

ULTRA-RED
INSTITUTIONAL FEVER
ADVISORY BOARD CONFERENCE TRANSCRIPT

PUBLIC RECORD
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In the process of re-forming itself into an aesthetic-political organization, Ultra-red convened a panel of collaborators and confidants. This group participated in an on-going internet dialogue reviewing the history of Ultra-red, its purposes and praxis. Out of their conversation came questions used to draft Ultra-red's *Articles of Incorporation*.

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Design organized by **u-r** using Century Gothic. "A science of the archive must include the theory of this institutionalization, that is to say, the theory both of the law which begins by inscribing itself there and of the right which authorizes it" (*Archive Fever*, 1996).

Preface.

Mercifully, these things never go as you expected. As the audio-activist group Ultra-red approached their ten-year anniversary of noise-making, silence-breaking and sound-scaping, it was time to do something different. Born in the wake of post-techno ambient music, Ultra-red always had an opportunistic tendency about it. Of course like most materialists, Ultra-red wouldn't refer to it as opportunism, rather the possession of a firm analysis of conditions. A ten year anniversary posed an opportunity too momentous to pass up, even in the wake of larger historical conditions that beg for analysis and action. Ultimately, anniversaries function opportunistically by definition. What is celebrated, what is lauded often serves only to institutionalize a certain subjectivity as somehow self-unified and without rupture or contradiction. Anniversary performances serve the uses of myth-making to such a fine degree that no self-respecting social arrangement can pass the temptation.

Ultra-red have rarely passed any temptation. But rather than perform their anniversary within the self-deprecating gestures of self-identity, the group opted to push the institutionalizing to the foreground. If the anniversary secures a standing for a social arrangement, then Ultra-red would in fact declare itself at ten years, an aesthetic-political institution, or, in the parlance of American culture, a non-profit arts organization. The Ultra-red organization would be born, at age ten.

The move toward institutionalization would occasion the collaborative to engender a few structural changes (most notably, the launching of the internet archive, Public Record), as well as pursue an expansion of its social network. Furthermore, and more crucially in the long run, a formal gesture such as institutionalization would provide Ultra-red the conditions necessary to self-critically examine the relationship between the contemporary artist and culture at this point in history. It is a moment when culture no longer possesses any

imagined autonomy from the universalizing discourse of the market. Constituting that discourse is a set of ideological assumptions so commonsensical that to reject the contract is to reject the capacity to use language itself. How the culture's institutions, sub and supra-cultural, replicate those assumptions and bury their legitimacy within our very unconscious becomes a matter of crucial importance for investigation. Is the unconscious a fully-realized product of ideological reproduction, or does it harbor some reserve of ill-will to the language structuring it?

Prior to taking up that direction, however, Ultra-red sought to kick-start its own self-critical processes by enlisting assistance from outside allies. In its ten years of negotiating art-practice and the urban-practices of community organizing and activism, Ultra-red has formed numerous associations with other artists, intellectuals, activists and organizers. Some of these associations remain steadfast proponents of Ultra-red, our invested critics. These individuals and organizations have collaborated with Ultra-red or have consistently monitored the group's activities offering criticisms and advice. According to the invitation sent to prospective Advisory Board members (not all of whom elected to participate), candidates to the Board were selected on the basis of four criteria:

1. Intimate familiarity with the members of Ultra-red. By this we mean that there is a level of trust and comfort necessary for useful critical reflection.
2. Investment in the mission of Ultra-red. We have worked with you either on a collective or an individual basis. This history has established a personal investment on your part in the group and its efforts to formulate an aesthetic-political practice of sound and media art.
3. Interest in the subject of art practice as it relates to institutionalization. You are either a member of an arts organization, political organization or an artistic project that directly engages the forms and discourses of

institutionalization. We consider this experience crucial in identifying concerns and conditions surrounding any project seeking its own institutionalization even wherein that institutionalization assumes the status of performativity.

4. Identification with Ultra-red's aesthetic-politics. Despite a range of political and artistic experiences, the four members of Ultra-red share a commitment to art that directly practices political change versus art that solely represents or comments upon politics. You are an ally in that commitment.¹

Among those former allies not selected as candidates for the Board, many of these individuals and groups withhold their endorsements. Among former collaborator, former members, past-accomplices (most of whom other artists) have deemed Ultra-red a complete compromise and have either withdrawn their approval in silence or spoken openly of their opposition to the group and its methods. Perhaps by making public the self-analytical process beginning with this text, both the silent and vocal opponents of Ultra-red will find a larger audience and more finely tune their criticisms in ways that are useful for all.

During the early 1990s a specific critical discourse began to develop around the nature of the public sphere in contemporary culture. These discussions drew heavily on philosophers like Henri Lefebvre and Guy Debord, the radical democracy theories of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, and the theory of the proletarian public sphere articulated by Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge. The discourse had a particularly transformative effect on discussions around public art and the relationship between art-practice and the spatial production of communities and public cultures. Ultra-red has always been candid about its collective debt to those discussions and debates. This remains particularly true in

¹ For the full text of the invitation see Public Record document No. 2.01.001, archived at www.publicrec.org.

the notion of a political progressive public sphere as located within resistant discourses. As long as public space is delineated around property and issues of ownership, social movements and the self-constitution of communities of struggle remain outside the transformative operations of culture. In contrast, articulating speech and spatial practices such as protest, festival, social networks as constitutive of public space not only succeeds in valorizing those activities but recognizes the actually existing material relations that stitch together both the professional classes and those who make public space their own everyday.

Ultra-red accepted this set of problematics in the realm of art production – sound art and music-making specifically. What does it mean to make public the private rituals of analysis and process that normally precede actual public manifestations of art and politics? The ways in which communities of struggle engage in analysis and reflection often at a distance from the overt gestures of action compels Ultra-red to stage those private moments as public art actions themselves. Similarly, the rituals of practice and artistic research, usually conducted in privileged spaces of the studio become, for Ultra-red, the political manifestation of the group's art.

Consequently, it would only be in a manner of institutionalizing these problematics that Ultra-red would make public those private conversations leading up to the group's re-formation into an organization. This text was never meant to be made public. Even as its public was always meant to be Ultra-red itself. Out of this potentially fruitful contradiction, Ultra-red has published the transcript of email messages between the members of the Ultra-red Advisory Board (sometimes written, URAB). For their cooperation in this process, both prior and subsequent to publication, Ultra-red wishes to thank most sincerely the members of the Advisory Board: Manuela Bojadzije of Kanak Attak, curator Ben Borthwick, curator and artist Sarah Pierce, The Speculative Archive, and artist Terre Thaemlitz.

Finally, an additional word of thank you needs to be given to those allies and accomplices not involved in the Advisory Board but whose opinions and comments were crucial in the process: Aeron Bergman, Nathan Britton, Masen Davis, Janna Graham, Sebastian Meissner, Eddie Peel, Elliot Perkins, Alejandra Salinas, Joel Schalit, David Shulman, and Andrew Zealley.

Dont Rhine

Information Secretary

Los Angeles January 2005

Transcript.

From Terre Thaemlitz

Mon, 22 Mar 2004 18:59:27 +0900

Hello all,

I haven't seen any mails in this group yet, so I think I am the first to write...? In that case, I just want to say I don't mean to set the course for discussion. I just thought I would outline my "first thoughts" when thinking about Ultra-red's transition into an "official" organization.

Some of my comments will relate to the fact that I have been asked to design the website, as well as future packaging designs.

Bureaucratic Matters

First, I must say I have every confidence in Dont's ability to put together fabulous grant proposals and keep things in running order... I'm focusing on Dont here because 99% of my Ultra-red transactions have been with Dont. He always seems willing to take on the daunting task of "floor moderator," and I really appreciate his ability to solicit opinions and formalize agendas (but who knows, maybe within the "band" he is resented as a terrorizing power queen - ha ha). Since I mostly work in a world of music label screwballs who can't organize the recycling their beer bottles, let alone an office, I just have to say that I am always pleased by Dont and Ultra-red's demonstrated bureaucratic capabilities.

I had some loose conversations with Dont about funding structures - if I understand and remember correctly, these are some of the ideas we threw around:

- It seems the general idea will be for Ultra-red to solicit grants and other lump-sum funds to facilitate projects.
- The website will probably not function as a major source of income, but will hopefully cover web-related expenses.
- Producers (artists) will be paid from the solicited funds (some grants may be project-specific, but I think the idea was to work from a general funding pool? this should be clarified a bit).
- Ultra-red will not be a record label and will hold no physical inventory.
- The website will serve as the distribution device for these projects through paid downloads.
- Project graphics and other "do-it-yourself" packaging data will be online.
- Some projects may be co-released with record labels, or producers may wish to press their own records, etc.

Although Ultra-red will not be a record label, it will clearly be operating in conjunction with labels. it was unclear whether CD or record licensing would be handled by Ultra-red, or by the producers individually (my vote was for the producers to have the option to do it individually, although I think Dont thought that might make it hard to coordinate simultaneous releases, etc. - it gets complicated when labels want to license from Ultra-red, which means Ultra-red needs to control more aspects of the producers' works). In any case, I suggested to Dont that Ultra-red treat the "internet" as it's only required contractual territory. This allows for record labels to handle standard music distribution territories such as "N. America, Europe," etc.

I think it is a good idea for Ultra-red to devise standard terms and agreements (duration, territory, etc.), but be flexible with regard to their implementation... and plan the costs. For example, if Ultra-red handled a joint-release with a label (rather than the producer arranging the release independently), would Ultra-red need to deduct an administrative fee from the producer's fee? Or, would that administrative time come out of the general administrative budget? This sort of stuff should be figured out.

I would be curious to know how many people are expected to "staff" Ultra-red in the beginning, what the "job positions" will be (not so much about hierarchy, but simply task divisions), who might be full-time, who might be part-time...?

Aesthetic Matters

Over the years we've all listened as Ultra-red's initially queer politic became less sexualized (oddly coinciding with an increase in the production of dance-oriented works - something about the sexlessness of dance music might be read into that, ha ha). It seems this was a "natural" shift as members and themes changed. And, I am also sure there are other themes which Ultra-red members may have been unable to introduce up to this point. So, I am really excited by the possibility of refocusing old themes and introducing new themes under the "Ultra-red" umbrella (including some of the unlikely producers which the future may bring).

When I first heard about Ultra-red turning into an organization, I couldn't help thinking about that early-90s shift in HIV/AIDS activism when people started focusing on C.B.O.'s. the idealism of being "community based" was countered by a stifling loss of evocative ideas, and the need to get along with city councils, church councils, etc. But, in the case of Ultra-red, it seems this kind of "organizing" could actually bring about an inverse opening of ideas (and that's not a criticism

of Ultra-red's past themes - it's spotting the potential to improve something that is already so rare and amazing!).

That's about all I have to say right this moment. In general, I'm really excited and curious to see what transpires. I think the change to an organization is a good thing. And, on a base level, I think Ultra-red is capable of making it work.

Love, Terre



From Dont Rhine

Wed, 19 May 2004 02:23:27 +0700

"The artist as an overspecialized aesthetic object maker has been anachronistic for a long time already. What they *provide* now, rather than *produce*, are aesthetic, often 'critical artistic' services. If Richard Serra could once distill artistic activities down to their elemental physical actions (to drop, to split, to roll, to fold, to cut, etc.), the situation now demands a different set of verbs: to negotiate, to coordinate, to compromise, to research, to organize, to interview, etc. This shift was forecasted in Conceptual art's adoption of what Benjamin Buchloh has described as the 'aesthetics of administration'. The salient point here is how quickly this aesthetics of administration, developed in the 1960s and '70s, has converted to the administration of aesthetics in the 1980s and '90s. Generally speaking, the artist used to be a maker of aesthetic objects; now he/she is a facilitator, educator, coordinator, and bureaucrat" (Miwon Kwon, "One Place After Another: Note on Site Specificity").²

² October 80, Spring 1997: 102 - 103.

In the hours preceding the convening of the Advisory Board, I thought I might insert a few comments that might help activate certain considerations for your discussions. Each of you comes to this conversation with very specific histories and experiences in relation to the question of institutions and institutionalization. Yet in the midst of those specificities, a general point of contact reveals that each has had to negotiate his and/or her relations on both the level of criticality and practicality. For this reason, it would perhaps be useful to pursue within your discussion discourses and debates that turn one ear to the former and another to the latter. Give priority to neither. In the realm of advice - the most mundane of commodities - resist whatever impulses urge the resolution of criticality for the sake of practicality, or the banality of practicality for the nobility of critique.

Along these lines, I offer the above citation from Miwon Kwon. The context of Kwon's comments is a dialogue between herself as critic and artist practitioner Andrea Fraser over new site-specific conceptual art works that adopt a service model - in Fraser's words - in relation to arts institutions. Whereas the older model of site specificity located work in a notion of locality that preceded the work in its uniqueness and specificity, the work Kwon is looking at assumes specificity has as much to do the specifics of discourse as place. Or, in other words, that the work not so much follows site but activates it - spatially rendering discourse and discursively rendering space.

Kwon locates the shift from an essential site to the site of discourse as coming in the context of a global network of arts institutions that commission artists to travel the world producing site specific work directly related to those same institutions. The artist becomes a sort of itinerant laborer providing a service that mines the uniqueness of a place. This conception of the artist's role relies on notions of authorial intent (the work, or place, becomes art because the artist names it so) as much as the value of the artist to perform a service.

The institution benefits from such a service in the same way (and often within the

same context of the commissioned project) as a city benefits from being able to advertise itself within the national and international tourist trade. Local specificity becomes a means of differentiation at precisely the moment movements in global capital obliterate the local. The itinerant artist arrives on the scene to help mine a site's uniqueness (to construct that uniqueness) just as globalization hollows out what is substantive about local specificity and reduces it to a system of signs to be circulated in advertising and tourism brochures.

I mention all this because part of what Ultra-red has responded to over the last few years has been precisely these conditions. As the support system for US artists dries up within the country itself, artists such as ourselves have been increasingly compelled to pursue support networks and institutions outside the US. This has produced an entire class of cultural producers adopting a simplistic and highly uncritical notion of nomadism. And yet the relationship between those artists and the institutions which fund and support them can best be described as a sort of cosmopolitan *bracero* program. Just how critical can the artist be of both that system and those institutions underwriting the artist's livelihood? What are the parameters of a criticality of the institution in such a context? Is it any wonder that US artists have operated within so apparent a blind-spot regarding their relation to imperial ambitions and the cultural institutions endeavoring to realize those ambitions on a global scale?

Here we come upon the question of the artist assuming his or her own institutionalization. Is this comparable to the artist attempting to equalize his and/or her power relations with those same structures? Or is that equalization little more than a retreat from the very possibility of resisting the collision of representation and capital accumulation: representation and the screen of imperialism?

Kwon argues in her essay that the current vogue for restaging site specific work within the institution suggests that the very language of specificity - its

oppositional impulse - has been hollowed out in favor of stylistics, the ability to recognize site specificity within and through the institution. Likewise, the *bracero* artist not only assumes a dependency upon foreign institutions for support, but then mystifies that relationship by denying their own position within a global market of contingency labor. Thus, Andrea Fraser can locate the service function of artistic practice without calling into question the profound differences between the independent contract artist who services the institutions and the precarious position of the immigrant cleaning woman or the immigrant *jornalero*. The artist thus both occupies that system of redundant labor and stands apart from it.

As the artist contemplates assuming her and/or his own institutionalization within that system, what becomes of that ambivalence? Is the drive toward institutionalization motivated in any way by the realization that our current relation to the arts institution is uncritical on the level of artist as service provider and yet simultaneously defeated by the practical collapse of certain institutions and the necessary support they provide? In other words, is our plight that of the migrant worker whose host economy has failed and burdened us with the effects of that recession in ways no less exploitative than the value extracted from us under even the best conditions?

While we can argue over the details of that institutionalization, I think a far more important question needs first to be considered. Given the profound normalizing capacity of all institutions - to both normalize their boundaries of inside and outside and to normalize the effects those boundaries produce - can an institutional masquerade accomplish anything but to deflect criticality away from an interior space held at safe distance from exteriority? Or in the discourse of psychoanalysis, can that masquerade be anything but an exaggeration of a lack (of authenticity, of legitimacy, of stability of meaning, etc) meant to conceal that lack which we find wholly unacceptable? Are we only fooling ourselves and thus carving out a space immune to criticism: a reserve of value secreted away?

I end with this invocation of the economic since at the heart of our original proposal (see Thaemlitz's synopsis of "Ultra-red as Non-Profit") is the delusion of an access to capital. As the house of electronica crumbles around us and the retreat to private markets and institutional neo-modernism offer the well-worn paths out of the rubble, can a non-profit model even pretend to both capitalize its operations and critique those relations affected by capitalization? For example, the current vogue of curator as artist (as highly-specialized itinerant laborer) has only succeeded in organizing art practice and discourse around a model of accumulation: the curator as consummate consumer, the crafter of taste and sensibility. Criticality is abandoned and the effects of the institution reserved for nature or bureaucratic mystification. The curator becomes the point of identification for the audience, the site of meaning in a landscape of equivalences and interchangeability. What sort of nature would the institutionalized artist draw on to legitimize her and/or his drive for capitalization and curatorial intention?

Ultra-red's proposed transfiguration aside, perhaps these questions go to the heart of that particular problematic facing the US artist in the context of catastrophic imperialism. It is, after all, a question of efficacy, of tactic and of living together in opposition to state terror and all its instruments of banal complicity.



From Sarah Pierce

Thu, 20 May 2004 16:30:07 -0700

Thanks for the words, Dont. They are a good starting point.

What strikes me most about Ultra-red at this stage in its exercise falls along the need to differentiate or perhaps distill its relationship as an "institution" versus as an artist "collective" to a local situation and an international cultural/artistic arena. In doing so, however, I think that Dont is getting caught in old arguments about the relationship of the institution to the artist that presumes certain power relationships.

In Dont's introduction there is much focus on the cultural and economic climate affecting the work and status of artists, and Ultra-red's impending work (which is on the increase) outside of the US. In his comments I read the "local" situation particular to the American artist, as one whose woes are not very interesting. We are no longer in the moment of institution critique that Fraser et al desire. We have actually, in very real examples moved towards a critical institution where the people working in institutions are partners and links in helping the messages and moments that many of us care about happen. (And I don't mean by incorporating institutional critique ala Guggenheim and Fraser into the programme, but by really changing how institutions and artists behave).

So on a practical level, I would advise you to let go of any anxiety that feigns artists are somehow subsumed by or in collusion with institutions and funders.

On a critical level, to follow Dont's lead, I find the questions (again, read as anxiety) surrounding Ultra-red's institutionalisation, somewhat limited. And surprisingly so, since Ultra-red has always maintained a practice of collectivity, adjusting in organic ways over the years through different representations of power, shifts in leadership, moments of production, citizenship and distribution--like many institutions. So why propose that the questions surrounding this moment include artist as service provider, or "the artist attempting to equalize his and/or her power relations with those same structures" when this is never how Ultra-red has performed? Really, I think we can acknowledge that a

level of institutional critique exists at the point that you are entering your institutionalisation, but let's not get caught up in it. There are other issues at hand.

Like: Will Ultra-red the institution re/produce its own internal ethics? What rhetoric does Ultra-red the institution surround itself with, and what kind of imagery does this produce? Is it nostalgic, futuristic, proletarian, etc? This is about looking at how an aesthetic/ethical system might manifest (socially, bureaucratically, politically, etc.) within an "institution." Does Ultra-red (this intuition) have room for contradictory activity that might disrupt or risk its identity, its authorship, its legality? Can Ultra-red imagine and organise an institutional practice as a social/collective practice?

Institutions have a unique role as producers and distributors; a station that defines, stimulates, and regulates cultural activity. In general, institutions favour processes that they can incorporate. As such, institutions constitute a highly observable politics; their inclusions and exclusions form a legacy. Communities that do not conform to traditional institutional formats, and communities that are not traditionally served by institutions are less often integrated into, and more often entirely excluded from the stories institutions tell us. In getting excited about your choice to become an institution, think about this: YOU CAN FUCK AROUND WITH ALL OF THAT! As an institution Ultra-red does not have to inherit, but can remodel a practical institution that includes systems and procedures, geographies and bureaucracies, architectures and histories that other institutions are not even aware of, or actively exclude.

Sarah

From Terre Thaemlitz

Fri, 21 May 2004 10:06:23 +0900

I also read a lot of anxiety in Dont's post. Well, that's why they're asking for our input. :)

It seems unavoidable that Ultra-red will always be caught up in some over-familiar art discourse (particularly if the proposed funding sources are primarily artistic grant based). Perhaps one way to complicate or think around some of those limitations is to simultaneously talk about the kinds of relationships Ultra-red will have with the commercial audio marketplace. Since I am largely uninterested in art and art discourse (in a pinch I would rather identify as a "dj" or "musician" rather than "artist"), the fact that Ultra-red is also attempting to clarify its status as a kind of "non-record-label" is interesting. This sets up a lot of nicely unavoidable antagonisms between the practices of the "art world" and "music market," which I think can help keep Ultra-red from being isolated in one world or the other.

The third wheel adding additional wobble to all of this is the notion of "community based action," the familiar rhetoric of which is also put in crisis by the lack of clear borders (geographical and cultural) for Ultra-red's future activities. My fear is that those borders become none other than "the art world," or "the music biz" (or "the internet download biz" god forbid). Since I believe those borders are unavoidable (although in occasional flux), my hope is to see Ultra-red co-habit multiple arenas and accept the contradictions and hypocrisies that will arise... which is something I think most of us have experience with in our own lives.

I also think it is important for everyone to deal with the fact that - despite its global activities - Ultra-red has always been U.S. based. I think this has always shown in Ultra-red's work, which I have always found very "American" in approach (from discourse to praxis), and I think the implications of this have often been lost in European arenas (as has been the case with my own activities). In fact, in my

mind it is precisely the "not very interesting woes" of the American artist (and they truly are uninteresting, frustrating, little-changing) which shaped Ultra-red as a direct response to those limitations. Cynical as this may sound, it is my guess that the very lack of European-style arts funding (and the deprivation of belonging to such artistic communities except as an "import") is what has enabled Ultra-red to remain involved and focused on local events and discussions that occur outside the world of "art." (Personally speaking, this is why I moved to Japan - another country without art funding - rather than Germany where I am sure I would quickly have all my time sucked up by European funded art activities.) I think Ultra-red's second-hand "import" relation to European art is an important and valuable complication in Ultra-red's relationship to future art funding. It might also give some valuable distance to keep Ultra-red from getting swept up in certain fictions of artistic community without borders, etc.

So why propose that the questions surrounding this moment include artist as service provider, or 'the artist attempting to equalize his and/or her power relations with those same structures' when this is never how Ultra-red has performed?

I agree when Sarah says not to get too caught up in this line of discussion, but I disagree that this is not how Ultra-red has performed. On the contrary, I always thought a key aspect of all of Ultra-red's work was the "crisis" of moving between roles of activists, organizers, producers and artists. In particular, Ultra-red has been preoccupied with the problem of how "artists" or the labels/institutions which fund them always having the "last word" in documenting and representing the communal actions of Ultra-red members and others. This has always put Ultra-red in conflict with the shortcomings of music as a documentary process (particularly limited to the aesthetics and politics of a major industry), as well as in conflict with the very community groups in which the group members are involved (by assuming the role of "representer") - the problems of audio imperialism. It seems an overwhelming amount of effort has gone into Ultra-red attempting to

"equalize his and/or her power relations with those same structures." And, while I think it is a kind of ideological trap or limitation which maybe needs to be broken through a bit, once it has been broken through I suspect variants on those same issues are still laying on the other side. :)

Love, Terre



From Sarah Pierce

Fri, 21 May 2004 01:11:48 -0700

I agree with Terre and I like the complications that he proposes regarding the marketplace. What I mean by "always performed this way" is that I see Ultra-red's identity as one that has continually challenged or complicated its relationship to the art world, the marketplace, organising, and activism and how its materials circulate - in which "world". I think that the shift to an institution should tenaciously hold onto to those complexities rather than attempt to rehearse them in some kind of institutional critique, or to resolve them altogether. It sounded like I meant that Ultra-red had performed as a service provider, which is exactly what I didn't mean! They have resisted this idea for so long, why start addressing it now?

I also think Terre is right. We need to address the US context in Ultra-red's work. I think this is really important for Ultra-red to work through Terre's comments. I can understand the woes, hey I have been there. But Ultra-red has been hugely successful at working around them, by remaining elusive on some fronts and overt in others, by being understood in different ways by different people. The question is - do these relationships have to be overly defined now?

Sarah

From Terre Thaemlitz

Sat, 22 May 2004 08:44:21 +0900

I think that the shift to an institution should tenaciously hold onto to those complexities rather than attempt to rehearse them in some kind of institutional critique, or to resolve them altogether (Sarah Pierce, Fri, 21 May 2004).

Totally (which I think is Ultra-red's ambition).

Ultra-red has been hugely successful at working around them, by remaining elusive on some fronts and overt in others, by being understood in different ways by different people. The question is - do these relationships have to be overly defined now?

In this regard, my friendly advice is that Ultra-red does not take its "institutionalization" too literally (essentially?). rather than our discussions helping crystallize Ultra-red's future shape, my personal understanding/hope is that soliciting all of this ideological talk of "institutionalization" is actually rooted in Ultra-red's desire to sprawl beyond the limitations of its "collective" format without totally falling into anarchic chaos (or maybe just out of a hope to "get more done"?).

Simultaneously to all of this discussion, there is a real need to discuss bureaucratic matters - again, going back to my initial question as to what full- and part-time positions people will hold (Ultra-red members, can someone step in and outline this a bit? Or is it spelled out in the package we were provided? Or do you totally NOT want to spell it out at this point and briefly why?).

How will their decisions be checked/balanced by other members, would those members be a board of the original LA-based group members or something

more open? Is it realistic to imagine the "democratic participation" of all members/artists in major strategic decisions (my guess is "no" - this would slow things down too much, and still end up with a lot of people not having time to contribute opinions - although maybe some kind of open "review" process that can actually affect change would be nice), etc. My suggestion would be that the group devises procedural guidelines (how to negotiate funding, assign commissions, etc. - which should be periodically reviewed/revise to resolve problems), then give the "staff" a good deal of autonomy within the "office." And in this sense, the resulting distance between "staff" and "artists" would also mean engaging the concerns about "artists vs. institution." But at the same time, the ability for "members" to inhabit all kinds of distances from the "office" is a good thing, and helps keep the entire operation from becoming an institutional beehive filled with like-minded drones all on the same level. I am sure many "artists" will not want anything to do with the operational procedures, keeping to themselves. (I am thinking of the relationship many artists had to the "politics" of Germany's Mille Plateaux label - they were totally excited about being released by the label, but equally unconcerned with the label's ideological ambitions. I think that is par for the course, and one reason why Ultra-red should not count on the "democratic participation" of its participants. Just a percentage of them.)

Love, Terre



From Julia Meltzer (The Speculative Archive)

Thu, 27 May 2004 16:25:01 -0700

Hi everyone,

Apologies again for responding late to this.

I have read through the submissions and am interested hearing some answers to both Sarah and Terre's nuts and bolts related questions. In relation to the insitutionalization question, I would agree with Sarah that you can do anything you want. I don't think you should fear becoming an 'institution' in the negative sense of the word. It would also be useful for me to have some clarifications on what might constitute recommendations. In Dont's last email he wrote: "At this point, you can assume the only involvement of the other three members in this entire process is that they have given their permission for the Advisory Board members to be convened and your recommendations to be solicited." I'm wondering if what is needed is concrete recommendations or, perhaps, more general meta-recommendations? If it is the former, then I feel like I need more information from Ultra-red.

It would help me to have answers to Sarah's questions below, which I'll paste here:

Will Ultra-red the institution re/produce its own internal ethics? What rhetoric does Ultra-red the institution surround itself with, and what kind of imagery does this produce? Is it nostalgic, futuristic, proletarian, etc? This is about looking at how an aesthetic/ethical system might manifest (socially, bureaucratically, politically, etc.) within an "institution." Does Ultra-red (this instiution) have room for contradictory activity that might disrupt or risk its identity, its authorship, its legality? Can Ultra-red imagine and organise an institutional practice as a social/collective practice?

Also, I'm curious to know what type of structure you want to set up. (Please excuse my oversight if I overlooked this information in the packet.) What is the point of forming an institution? Do you see yourselves as having a board of directors which might review projects, fund projects, produce other work that is not your own, form a record label? If so, what would be the basis for identifying these projects? Word of mouth? People who you meet? Where would the

funding come for these projects? Would they exist as collaborations? Would they be required to identify themselves as 'Produced by Ultra-red'? How do you see the mission of Ultra-red changing or expanding? Has this move to institutionalize been provoked by specific things that have come up in your recent projects that you all feel is not working? If so, what are these issues? I feel like it would help to have more grounding in specifics before I can offer useful suggestions.

All the best,
Julia



From David (The Speculative Archive)

Mon, 31 May 2004 15:48:04 -0700

Some thoughts.

First, I haven't read this oft-cited essay by Miwon Kwon, so I cannot make an argument around it with any specificity, so to speak. It seems to me, however, that Kwon is writing about a very particular kind of site-specificity, and a very particular kind of practice of institutional critique involving a dialogue, exchange, mutual exploitation or some such relationship between art institutions and institutional artists. It could be argued that the notion of "institutional critique" needs to be critically expanded, so that when we hear the term, we don't immediately think of the dynamic duo of artists and art institution. Are artists engaging issues around police brutality not practicing a mode of institutional critique? Has not Ultra-red engaged in an institutional critique of public housing? What is an institution? And what constitutes critique? It may well be that I am off the mark here, in response to a short citation, and that in the full essay Kwon discusses site specificity in relation to other sites, and in relation to artistic practices that are not, in the first instance, invested in the "institutions" of art as

such, or have in some way divested from them. Ultra-red, from what I have learned, would seem to be an entity of this "type."

This is not to say that the Kwon citation is irrelevant with regards to the impending institutionalization of Ultra-red. If we expand the scope of the terms, could it be said that Ultra-red has already occupied the position of service provider in some way? Is this necessarily a negative position? (People struggling for social justice need all the help they can get.)

Ultra-red's current transition seems fraught with ambivalences.

Fraught with ambivalences: The questions Dont raises in his comments, as interesting as they are, and as important as they are to consider continuously, are not necessarily answerable in the abstract. Ultra-red will answer them, however provisionally, as you form an "institution," raise capital (why is this a delusion?), and attempt to level social critique (which in part consists in engaging other ways of doing things) from this complicated position. It's not, as you know, as if there is some pure outside that can be pinpointed, delineated, and moved to, and then the critique begins in earnest, unassailable, righteous, un-contradicted, "immune to criticism."

The references to masquerade in Dont's comments are, if I may, a bit silly in this instance. While there are indeed a number of "groups" who have taken up the mantle of an institution in a mode of interventionist parody etc., there are also people who have formed institutions to facilitate, expand, complicate their work. Why go to the psychoanalytical? I am not saying exclude it, but I agree with Sarah: the anxieties become debilitating (can they become productive ambivalences?), and detract from more significant, perhaps even practical, concerns. Is not the intent of forming "an institution" to develop a different mode of working around an expanse of socio-political questions the contours of which may have shifted in the present moment but that are in many ways of a piece

with the questions Ultra-red has taken up in the past? Are the concerns really about the state of arts funding in America? Even if the current political moment seems to be producing several thick threads of reactionary artistic and art-institutional practice, isn't this quite a negative organizing principle, as it were?

It's not that the notion of an "aesthetics of administration" is not of interest on some level, but I hardly imagine Ultra-red falling into this particular trap, if it is one. It seems to me a matter of thinking about what one is doing before, as, and after one does it, which I suppose is the purpose of this exchange, to generate some thinking. But debating the relative merits or the potential pitfalls of transforming into a different sort of organization seems somewhat beside the point, or amounts to having an institutional identity crisis before forming the institution. Questions about structure, internal ethics, collectivity-as-institution and vice versa, seem more to the point. I can weakly echo Sarah's last paragraph, which effectively says that the institutional field is wide open, and that in forming an institution there are potentials for challenging the form of "the institution," and that this process can have political effects, perhaps even efficacy, however measured. To this I would only add a few more questions: What is the relationship of Ultra-red the institution to the institutions of political organizing? What is the relationship between localized and globalized activities if you don't end up (and you won't) replicating the *bracero* model? How do you see this institution functioning in political terms, in relation to other artists and other collectives or communities? How would you enumerate the positive possibilities of providing services, facilitating, educating, and coordinating (these verbs take on different resonances when delinked from the institutional art context)? Finally, I think it is interesting that Dont's opening remarks focus on certain discourses of art, and that, apart from the last sentence about living and working together in the shadow of state terror, there is not much mention of the "community-based" practice that Ultra-red has developed over the years (and we could get into an entirely different but related discussion about the institutionalization of so-called "community-based" work, but let's not. . .), or any allusions or intimations of

thinking about how Ultra-red the institution sees their as yet unfigured new form and project interacting with the various struggles to which their past work has contributed. I suppose that's a question, too. . . .

David



From Ben Borthwick

Tue, 1 Jun 2004 11:57:40 +0100

Dear all

Thanks for initiating the discussion and apologies for my absence from it thus far. There have been various contingent reasons but to echo the general mood expressed so far, I can't help but come back to a sense of being stymied by the lack of definition of terms. There are two I keep stumbling at in particular, namely 'institution' its variants and 'Ultra-red'. Consequently, the announced shift UR is embarking on into 'institutionalisation' also needs definition, as has already been commented on. For instance, the trajectory of that what 'the' 'institution' means is going to be radically different than what that terms generally mean for me since starting to work at Tate Modern (fourth in the Tate franchise after ~Britain, ~Liverpool and ~St. Ives... talk about imperial ambitions! Will there be more, and if so, will they be confined to these shores or is Tate going for global domination?!?). At least, I assume they are going to be radically different! As for Ultra-red, each of the existing members has an understanding of what UR means that those of us outside, no matter how keenly we may follow your activities, are not privy to. Below I have some questions about your motivations for embarking on this process that will, hopefully, help me figure out why UR needs to change.

Many of the questions I have been turning around while working my way through the file (an Ultra-red publishing project for the future?) have already been raised, but to add (or reiterate) a couple of questions to the growing list, it would be good to know:

How much internal discussion within UR the group has there been about how UR the institution will function? What is understood by each member and/or the group as the purpose and benefit of ceasing the current manifestation and moving onto an 'institutional' footing?

What relations will be produced by the change, and what products will be produced? How will these relations and products be disseminated?

Is the motivation about expanding the sphere of influence of URs ideas and/or model of practice through the music/ publications/ whatever else is produced under the new rubric? Terre's example in reference to Mille Plateaux was spot on for how the clearly announced politics of the organisation and muted articulation of the politics of the projects it supports and disseminates often seemed to be at odds. Does it matter if the core politics of what Ultra-red the group stands for is tangential to the aesthetic productions of those who become associated with UR the 'institution'? Here I am thinking of the Beta Bodega Structural Adjustments remix album which seems a case in point. How important is it that the politics of 'guest' musicians who become associated with UR are articulated with the kind of rigour that, at this point, only Terre and UR exhibit in the entire field of music, electronic or otherwise?!?

Is the reorganisation about allowing individual members to explore different kinds of projects than the current structure of UR can accommodate? I would be interested in hearing from other members than Dont who has already told me that his identification as a political organiser has been compromised by being the only member of the group who does not have an identity as a political organiser

outside of UR - essentially, that Dont has become intimately familiar with the aesthetics of administration in order for UR to exist yet his organising outside of UR has become almost non-existent. If I understood Dont's explanation of what he has in mind for the reorganised UR, it is to allow each member to use UR as an umbrella organisation for individual as well as group projects. From his point of view, restructuring UR is a way for him to reactivate his involvement with HIV activism. Elizabeth, Leonardo, Pablo: what are your views on how the shift in UR's structure will change, facilitate, or compromise your production individually or as members of Ultra-red? Pablo, in particular, if you develop individual projects would you release them through True Classical or UR? Would it depend on the kind of project or isn't that so important? Of all the members, my connection is strongest with Dont whose skills as a music producer I rate very highly. I don't know how the division of labour breaks down and how involved the other members have been in the music production side of URs activities. In the reorganised UR or on individual projects, are there aesthetic processes other than sound that each of you might prefer to engage in as a means of articulation of your ideas?

Until I read Terre's initial email about 'bureaucratic matters' I was under the impression that UR would become a means to disseminate ideas as any number of types of products, be they CDs, books, pamphlets, videos or whatever. Has this now definitively shifted to the internet only model for music releases? If so, what are the ramifications for publishing or this an activity I have imagined into the future UR? Following on from Terre's follow up on 'bureaucratic matters' (22 May), will all the bureaucracy be managed by the existing members or is part of the intention to become a kind of grant maintained organisation with a full or part time administrator?

I know this process is really meant to be about a discussion between the advisory board members, but I would find it extremely helpful to hear from the members of UR about the above and the questions raised in the discussion so far. From my point of view it will help clarify what you understand by the process you have

(presumably) all decided to embark on. Or is institutionalisation an endgame where UR ceases to exist as a group - a means to facilitate fragmentation without total dissolution?

Please let me know your views on these points or those to which they relate from emails of other members of the URAB (sorry, at times like this with all talk of institutionalisation there is an overwhelming desire to come over all Pynchonesque and start generating acronyms!)

All the best
bEn



From Terre Thaemlitz
Wed, 2 Jun 2004 09:37:08 +0900

I'm enjoying reading everyone's comments with interest, but also noting all of our comments include a degree of detached confusion...

So, with absolutely no intention of stopping conversation, and just to provide the ultra-red crew with a simple perspective through which to read our comments, I am wondering if we shouldn't all provide ultra-red with a simple "yes/no" as to whether or not we think they should attempt to undergo this change (which, in my view, is ultimately more about expansion than "institutionalization"). Of course, "not enough information" is another option?

I think "yes", they should try to do it.

Terre

From Julia Meltzer (The Speculative Archive)

Tue, 1 Jun 2004 19:52:47 -0700

Terre et al,

I think I'd opt for the 'not enough info' at this point.

However, I think even if my answer were 'no', I think the discussion, and whatever meandering path it takes, would still be worth pursuing.

Julia



From David (The Speculative Archive)

Tue, 1 Jun 2004 20:52:59 -0700

If we think in terms of "expansion" rather than "institutionalization," I would say yes, Ultra-red should proceed with an undetermined change.

Perhaps I have been remiss and not carefully looked through the rather expansive packet of materials we were given at the outset, and if I looked there I might find some answers to some basic questions. But it is an overwhelming object, in its way. I agree with Ben: it would be helpful to hear from members of Ultra-red directly, not through their aesthetic administrator Dont but including Dont, about these basics.

What are the reasons for considering this transition? Are there certain aspects of the collective work of Ultra-red that are tired, troubling, unrealized, etc.? Are there aspects of the interactions with others - from arts administrators to community organizers - that you want to question, provoke, challenge,

elaborate, complicate, jettison, etc.? In what ways do you want to change the resonances of Ultra-red within the various fields you occupy and work in? Are there questions about audiences that are animating this possible shift? Questions about political efficacy? What have you spoken about as a group in terms of the possible contours of this whatever entity?

David



From Sarah Pierce

Wed, 2 Jun 2004 03:21:54 -0700

I resist the idea of a yes/no role call at this stage. It has been nice to see this conversation develop. But more importantly, the process we are engaged in shows a lot of possibility for how Ultra-red imagines self-institutionalisation. Here they are focused on a practice, and in opening that practice up to other possibilities they are asking people close to them, their community (us) for feedback. In looking at the practice over the past 10 years, I think this is in-step with what Ultra-red has established as an effective mode of representation. Ben's points about activism are poignant to consider. How has organizing a practice worked over the last 10 years, and how might Ultra-red now be in a position to infiltrate other systems, to support other projects, and to really change the way people behave, the way people engage with a process?

Sarah

From Ben Borthwick

Wed, 2 Jun 2004 17:17:13 +0100

On the yes/no/need more info question, I definitely 'need more info' to make an informed comment. However, if UR is in danger of ceasing to exist altogether without structural change then I say 'yes' unreservedly. The loss of such an extraordinary group/organisation would be a travesty if there are ways for its continued existence.

Peace

bEn



From Ben Borthwick

Wed, 2 Jun 2004 17:18:46 +0100

Dear Ultra-redistas

I would like to append questions from my email onto David's rather more concise and legible list (copied in below with my questions added as 8 & 9).

1. What are the reasons for considering this transition [from group to institution]?
2. Are there certain aspects of the collective work of Ultra-red that are tired, troubling, unrealized, etc.?
3. Are there aspects of the interactions with others - from arts administrators to community organizers - that you want to question, provoke, challenge, elaborate, complicate, jettison, etc.?

4. In what ways do you want to change the resonances of Ultra-red within the various fields you occupy and work in?

5. Are there questions about audiences that are animating this possible shift?

6. Questions about political efficacy?

7. What have you spoken about as a group in terms of the possible contours of this whatever entity?

8. What are your views on how the shift in UR's structure will change, facilitate, or compromise your creative production individually or as members of Ultra-red?

9. In the reorganised UR or on individual projects, are there aesthetic processes other than audio each of you might prefer to engage in as a means of articulation of your ideas?



From Elizabeth Blaney

Tue, 8 Jun 2004 01:22:03 -0400

This is Elizabeth from Ultra-red and I would first like to say that I appreciate the very thought out comments and questions that you all have made and thank you for your time. I started to answer some of the questions (have not quite finished but thought I should send what I have done) that several of you have asked. The answers are as follows:

How much internal discussion within UR the group has there been about how UR the institution will function?

As a group we have had very little discussion about how the institution will function. Basically we decided that when we finished our last project with Ballymun (last October) we were going to slow down as a group. The reason for this was based on people's schedules and interests. Personally for me the project last year took a lot of time away from my organizing work and I needed to dedicate more time to that.

What is understood by each member and/or the group as the purpose and benefit of ceasing the current manifestation and moving onto an 'institutional' footing?

From my point of view I see it mainly as a way for dealing the technicalities of financing and funding. A non-profit institution can help us avoid certain tax issues and allow us to tap into different sources of funds like donations. A more institutional structure will also deal with legal and technical issues relating to releasing a label, making records, etc.

What relations will be produced by the change, and what products will produced? How will these relations and products be disseminated?

I am uncertain about the relations and products that will be produced. I think that the four of us will embark – and actually have embarked – upon various individual projects. Which actually has been the nature of Ultra-red, but I guess because since 2000 it has been mainly just the four of us and now we are going back to individual work it seems different. The “institution” maybe is a way of incorporating these various individual works as Ultra-red as opposed to the artists individually. However, by doing so Ultra-red will develop a different style and sound. I would be interested to know how Dont feels about that because he is the founder and has developed so much of the sound component. For example, my role was with video and not with sound but Leonardo and I are working on a project for a sound exhibition in Mexico City. Don't is not involved in this project

and it is the first sound project that Leonardo and I have ever done. In prior projects we contributed conceptually to the sound work but we never actually composed it (outside of live performances which were later turned into other things) Don't has a certain style, creativity, and thinking that defines Ultra-red that will not be included in this project because he is not involved. The piece that develops will probably be something very different than anything that Ultra-red has ever created. It may not meet people's expectations of Ultra-red when compared to other Ultra-red works. Therefore, I guess the types of products produced under the "institution" Ultra-red will be different for each other and what was presented in the past.

In the reorganised UR or on individual projects, are there aesthetic processes other than sound that each of you might prefer to engage in as a means of articulation of your ideas?

For me, I also would include and continue to work with video.

Will Ultra-red the institution re/produce its own internal ethics?

I assume that we would and that it would happen organically as various artists begin to participate under this umbrella.

What rhetoric does Ultra-red as an institution surround itself with, and what kind of imagery does this produce? Is it nostalgic, futuristic, proletarian, etc?

I am uncertain as we have never talked about this as a group.

This is about looking at how an aesthetic/ethical system might manifest (socially, bureaucratically, politically, etc.) within an "institution." Does Ultra-red (this institution) have room for contradictory activity that might disrupt or risk its identity, its authorship, its legality?

Though we have not discussed this collectively, I think that some basic principles would need to be established and artists that come under the umbrella would have to agree to abide by those principles. I don't want to create some homogeneous organization but there are underlying values and principles in how we conduct and organize projects and I would think we would want to maintain that.

Also, I'm curious to know what type of structure you want to set up. What is the point of forming an institution? Do you see yourselves as having a board of directors which might review projects, fund projects, produce other work that is not your own, form a record label?

When we started to receive larger paying commissions we started thinking about the tax consequences of this and what was the best way to deal with that given our nature and goals for our work. We thought of institutionalizing as a non-profit to enable us to solicit donations to fund the work and because we were not about making money but rather the work itself. However, though there are tax benefits there are also consequences in terms of where the money comes from and it being a certain percentage and the power that a board can have and setting up an executive director, etc that can be limiting. Boards are required for nonprofits but because their role traditionally is stand offish this may not work well. Mainly we need to talk about accountability and what that means, as well as values and principles, money and how it's distributed and taxed. On some level, I prefer the idea of a co-op rather than a non-profit because it more collective in nature.

From Manuela Bojadzije
Sat, 12 Jun 2004 00:20:51 +0200

Dear all,

Sorry for not contributing to the discussion before. I have been reading all your submissions with much interest. Probably all important questions have been raised and some answers have been given that can help to start a shift in organising Ultra-red. I have been wondering what my contribution for the discussion could be, given that I don't have any artistic background (although performing with the Ultra-redistas for a couple of times with pleasure & passion and being part of an antiracist group/network that uses cultural productions in our work) and don't know much about the situation in the US too well.

Like Ben (and the others) I have been asking myself what the term institution evokes and what anxieties it transports. Sometimes I felt, reading the submissions on the list, that formalisation could be much more of a problem than founding an institution that, as Sarah has put it, according to its own ethics, is open 'for contradictory activity that might disrupt or risk its identity, its authorship, its legality'. In my own experience the rejection of institutions stems from the experiencing of a development that seemed to have weakened the movements and struggles that we all, I suppose, are being part of. At the same time all through, there has been an experience of a critique of this development that we sometimes seem to underestimate and that has given struggles in the past decade(s) a different shape. I am talking about different attempts of organising along with the critical globalisation movement, which has to be understood as a result of many local efforts to learn from this critique and to transform old movement institutions such as parties or trade unions – or to cold-shoulder them. A critique that is as old as these institutions are.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not uncritical on the developments that are currently taking place in organising. And of course, I am aware that there is a risk of falling back into old iron structures. But what have been our fears? Usually people argue that institutions are a result of a defeat, that they are limiting the multiple expressions of our struggles for a different every day life, for different politics, etc. That they are a result of becoming detached from movements or communities and that claim a representational position. Here I think it is important to take into account that politics in the US, as far as I understand, have much more a community related perspective while in Europe it seems there is a history of being more movement related. Representation in this context is not necessarily democratic, even if it claims to come 'from below'. Often organisations in that sense are creating those they claim to represent. This is also where co-option can come into play.

At the same time when we discuss more concretely the plans of Ultra-red to institutionalise I have understood Dont's intention that this is also to be not so much dependent anymore on funds from (festival) organisers, but to be able to create projects of their own, be able to bring together people, launch ideas and set different subjects on the agenda. In this sense institutions or organisations promise more coherence, greater continuity of the work, that they can restore traditions to a commemoration of struggles or just tie in with knowledge and practices that have been lost. They give the opportunity to mediate, distribute & transport experiences.

That's what I always loved about the work of Ultra-red. Where ever they went to, they have been taking the advantage to bring people together, give the opportunity to exchange different attempts and ways of organising or practices and create a different sort of knowledge production. Kanak Attak owes much to Ultra-red. Ultra-red's politics to a certain extend seem to be comparable with projects of militant investigation like they have been conducted since the sixties in Europe and which seem again to become popular nowadays. Of course such

politics need a local base. But they are also dependent on an exchange of information and experience which needs to be distributed, be it through music, performances, actions, writing, organising, etc. That actually and hopefully, such a politics can contribute to changing the way we use, produce, create & live music, performances, actions, writing, organising, etc.

So yes, I am very much for an undetermined change of Ultra-red and I would also very much like to hear from the other Ultra-redistas what their thoughts are!

So far a few, very general thoughts, love & solidarity,

Manuela



Contributors.

A community organizer and an artist, **Elizabeth Blaney** first worked with Ultra-red in collaboration with Union de Vecinos in 1998. In addition to her video and performance work, Blaney also serves as Ultra-red's Secretary of Finance.

Manuela Bojadzijev lives in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. She is an activist with Kanak Attak a national anti-racist organization launched in 1997 with chapters through-out Germany. From 1995 to 1997 Bojadzije

v was part of the editorial collective of the quarterly magazine "Die Beute". Bojadzije

v is also a member of the TRANSIT MIGRATION research project, based at the University of Frankfurt, School of Social Research. The project is an interdisciplinary inquiry into the transformation of border regimes in Southeast Europe and migration movements. The cultural portion of TRANSIT MIGRATION'S Yugoslavia project features Ultra-red. Currently completing a Ph.D. on "Struggles of Migration," Bojadzije

v's research encompasses and combines racism theory and migration history. She is a Research Fellow at the University of Frankfurt in the Department of Cultural Anthropology and European Ethnography (www.kanak-attak.de).

In 1994 **Ben Borthwick** moved from London to New York for the Curatorial Studies section of the Whitney Program. After completing the Whitney, Borthwick worked for a year in various commercial galleries and non-profit spaces before moving back to Leeds in the UK for a Masters in Social Art History. The interim six years were spent in London working freelance on various projects. These included a few with Artangel (Michael Landy's "Breakdown," Tony Oursler's "Influence Machine," Alan Platel's "Because I Sing" and an unrealised Francis Alys psychogeographic project about surveillance and marching bands in the City of London). Until 2002, Borthwick was involved with Milch, an artist-run space eventually closed by gentrification. In addition to his curatorial experiences, Borthwick has written for The Wire (including a cover feature for the December 2003 with Carsten Nicolai which evolved from a show at Milch) as well as

occasional exhibition catalogues. In 2003, Borthwick institutionalised himself as Assistant Curator at Tate Modern where he works on a range of historical and contemporary exhibitions, including Bruce Nauman's sound installation in the Turbine Hall and smaller projects with 'emerging' artists, as well as programming sound events in conjunction with talks and digital projects.

The Metropolitan Complex is a Dublin-based project by artist and curator **Sarah Pierce**. It organizes a social practice that incorporates a range of activities such as exhibitions, talks, and publications. These structures are often opened up to the personal and the incidental (www.themetropolitancomplex.com).

Dont Rhine co-founded Ultra-red in 1994 while working with the harm reduction organization, Clean Needles Now. A sound artist and musician, Rhine is an AIDS activist with ACT UP Southern California (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power). Rhine also serves as Ultra-red's Information Secretary.

The work of the **Speculative Archive** focuses on the production of documents, their collection, circulation and reception, and their socio-political effects. Past projects include "Free the, Demand your . . .," an installation developed from research in an archive of leftist political graphics; "A Brief History of the Internal Conflict," a presentation constructed from declassified U.S. government files pertaining to the 36-year war in Guatemala; "In light of the recent events," a presentation about events in Chile in 1973; and "It's not my memory of it," an experimental documentary which explores the dynamic of knowing and not knowing that is central to secrecy, memory, and documentation. The Archive is a collaboration of Julia Meltzer and David Thorne (www.speculativearchive.org).

Terre Thaemlitz is an award winning multi-media producer, writer, public speaker, educator, audio remixer, DJ and owner of the Comatonse Recordings record label. His work critically combines themes of identity politics - including gender, sexuality, class, linguistics, ethnicity and race - with an ongoing critique of the

socio-economics of commercial media production. This diversity of themes is matched by Thaemlitz' wide range of production styles, which include electro-acoustic computer music, club oriented deep house, digital jazz, ambient, and computer composed neo-expressionist piano solos. He has released twelve solo albums, as well as numerous 12-inch EPs, 7-inch singles, collaborative albums, remixes, and video works. His writings on music and culture have been published internationally in a number of books, academic journals and magazines. As a speaker and educator on issues of non-essentialist transgenderism and Queer theory, Thaemlitz has participated in panel discussions in Europe and Japan, as well as held numerous cross-cultural sensitivity workshops at Tokyo's Uplink Factory, near his current residence in Kawasaki, Japan (www.comatonse.com).