussion is happening because I started a campaign a year and a half ago. It is called Wages For Wages Against and it's a campaign for the remuneration of artists in Switzerland and beyond. Something that I realized during this year and a half is that artists need to gather together and just talk about money and our working conditions. Because information doesn't circulate the way it should or the way it could. That's the reason for this. I don't know if you want me to explain the campaign a bit. Tina can you hear us?

CZ Yeah, yeah, I can hear you.

RT Okay. I launched the campaign during a group show at a Kunsthalle in Switzerland. One of the reasons is that I got to know about W.A.G.E.<sup>1</sup> in the USA.

1 W.A.G.E. (Working Artists and the Greater Economy) is a New York-based activist organization founded in 2008. Their mission is to establish sustainable economic relationships between artists and the institutions that contract artists' labor, and to introduce mechanisms for self-regulation into the art field that collectively bring about a more equitable distribution of its economy.

At the time I was having a lot of problems regarding money, like not having much money. It was also really difficult to get paid for performances, even if it was pretty clear that I was not going to sell them. Also I had engaged in annoying negotiations about money with this same Kunsthalle regarding previous projects. So I decided to launch this campaign in this context. After this, four friends joined and we became a collective. So, now we are five women and we have been organizing a series of discussions and workshops. For example, last August in the context of an event at the Kunsthalle Bern, I invited several people to discuss the relationship between representation and artists' fees. I mean the representation of certain types of population. For example, in the Kunsthalle Bern not a single black woman had a solo show there, and the institution is 100 years old. Also, one month ago, WFWA organized a public meeting with the idea to form a new group of artists in Geneva in order to launch a collective open letter<sup>2</sup> that can be signed online by anybody, and addressed to the authorities of Geneva. The cultural sector in Switzerland is mostly publicly funded. So the letter is demanding that the city doesn't give money to institutions and projects that do not pay artists. So we want to put pressure on the institutions

2 <https://garageneve.tumblr.com/lettreouverte>



where their money comes from. Since the launch of the campaign, I feel people have talked a lot about artists fees, and opinions are visibly shifting. For example, I had a solo show in 2015 here at Fri Art, and before that I did some performances here, I wasn't paid. And today all of us are paid. So I'm really happy about that.

JH Tina, this is Jason talking.

CZ Yeah, I know you, Jason.

JH Did anyone negotiate with Fri Art for their fee, and know what the fee is?

CZ Yeah, I did.

JH I didn't ask.

Michèle Graf It's 800 CHF (approx. 800\$) We are still negotiating it, because we are two people.

Selina Grüter But we won't get the double.

MG What about you guys? Do you know what you get?

Cassidy Toner Yes, we all have 800 CHF. And there is a production budget on top of it.

Q Takeki Maeda The same, I think.

MG Each?

QTM No, we get 450 CHF.

Jay Chung Because it's an already produced work.

CZ I'm getting 4000 CHF. I negotiated. (Laughs) No, I'm kidding, 800 CHF.

JC No, each of us get 450 CHF. We are two individuals.

MG But I think you will get more than 450 CHF. I think you will get 500 CHF each maybe.

JC There is no explanation for that.

CZ But you should get 800 CHF each. It's two artists?

JC Basically Balthazar<sup>3</sup> set the terms. I mean, there is not a clear distinction between producing and "reviving."

MG We just participated in this symposium in Basel today. And we each got 500 CHF for it.

RT It was offered to me. It was very clear: 800 CHF as fee if it is a new production, and 1000 CHF for production. And Balthazar told me everyone will get this.

QTM I think because you, Ramaya, participate, that is why we get paid.

MG Yeah well, I think it is partly because of her that people are getting

<sup>3</sup> Balthazar Lovay, Artistic Director of Fri Art Kunsthalle Fribourg.

paid in here. But it was also very transparent when we did our solo show here earlier this year.

SG Also because we were performing in our show too. And we had the same conditions as the other performers working with us. So we were negotiating the conditions of every person involved.

RT I forgot something very important. We need to gather the waters.

JH Before we talk?

RT Yeah, I think. Should we do that?

AW Should we say something special?

RT I mean, everyone says what they want. Were you going to say something special?

AW No. (Laughs)

RT My water is from the Mediterranean Sea, it's salty water. (Pouring water into the bowl)

CT Wow there is sand!

SG Mine is from the Zurich Main Station. (Pouring water)

AW It's from the river l'Arve in Geneva. (Pouring water)

Jason Loebbs I have Brooklyn water. (Pouring water)

QTM From Berlin. (Pouring water)

JH My water is from the freezer burn of my fridge, and the back of my toilet, and the condensation in my apartment. (Pouring water)

Ghislaine Leung It's a mix of London and here.

JH We're pouring the water into the bowl now Tina.

CZ Yeah, I hear that. My water is vibing y'all's water. Mine is New York City tap water which comes from the Catskills in Upstate New York, so it's nice water actually.

RT I'm adding some water from here, Fri Art water. We can now continue the discussion, but I just wanted to say that I don't see this discussion as something like an attack or something. It rather comes from a need I have to exchange more among artists.

JH I was at a W.A.G.E. event in New York, before I came here. And they presented their new website WAGENCY. They also did a pretend negotiation and that was kind of odd, I couldn't quite understand the logic of it. So W.A.G.E. is an advocacy organization. They first started with a system of certification of institutions that remunerate the artists. And now they made this new website. You can sign up as an artist. And then you can exchange about the amount of your fee with the institution that invited

## 4 GET CERTIFIED OR NEGOTIATE

WAGENCY is also a certification program. It certifies WAGENTS when they successfully secure W.A.G.E. fees or withhold labor when not paid them. When WAGENTS are willing and able to leverage their social, cultural, or economic capital to pressure institutions, they build leverage for those who may not be in a position to turn down work. Negotiating your terms of engagement begins once your contact at the institution receives a Fee Request from W.A.G.E. sent on your behalf. Once received, they will have two options:

### (1) APPROVE (2) NEGOTIATE

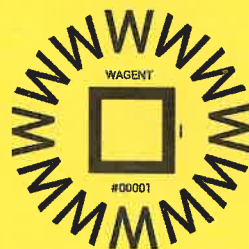
(1) If the institution APPROVES, W.A.G.E. fees will have been secured and you become a Certified WAGENT.

(2) If the institution chooses to NEGOTIATE and makes a counteroffer, there are three possible outcomes:

(i) The institution makes a counteroffer above W.A.G.E. standards. You accept and become a Certified WAGENT.

(ii) The institution makes a counteroffer below W.A.G.E. standards. You decline and become a Certified WAGENT.

(iii) You choose to negotiate below W.A.G.E. standards and secure compensation. You remain an active WAGENT.



WAGENCY allows you to oscillate between being certified and uncertified and welcomes all forms of participation. WAGENTS choose to be listed publicly by name or anonymously by number ([../wagency/artists/certified#top](https://wagency/artists/certified#top)), and WAGENT signatures, intended to be placed on your website, are dynamic SVG files that always reflect your current status. As long as you continue to secure W.A.G.E. fees or withhold labor when not paid them, you will be listed as certified. Please note that Certified WAGENTS have an additional responsibility. They are required to pay equitably those who contribute to producing the content of their work – their studio assistants. New payment guidelines and a WAGENCY Work Agreement for assistant labor can be found [here](https://wagency/artists/assistants#top) ([../artists-assistants#top](https://wagency/artists/assistants#top)).

you through this platform. But what I thought was odd is that the possibility of caving in is built into it. The way they demonstrated it was, the artist said "I need 20.000 USD for my project, I can't do it for less, I need to pay my assistants to make the work." The institution replied "Oh, okay, we can do it for more." So the artist gives their high and the institution their low. So the artist takes 2000 off of their number, and the institution adds 2000 to theirs. And then, they found this middle ground in the negotiation. But eventually the artist just ended up declining the invitation. So the platform is promoting that artists should just decline if the fee doesn't correspond to their needs or the minimum wage set by W.A.G.E. So I found that kind of odd because I would want an artist organization in favor of wages to help us find a way, rather than vacating our position.

CT It is just like on eBay. But the institutions will always be in a position of trying to get the lowest bid, no? I mean, of course.

JH Or, they want to get the highest bid in some cases.

CT I guess so. Is that also a thing that happens? Like multiple institutions are offering competing bids.

MG What?! (Laughs)

CT Or is it always just like "No, we will give you what you want or closer to what you want."

JH Well, yeah, but if an artist is saying "This work is only worth 50 USD," then no one wants to deal with it. You have to somehow name a price that makes your institution feel worthy of itself.

CT Sure.

JC But once you have been invited, the institution is not going to back down and choose another artist. Because they already have decided to invite you.

MG I was talking about this with a friend yesterday—only "wealthy" institutions are able to pay fees. For example a small Kunstverein could decide to do only three shows per year instead of five in order to be able to pay the artists. Even this isn't so easy, the board could just refuse because they want five shows per year. And I'm not even sure on which side I'm positioning myself. I was wondering, do you only do shows when you get paid?

RT No, no. I just did a show in Hamburg, I wasn't paid. I mean, the idea behind this campaign is to incentivize discussions about the subject. We don't promote any solutions or answers over another. It's more about having people realizing that there is a problem with the actual situation. We are organizing discussions, like the one we are having today, to understand together what could be the solutions.

MG In our case, we can't really afford doing it for free. Maybe it's also



## BUST YOUR BOSS!\*

card for freelance art and cultural workers

During a negotiation about work you have the right:

**not** to remain silent about money

**not** to subsidise the production from your own pocket

**not** to accept a change of agreed conditions without a renegotiation

**not** to take this job on the promise of a future!

\* Warning: In the cultural sector your boss may not look like a boss – they could be your friend/drinking buddy... It might even be you!



In solidarity – Precarious Workers Brigade  
[www.precariousworkersbrigade.tumblr.com](http://www.precariousworkersbrigade.tumblr.com)

**BUST YOUR BOSS!**  
YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO ASK:



*What's the budget? How much am I getting paid? How much are YOU getting paid? When am I getting paid? Do I get paid sick leave and holidays? Will my pay cover a living wage for the period of the project? What union can I join? Are there separate budgets for production, expenses and pay? When shall we agree the terms of the contract? What is the compensation fee if the work gets cancelled? Has all the money for the project been raised? What is the maternity/paternity and pension provision? Where is the money for the project coming from and what degree of involvement do funders have in my work? etc..*

because we are doing a lot of performances. Another aspect is the question of branding. Some institutions get the W.A.G.E. branding through being certified by W.A.G.E. And all of a sudden they convey the impression of being a "fair" institution, even though they may not be at all. There are obviously two sides of it.

JL I have the sense that institutions that have smaller capital will tend to invite certain forms of work that generate less costs. Then I wonder if galleries or institutions will pick up performances to fill in gaps in their program thinking it isn't going to be that costly.

MG Well, but that's a huge misunderstanding. Performance is what costs institutions a lot of money actually. Because there are people involved, at least in our cases. Performances are very expensive. We recently got invited to do a performance at an "event." Usually we never do performances at openings, we refuse these kind of invitations. The last performance we did within such a scenario—they, of course, didn't have the money for it, and only wanted to get some sort of happening for the opening. So we answered with a performance where Selina was blowing up a balloon and I destroyed it with a needle. That was it. Probably the worst performance on earth. (Laughs)

CT Sounds okay to me.

JL I don't know if this is happening

outside of New York so much, but I noticed it when I moved there. Artists are called at benefit auctions, collectors houses, institutional dinners, pretty consistently. I think to fill the gap of performativity and sociality. But I did have the thought that it is so much work, you know, being invited constantly.

RT What about this show? In my case, I was considering the amount of money I was getting paid, and what I could do with this budget. So I tried to provide an amount of labor accordingly to the fee. Jason, the work you are presenting here is also about labor, or how to sustain yourself as an artist.

JH Yeah. Since I was involved in inviting Jason (Loebs) for my project here, I assumed there would be an honorarium for him. And if there wasn't one, I would have had to advocate for one, either find a way exterior to the institution to get one, or do a different work, or no work. The first idea would be to try to sacrifice a portion of mine to make it happen. Because part of the experiment of my project is trying to make a work addressing the appropriation of a person's time, resources and energy, as well as the possibility to make or to exhibit art without appropriating people? That is the question and the answer is probably no. Jason and I have been talking a lot about art and value. Labor done by assistance is sold under the name of the author, and this is what generates the price of the work, not the labor provided for it. So it is a form



of alienation. What I'm trying to figure out is, is it possible that labor doesn't get alienated? I already happen to do alienated labor for Jason, being his assistant. But now, by doing a faithful presentation of his work for this exhibition here, I'm trying not to alienate what he did. One starting point is the budget we agreed upon.

GL I guess it's about use. Remuneration is one way in which you can think of compensation but at the same time it is totally possible to be paid and still feel used for example. And not to be paid and feel compensated.

CT I'm wondering if it is possible to do labor without feeling as an alienated worker. It is inherently part of it. Unless you are doing it for yourself.

GL But even if you are doing it for yourself, there is still the issue of self-exploitation.

CT Yeah, for sure.

GL It is this constant question over how to work, how hard it can be to value our own labour, and labours that do not comply to specific metrics or outputs. How that rests on the ways different forms of labour are valued socially. On all those relations, the groups and partnerships and dependencies we are already in, and excluded from.

JH Is it possible to avoid alienation? That's for me a major question of art.

CT But somehow I'm more okay with alienating myself than somebody else, because I'm choosing to do that.

GL I feel like it's to do with a certain, and problematic, model of agency. Refusing one set of terms doesn't mean not instigating another.

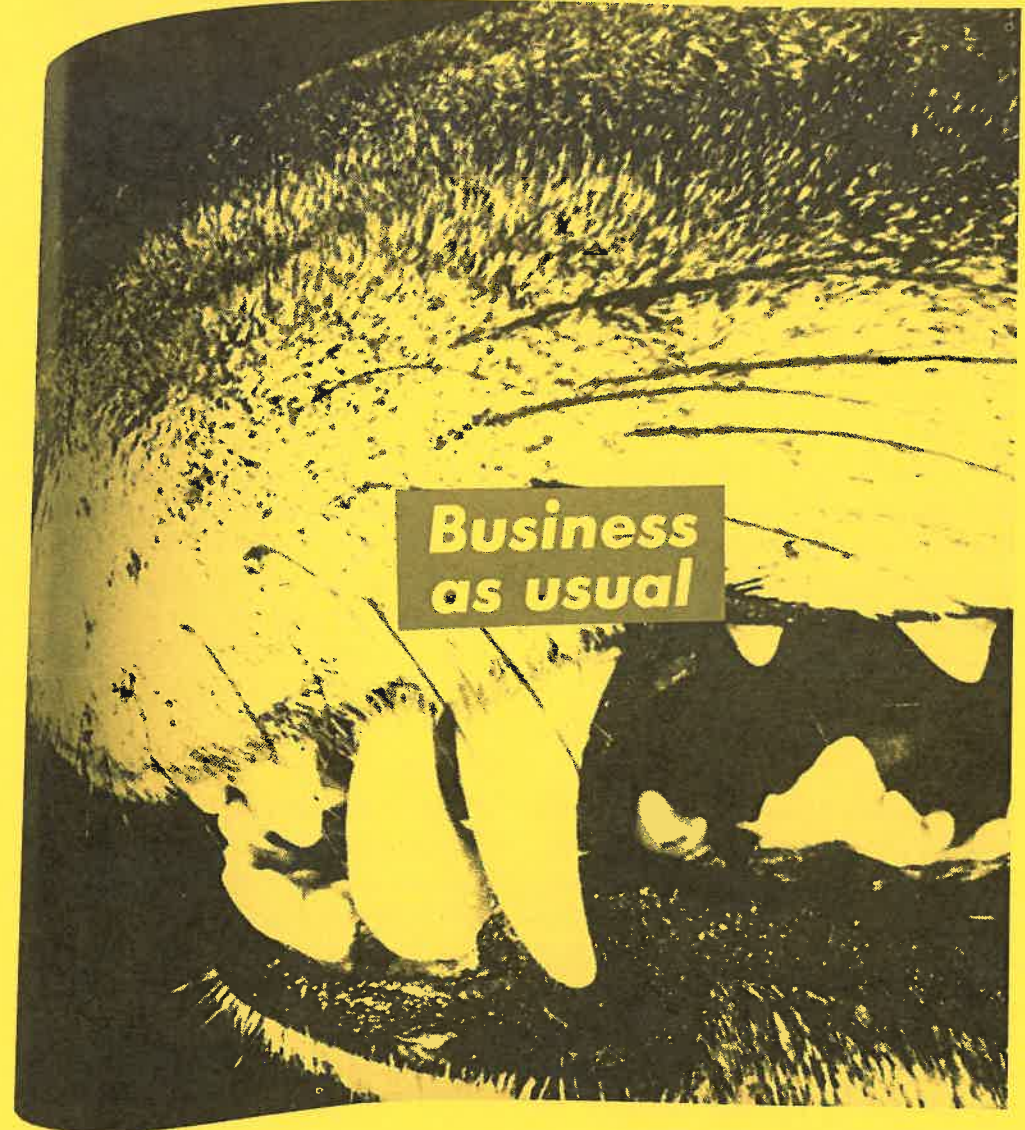
JC In terms of not being offered to be paid for a show. I don't see any real consequences to saying no, and not doing the show.

JL Wait, that doesn't seem right at all. It would have a lot of consequences.

GL No one sees that you don't do the show.

JC That, and the imaginary gain that you get from doing the show is far greater than the actual gain. Artists don't cumulatively build their careers by doing a show there, there, and there, and then saying "I'm done." There is a lot of chance involved, and the decisions are made early on whether you are going to be a market favorite or a success story or not. The difference between doing a show in Hamburg or not is so slight that it gives you a lot of power to decide whether you want to walk or not.

RT Just recently I was invited to this group show in an institution: the opening is actually tomorrow. In our correspondence, the curator never mentioned anything regarding money. So at some point, I asked whether there





was going to be a fee. He replied there was no fee, because I was presenting an already produced work. But I was offered to go there, to sleep in a hotel, to have this nice dinner with everyone, blah blah blah. I replied that I was sorry, I'm doing this campaign, so I'm not going to participate in this exhibition if I'm not paid. He then asked me how much I would like to receive. I said I want all the artists of the show to be paid as well. He said "Okay, but how much would it be?" I replied "500 EUR each." And then he ended up saying "I think we can do it."

MG What?!

RT We are five artists in the show. But just two days ago, I was at this opening and I met one of the artists. He started to explain to me all the problems he just had regarding money for this show, and I told him "Actually, I've asked all the artists to be paid as a condition for me to participate." He said "I haven't heard about it." So one of the reasons for the discussion we are having today is because this is happening all the time! We don't exchange about each other's conditions. So I immediately wrote to all the other artists of the show. One was indeed offered a fee. Another one said "No, never. Anyway, I'm not asking for fees, because I'm never receiving them."

JC That's a problem not specific to the fee itself. Institutions renege on their promises all the time, in every category.

In general, it's that they are not responsible, rather than that they have some kind of prejudice against paying fees. Like you said, the curator was willing to pay as soon as you asked, or at least he was willing to promise.

RT Right. So I wrote to the curator yesterday and he replied "Oh yeah, yeah sorry, we haven't talked about it but we are going to do it of course." I don't know if he will do it. It's definitely not correct not mentioning it before the opening. All of this is just annoying.

JC This curator doesn't have any incentive to reduce the cost of his show. So it is just him making a promise that he is not willing to follow through on.

RT Or maybe he was, but he didn't put it forward until now.

MG Which is part of the problem.

RT Yeah, exactly. I really just want things to be straight from the beginning. When I was a younger artist, it was impossible for me to ask to be paid, and really hard to even mention anything about the budget. It was never addressed. Even now, it is still annoying to do it. So this depends on how much power you have as an artist, or the power you think you can have.

CZ Thank you for everything everyone is saying. But maybe I just have a simple question, which is coming before the actual idea of the payment,

along with the idea of the need for payment. There is a need for money to live. And that comes even before you agree or don't agree to do a show or receive an artist fee. Everyone has some kind of practice, maybe not the one you want, or not waged in the way that you would want. It can probably always be better. So there is something that you are doing: a job outside of your art practice, or your art practice pays because you sell works or...

JL You're a teacher or something.

CZ Or you are wealthy. Whatever the situation is, that differentiation, of people's financial situations, is what problematizes this call for the wage, and equally the call against the wage, if you take it in the Wages For Housework<sup>4</sup> sense. The call for remuneration was actually a call for the destruction of the wage, of the very notion of the wage. What I'm trying to say is, what lies behind this is, the question of "How are you going to maintain?" It's a question behind WAGENCY as well, or even the whole determination of agency, or the capacity for production and reproduction. So I think that's the inherent problem. So it is not a critique of the call for

4 Throughout the 1970's, the Wages for Housework movement developed an analysis of women's reproductive labor, "housework" broadly conceived, as a primary site for mobilization. It was grappling with the question of what is to be done to put an end to the massive quantities of unwaged labor steadily expanding the wealth of the capitalist class while condemning millions to impoverishment and endless work. Silvia Federici was the co-founder of the movement.

remuneration, it is just a class-based question, which obviously is localized around race, gender, ability and disability, among other things. I'm sure all of us are in a different situation, of how they get paid, or how they are paying to work for free. Because when you say you are working gratis, you are getting paid somewhere else, or you wouldn't be able to do it, or somebody is working for free for you. So asking for a fee is a symbolic gesture. And I don't mean that as an affront, in fact I mean that as a really hard compliment, because obviously we should all be fucking paid, of course. But institutions are always going to just take the fee off the material budget, because that's how they do it. They are not putting fees in their budget, grants applications or their funding structures, because it hasn't been called for. That is why W.A.G.E. operates as a brand, as somebody said earlier, a brand that institutions can hide behind. A movement like W.A.G.E. requires a sense of solidarity. I really feel the person who was saying that it is hard to value your own labor. But you got to realize when you do that for yourself, you are doing that for everybody, and that you are part of that everybody. So if you can't do it for you, think about the you that is inside of me, you know what I mean, and do it for me.

JL I get where Tina is pointing towards, which is the question of how do you work towards abolishing the wage.

CZ Yeah, exactly.



IN THIS WE TRUST

# THE WOMEN OF THE WORLD ARE SERVING NOTICE!

WE WANT WAGES FOR  
EVERY DIRTY TOILET  
EVERY INDECENT ASSAULT  
EVERY PAINFUL CHILDBIRTH  
EVERY CUP OF COFFEE  
AND EVERY SMILE  
AND IF WE DON'T GET  
WHAT WE WANT WE  
WILL SIMPLY REFUSE  
TO WORK ANY LONGER!



# WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK

CAMPAIGN OFFICE • 268 B EIGHTH STREET (OFF FIFTH AVENUE) BROOKLYN, N.Y.

JL I also sense the kind of criticism of W.A.G.E. You are kind of nicely saying that it is a luxury protest.

CZ Listen, I love W.A.G.E. (Laughs) All my friends are in W.A.G.E. Fully on board for asking for artist fees. I don't know if this is recorded or what, but I LOVE W.A.G.E. (Laughs) The call for the wage is the call for the destruction of the wage, but associated with the concept of reproduction. It is so far beyond anything about labor. It is beyond a question of value. This is a question of life. When you call for the wage outside of organized solidarity around class construction, then you are calling for some kind of unique exchange. Everybody who lives on this planet deserves something. We all have a right to be alive and have shit to live. And hopefully live well. I guess it can be a critique but it doesn't have to be.

JL I think it goes right to the core of post-war welfare politics around unionization. Like the various ways the union would be split between the radical abolitionist organization and the increasing subsumption of the union under a substantial wage increase model.

CZ Yeah, because it is allocated to the few at the cost of the many. When people are calling for a wage, they are basically first questioning representation and the recognition of labor itself. Art work should be recognized, because for a long time it was not. It is work.

JC I want to play the devil's advocate

here. I don't think a symbolic protest for higher wages in the art world has a relationship with a real protest for wages in a different kind of economy. My struggle here in Switzerland has no effect or relationship with another person's struggle wherever, in Bangladesh for example.

CZ Well, I mean regarding my critique towards, as Jason Loeb said, a "luxury protest," you nonetheless still need to get paid. I've spoken to W.A.G.E. people extensively and I know that they do not consider this organization as an art piece, rather as a real base relation. I'm with you devil's advocate. I agree that artists should be paid, but also everyone should be paid. I think people who don't do any work should be paid, as long as their world requires money for living. I don't care how lazy you are, if you are a drug addict or whatever. Everybody alive should be able to be living off their labor.

JC To bring it down to a concrete level, although it seems really difficult for artists to demand a fee, it is in fact achievable, just because of who artists are socio-economically. They actually have a lot of power, it is really not a leap of the imagination.

RT But I mean, it depends which artist.

CZ I agree totally.

JC Just artists as a whole, artists as a social group.



YOU LOUSY ARTISTS. You've been ruined by the system that's made you a pawn for them—them that controls everything, including you. Including your *Art*. And you don't even know it. Why do you think there's so much trademarkism in the art world? This guy thinks he owns stripes. That one owns mirrors. That one owns the *earth*, yet. You trade in originality because you don't know where to find it outside of the market. You're scared to do anything if it's Been Done Before. You think art is individual. Ha! Individualism is what makes all the art in the system the *same*.

And what about regional art? Now how come there's no Great Art in the sticks? Because there's no Great Art promoters in the sticks. Because rich people in the sticks like to buy their art in New York. And if there are promoters and if they do promote you, chances are you're going to move here where you can pay five times the rent and go to the openings and the bar every night so you can make the right connections. So of *course* you don't have time for feminism, YOU LOUSY WOMEN ARTISTS. You're a token woman now. You're grateful that some other women have broken their asses to open up galleries, museums, teaching jobs for you. You maybe even attended a few meetings, a few demonstrations—back *then*. But now it's up to the *bad* artists, who aren't really serious, to carry the burden. How can you—a *good* artist—be expected to give up studio time to work for a political cause? Those *bad* artists joined the ugly, fat, unloved dykes to do the real work of the feminist movement. And *You* don't belong in that company, do you? "I don't even know what feminism is. I don't have to know. You older women did it for me. Thanks."

YOU LOUSY ARTISTS. Doors are open now to white women with some money so what do *you* care about anybody else? So what if there aren't any Third World women in the art world. It's because they don't want to be there. It's because they aren't good artists. It's because they have some other idea of what good art is, and it won't sell. It's not because we don't know any of them. It's not because we don't invite them to our houses or go see their shows or protest when they're insulted. (*That* might be censorship. Artists should be free to be bigots.) Are there any Black artists? If one of them makes it into the art world you put him down because he makes *white art*. That's right, Give it to 'em coming and going. We don't need any more competition in the art world anyway. Pie's too small as it is. Bad enough all these *women* coming in. Just means the standards are falling. What can you say—YOU LOUSY ARTISTS. . . . You . . . bleep bleep bleep. . . .

RT Artists together could do it, but individually you can't. I mean some people can't.

CZ Fees are totally doable. It just takes a lot of people asking for it until it becomes a norm.

JH I'm trying to think, how can we relate our privileged position to people who can't ask, who don't have the bargaining power that we have?

JL But once you introduce the problem of the wage, you have to ask yourself, if you employ other people, what is an adequate payment? Not only "Are you paying somebody?", because you can under- or overpay somebody. It becomes a qualitative question as soon as you introduce the possibility of doing it, both in relationship to who you are asking it for and who you are giving it out to.

CT Then comes the question of the universal basic income [UBI], which you've mentioned Jason [Hirata] the other night, that it follows the idea that it was a way to make consumers rather than workers.

JC That's true. The theory is, that the wages seem so low, so the consumer economy starts to stall, then the people who produce goods can't survive, and it creates this kind of whirlpool, and the whole system collapses. So in order to prevent that, you basically give everyone spending money. But actually

Switzerland voted it down. They don't even want it, you know.

RT Because it is too early. I think the reason for this initiative was not even to pass, it was just to get the word out, to make people think about the possibility of it. In Switzerland a lot of things don't pass the first time and it might be voted again later.

CT But there are also a lot of ramifications for Switzerland. For corporations, for example, to have this instituted would mean that the people in charge would then make much less money. So it won't be appealing anymore for these corporations to be here. This cascading effect is definitely a part of voting it down. I don't know if the UBI is a solution.

JL There is also a really big debate around what's called means-tested aid, the people being granted have to demonstrate that their income is below specified limits, so they are subject to the state authority. At least as it is formatted now, it can be rescinded. So one aspect that is less addressed is in terms of where it would come from if not in the state form? How would it be managed privately?

CT Exactly.

JL The payment is haunted by the possibility of it being acted as a means of control, through lowering or deleting, also removing subsets of the population potentially. So it is used as a threat.



JH One thing I want to do the next time I'm invited to do a show where I'm in a place I can negotiate, is to ask for all the future fees of an institution. So everyone that gets the 500 quid in the show I'm participating in, and in every show after that.

RT I should have asked for that.

JC But how do you enforce it?

CT You sign a contract then you sue them in the amount of money you have put in hiring lawyers.

JC Well, maybe that would be a business model, like a hedge fund. By suing them you would actually get paid more money. (Laughs)

CT That is the next show here. (Laughs)

GL I'm always interested in whether a film distribution model can be used for the circulation of an artwork.

JC This is similar to the way an image bank is operating, like Getty Images. You could probably imagine that.

CT Actually there is this art bank. I remember it started when I was in New York a couple of years ago. I forget exactly the premise, but artists could put their works in it and they would gamble on it. Then if one of the artists would become wildly successful every artist would benefit from it, or something like this.

JL Yes, every artist contributes one work a year for ten years. The art bank doesn't pay for the works.

CT But they select you.

JL They are selecting artists already from a pool that they imagine would have a percentage value increase each year.

CT Yeah, and they are gambling that one of you will become successful.

JC You are submitting a work, once a year or once every two years. It is actually kind of frequent. And at some point the fund would become mature. It is like a health insurance, everyone could extract from it. But that actually never happened. I think they went out of business. And they took the works.

CT I just remember this from three or four years ago. It is crazy it already folded. It didn't even have the first ten years. So this model did not work.

JL They probably declared bankruptcy then recuperated all the works.

JC It could be a way simpler model. There is a bank with the actual works and the institutions have to rent directly from it, just like Getty Images.

RT But thinking of all of these models, one of the ideas behind the artist remuneration campaign is that I don't necessarily want to produce objects

l'élaboration et l'étude du concept d'*agnostologie* ont permis de démontrer que les positions de pouvoir hégémoniques induisent une production active d'ignorance. Cette production est complexe : elle passe par la négation d'existences ou de points de vue tiers, par l'universalisation d'un point de vue situé compris comme la réalité elle-même (le réel *en soi*), par des processus de perception erronés, biaisés ou de cécité, par des mystifications, des spoliations de connaissances, des dénégations, des critères de recevabilité, de crédibilité et d'autorité scientifiques socialement centrés, des pratiques archivistiques ou des procédures de vérification comportant des doubles standards (définissant ce qui est *digne* d'être conservé, mémorisé, ce qui est vrai, objectif, neutre, scientifique, ce qui constitue un événement, un fait) ; et, par conséquent, par de l'amnésie active, du révisionnisme, de la *doxa scientifique*, de la production idéologique à proprement parler.

le concept d'ignorance permet de saisir l'asymétrie entre l'exploitation cognitive et gnoséologique des dominé.e.s et les infinis bénéfices sociaux et symboliques dégagés de ce travail au profit des dominant.e.s. Ignorant.e.s, les dominant.e.s sont engagé.e.s dans des postures cognitives qui leur épargnent à proprement parler de « voir » les autres, de s'en soucier, de les prendre en compte, de les connaître, de les considérer. Les dominant.e.s se ménagent ainsi du temps pour eux/elles-mêmes : se connaître, s'aimer, s'écouter, se cultiver. En se prenant pour objet exclusif d'attention et de soin, ils/elles se donnent de l'importance, du poids, de la place, et reproduisent ainsi les conditions matérielles assurant la pérennité de leur domination.

that can be rented through a bank or sold. If we get paid for our work, the production might shift and might then be less object-oriented.

JC The image bank in Germany is actually really convenient. If you want to rent an image, you just go on the website and search for it and then you pay a fee and use it. You don't have to ask whoever it belongs to, like in the estate of Picasso, because there is already a mediating agency. I think it is actually subsidized by the state.

JL They started an artist agency in Hollywood. Or an agency that is including artists now.

MG What is the difference with a gallery?

JL I'm not sure, but that is surely guaranteeing the artists a wage or a payment. I wanted to ask you Tina, you evoked the relative potential for solidarity amongst artists and the lack thereof. And I got the sense that you were potentially idealistic about the possibility of this solidarity. I thought that was very positive. But I wanted to introduce the possibility for the opposite. If we would take up what you said that this might be a luxury field. Isn't there also the possibility that there are more antagonistic relationships than are necessarily articulated?

CZ Um. Are you asking, I was trying to be positive and couldn't go the other way? (Laughs)

JL Yeah.

CZ Exactly. That is why I am positive, Jay. (Laughs) I think it can or it does have to go all the other way. That was the underbelly of that statement. I didn't intend it as a critique but that could easily become one.

JL I mean, just to be the devil's advocate, wouldn't it be problematic to start from the position of solidarity in the market-articulated here as luxury? Because it could just be a veiled antagonism.

CZ Well, okay. I am not an economist, I don't know what art is, I am not a philosopher, I am barely an artist. So I don't know if art is a luxury commodity. That is just some shit I heard. (Laughs) I was just trying to think about our needs. But do I think it can be antagonistic? Yes, I think it is. Solidarity always works across the tightness, otherwise you wouldn't need to make the claim. Somebody talked about the difficulty to value their own labor and I really felt for that. Because it has been so many times in my life where—not as an artist, because art to me is one of the easiest jobs I have ever done, and in that case it is a luxury—I just felt for that person or felt myself in that person's call. I think we share a need, a need to get by. Most artists I know want to make art, to put it out there, and want it to be seen. And it is labor, it takes a lot of time, which keeps you from doing other jobs. Unless you are already rich, you do need to get paid. And it is hard to ask for money, because there is a lot

of shame around not having enough money. What I think undercurrents all questions of remuneration is always located around recognition and representation of labor converted into value. I don't mind asking people for money. For this show here, in my mind I was thinking "Alright, listen, if the fee is 500 I am going to say yes." And then I got offered 800 CHF, I was like "Alright, cool." So I was able to give Jason a couple of hundred to gather the pedestal since I wasn't there to do it myself. That is how I feel about it. So can it be antagonistic? Yes, it can be. The issues of W.A.G.E. lies between different class generations and also age generations. There are artists in W.A.G.E. that do get paid for shows and do work for institutions. And there are other artists in W.A.G.E. that are younger or just in a different social class position. They believe in that call because they simply need to be paid. Also some people also feel disrespected by that call because they are being devalued for working for free. For example they work at an artist-run space with their friends in Bushwick or in any neighborhood. And they are really trying and are sincere about it. They are trying to make art and show it to the world. Some people work for free because that is not the place where they're getting their money, or they are just doing it for other reasons. Then you also have rich people who are working for free because they can and don't care. These artists are unknowingly cutting off the potential for everybody else to ever enter that round. So, yeah, that

is antagonistic, and I hear about it all times. At some level, I struggle in those worlds.

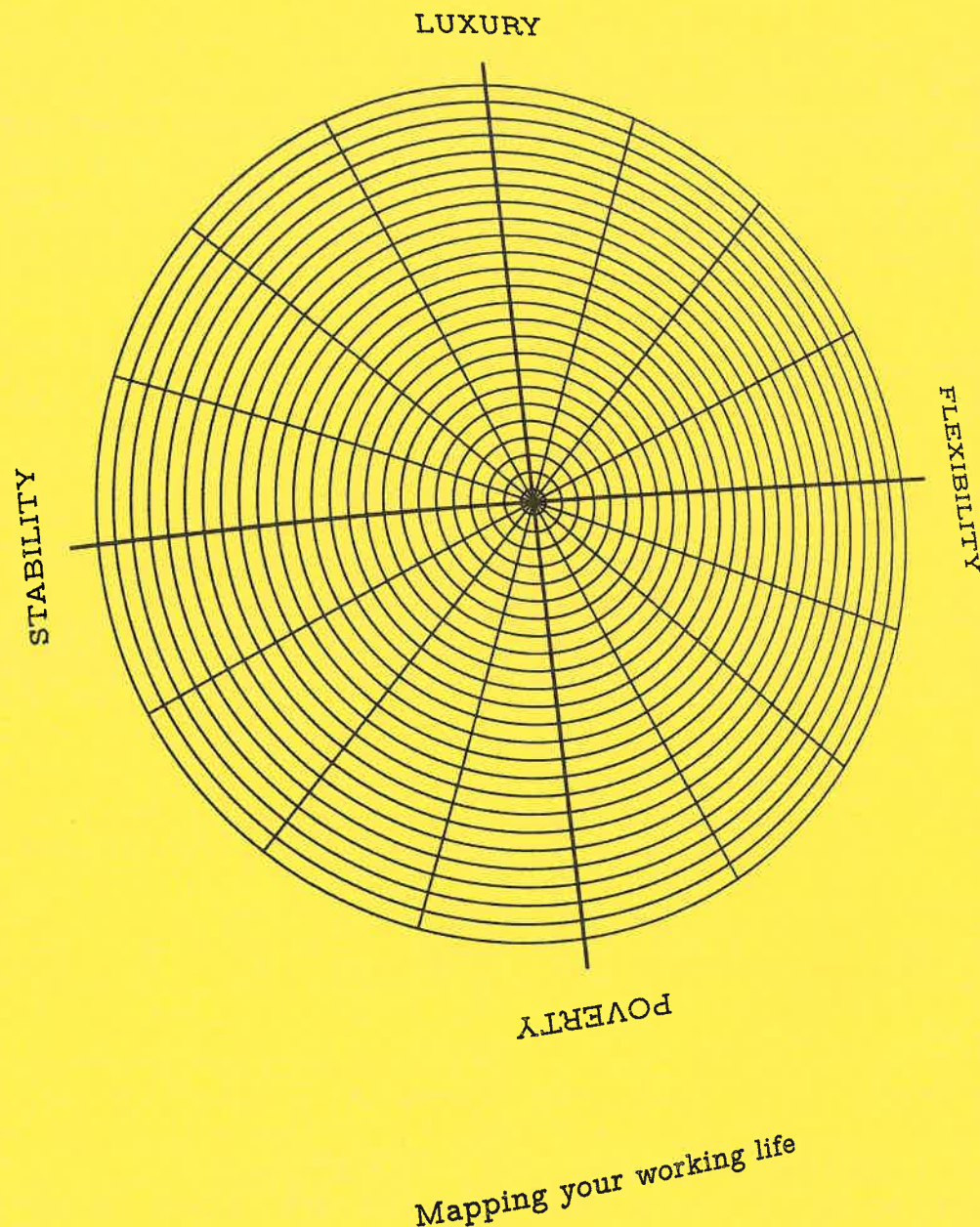
JL If you take the totality of artists producing work, I would probably imagine the majority of them are not paid. I mean, I grew up in a small town with tons of artists that don't show. So I'm wondering about the totality of artists producing in comparison to the artists that are called to perform and those who are paid already in the marketplace.

CZ Yeah, that is what I'm saying. If you are in a position to ask for getting paid, you should try to do that. And if you are not able to for whatever reason, then the group should be able to bring it up. That is all there is. Some people would then be carried by the group.

JL Maybe we should start with the majority who is hypothetically just unpaid and not called, rather than starting with the minority who is paid and called.

CZ Yeah, exactly. I think we should value the more ubiquitous, the more common, the bulk of artists. I mean, just again, I'm mapping it to other forms of struggle where it was historically the case like Wages For Housework, they concentrated on bringing the bottom up. Those are some of the things that piss me off in the art world. The only thing I can offer is, my piece for this show, it's some pieces of gold. I just





took the whole production budget and put it all in it. And it is totake away to whoever gets it. So if you want, just take it.

RT Maybe we can just continue this discussion while we cook dinner and eat? And I just stop the recording.

GL Can I ask you a question, just as a sort of ending? Given it's the first time you tried this, did the group discussion go how you expected?

RT I think I wasn't expecting anything from this. I was just imagining people will just join and chat. I wasn't even expecting that people would talk about money or fees. I just wanted to see what would happen if I was organizing this moment.

JH Can I ask one more question? It is not a good way to end, but I ask it really quick since we are all still here. Would it help to have a preview of the total budget for each exhibition you work on?

GL Like the breakdown of it?

JH For example choosing not to do a dinner or whatever it is.

GL If I do a solo show I tend to do a budget myself. And I would look at all the costs.

CT But I mean, even if it is not helpful, I would be curious to see it, for each show, you know.

RT The solo show I did here at Fri Art, I had access to the overall budget of my show because we applied for funding and I was the one sending it. So I was able to see it, but I didn't negotiate on it.

JC So you raised the money for your show?

RT We did it together. For some applications, the artist should apply themselves for it.

JC It was funded, so you should be getting a fee.

RT Yeah, of course. I could have put a fee, but I didn't even know I could at the time. Okay then, thank you everyone, and it was really nice to have you with us, Tina. We miss you here. We are sad that you are not here with us.

SG Yes.

JH Yeah.

CZ Yeah, me too. Thank you so much. I saw pictures of the fondue from yesterday. I don't know how you can eat that much cheese, but it looked really cool.

JH Yeah we had so much cheese.

CT As a fellow American I can say, it was too much cheese, not into it.

JH It's also diluted with other cheese.

CZ Sounds amazing, for real, I'm seri-

ous. Thanks for having me. And thanks for all your works too. I can't wait to see all the pictures.

JH I'll send them now, I have a ton.

CZ Have a beautiful night.

JH We are making dumplings now.

CZ C'mon Jay, I'm already jealous! It was good to meet some of you. Okay, bye!

Everyone Bye!



Institutions are crowded. In noticing the crowds, we also notice the orientation devices that direct the flow of human traffic in particular ways. We all know the experience of "going the wrong way" in a crowd. Everyone seems to be going the opposite way than the way you are going. No one person has to push or shove for you to feel the collective momentum of the crowd as pushing and shoving. To keep going, you have to push harder than any of those individuals who are going the right way. The body who is "going the wrong way" is the one experienced as "in the way" of a will that is acquired as momentum. For some, mere persistence, "to continue steadfastly," requires great effort, an effort that might appear to others as stubbornness, willfulness, or obstinacy. This book has been written from the experience of "going against" and "coming up against."

We might need to get in the way if we are to get anywhere. We might need to become the blockage points by pointing out the blockage points.

I end this book with a maxim: *don't look over it, if you can't get over it.*



WAGES FOR

**WAGES  
AGAINST**