

knowledge is never neutral

Co-research: subjectivities & conditions of culture as labour

A project in three parts, starting 16 October 2012

This project (in three parts) is organised by **The Strickland Distribution** as part of its **knowledge is never neutral** programme with **Transmission Gallery**. The project revolves around cultural and knowledge workers concerned with understanding more about our working conditions and practices. The proposal is that we might do so through a project of three complementary parts: a reading/discussion group; a co-research inquiry; a workshop on the inquiry's findings.

We start from the basis that cultural production – such as visual art, performance, sound – is itself a form of knowledge production.

If knowledge *is* never neutral, any form of knowledge production and distribution deserves our critical exploration; so as to understand its relation to how economic and social value is assigned, and to understand our own conditions of *doing*, not least in relation to one another.

For this, we will explore – in reading, discussion and inquiry – activist research that is often self-organised, precariously funded (if at all), and committed to its political positioning as well as to the desire to further the understanding of social processes. The last ten years have witnessed a renewed interest in such projects, whether called co-research, militant investigations or inquiries. The economic crisis of 2008 has placed even more pressure on interrogating the *now* and its proclaimed evidence of what constitutes truth and fact; yet, if the conditions for such kinds of research had been precarious before, they are even more so now in the face of broad sweeping cuts and reorganisations.

As a collective self-inquiry into *culture as labour*, the co-research project will begin with a series of discussions based on a short succession of readings. These readings introduce and the discussions explore the themes of research and learning in settings outside of academia or formal arts education. We will then explore the relevance such approaches might have for contemporary approaches to inquiry; exploring tools and practices to enable us to become co-researchers who then develop a three-month self-inquiry into our own positions and practices as cultural workers. We will then share our research in a public workshop.

In practice, the project will engage with traditional research institutions as much as contemporary art spaces. Doing so will enable us to recombine and hopefully collapse the distinction between professional educators and 'genius' artists, to move away from entrepreneurial celebrations of a so-called 'creative class' and towards emancipatory and critical education as collaborative research practice.

Co-research: subjectivities & conditions of culture as labour

A project in three parts:

Part One

A series of discussions each based on the reading 16, 23 October
of one text, at Transmission Gallery, 5.30-7.30pm. 6, 13 November

These texts are available to download, please see below.

Part Two

Out of these discussions, a small group will go on 27 November
to do a supported co-research self-inquiry into the to the end of
subjectivities and conditions of their experiences February 2013
of culture as labour.

You don't have to intend to come to Part 2 to participate in Part 1.

Part Three

At a public workshop we will present and explore 9 March 2013
what our co-research has found.

Space may be limited, please confirm if you intend to participate:
contact@strickdistro.org

All readings and further information available at:
<http://strickdistro.org/knowledge-is-never-neutral/co-research>

transmission gallery

The Strickland Distribution



Transmission Gallery
28 King Street
Glasgow G1 5QP

Tel.: +44 (0)141 552 7141
info@transmissiongallery.org
www.transmissiongallery.org

The Strickland Distribution
contact@strickdistro.org
<http://strickdistro.org>

Designed by www.jamesbrook.net

knowledge is never neutral

knowledge is never neutral

The Strickland Distribution,
September 2012 – June 2013
with/at Transmission Gallery

knowledge is never neutral is a series of projects organised by The Strickland Distribution taking place from September 2012 to June 2013 within and outside the gallery space. Taken together, these projects set out to explore the circumstances that surround cultural and knowledge production. We look to situate this production within a wider set of social and historical relations, and to reflect on our practices across these relations. We invite you to join us in these processes.

Creating spaces for participatory dialogue – for listening and being listened to – the projects include a public walk, co-research inquiry, facilitated workshops, film screenings, reading and discussion groups, publication launches and the ongoing documentation and reconsideration of outcomes deriving from these projects.

knowledge is never neutral seeks to foreground histories-from-below, collective learning, and constitutive forms of collaborative practice. In doing so, we explore existing spaces of learning and research for their potential for liberatory education and research praxis. By means of renewed circulation, we will explore the relevance and potential of recent histories of radical forms of (non)-institutionalised inquiry and communication for our contemporary situation. We aim to develop a practice of dialogue and co-research across different constituencies of political struggle, and to forge social relations and links for future practice.

At a time where we are again made aware of the contestation over how to narrate the (recent) past – of attempts to erase particular histories and knowledge and to ‘rewrite’ official archives and ways of remembering – we support the necessity to learn from and engage with past struggles here and elsewhere, asking: What and how can we learn from these?

In the specific lexicon of artist-run/ artist-led/ self-organised practice, this also calls on us to explore the implications for a diversity of cultural expression, and group autonomy through freedom of association and communication. Seeking to explore the potential for present-day translations of ‘co-research’ and politically committed inquiries, we are asking: What kinds of methodologies can, today, produce emancipatory knowledge?

The projects will often involve a collective exploration of position taking and position making both within and beyond the arts. This approach acknowledges that contradictions and irresolvable tensions can, often structurally, exist and endure, and that they are themselves a potent focus for study. This exploration will enable (self)-reflection on the production and circulation of knowledge, emphasising the contingent nature of artistic thought, practice and representation within a broader set of power-filled dynamics.

knowledge is never neutral includes:

A public walk/discussion incorporating Glasgow’s proposed new ‘cultural quarter’ and canal development, combining critical practices of urban geography with collective urban exploration.

A series of screenings/ readings/ discussions of ‘Autonomous’ films which explore the meaning and diversity of the movement from the mid-1960s onwards.

A series of readings/ discussions on contemporary possibilities for co-research and DIY-inquiry, leading to a co-research project which investigates the conditions of cultural labour.

Publication launches and workshops to explore histories-from-below: an approach that attends to subjects, forms of agency, struggles and areas often omitted from official historical studies.

A workshop exploring curatorial practices elsewhere in Europe which have undertaken critical appraisals of ‘competitive cultural nationalism’, especially countries similarly undergoing nationalist assertions of identity.

The Strickland Distribution is an artist-run group supporting the development of independent research in art-related and non-institutional practices. Art-related includes research forms that directly implement artistic practice as a means of research method. Non-institutional includes forms of grass-roots histories, social enquiries and projects developed outside of academic frameworks and by groups and individuals normally excluded from such environments. The Strickland Distribution operates in the public sphere, seeking to stimulate and contribute to public education, discourse and debate around the topics and themes addressed through its projects.

For further information, contact@strickdistro.org
or <http://strickdistro.org>