

knowledge  
is never neutral

## A Future at Our Backs! Autonomy on Film

Following a series of readings, films, and co-research enquiries by The Strickland Distribution in the area of *autonomy*, this film series charts the relation between *production* (the workplace) and social *reproduction* (the home, the community, schools, etc) in 1970s Italy. The films signal a theoretical and practical break from the sexual division of labour: the factory 'worker' (waged) and the domestic 'housewife' (unwaged). In doing so they intimate the unfinished project by which social reproduction and the workplace might be reconfigured to take into account relations of care and forms of value production that are non-economic.

For Michael Hardt, Italy in the 1970s presents us with a model because it constituted a kind of laboratory for experimental thinking and living that can help us conceive of new modes of collective being in our own times. Likewise, Manuela Pellarin's *The Suspended Years* suggests a period of intense experimentation in the 1970s that can, "perhaps be seen as 'suspended' in time and space, separate from what came before and after, waiting for something new ahead, but not yet in focus or determined... perhaps".

From the factory to the social factory – where are we now? Is the future behind our backs?

The films will be preceded by a brief introduction, and followed by an open, informal discussion.

All films start at 7pm.

**transmission gallery**

The Strickland Distribution



Designed by [www.jamesbrook.net](http://www.jamesbrook.net)

Transmission Gallery  
28 King Street  
Glasgow G1 5QP

Tel.: +44 (0)141 552 7141  
[info@transmissiongallery.org](mailto:info@transmissiongallery.org)  
[www.transmissiongallery.org](http://www.transmissiongallery.org)

The Strickland Distribution  
[contact@strickdistro.org](mailto:contact@strickdistro.org)  
<http://strickdistro.org>

7pm Wednesdays  
5<sup>th</sup> 12<sup>th</sup> December | 9<sup>th</sup> 16<sup>th</sup> January

Week 1 - Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2012, 7pm

***The Working Class Goes to Heaven (La classe operaia va in paradiso)***  
(Elio Petri, 1971, Italy, 125 mins.)

*The Working Class Goes to Heaven* viscerally depicts the conflicts between productivity and 'the refusal of work', the machine and the body, production and reproduction, order and desire. "I was a piecework labourer, I followed the politics of union, I worked for productivity, I increased output, and now what have I become? I've become a beast, a machine, a nut, a screw, a transmission belt, a pump!"

Week 2 - Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> December, 7pm

***The Suspended Years: Movements and Political Journeys in Porto Marghera***  
(Manuela Pellarin, 2009, 49 mins.)

Based on testimonies with militant workers, *The Suspended Years* charts the intense series of workers' struggles that took place in and around the chemical production plants of Porto Marghera in north eastern Italy from the mid-1960s until the late 1970s. The movement began in the factories but rapidly spread far beyond the factory walls to encompass and question the whole of social life under capitalism.

Week 3 - Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2013, 7pm

***School Without End (Scuola Senza Fine)***  
(Adriana Monti et al, Italy, 1983, 40 mins.)

*School Without End* follows a group of housewives who had undertaken the '150 hours' course, whereby employers conceded to paying for 150 hours of learning activities by employees. The women then continued their education independently with seminars on literature, the body, and the image.

Week 4 - Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2012, 7pm

***We Want Roses Too (Vogliamo Anche La Rose)***  
(Alina Marazzi, Italy, 2007, 84 mins.)

Through archive material and the personal diaries of three women, *We Want Roses Too* portrays the change brought on by the feminist movement in Italy during the 1960s and 1970s. "In this film, I chose to examine the history of women in Italy from the mid-1960s to the late 1970s in order to relate it to our current present so charged with conflicts and contradictions..."

# 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](mailto:contact@strickdistro.org)  
or <http://strickdistro.org>