



Web of Capturing the Moving Mind: X

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We mark this web – this publication, this project – with crossing lines, a *chiasma*. The Greek letter *chi* (χ) marks a decussation, a crossing of tracts. With it we wish to point to the nature of this project as a diagonal arrangement, a connection and crossing of heterogeneous domains and their codings.

This web is produced in cooperation between *Framework: The Finnish Art Review* and *ephemera: theory & politics in organization*. It aims to weave a connection between art and politics, between art as an act of resistance and economy as biopolitical production. For if it is true, that today our thinking and emotional abilities, our imagination and subjectivity are increasingly put to work in economic production and that the new controls operate today with the possibilities of our thinking and acting which they try to subordinate to the pre-structured tasks and aims of a particular historical period, then the question of art as an act of resistance and creation of new forms of autonomous and good life – a life in which our ways and acts of living are always about the possibilities of life – interferes directly to the core of this enterprise. The question of organizing new forms of life and the critique of capitalism must today be seen as one.

The web, or X, presented here is based on *Capturing the Moving Mind: Management and Movement in the Age of Permanently Temporary War*, the first *ephemera* conference on the Trans-Siberian train (Moscow–Novosibirsk–Beijing) September 11–20, 2005.¹

A conference on a train? Captured in a container like sardines in a tin – ready for consumption? An experiment. But what was actually the difference between our experiment and so-called reality TV shows like *Big Brother*? Or were we just imitating the model of Post-Fordist production where mixing different roles and competences, arts and sciences, is the basic method for putting to work not this or that particular ability, but the faculty of being human as such? Or were we engaged in a spectacle, a

¹ See <http://www.ephemeraweb.org/conference>. The conference was organized and supported by *ephemera: theory and politics in organization*, *Conflitti Globali*, *Megafoni*, *Framework: the Finnish Art Review*, Tutkijaliitto, The Wihuri Foundation, the Foundation of Economic Education in Finland, Helsinki School of Economics, Chydenius Institute, University of Essex, m-cult centre for new media culture, Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Novosibirsk State University and Tsinghua University.

pseudo-event, a false event of marketing movement and crossing borders without, or separated from, a real capacity to experience and engage with it?

To answer these questions it is important to understand two things about our experiment as a pragmatics of existence.

First of all, this experiment did not drop from the heavens; it had to be made. It was not made for fun, but out of necessity. The necessity to resist the new war and the arbitrary powers around us. The necessity to create our own problems and not only to respond to the questions and 'weekly assignments' already posed by the Teacher-Capital. The necessity not to submit at the moment when the fragility on which the new controls are build (the bare belief and fear) reveals itself; when we should refuse the panic and fear they try to spread; when we should take control of our lives and not only react to demands and requirements set on us.

Secondly, this criss-crossing was not born out of nothing, but it was made of around 40 independent projects, 40 body-mind and time-space constellations, a series of 40 pieces whose connections were not pre-destined in any way. This was the potentiality in our hands, a potentiality for anything, a potentiality to do anything (also to fail or to submit).

On the train, it was as if we could see in the dim windows a reflection of our existence which had lost both its visible ends and clear origins, as if all that was left was its purposeless movement. It was as if we could look directly into the eye of our existence as potential beings which do not have any particular surrounding, any particular tasks or functions, that is, as beings which can do anything and from which anything may be expected. It was as if we experienced what it means to be a 'human being'. We experienced at the same time the abundance of our possibilities and the trivialness and vanity of all the reasons. In such a condition, we paradoxically had no other ground, no other resources, no other shelter to turn to – except *ourselves*. This experience of the bare 'I can' does not refer to any particular ability or faculty but to our nature as such. It is maybe the most severe and cruel experience possible: the experience of potentiality.

Yet this potentiality is always entangled in its expression, as our journey is in no way separable from its organization. Organization that didn't come from above (the leader, god, the heavens), but was made by us. Our ways and acts of living are never simply facts but above all about possibilities of life.

The level crossing we were facing was this: pure experiment. The journey could also have turned into a chaos or a catastrophe. We are animals that are able to change our fate, but also able not to do so. We can do or can not do, we can succeed or fail, lose ourselves or find ourselves, become slaves or free. No excuses; our behaviour is not prescribed by a necessity, but always retains the character of possibility. Through this potentiality we may meet chances, make connections, either lose or gain in combinations, whither away or branch off to change. None of it happens by itself, but creates rather its own 'problem'. To create our own problems is to climb back to them, to touch, not chaos where we would disappear, but movement that gives us consistency.

So our problem was really this: how to find the courage to look directly into the eye of our ability to do anything; how to seize our potentiality and make of it a beginning of something else, another sense or another form of life whereby the seed of potentiality grows into something else; how to travel through this space of experimentation where there are no visible landmarks or determined cardinal points?

And our answer is this: it is done by hand. It is done by touching, by groping one's way, like in the *Crane Dance* that coils and uncoils in the labyrinth of Minotaur.² In this labyrinth every entrance seems to lead to an *aporia*, a knot, which is impossible to open with visible and formal principles. We have to find our way in a 'place' or rather 'space' or 'time' without boundaries or ceilings, where one returns near the place where one started, where near and far-away commingle and which is fundamentally without a centre. Like a measuring worm, with hands and feet sticking out everywhere, we have to grope, dance and ramble our way through the empty desert. This is to sense the burning problem of what it is to live today. It is a question of sensing and not of understanding, of moving from the level of meaningful words and communication to the materiality of language where thinking turns flesh and starts directly changing the world. A production and invention of gropings, touches, whirlings, rotations, gravitations, dances, leaps... Such is the problem of crossing that would directly touch the soul, that would be that of the soul.

the editors

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2 The myth behind the Crane Dance or *gèranos* involves Theseus and his lover Ariadne, the daughter of King Minos. After Theseus braves the labyrinth to kill the Minotaur, he flees with Ariadne to the island of Naxos, where they dance a winding, labyrinthine dance in Aphrodite's honour to celebrate their love. The dance imitates the winding and tortuous path that Theseus took out of the labyrinth which reveals not as a maze but as a dance floor where the bull fight takes place. It is danced spirally in a chain, or a train. In *The Iliad* (18:590) Homer refers to the Crane Dance in which dancers circle and criss-cross each other "on their understanding feet": "Hereon there danced youths and maidens whom all would woo, with their hands on one another's wrists... sometimes they would dance deftly in a ring with merry twinkling feet, as it were a potter sitting at his work and making trial of his wheel to see whether it will run, and sometimes they would go all in line with one another, and much people was gathered joyously about the green."