Colour, In Theory

January 25 - May 4, 2014

Valley Art Gallery of Markham
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With this special issue bulletin, we at FUSE have embraced the motto "Do Less with Less." Along with our peer organizations within artist-run culture, FUSE has endured chronic underfunding for many years. Of the long-term effects of underfunding, the most morbidly catastrophic are burnout, a loss of institutional memory, and a loss of our ability to keep up appearances under these conditions. Rather than attempt to keep up appearances under these conditions, we offer you a pared-down issue of the magazine, with modest materials to match the modest resources we have to produce it.

The contents of this issue present labour-side perspectives on austerity from inside the artist-run sector in Canada. Our feature essay is a locally written and edited 8,000 words by Alexander Gillett. To help combat the spread of austerity, we have published a letter adapted from the Precarious Workers' Brigade in Scotland.

These materials frame our occasion to inform you, dear readers, that FUSE is coming to a close. After much careful planning and consultation with our elders, we have come to the conclusion that this is no longer a viable project under current conditions. While we have seen some of our special annual events (such as the annual winter issue) with mixed success, we have nonetheless decided to end our publication of this magazine. The FUSE archive will be available cost-free on the World Wide Web, offering a fully indexed resource on some of the most significant moments in the history of contemporary Canadian art. We are currently planning for the archive and the commemorative issue to take place across the country in the fall of 2014 and we will be working with you. If you are interested in being involved in this celebratory process, or if you have anything you want to share with us about the changes at FUSE, get in touch! We are always happy to hear from you.

— Gina Badger, Editorial Director and Publisher

on behalf of the Board of Directors and Editorial Committee
advertising unpaid internships

Hello,

We notice that you have recently advertised an unpaid internship. We understand the pressures that publicly funded non-profit arts organizations such as yours are under. We salute you for taking the time and effort to mentor and train people wanting to work in the arts sector.

However, we are concerned that by not paying people, only those who can afford to work for free will be able to benefit from your internship scheme. As internships are becoming more prevalent than entry-level jobs, those who are unable to take up those unpaid opportunities are less likely to enter the sector. These positions negatively impact the value of all labour in the arts, and make it harder to fight for adequate working conditions in the cultural sector.

This is far from an equitable labour practice. Demonstrating such unfair employment practices also seems to contradict your gallery/center/organization’s role in the arts milieu. Artist-run centers in Quebec/Canada have a long-standing history of fighting for artists’ rights, including the payment of artist fees and advocacy around the value of cultural work. It is only logical that the recognition of artistic labour and support for fair working conditions should apply to all cultural workers, including the staff of arts organizations.

In Quebec/Canada we have been avoiding important conversations around artistic labour and precariousness. Perhaps the situation feels less urgent in light of our particular funding structures, or we are censoring ourselves because the community is small and we are worried about upsetting people or endangering our own jobs and future opportunities. Nonetheless, we encourage you to think about how an organization like yours might act as a model for equitable labour practices, rather than contributing to economic conditions that encourage exploitation.

We wanted to flag this and ask you to consider the ethics of offering unpaid internships in your organization. There is a lot of information out there that might help you develop a new and more equitable approach to working with interns. FUSE Magazine has a number of links on their website (fusemagazine.org/2013/12/interns) with information and guidelines on this topic, and we encourage you to consult those.

We thank you for your attention to this matter, and hope that we can count on your collaboration.

Sincerely,

Nicole Burisch

Nicole Burisch is a Canadian visual artist, writer and cultural worker. Her research (such as Art in Public) is centered around the role of the creative economy in the 21st century. She currently works as the director of Calgary’s Mountain Standard Time Performance Art Festival from 2007 to 2010 and is currently based in Montreal where she works as research associate at Centre d’art contemporain de Montréal. She co-organizes Sadie and collaborates with artists and collectors worldwide. She is on the editorial board of Insurrectional ( deedat.de/insurrectional) and a member of The Black Factory (blackfactory.ca). Thanks to Amber Amich and Delphine Girard for their encouragement and support.

 modelos de cartas a las instituciones artísticas

Modèle de lettre à l’intention des institutions artistiques

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Mentionnez l’aspect éthique du fait d’offrir des stages non rémunérés au sein de votre organisation. De nombreuses sources d’informations s’offrent à vous afin de vous aider à développer une nouvelle et plus équitable approche envers les stagiaires. Le magazine FUSE offre sur son site (fusemagazine.org/2013/12/interns) plusieurs liens à ce sujet, que nous vous invitons à consulter.

En vous remerciant de votre attention et en espérant pouvoir compter sur votre collaboration,

cordialement,

Nicole Burisch


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Nicole Burisch


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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF BUFFALO BOY
edited by David Garneau

Publication produced by M:ST Performative Art Festival and TRUCK Contemporary Art, Calgary
WE CAN’T COMPETE

IOLI BIONDEAU & ADRIAN STIMSON

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RADICAL PERFORMANCE
In early November, FUSE put out a call to our close collaborators for a short feature essay on the impacts of austerity within our sector. Faced with an overwhelming response, they decided to take a more experimental, collective writing format. On the evening of 2 November 2013, a group of Toronto-based executive directors, curators and founders of prominent artist-run organizations met at the FUSE office to engage in frank discussion about the conditions affecting our organizations. The fact that follow was built out of a selective set of that conversation. As compensation for their participation, each contributor has been paid the minimum wage (currently $10.15 in Ontario) for four hours of conversation and writing. This ad hoc collective has elected to remain anonymous.

On 30 October 2013, the Toronto Sun published an article criticizing a project organized by Allison Mitchell and presented at the Art Gallery of York University. "A Lesbian Feminist Haunted House" was a large-scale installation in Toronto's west end, and was described by Homorun to lay out a haunted history of feminism. Situated as a response to "multiculturalism" created by radical egalitarianism, the installation was socially conservative successes. RYJ's Joy's Manitoba play provided a much-needed response to homophobia and misogyny (while also stirring up a maelstrom of intra-community discussion and controversy). The Sun's attack of Mitchell's work, penned by veteran columnist Joe Wargentim (1), relied on the most limited of right-wing attack -- the public funding that the project received. In this case, dedicated funding amounted to $500 Exhibition Assistance Grant from the Ontario Arts Council, a modest sum that the Sun exaggerated by publishing it alongside the five-digit number corresponding to the annual funding received by the Art Gallery of York University. To further criticize this supposed misuse of public funds, the Sun's reporter drew a comparison to a haunted house set up by Toronto mayor Rob Ford as his office, which was paid for privately. While an obvious insult might be taken with reminding Wargentim and his ilk that artists and other residents will always create projects from their own funds, leaving on this type of argument misses the point of public arts funding altogether: art adds value to society through the expression of diverse viewpoints and critiques and does not need an aesthetic object, a form of spectacular entertainment or an economic moneymaker. This type of alienating shamming is certainly not limited to the Sun in September 2013. CTW News published a similar story criticizing funding for Toronto production centre Trinity Square Video (TSV) for "Canadian You Own Porn", 2013 Style, which attacked "ethical and political issues around explicit sexual representation, prioritizing problem-solving and practical production.

"Canadian You Own Porn" is an attempt to make the development of new projects that are not dependent on traditional funding, and to create space for new ideas and new projects. There has been a major success in arts funding. In January 2013 Toronto City Council passed a motion to tax billboards and dedicate the income to arts and culture funding. Estimated at $17.5 million annually, this increase in arts funding is the only recent break from the regime of austerity. This didn't come from a vacuum; working with partners in urban planning, citizens' groups worked for this to make it real. Under the umbrella of the Beautiful City Coalition, over thirty arts organizations shared common causes to make a ambitious goal. This new funding, Toronto organizations are just starting to catch up to the cultural support for the arts. Without this support for diverse artists, it will be impossible to build a robust national voice to resist austerity in arts funding. The future of the Cultural Worker or How Not to Lose Faith

The political situation is dark. The public discourse is bleak. Austerity is spreading across the entire world. Too many people of our generation have been engaged with broader communities. Most arts funding is static, and the only way to make a sustainable diabolism is cemented -- a permanent state of emergency sets in. This state of emergency does not impact everyone. While the arts are vital to society. This is particularly striking in areas such as the price of education, health care, income support and virtually all other areas. As governments worldwide are pressured to cut spending and austerity is the result. Toronto had the lowest per-capita municipal arts funding under the Harris government, and to peers in other cities (prior decades ago. In media arts, there are three main types of organization: production centres, distributors and exhibitors have all worked to foster a new generation of $500 Exhibition Assistance Grant who get a pass from Toronto's funding 'lesbian haunted house' in the way of such succession is that no one's done the math.

Arts organizations are increasingly under pressure to pursue private sector sponsorship. Many organizations have shifted their models to attract corporate sponsorship and to increase self-generated revenue, other projects have resisted change because it threatens their core mandators and values. Again, key to this discussion is how to ensure the independence of the sector from government, because work that is truly moneymaking, radical or controversial (environemantal, anticapitalist, aboriginalist etc) is often unattractive to corporate audiences. While6064, 5634, and 5737; and so on. 3

As governments worldwide are pressured to cut spending and austerity is the result. Toronto had the lowest per-capita municipal arts funding under the Harris government, and to peers in other cities (prior decades ago. In media arts, there are three main types of organization: production centres, distributors and exhibitors have all worked to foster a new generation of cultural workers tasked with working out their present and future while struggling to honour their past. Perhaps it's better to go gracefully rather than to struggle, as we have seen with the Toronto Free Gallery's decision earlier this year to close its doors. In mid-November 2013, the Ontario Arts Council released a report on the demise of the demimonde of centres, it may be helpful to see some as having lived out their slim span due to our own. The decision to close the Toronto Free Gallery was not a matter of austerity. The Ontario Arts Council released a report on the demise of the demimonde of centres, it may be helpful to see some as having lived out their slim span due to our own. The decision to close the Toronto Free Gallery was not a matter of austerity. This backhanded push towards censorship is just one element of the driving actors on the fundamental principles of arts funding in Canada—designed as an arm's-length granting processes for artists, organisations and projects, joined by their peers. Media critiques directly produce the fear that they are supporting potentially controversial projects, artists and their institutions run the risk of funding a neoliberal assault on public-sector arts funding. This is a fact. As governments worldwide are pressured to cut spending and austerity is the result.

Amidst the backdrop of this widespread and rising trend toward austerity, the arts community. With luck, the action will spread for beyond artists and cultural workers, allying all communities under attack by austerity. (3)