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Practicable

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11 Art/Anthropology Interventions

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In this essay I will discuss the participatory practices by the actors of two inherently unstable disciplines (despite their categorical pretensions to the contrary), art and anthropology—both in relation to each other, and with respect to their possible audiences. In particular, I will focus on the notion of practice, and what it takes to collaborate between anthropologists and artists, and their research subjects in fieldwork situations. I will address three significant areas of such participatory relations between the fields of art and anthropology: fieldwork, agency, and appropriation.

Fieldwork is the standard practice of empirical data gathering in anthropology, and its status has been that of a defining centerpiece for practice in the discipline, when in fact its scientistic pretensions have long been questioned, and the performative mise-en-scène character put into relief.[1] Agency, linked to the rethinking of materiality, has been one of the most fruitful avenues in recent anthropological theorizing, with important implications for the understanding of art practices. Indeed, the new thinking on agency in anthropology has many points of reference—as yet rarely made explicit or explored—to the notion of relational aesthetics in contemporary art theory. Appropriation, on the other hand, has been somewhat of a signature practice by artists engaging with what anthropology claims as its terrain (the Other) and methodologies (i.e., in fieldwork), and after various turns of (neo)primitivisms, offers interesting potentials for reworking cultural materials.

Audience Participation as Fieldwork Interventions

In a narrow sense one could think of anthropology's audience as a public consuming anthropological works (books, articles, ethnographic films, ethnographic museum exhibitions). With the exception of a few anthropologists who have reached substantially beyond academia (for example, Margaret Mead and Claude Lévi-Strauss), the audience on the whole would be restricted to this field, or at least to a university-educated

public. However, audience as an ensemble of consumers of anthropological works is not what I primarily have in mind here. It is perhaps more interesting to ask how another type of "audience" exposed to anthropology (that is, as spectators turned actors) and constituted variously by anthropology's research subjects, but also its collaborators—artists as well as experts (such as members of NGOs, journalists, and other intellectuals at the sites where anthropologists do fieldwork), can and indeed does intervene in the production of anthropological work. The outcome, or result, of these particular relationships are works that are consumed by a "public," which in some cases is constituted, in part at least, by the research subjects themselves, blurring in effect the presumed boundaries between audiences, research subjects, and anthropologists as discreet categories.

Since the 1980s, in the wake of the "writing culture" critique,[2] the mostly textual production of anthropology has seen a reflexive reassessment of the roles of author and subject, highlighting the constructed, "fictional" character of texts (rather than descriptions and analyses with positivist pretensions). These critical moves provided authors with the possibilities for new and experimental textual strategies (ranging from the use of extensive diary extracts to ethnopoetry), and the subjects (the Other) with opportunities to intervene in the texts as native voices, and sometimes even as co-authors. However, "giving" a voice to others can itself result from a patronizing, neocolonial attitude; "speaking nearby," as advocated by Trinh T. Minh-ha,[3] is arguably a better strategy of encouraging the participation of the Other. Anthropological works, and their concepts, have also been actively appropriated by research subjects. A notable example are the Cargo Cults of Melanesia and related religious phenomena, where anthropologists' theorizations of indigenous culture eventually become part of a reconfigured cultural fabric,[4] or indeed anthropologists themselves got incorporated into the mythological constructions they meant to investigate.[5] Here the audience is anthropology's subject, and the subjects become co-producers (not always acknowledged) of works of cultural construction beyond the original anthropological fieldwork and texts that resulted from it. The lives of authors and their works thus become entangled with the sites of their practices, and once fieldwork is conceived of as an extended performance site, an audience understood as those who experience live media or performance also encompasses the research subjects themselves.

Above all, it is arguably the staged character of anthropological fieldwork, characterized by George Marcus as a "mise-en-scène"[6] that allows for, indeed demands, the intervention of research subjects and others into its processual construction. Here we can think of the ensemble of researchers, research subjects, and consulted specialists

(archivists, librarians, journalists, etc.) who partake in the performative spectacle of the mise-en-scène brought about by fieldwork. According to Marcus, "this mise-en-scène" of fieldwork has gone though several reincarnations, from a positivist field science modeled on laboratory practices, in the days of mythical fieldwork founder Bronislaw Malinowski, to Clifford Geertz's interpretive anthropology, and more recent postmodern multisited research paradigms. It is such mise-en-scène sites and settings that artists, especially performance and theater artists, as well as preparatory works in film production (e.g., reconnaissance, stage setting, and rehearsal), can make productive to probe the constructedness of anthropological research and the entanglement and complicity of its various participants. For instance, in 1997, at the invitation of the Transart Foundation and Rice University's Anthropology Department (then headed by Marcus), artist Abdel Hernández and scenographer Fernando Calzadilla constructed *The Market From Here*, based on their own ethnographic researches in Cuba and Venezuela. Rather than being a mere representation *of* markets in these Latin American countries, the installation, as Calzadilla and Marcus explained, offered viewers a participatory experience in the market stage, including the research processes by the artists-ethnographers:

> Hernández and Calzadilla designed and built an installation that could easily be interpreted as an attempt to represent the market, not by an ethnographic study, but by a mise-en-scène. Actually, the construction of the [*The Market From Here*] installation, with the involvement of numerous people of the literal marketplace they researched, is quite different than a mere representation as mise-en-scène. It was more the creation of a sort of imaginary of the people involved in the marketplace working with Hernández and Calzadilla making intricate decisions about space, light, materials, and so forth. …
>
> Ethnography is much richer in possibility if it collaborates with the practices of other intellectual crafts that have a kinship and resemblance to it—as in the case of scenography in the theater. The debates and discussions of collaboration in these cases promise outcomes more complex and interesting than just "the monograph" or "the essay" into which all experiments in anthropology seemingly must end, or merely the "mise-en-scène" of theater or the installation of performance art, which otherwise lack the intensity and theoretical depth of ethnography. And of course such "expert" collaborations in different genres are about a "third"—people in certain settings in their everyday lives who become the subjects of interest to anthropologists and dramatists. What is fascinating about these expert collaborations is that they incorporate the "others" of their mutual interest in a greater variety of ways and with different sorts of outcomes and products than would be possible if, say, anthropology refused to risk its authority by not entering into such partnerships with the scenographer, for instance.[7]

It is precisely with the idea that such installation work makes visible and perceptible the staged and performative character of anthropological fieldwork that its value lies,

questioning and criticizing its own authority. The "third" named by Marcus in the above extract then constitutes anthropology's and artists' fieldwork audience.

More generally, participatory practices in the arts thus point to the constructed and ultimately processual character of anthropological fieldwork. Many artists in recent decades have engaged in fieldwork practices, with and without the collaboration of anthropologists, among them Lothar Baumgarten, Nikolaus Lang, Tony Oursler, Teresa Pereda, Virginia Ryan, and Rainer Wittenborn.[8] A particularly poignant example of participatory work that makes evident and problematizes the staged character of fieldwork practices is the artist-photographer Anthony Luvera's project, *Residency* (2006–08). It incorporates a critical investigation of the photographic archive of the contemporary photography gallery, Belfast Exposed Photography, the production of a new body of work with homeless people for the collection, and a critical examination of Luvera's own archive of photos of, and with, homeless people. Over a period of sixteen months, Luvera worked with homeless people in Belfast, and produced what he calls "assisted self-portraits":

> After several weeks I invited participants to learn how to use large-format camera equipment to create an *Assisted Self-Portrait*. In order to produce an *Assisted Self-Portrait*, I met with each participant over the course of a number of meetings to teach them how to use a 5 × 4 field camera with a tripod, handheld flashgun, Polaroid and Quickload film stock, and a cable shutter release. The final image was then edited with the participant. The aim was to invest in the participant a more active role in the creation of their portrait representation than is usually offered in the transaction between photographer and subject. Each *Assisted Self-Portrait* is the trace of a process that attempted to blur distinctions between the participant as a "subject" and me as the "photographer" during the photographic sitting. …
>
> When creating an *Assisted Self-Portrait* I asked each participant to take me to a place they found interesting, personal or memorable in some way. … I felt that it was important to document the process of working with the participants in the sites that held meaningful associations for them in order to attempt to emphasise what I saw as the reclamation of place by the participants. These images represent the processes of engagement between the participant, the medium and me, which I see as being integral to the work, and in many ways significantly more important than the finished *Assisted Self-Portraits*.[9]

Luvera's long-term immersion into both the photographic archive and the lived world of homeless people, which he turned into a participatory, self-reflective practice, speaks to the constructed character of ethnographic fieldwork. His project at once introduces and works through a number of ethical and representational issues inherent in the mise-en-scène of fieldwork. The term *Assisted Self-Portrait* points to the dilemma of the ethnographer: how to enable, or provide "voice" for the other; how to make a collaborative project without falling back into patronizing and neocolonial

Figure 11.1
Angela Wildman / Anthony Luvera, *Assisted Self-Portrait of Angela Wildman*, 2006–08. From the *Residency* project by Anthony Luvera.

attitudes. Building on the critiques of Jacques Derrida and Stuart Hall, Luvera is acutely aware of the hegemonizing power of the archive[10]—a kind of reverse audience sedimented in time—so he also critically probes the collections of Belfast Exposed. His work then is a tripartite engagement with archive, collaborating research subjects, and self-examination of his own archiving practice. The *Assisted Self-Portrait* forecloses any possibility that this is merely a navel-gazing, self-inspecting strategy, as it clearly highlights the nature of the entanglement between artist-photographer and subjects.

Luvera's approach can be compared with that of Thera Mjaaland. A photographer working with artistic subjects, also trained as an anthropologist, Mjaaland critically questions the realist paradigm underlying much of anthropological visual production, especially the use of photography to merely illustrate text.[11] Her work is a thorough critique of nonintervention. Rather than understanding photographs as a reproduction of reality by a distanced observer (the photographer), she starts from the understanding of the "photographic situation" as a "social situation,"[12] where knowledge emerges

in a "relational visual process" that is "triggered by the very relationship between the photographed and the photographer."[13] The photographed people in Mjaaland's work, men and women of Ethiopia's Tigray region (some of them former fighters from the struggle against the Derg military regime, 1975–1991), were "actively taking part of a desirable self-image."[14] Although, unlike Luvera's subjects, they were not photographing themselves or trained in using photographic equipment, they were actively determining how a photograph should be taken (for example, full-length rather than close-up), and which props to use (many of them wanted to be shown with their guns from the former struggle, or other high-status items)

What these strategies by Luvera and Mjaaland have in common is that they make visible and explore the staged and performative character of fieldwork—the representational strategies present material evidence of the relationally fractured process of collaboration,[15] in other words, the working and research relations with others. Both the practice of photography and the photographic image itself are social agents, as much

Figure 11.2
Thera Mjaaland, *Alogen, Tigray*, 1997. From the series *Encounters*. Mammay Golla (with the radio) and Abraha Legesse asking to be photographed on the way from their village to the Saturday market in Endabaguna, Tigray, Ethiopia. Photo and © Thera Mjaaland / ADAGP, Paris, 2014.

as the photographic subjects and the researcher-artist-photographer are. The "photographic situation" (Mjaaland) and the "process of engagement" (Luvera) stand in for, and encapsulate, the anthropological mise-en-scène.

Agency, Relationality, Materiality[16]

Review of these photographic projects clearly shows the role of agency across different actors in the photographic encounter, or situation: subjects, artists-photographers, equipment (or what in photographic and film theory has been called the "apparatus"), and images. The understanding of agency in such a multifaceted way has been made possible by the new theories of agency and materiality that decenter the notion, largely Western, of the individual human-bound subject and its external object world. In anthropology, Alfred Gell's *Art and Agency* (1998) signified a paradigm shift as it dispelled any notion of artworks as discreet objects of aesthetic appreciation. Importantly, Gell built a new theory, where art objects are part of social relationships, indeed can become "social persons" in social relations. Gell was influenced by Marilyn Strathern's[17] and Roy Wagner's[18] rethinking of kinship, and more generally, social relations and their symbolism in Melanesian societies, which resulted in notions of partible and fractal personhood, where things, people, and animals would share "social" substances across what we in the West would see as discreet, bounded entities. Significantly, Strathern[19] also applied this thinking to deconstruct Western notions of individuality, and to provide a new reading of kinship in the light of advances in reproductive technologies.

For Gell, "social relations," not culture, are at the core of anthropological theories. Consequently, an anthropological theory of art has to focus on the social relations instantiated by, and articulated through, art objects (or "indexes," in the terminology of Peircean semiotics, which Gell follows here[20]). This means that artworks become socially effective once their agency is inferred (or "abducted") by those who view and use them. In this sense, then, artworks ("indexes") are both the "*outcome, and/or the instrument of, social agency.*"[21] That objects or things can have social agency is now a widely discussed proposition in the social sciences and beyond, following Bruno Latour's influential actor-network-theory.[22] One important difference, however, is that Gell (who did not make reference to Latour) would probably not have supported the idea that things can have social agency, completely independent of distributed and abducted human agency—they have this agency precisely as part of social life. In contrast to earlier theorizing on art in anthropology, in Gell's theory of the art nexus,

artists are now just one among other actors (which include also artworks and their recipients).[23]

A further distinctive feature of Gell's theory is its potentially universal applicability. While many of the empirical examples are drawn from indigenous societies, Gell's theory is not confined to the art of non-Western societies (long the domain of the anthropology of art), but also explicitly addresses modern art (the work of Marcel Duchamp, for example), and is very relevant for contemporary art. Artworks, for Gell, are distributed objects of the extended mind. Consequently, agency can be inferred from different biographical events during an individual's life course, which then become temporally manifest as artworks. Two notions are present here: on the one hand, artworks are conceived as process, that is an artwork can go through several stages—of idea, sketch, finished work, and later copies; on the other hand, artworks also constitute instants of a larger temporal series during an artist's lifetime.[24] In sum, Gell offers a general theory of art production and circulation, where art is seen as a "system of action."[25] In marked contradistinction to other theories, giving prominence to communication and meaning, as well as to cross-cultural aesthetics, here the emphasis is clearly on "doing" and "social relations."[26]

A rewarding avenue for further interdisciplinary work is to see Gell's focus on relationality in conjunction with some recent contemporary art theory, namely relational aesthetics, as set forth by Nicolas Bourriaud. For Bourriaud, social relations—rather than concepts, the individual artwork, or the system of the art world (as in the "institutional critique")—are the materials artists work with. This way of thinking directly reflects on the processual nature of making art, rather than being restricted to physically circumscribed artworks. Critics have pointed out that Bourriaud's model does not address the "authority" of the artist in the relational networks, and that these—based on an artificial egalitarian assumption—remain largely confined to, and instantiated by, the art world (such as Rirkrit Tiravanija's famous gallery-based dinner parties, for example, as in *Untitled 2002 [The Raw & The Cooked]*), hardly providing any institutional or systemic challenge (in contrast to the earlier "institutional critique").[27] In any case, rather than focusing on *objects* made, here the stress is on *human relationships* that are produced.[28]

As yet the possible correspondences between Gell's concept of agency and Bourriaud's relational aesthetics remain underexplored.[29] In fact, Gell had virtually no reception in contemporary art criticism and theorizing. However, further avenues for theoretical research, and indeed collaboration between the fields of contemporary art and anthropology, could include issues of relationality, temporalities, and biographies of things, artworks, and the people who make them.

The idea that capabilities (or *Handlungsmacht*, literally "the power to act," to use a term from Ilka Becker, Michael Cuntz, and Astrid Kusser[30]) for agency can be shared across humans, animals, and "inanimate" objects, is also reflected in a renewed anthropological discussion around the concept of "animism."[31] Contemporary theorizing on animism[32] is also linked to the fundamental differences, or alterity of other peoples' ontologies, as in Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's "Perspectivism."[33] Most recently—a further sign of the crossover of anthropological and art audiences—theorizing on animism, as well as the related discussion on mimesis,[34] has also been the subject of contemporary art exhibitions.[35]

Agency, of course, is also intrinsically linked to materiality, and how materials have been reconceptualized in anthropology.[36] New notions of materiality are now being used across disciplines;[37] they include the ideas of agency in objects, both as the extension of human agency, as Gell described it, as well as independently of it, as for Latour. "Thinking through things"[38] has become something of a programmatic catch phrase for these recent research trends. For instance, the *Pasifika Styles* exhibition at the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology highlighted the creative potentials of materials through indigenous, academic, and contemporary art perspectives.[39] Things, in the words of Amiria Henare, Martin Holbraad, and Sari Wastell,[40] function as "conduits for concept production," and primarily do not have referential or indexical qualities. In other words, things *are* concepts, not in need of further interpretive action.

Materiality's agency then has do with processes of doing and making, which have been given renewed emphasis in material culture studies in anthropology, as well as studies of technology in archeology. Significantly, materials are both agents of "construction" and of "de-struction": unmaking, undoing, and recycling are all equally important processes in the changing, relational networks throughout the material environment. Thus the performative, or praxeological, aspect of materiality has moved center stage.[41]

Materials, after all, constitute the "material of art" (as an important study by the art historian Monika Wagner is called[42]), and it is the enabling and constraining effects that are now foregrounded. Susanne Küchler's work on the "material mind" has been very prominent in this respect. She suggests that cognitive intelligence is not only distributed, but actively effective through a range of materials, enhanced by recent advances in nanotechnology and engineering.[43] "Intelligent fabrics," which can change according to environmental and bodily requirements (as well as many other adaptive and creative, intelligent materials), are evidence of how we cannot think any longer of an individual and isolated mind. In Küchler's words, the specific properties of intelligent

materials carry "our own mind beyond bodily confines,"[44] a process, I would argue, which had already started with the invention of toolmaking.

Cognitive insights and capacities from "intelligent" materials, both ancient and contemporary, have always been part of the arts.[45] For instance, indigenous textile techniques (including the symbolic imagery) are already appropriated into the realm of technical production and innovation processes, and the new digital revolution opens up new, "intelligent" materials for artists in their own works of appropriation.[46] One only has to be reminded of the historical connection between the textile looms in mechanical weaving and punch-card computing to read these implications in reverse. In sum, these new (and not so new) insights on the properties and capabilities of materials have implications both for working artists (who for some time have used "intelligent" materials[47]), as well as the thinking about art and its materials more generally.

What kind of practices does this kind of theorizing on agency and materiality open up for artists/practitioners? The challenges and promises arising for relational practice in artists' interventions at the crossroads with anthropology are illustrated by the following example. In 2009, the anthropologist Theo Barth, while teaching research design and methodology at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts, developed a project with his design students in the Oslo suburb of Romsås exploring ideas of a socially responsive design.[48] Students were given the naked, and perhaps depressing, facts about the suburb. Built between 1969 and 1974, inspired by Le Corbusier–type social housing projects in France, today it is a commuting suburb with 50 percent of the population of non-European origin. The information continued: "Romsås is invented every day by the people who live there, local TV and business, municipality, facility managers, planners and designers, researchers as well as the media. There are a variety of actors, and they each have their versions of Romsås. Yet, there are a number of contact-points, transactions and opportunities in everyday life that make up the community of Romsås: there are recreational areas, kindergarten, youth club, a library, a commercial centre. … People who live there experience this community day by day, and these experiences are produced by more/less viable designs for living."

For one month the students worked in the shopping and neighborhood center of Romsås, from a vacant space on the commercial ground floor (due to high rents, many spaces were empty), where people have to pass to and from the underground station. The idea, inspired both by George Marcus's term of "para-site,"[49] and Bourriaud's notion of relational aesthetics and his other works, was to "develop the project in close interaction with the Romsås inhabitants." The project, understood as an "experiment in design," asked "what can we do—as designers—to support [the citizens of Romsås]

in enhancing or reflecting their lives? In which sense can we, as designers, think of our profession as a *critical practice*?"

Three group projects were developed. Group 1 offered a toolbox or starter kit to help new residents to develop networks of contacts. In practicable terms, passers-by were offered hot waffles with jam, and invited to write down a positive thing about Romsås and post it on the wall of the temporary "office" space of the project.

Group 2, assisted by some children, filled a large number of balloons with gas and put them in the elevators to see what would happen with users. Mostly children were using the elevator, as the exercise was carried out during non-rush hour times (thereby missing commuting passengers).

The project by Group 3 was based on the great ethnic diversity of the area. They wanted to collect recipes, in order to make a cookbook with dishes from Romsås. Although, in the arena of Romsås Town Hall, ethnic foods were shared to celebrate UN Day, the group had to realize that "there is no necessary connection between food-culture and both the existence and use of recipes." Despite their efforts, which included wrapping vegetables with flyers explaining the project and getting support from a schoolteacher who distributed the invitation to supply recipes as a voluntary class assignment, the group got no response. Distributing disposable cameras to document foodways at home was only slightly more successful, and to explore the possibility to participate (as MA students) in the food-making process, or to live (as an anthropologist would) with a family, was not really explored.

Thus the three groups worked to different degrees with socially responsive design, with Group 1 being the most successful in promoting user participation through the starter kit. The whole project, then, points to the fragility of constructing and instantiating social relations through outside intervention, while setting a new agenda for art as "habitable," in what are otherwise seemingly alienating, or "uninhabitable" environments.[50]

Appropriation

Appropriation, the taking out of one frame of reference and presenting it in a new context, has a long trajectory in art history.[51] While appropriation has been vital to the processes of global cultural changes, it implies both limitations and potentials for those involved in it, and is often politically and ethically controversial. On the one hand, anthropological studies of appropriation show the importance of the materiality of things (including those classified as "art") in revealing the hermeneutic potential of appropriation. Through physical processes of working *with* materials, and *in*

techniques of other (cultures), artists and anthropologists learn *about* and, on occasions of collaboration, *with* the Other. This hermeneutic potential, often overlooked in studies focusing on appropriation's negative sides, has been characteristic of work by artists such as Teresa Pereda, who through her projects *Las cuatro tierras*, *Bajo el nombre de Juan* (1998–2001), and *Recolección/Restitución* (2007 till present) in ethnography-like fieldwork situations has collaborated with indigenous people in Patagonia, the northeast region in Argentina, and Bolivia.[52]

On the other hand, artists and other social actors appropriating from indigenous cultures often infringe intellectual property rights and indigenous self-determination.[53] However, not all cases are clear-cut, and some artists successfully problematize the ethically controversial nature of such interventions.

A good example is *The Catalyst*, a work by the Copenhagen-based artist Yvette Brackman. Throughout 2006 and 2007, Brackman, who has a long-standing interest in the Kildin Sami peoples of the Arctic regions of the Russian Kola peninsula (bordering Norway and Finland), went to the area with a commercial designer.[54] The project plan was to design and manufacture shoes from reindeer hide for the tourist market, in collaboration with local artisans and based on traditional models. However, the project faced a number of challenges, as local artisans did not want to adapt the traditional

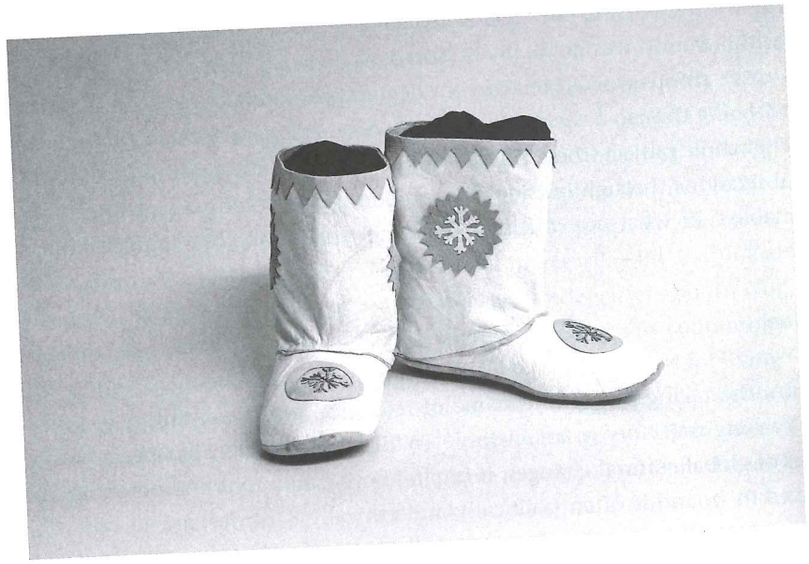

Figure 11.3
Designer reindeer shoes by master shoemaker Anna Galkina, Luja Boots. Photo Vigdis Haugtrø.

shoe type to the new one, and despite the intentions of the designer and the artist, the benefits were not clear to the local community.

As a result of these controversies and failed negotiations, Brackman wrote a play, *The Catalyst*, in the tradition of a Brechtian *Lehrstück* (literally "learning play"), with no separation between actors and audience, and serving didactic purposes for playwright, "actors," and audience. In the play, various typical roles from the controversial project (such as The Native, The Specialist, The Advocate) are read by audience participants. As of May 2010, the play has been performed thirteen times, usually at art venues, and was rewritten after each performance. A final version, in English, Kildin Sami, and Russian, was published in 2010.

The following extract shows how Brackman's play effectively, and self-critically (her own role would be that of The Advocate), synthesizes the controversial issues surrounding the intervention by artists and designers:[55]

39. Then YOU turn up with a business proposal. We welcomed your initiative to work together with us on a new product.

40. Yes, I proposed the idea to you of collaborating with a shoe company from a small island off of Spain. Their company built up their business in the periphery. Using local resources and traditions they were able to build a successful company.

41. There were many questions and worries about your proposal from the start.

42. The Advocate contacted our company and told us about your community. We became interested in the project after seeing the beauty of your craftwork.

43. The proposed idea had the following criteria: a. The designs developed and owned by the local community; b. The individual designers get an extra percentage to be mutually agreed upon for their innovation of an existing design; c. The global shoe company purchases the rights to manufacture the shoe design for a mutually agreed upon period of time; d. The profits from the rights will be reinvested in the local community; e. The local craftspeople will produce the upper part of the shoe; f. The global shoe company will manufacture the sole and inner lining; g. The global design company will pay between 6 to 8 Euros per pair of upper shoe parts; h. The local craftspeople will develop a design that is both economically and environmentally sustainable for themselves.

Chorus (Spoken by Everyone): And WHO decided on THESE criteria?

44. We did: The Advocate, The Native and The Specialist.

Chorus (Spoken by Everyone): Nobody asked us. Don't we have a right to an opinion?[56]

While the play (as well as installation, performance, and video work)[57] has been the productive result of the failed project, Brackman still has not given up hope to continue working with the people of Lujavri/Lovozero, and building with them a commercially and ethically viable project in the future.

In this instance the artist effectively uses the play to critically reflect upon her own role as "advocate" in the problematic process of appropriation and transformation of an indigenous craft tradition. The genre of "learning play" enables her to extract and confront the different voices in this controversial and potentially conflictive situation, and to provide, literally, a new reading and interpretation at each performance without falling into a more comfortable solution of conflict resolution. Her play and, indeed, her continuing work on the topic bear the seeds for a future, more productive collaboration with the craftspeople of the Kola Peninsula.

Coda

Artistic projects of intervention similar to the ones reviewed here have also been discussed in writings on site-specific art and community art, which critically appreciate the "ethnographic turn" in contemporary art.[58] They deconstruct the "site" as a place of presumed fixed identities and belonging[59] or, conversely, see artists in dialogue with legitimate identity claims by communities.[60] Hal Foster voiced a serious reservation, that many such projects would misappropriate the ethnographic mode for short-term status within the art world (and not change the fundamental politics of representation).[61] Yet discussion in this essay of the mise-en-scène character of Luvera's and Mjaaland's photographic practices paralleling anthropological fieldwork, show that ethical relationships, however tenuous and temporary, can be constructed in such artistic interventions.

Revised notions of agency and materiality have also demonstrated the fundamentally democratic potential of art practices that do not privilege the "originating" artists (or anthropologists for that matter) over their subjects and audiences. Finally, interventions on another scale and with heterogeneous frames of reference, at the local-global interstices of cultural appropriations, are ethically risky, but also generate hermeneutic potentials for a continued learning process which remains worthwhile exploring, even if negotiating partners in dialogue—that is artists, research subjects, communities (as "audiences" writ large)—might not always succeed in their endeavors.

Notes

1. See George Marcus, "The Uses of Complicity in the Changing Mise-en-Scène of Anthropological Fieldwork," *Representations* 59 (1997): 85–108; and "The Green Room, Off-Stage: In Site-Specific Performance Art and: Ethnographic Encounters," *Performance, art et anthropologie* ("Les actes") (December 1, 2009). http://actesbranly.revues.org/453.

2. James Clifford and George Marcus, eds., *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

3. Nancy Chen and Trinh T. Minh-ha, "Speaking Nearby: A Conversation with Trinh T. Minh-ha," in *Visualizing Theory: Selected Essays from V.A.R. 1990–1994*, ed. Lucien Taylor (London: Routledge, 1994), 435–451.

4. Joel Robbins, "On the Critique in Cargo and the Cargo in Critique: Toward a Comparative Anthropology of Critical Practice," in *Cargo, Cult and Culture Critique*, ed. Holger Jebens (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 243–259.

5. This phenomenon is explored in relation to a particular men's cult in Papua New Guinea in Donald Tuzin, *The Cassowary's Revenge: The Life and Death of Masculinity in a New Guinean Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

6. Marcus, "The Uses of Complicity."

7. Fernando Calzadilla and George Marcus, "Artists in the Field: Between Art and Anthropology," in *Contemporary Art and Anthropology*, eds. Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2006), 97–98.

8. For a fuller discussion see Schneider and Wright, eds., *Contemporary Art and Anthropology*; Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright, eds., *Between Art and Anthropology* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2010); and Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright, eds. *Anthropology and Art Practice* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

9. Anthony Luvera, "Residency," *Photographies* 3, no. 2 (2010): 230; and his book *Residency* (Belfast: Belfast Exposed Photography, 2011).

10. Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); and Stuart Hall, "Constituting an Archive," *Third Text* 15, no. 54 (2001): 89–92.

11. Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories*: *Photography, Anthropology, and Museums* (Oxford: Berg, 2001); and Elizabeth Edwards, ed., *Anthropology and Photography 1860–1920* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

12. Thera Mjaaland, *"Ane suqh' ile*. I Keep Quiet. Focusing on Women's Agency in Western Tigray, North-Ethiopia" (master's thesis, University of Bergen, 2004), 52, http://hdl.handle.net/1956/1453; and Thera Mjaaland, "Evocative Encounters: An Exploration of Artistic Practice as a Visual Research Method," *Visual Anthropology* 21, no. 5 (2009): 395.

13. Mjaaland, "Evocative Encounters," 397.

14. Ibid., 400.

15. On the aspect of collaboration, see, more generally, Anthony Downey, "An Ethics of Engagement: Collaborative Art Practices and the Return of the Ethnographer," *Third Text* 23, no. 5 (2009): 593–603.

16. Some elements of the first part of this section are further developed in different form and context in Arnd Schneider, "Anthropology and Art," in *The Sage Handbook of Social Anthropology*, vol. 1, eds. Richard Fardon et al. (London: Sage, 2012), 56–71.

17. Marilyn Strathern, *The Gender of the Gift* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

18. Roy Wagner, *The Invention of Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

19. Marilyn Strathern, *English Kinship in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

20. Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

21. Ibid., 15. Italics in the original.

22. Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers Through Society* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987). For later developments see Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

23. Gell, *Art and Agency*, 26–27.

24. Structural temporalities rather than individual artworks are the preferred analytical emphasis here, with implications for the concept of style and, indeed, the intrinsically related notion of repetition, "without (which) art would lose its memory." Gell, *Art and Agency*, 233. Although not referenced by Gell, there is an interesting, implicit link to the art historian George Kubler's thinking on stylistic changes, and human creativity more generally, in terms of "series." See George Kubler, *The Shape of Time* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962).

25. Gell, *Art and Agency*, 3, 6.

26. Ibid., ix. This essay is not the place for a comprehensive assessment of Gell's important contribution, which has been provided by others, e.g., Nicholas Thomas and Chris Pinney, eds., *Beyond Aesthetics* (Oxford: Berg, 2001); and Robin Osborne and Jeremy Tanner, eds., *Art's Agency and Art History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007).

27. For an overview of this criticism see Walead Beshty, "Neo-Avantgarde and Service Industry: Notes on the Brave New World of Relational Aesthetics," *Texte zur Kunst*, no. 59 (September 2005). http://www.textezurkunst.de/59/neo-avantgarde-and-service-industry/. Thanks to Ilka Becker for this reference.

28. Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods, with Mathieu Copeland (Dijon: Les presses du réel, 2002), 25, 70.

29. For some explorations, see Giorgina Born, "On Musical Mediation: Ontology, Technology and Creativity," *Twentieth Century Music* 2, no. 1 (2005): 7–36; Roger Sansi, "Making Do: Agency and Objective Change in the Psychogenetic Portraits of Jaume Xifra," *Quaderns de l'Institut Català d'Antropologia* 21, (2005): 91–106; and Schneider and Wright, eds., *Between Art and Anthropology*.

30. Ilka Becker, Michael Cuntz, and Astrid Kusser, eds., *Unmenge: Wie verteilt sich Handlungsmacht?* (Munich: Fink, 2008).

31. Originally meaning the belief that all "things" have a soul—the term was widely discussed in many works in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century anthropology, e.g., Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture* (London: J. Murray, 1871).

32. See Philippe Descola, "Human Natures," *Social Anthropology* 17, no. 2 (2009): 145–157.

33. Eduardo Viveiros De Castro, "Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 4, no. 3 (1998): 469–488.

34. Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity* (London: Routledge, 1994).

35. For example, two exhibitions curated by Anselm Franke at Extra City: *Mimétisme*, 2008, and *Animism*, 2010. The latter exhibition was accompanied by an eponymous anthology, ed. Anselm Franke (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2010).

36. Material cultural studies—since the mid-1980s promoted by Daniel Miller and Chris Tilley at University College London—provided an initial lead in this field.

37. Approaches now range across the fields of anthropology, archeology, and art history. For a good critical evaluation, see Carl Knappet, *Thinking Through Material Culture: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005); and Carl Knappet and Lambros Malafouris, eds., "Material and Nonhuman Agency: An Introduction," in *Material Agency: Toward a Non-Anthropocentric Approach* (New York: Springer, 2008), xi.

38. Amiria Henare, Martin Holbraad, and Sari Wastell, eds., *Thinking Through Things: Theorising Artifacts Ethnographically* (London: Routledge, 2007).

39. Rosanna Raymond and Amiria Salmond, eds., *Pasifika Styles: Artists Inside the Museum*, (exh. cat. Cambridge: Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2008).

40. Henare, Holbraad, and Wastell, *Thinking Through Things*, 5.

41. For an overview of recent research, see Myriem Naji and Laurence Douny, "Editorial," *Journal of Material Culture* 14 (December 2009): 411–432.

42. Monika Wagner, *Das Material der Kunst* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2001); and Monika Wagner, "Hans Haacke's Earth Samplings for the Bundestag: Materials as Signs of Political Unity," *Journal of Material Culture* 12, no. 2 (2007): 115–130.

43. Susanne Küchler, "The String in Art and Science: Rediscovering the Material Mind," *Textile* 5, no. 2 (2007): 124–39; and Susanne Küchler, "Technological Materiality: Beyond the Dualist Paradigm," *Theory, Culture & Society* 25, no. 1 (2008): 101–120.

44. Küchler, "Technological Materiality," 110.

45. A number of scholars have focused on how a variety of cultures have experimented with thinking through and with materials, especially fibers from plants and animals. Cognitive

processes are often expressed through and stimulated by these materials, as is the case with the Andean *khipu* writing and counting devices. Textile arts, as well as related arts and techniques of lashing and basketry, arguably have been at the root of indigenous abstract architecture both in the Andes and in the Pacific. See César Paternosto, *The Stone and the Thread: Andean Roots of Abstract Art*, trans. Esther Allen (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996); César Paternosto, *North and South Connected: An Abstraction of The Americas* (New York: Cecilia de Torres, Ltd., 1999); César Paternosto, *Abstraction: The Amerindian Paradigm* (Brussels: Palais des Beaux-Arts, 2001); and Susanne Küchler, "The String in Art and Science," 124–139. Conversely, the virtual qualities of materiality in classic Islamic art, as Laura Marks has argued, are at the root of contemporary notions of virtuality present in new media art. See Laura Marks, *Enfoldment and Infinity: An Islamic Genealogy of New Media Art* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010).

46. See also Teshome H. Gabriel and Fabian Wagmister, "Notes on Weavin' Digital: T(h)inkers at the Loom," *Social Identities* 3, no. 3 (1997): 333–344.

47. Stephen Wilson, *Information Arts: Intersections of Art, Science and Technology* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 215–218, 253.

48. Theo Barth, "Romsås: Some Experiences of Socially Responsive Process (SVRD)—in a Field Where Art and Design Overlap," (unpublished manuscript, Kunsthøgskole, Oslo, n.p., 2010). All quotations relating to the project are from the same source.

49. George Marcus, ed., *Para-Sites: A Casebook against Cynical Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

50. Nicolas Bourriaud, *Postproduction Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World*, trans. Jeanine Hermann (New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2002), 21. Bourriaud borrows the notion of the "habitable" from Michel de Certeau. See Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

51. See Robert S. Nelson, "Appropriation," in *Critical Terms for Art History*, eds. Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 160–173.

52. For more on this artist, see Arnd Schneider, *Appropriation as Practice: Art and Identity in Argentina* (New York: Palgrave, 2006); Schneider and Wright, eds., *Contemporary Art and Anthropology*; and *Between Art and Anthropology*, eds. Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2010).

53. James O. Young, *Cultural Appropriation and the Arts* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008).

54. Information relating to Yvette Brackman's project, has been gathered from an unpublished artist statement (courtesy of the artist); "SKO" (Kunsthøgskole i Bergen [Bergen Academy of Fine Arts], 2010), a master's thesis by Hilde Methi, a curator with whom Brackman has collaborated, also forwarded to me by the artist and available on her website: http://www.yvettebrackman.info/HM%20Bergen%20Eksam.pdf.

55. "First written and performed with six separate roles with actors assigned to each role, this final version is numbered allowing participants to play several roles during the course of a performance." Yvette Brackman, *The Catalyst* (The Sámi Art Festival, 2010), 5. http://www.yvettebrackman.info/Catalyst_t_web.pdf.

56. Brackman, *The Catalyst*, 10–12.

57. See http://www.yvettebrackman.info/Catalyst.html.

58. Alex Coles, ed., *Site-Specificity: The Ethnographic Turn* (London: Blackdog Publications, 2000).

59. Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), and Grant H. Kester, *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

60. Grant H. Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

61. Hal Foster, "The Artist as Ethnographer?," in *The Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Art and Anthropology*, eds. George E. Marcus and Fred R. Myers (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 302–309. For a critical reaction by artist Renée Green to Foster's text, see Renée Green, "Der Künstler als Ethnograf? Renée Green über Hal Foster, Return of the Real, Cambridge 1996," *Texte zur Kunst*, no. 27, (September 1997): 152–161. For the context of Green's risposte, see Elvan Zabunyan, "We Are Here," in *Renée Green: Ongoing Becomings Retrospective 1989–2009* (Lausanne: Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts de Lausanne, 2009), 7–15. Thanks to Ilka Becker for these references. Another critical appreciation is provided by George Marcus, "Affinities. Fieldwork in Anthropology Today and the Ethnographic in Artwork," in *Between Art and Anthropology*, 85–87.