

OFFSHORE

OFFSHORE is an itinerant performance company, laboratory and pedagogical structure that finds its full name from wherever it finds itself. Its attempt is to draft new vocabulary and terms for how to organise, work and perform. OFFSHORE sits somewhere between a philosophy school for embodied knowledge, an engine, an alibi, a backroom, a rehearsal and some deliberate, unguaranteed, social plumbing. OFFSHORE is probably though best described, simply, as an organizational structure. It enables a number of persons, some of whom will have met before, some who have not, to maintain a state of rehearsal over a number of days, in public. Comprised of a growing number of performers, academics, writers, scientists, psychologists, economists and philosophers, OFFSHORE has been in formation since 2017, when it was initiated by Cally Spooner. Her role in the project now continues as the OFFSHORE ACCOUNTANT, ALIBI BROKER and LEGIBILITY COORDINATOR.

OFFSHORE came to life through an initial grant from Corpus, an international network for commissioning performance-related work, co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union. A funded exhibition and event opportunity at REDCAT in Los Angeles first set the stage for testing ideas. Among Corpus' partnering institutions, the Playground Festival (STUK arts centre and M Museum) in Leuven and Bulegoa z/b in Bilbao, then acted as generous hosts for research and rehearsals. The Stanley Picker Fellowship for Fine Art (in collaboration with Kingston University) has been a key supporter, to realize further research gatherings and live events. At Swiss Institute, New York, OFFSHORE remains itinerant and in rehearsal into 2019 with PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY, a school for embodied knowledge.

IN NEW YORK

PRACTICAL

The scene is right now. Somewhere between the 4th Industrial Revolution and the 6th Extinction. The premise is this; economization and corporate techno-capitalism has replaced a political and a public lexicon with a market lexicon. Governance replaces a political lexicon with a management lexicon. The combination transforms the democratic promise of shared rules into the promise of enterprise and portfolio management at the individual and collective level [1]. This ‘hollows out’ subjects. It amounts to a death, or deathliness of that which could otherwise live and thrive as a complex, political, interconnected body, and the body is hijacked by a bad encounter of the worst kind. It goes something like this:

“Thou shalt not eat fruit”.

Yet the anxious, ignorant Adam understands these words (says Baruch Spinoza, via Gilles Deleuze) as the expression of a prohibition. “And what do they refer to? To a fruit that, as such, will poison Adam if he eats it. This is the instance of an encounter between two bodies who’s characteristic relations are not compatible. That is, it will determine the parts of Adam’s body to enter into new relations that no longer accord with his own essence. Spinoza is categorical on this point. All the phenomena that we ground under the heading of evil, illness and death are of this type: bad encounters, poisoning, intoxication, relational decomposition.” [2]

A bad encounter between society and corporate lexicons and media vectors leaves public speech, shared resources and infrastructure over-engineered, under-maintained; erratic and hapless. In their place, an axiomatic command is self-issued: I WILL TAKE CARE OF MYSELF. Corporate digital measuring, rating, ranking instruments step

in to assist; then splice and dice responsibility, individualized subject’s protection mantras into meta-data. Self-tracked and self-policed, a neo-fascist occupation of privatised bodies arrive, and consequently a desire for perfectly good health. Vocabulary shrinks, time turns metric. Intolerant and allergic to the complexities of life, we manage ourselves to death.

Assuming that all matter is inter-connecting, that we can each dominate even whilst we are dominated, and that no one is exempt from culpability, this is the backdrop against which OFFSHORE IN NEW YORK takes residency in the SI reading room. Here, they will create a PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY school, for embodied knowledge which begins with a question. How might we learn to tell the difference between what is alive, vital, visceral and what is deadened, hollow, and cruel in this machinery engineered to yield maximum profit and efficiency? And if we can learn to tell the difference, what do we do next?

Beginning with the text you are reading now and accompanied by a preliminary bibliography, PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY will subsequently unfold in January and February 2019 as rehearsals, talks, reading groups as well as performances. These will consider how we may re-imagine and re-articulate our encounters and our agency within our current climate’s life shaping liabilities in 2019 and beyond. Full programme details of PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY will be announced by SI in January 2019.

[1] Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos – Neoliberalism’s Stealth Revolution*, Zone Books (MIT Press), 2015

[2] Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza : Practical Philosophy*, City Lights Books, 1988

PHILOSOPHY