

*CULTURAL CAPITAL COOPERATIVE OBJECT #1 & 2* at Rodeo Gallery presents two cooperatively produced and owned artworks—a large-scale ceramic relief, and a single-channel video—organized by the London-based artist Sidsel Meineche Hansen. For both distinct works, Meineche Hansen responded to the invitation from an art institution to present her own work by proposing instead to recruit members of a cooperative she would join with in producing a new work for that institution. Once the inviting institution agreed to this particular condition, the artist approached different practitioners about becoming members of a context-specific cooperative with equal governing authority in how the work would be produced, exhibited, owned, and distributed. The political imperatives for Meineche Hansen in organizing these cooperatives are particularly motivated by the artist's longstanding interest in recognizing economic subjectivity within group work. The artist engaged cooperative economics not solely to consider how art might be managed collectively, but moreover, to consider how the cooperative as a model for a diversity and pluralism of ownership could transform the relations and conditions of property reproduced by the field of art. For Meineche Hansen, this ongoing critical project of the *CCCO* is intended to complicate the settled expectation that art exists as any other legal private property—resisting the presumption of individual attribution, the exclusionary function of property, and the normalized terms for bargaining ownership that are legally legitimated through social and economic advantage.

Exclusionary economic practices are of course pervasive in the art context, despite persistent characterizations of an artworld dissociated from “real world” problems. Artists who seek to reconsider the legally framed economic parameters for their work take on social, psychological, and ideological conflicts—internalized struggles—over their own role as producers within the contentious art field. Enacting a cooperative agreement legally obligated to the artwork may seemingly contradict the principle that art is an intangible expression of one's personal experience. And artists who respond to the emotionally unsustainable realities of an exploitative artworld by proposing to renegotiate the legal-economic structural asymmetries of their work are dismissed as too difficult to be bothered with, or as failing to prevent their work from being subsumed by commodity logic. The structural inequalities of property relations specifically, are increasingly evident within the ecology of art spaces that distinguish themselves from commercial sector galleries. It is well known that non-profit and non-collecting institutions are sites for art acquisitions and market speculation. In addition to acquiring work through auction benefits and editions programs, individual collectors and collecting institutions frequently negotiate the purchase of works during the run of exhibitions at non-profit and non-collecting art spaces. Rather than foreclose or disavow this reality of the exhibition context, the *CULTURAL CAPITAL COOPERATIVE OBJECT #1* and *CULTURAL CAPITAL COOPERATIVE OBJECT #2* members utilize the transactional order of cooperative economics to reconsider the terms for distribution of

their transferable work. Forming a cooperative in the early planning stages of working with an exhibiting institution—whether commercial gallery or non-profit space—is a way to anticipate, enact, and renegotiate the enmeshed economic and intersubjective conditions that constitute the production, reception, circulation, and consumption of art today.

Artists Manuela Gernedel, Sidsel Meineche Hansen, Alan Michael, Georgie Nettel, Oliver Rees, Matthew Richardson, Gili Tal, and Lena Tutunjian comprised the cooperative that produced *CULTURAL CAPITAL COOPERATIVE OBJECT #1*, a large-scale clay relief that reflects on Asger Jorn's 1956 ceramic interior design commission for the Statsgymnasium in Aarhus, Denmark. This clay relief work was produced within Meineche Hansen's exhibition *SECOND SEX WAR* (March 17 – May 29, 2016 and June 12 – October 16, 2016), co-presented by Gasworks, the London residency and exhibition space, and the Trondheim Kunstmuseum, a public museum in Trondheim, Norway. In reconsidering the means by which cultural funding is allocated and the specific history of the Danish Art Foundation in funding the commission of Jorn's ceramic interior, *CULTURAL CAPITAL COOPERATIVE OBJECT #1* repurposed the Danish Art Foundation's support of the exhibition at Gasworks and the Trondheim. Rather than allocate the DAF funding entirely for Meineche Hansen's own work as a Danish national, *CULTURAL CAPITAL COOPERATIVE OBJECT #1* redistributed that national arts funding in equal shares to the cooperative, none of whose members, save for Meineche Hansen, are Danish nationals. *CULTURAL CAPITAL COOPERATIVE OBJECT #1* applied Jorn's praxis of interconnecting art, architecture, and life in approaching the socio-economic conditions of the rapidly gentrifying area of South London. *SECOND SEX WAR* was one of the first exhibitions at Gasworks immediately following the organization's purchase and redevelopment of the property where it has maintained artist residency studios, exhibition space, and offices since 1994. Although the clay relief was initially exhibited at Gasworks, it was made in a nearby artist-run space at Penarth Centre in South London. The cooperative artists' conflicted relationship to property development in South London was a crucial point in their considering how cultural capital operates within low-income neighborhoods in which artists live and work, and how this reality is underscored by the redevelopment of Gasworks.

*CULTURAL CAPITAL COOPERATIVE OBJECT #2* was produced by artists Nikita Gale, Candice Lin, Sidsel Meineche Hansen, Nour Mobarak, Blaine O'Neill, and Patrick Staff. For this second effort by Meineche Hansen to initiate a cooperative artwork, the cooperative produced a remake of Shigeru Izumiya's horror film *Death Powder* (1986) for the Los Angeles non-profit art space, LAXART. *CULTURAL CAPITAL COOPERATIVE OBJECT #2* was entirely conceived and filmed by the cooperative members onsite at LAXART over the course of one day using their camera phones. The film remake was screened as part of an installation created by the cooperative in the

main gallery of the exhibition space on November 6th, 2017, two days before the US presidential election. While invoking the dread of the US election and the body horror aesthetics and post-cyberpunk frameworks of Izumiya's film, the process of producing the film within the site of its reception was central to the project's outcome. The cooperative underscored art as a situationally-specific contingent object that reflects and embodies social, economic, spatial, and temporal parameters of the presenting institution. Within the process of realizing *CULTURAL CAPITAL COOPERATIVE OBJECT #2*, the cooperative artists revised LAXART's standard artist agreement to identify the particular authorial role of the cooperative, and to ensure that the economic conditions for the work's production, ownership, and transfer were consistent with their cooperative model. As a curator at LAXART at the time, I worked with the cooperative to revise the artist agreement. My own role in the contract negotiations was deeply ambivalent, simultaneously advocating the cooperative artists' interests, as well as asserting financial protections and limitations on behalf of the institution. The cooperative agreement document we drafted was displayed and distributed in the main gallery as part of the installation with the film. By enacting and disclosing social, material, and legal processes of the project, the cooperative challenged assumptions that internal aspects of exhibition-making are merely a hidden-from-view bureaucratic maneuvering—arguing instead that these efforts by artists permeate and charge our experience with the work, situating its public reception and terms of viewership.

*CULTURAL CAPITAL COOPERATIVE OBJECT #1 & 2* repurposes Meineche Hansen's first solo presentation of new work at Rodeo as an occasion instead to consider how the two cooperative works function within a commercial gallery context, and to consider the broader implications of the overarching *CCCO* project. In anticipation of the exhibition opening on October 14th, 2017, Rodeo will host a closed-door working group for the cooperative members to discuss the sale of their cooperative works with the gallery's founding owner and director, Sylvia Kouvali. While artist collectives are a widely recognized form of artistic production, in order to realize the legal cooperative agreement intended for the sale of *CULTURAL CAPITAL COOPERATIVE OBJECT #1* and *CULTURAL CAPITAL COOPERATIVE OBJECT #2*, the gallery and cooperative members will negotiate, not solely modes of collaborative production, but also the specific demands and varying contingencies of a mutual ownership structure. To help draft this legal cooperative agreement, the working group will additionally be comprised of cooperative advisers and organizers of worker cooperatives, a contracts attorney specializing in cooperatives, labor and employment law, and advocates for improved working conditions in the art field, among other contributors. The cost of organizing the working groups has been supported by the sale of Meineche Hansen's, *Banked* (2017), a figurative sculpture produced by the artist and sold outright to an individual collector through Rodeo. This sculpture—ceramic portrait heads depicting the artist, gallery management,

and the individual collector who acquired the work—is included in the exhibition, displayed at the entryway of the gallery. As a kind of double bind, *Banked* operates to directly support the cooperative endeavor, while functioning as an individualized work. Exhibiting the cooperatively produced and non-cooperatively produced work together is an effort to recognize the comparative, and enmeshed, economies of cooperatively and individually owned work. The disclosure of this comparative economy evidences the complications that exist when actualizing alternate approaches to settled property relations. The working group sessions will include discussion about this structural complication, in addition to meetings with legal counsel in order to draft and finalize a legal agreement for the sale of the cooperative artworks through Rodeo Gallery. This effort by the two cooperative groups to execute the legal agreement is not conclusively about securing their individual remuneration, but is ultimately intended to model organizational structures, challenge cultural competencies, while also recognize the interrelations between the art field and the broader legal-economic order. For Meineche Hansen, this foregrounding of the legal entanglements of exhibition, transfer, and possession does not ensure a comprehensive solution to the problem of sales, but rather, operates as a distinct set of problems through which the normalization of sales by individual ownership may be reconsidered.

—Eric Golo Stone, Los Angeles (October 2017)

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