

The Second Congress of the Free University of Warsaw CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AND KNOWLEDGE FACTORIES: ANALYSIS AND RESISTANCE | 7-9.12.2010, Warsaw

The Second Summit of the Free/Slow University of Warsaw will be devoted to reflection on the transformations in the field of science and art. The three-day meeting will gather educators, artists, activists and culture theorists from the entire Europe. This year's FSUW Congress is to serve the purpose of mapping mechanisms of resistance and searching for alternatives to the transformation of independent institutions of culture and universities into effective and profit-oriented enterprises.

The proceedings of the Summit will be accompanied by afternoon events open for the public: Jan Simon's exhibition "Four Pata-economic Undertakings", presenting the principles of alternative economics, and the premiere of the new translation of the notorious book by Ivan Illich Deschooling Society.

FSUW Summit is free to attend, but we ask all participants for a prior enrolment. Number of participants limited. Please send applications (including a bio and a short explanation note on why you are interested in the subject of the seminar) to the address: szymon@funbec.eu

The Second Congress of the Free University of Warsaw CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AND KNOWLEDGE FACTORIES: ANALYSIS AND RESISTANCE

Time: 07-09 December 2010, Tuesday-Thursday, 11-17 hours

Venue: Solec, ul. Solec 44, Warsaw / www.solec.waw.pl

Language: English

Host: Janek Sowa, Kuba Szreder

Participants: Matteo Pasquinelli (Berlin), Critical Practice (London), Microsillions (Geneva), Carrot Workers Collective (London), Radical Educational Collective (Lublana), Krystian Szadkowski (Brussels / Poznań), Tomasz Szkudlarek (Gdańsk), Kuba Mikurda (Cracow), Kaja Pawełek (Warsaw), Magdalena Rek-Woźniak (Łódź), Piotr Kowzan (Gdańsk), Heath Bunting (Bristol)

COLLATERAL EVENTS:

JAN SIMON: FOUR PATA-ECONOMIC UNDERTAKINGS

Exhibition opening: 7.12.2010, Tuesday, 19.00

Time: 7-19.12.2010

Venue: Bec Zmiana, 65/7 Mokotowska St., Warsaw

IVAN ILLICH: DESCHOOLING SOCIETY

Publication premiere: 8.12.2010, Wednesday, 19.30

Debate: Jan Sowa, Przemyslaw Czaplinski, Piotr Laskowski

Venue: Solec, ul. Solec 44, Warsaw / www.solec.waw.pl

Tuesday, 07.11.10

11.00

Janek Sowa & Kuba Szreder: Introduction

11.30 - 12.45

Matteo Pasquinelli (Berlin): Beyond the ruins of creative cities.

12.45 - 14.00

Tomasz Szkudlarek (Gdańsk): Knowledge society and its workers.

The idea of knowledge society is gaining a considerably wide acceptance of the academic circles – for them it is specifically nobilitating and entails social recognition of their rank. This acceptance desensitises us to a range of controversies stemming from this ideology. They are connected with the capitalist character of knowledge society. Knowledge is a commodity, which entails the necessity of its parcellation and privatisation, and therefore undermines the basic principles of public education – especially academic, which traditionally stipulated the necessity of education based on free access for students to the processes and findings of current research. This ideology justifies an array of exclusions connected with access to knowledge for people who are prepared to work at creating knowledge – deprived of the access to knowledge with the value of capital (patents, copyright, corporation-commissioned research), they learn what it takes to produce it. It is an analogous situation to the one described by Marx in his analysis of the origins of industrial capitalism (workers as those who possess nothing apart from “manual work” and are forced to become hired labourers). This status quo is beginning to be highlighted by contemporary “knowledge workers”, as one of Ph.D. students at the University of Gdańsk seems to prove:

We constantly revolve around the system, where on the one hand we are needed because we generate profit, on the other – the very system keeps us from entering inside. We are plenty, there are no funds for us, we have to earn a living ourselves (...), therefore we cannot fully commit to science, so we're not good enough. Vicious circle. Mass character of these studies will only propel the machine. On its part, university as an institution (...) will become increasingly restricted, to a much greater extent than when Ph.D. Theses were prepared by individuals prepared for scientific work. It is a broader problem stemming from marketisation of universities: on the one hand simplified science for the masses, on the other, hermetic “genuine” science.

In such perspective, university emerges as a structure divided into two circles: „inner university”, where access to knowledge is restricted by walls impossible to surmount (full-time employment, “genuine” science, partner relations) and its “outskirts” (mass studies, including Ph.D. and postgraduate, developing skills necessary for conducting research on the basis of the practice of “simplified science for the masses”, but not allowing to enter the stiff structures of the academy), being a reservoir of cheap workforce employed for specific projects and short-term contracts, and increasingly used for teaching at even more mass vocational studies.

14.00 - 14.30 - Break

14.30 - 15.45

Critical Practice (Londyn): Critical Practice: A Case Study of a Culture in Common.

Our presentation considers the organizational ethos of Critical Practice (CP) as an interdisciplinary community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991). CP brings together artists, designers and/or researchers based in London and beyond to explore what it means to co-create knowledge about culture in common, i.e. culture that is not only shared, distributed and publically accessible but also investigates the sharing, distribution and accessibility of culture more generally. After elaborating CP's ethos in relation to this interest, we go on to analyze the interplay between the community's working methods and its stated aims and objectives. Key flows and tensions in CP's self-governance are identified with the view of opening up discussion around their broader significance: what they may indicate about the limits and/or potential of communities of practice intent on simultaneously investigating and enacting culture in common.

As a presentation about CP made by members of this community, this case study springs from our subjective perspective in combination with various viewpoints, theories, histories, and not least, our own practical experience.

15.45 - 17.00

Kaja Pawełek (Warszawa): When attitudes become professions.

Sick of intrigues and jealousies, I began to move away from ensemble work until I was doing everything by myself - a one-man style of theater that reflected my ambition to realize a gesamtkunstwerk

Harald Szeemann in conversation with Hans Ulrich Obrist

When I was travelling round the world ten years ago, everybody wanted to be filmmakers. Now everybody wants to be a custodian or a curator. Museums have become the largest industry of our times

Peter Greenway

Haunted, especially in Eastern Europe, by the phantom of cultural underdevelopment and lack of solid structures and formats, we prioritize the professionalization of the field. This tendency is strengthened through project-based cultural policies and system of funding. It is based on the conviction that we still miss the key players: globally powerful institutions, culture managers, art market. On the other hand, third sector is growing and becoming more important than ever. As a counter-tendency to huge events, biennials and curatorial starship, collaborative values and collective process/authorship are juxtaposed again. But is it really a way for contemporary art and culture to get away from the trap of codification and systematization which exclude genuine choices and replaces them with repetitive modes easy to multiply and adopt? In the age when 'private mythologies' and 'obsessions' are being odified, taught and sold as part of the profession, is there any space left for visionary art and ways of transmittransmitting/presenting/communicating it? If we all become 'art professionals', skillfully reusing the developed formats and counter-formats, will there be any place for 'amateurs' and those who want to seek their own way?

19.00

Opening of exhibition of Jan Simon "FOUR PATA-ECONOMIC UNDERTAKINGS"

Venue: Bec Zmiana Foundation, ul. Mokotowska 65 / 7

Wednesday, 08.11.10

11.00

Janek Sowa & Kuba Szreder - Summary of previous day.

11.30 - 12.45

Microsilions (Genewa): "Fly in - fly out" workshop.

In 2008, Irit Rogoff discussed what she called "the educational turn" in curating. In this seminar, we want to discuss this institutional frenzy for projects around pedagogy from our own perspective of cultural workers dealing with education and as curators of an exhibition presenting art practices dealing with pedagogy. We will focus on questions raised by the fly in fly out workshops as corollary of this trend. What does it mean, for a practice based on projects involving people from outside the art world, projects based on relationship with existing local structure and long term collaboration, to be internationalized? How limiting is the fly in fly out workshop? Should we refuse them or use them as challenging frames to question our position as cultural workers?

12.45 - 14.00

Magdalena Rek-Woźniak (Łódź): A picnic for winos? On institutionalized culture and social exclusion in a post-industrial city.

The presentation is going to deal with a relation between the field of cultural production and consumption and social exclusion in the city of Łódź. By analyzing strategies and events undertaken in the recent years, especially in relation to the application for the "European Capital of Culture", we would like to explore the question of identification and responding to social problems typical for a deindustrializing, pauperized city. Our main concern will be the possibility to bridge the gap between institutions and the citizens, which has been emerging in the public sphere on the local level.

14.00 - 14.30 - Break

14.30 - 15.45

Piotr Kowzan (Gdańsk) Pedagogy of debt: from migration to institutional changes.

Pedagogy of debt: from migration to institutional changes. It seems that more and more adult choices lead us into debt. From getting university degree, a place to live, a car, to launching a business. Basing on my research in Iceland I am going to identify social differences which appear in modern societies when people are in debt. New dimensions of these differences occur because of many reasons: the mostly financial character of debt in capitalist societies, its bondage with morality, its possibility to be imposed on people without a preceding credit and its capacity to spread along kinship relations. Indebted people are vulnerable to the state power and many sorts of legitimate violence. It is interesting what people learn together with indebtedness

and what their strategies to cope with violent economic conditions of their lives are.

I would also like to discuss social consequences of financial obligations imposed on public institutions. In addition to this, I am going to use debt-related theories of money in order to sketch some opportunities for resistance against commercialization of the public sphere.

15.45 - 17.00

Heath Bunting (Bristol) A fortune of \$1,000,000 begins with a single transaction.

As artists, we create meaning, the driving force of societal change and cultural life, but very few of us are able or willing to accept and assert this some of us surrender to other powers, often brutal, for the security of bondage, but most of us reject the violence of others, and choose to destroy ourselves instead in the same manner that those of us that eat meat and engage with its violent production to avoid hypocrisy and insanity, we as artists must also actively participate in the creation of cultural wealth and its translation into other value systems and currencies. being based in the united kingdom, i am constantly exposed to poor and corrupted art hailed as highly financially valuable. As a young artist, i actively refused to engage with this distortion, but now i choose to stand my ground, speak my mind and walk the monetary walk. Hence the heath bunting collection.

19.30

Debate (held in Polish) about *Deschooling Society* by Ivan Illich.

Thursday, 09.11.10

11.00

Janek Sowa & Kuba Szreder - Summary of previous day.

11.30 - 12.45

The Carrot Workers Collective (Londyn): When the carrot becomes a stick: on recent trends in free labour economy.

The carrot represents the promise of well-paid work, meaningful experience, success and fulfillment, which, more often than not, is never actually realised. The figures of the 'intern', the 'volunteer' and the 'unemployed' person undertaking 'mandatory work activity' encourage a series of expectations around labour that, from the cultural and creative sectors outwards, infiltrate the entirety of productive relations. How does the trick of the carrot pave the way for new propositions of autonomy in the 'Big Society'? What fears and desires are put to work in this model, and how could we organise our work otherwise? How is it possible to link up material struggles in the cultural sector to broader processes of political transformation?

12.45 - 14.00

Krystian Szadkowski (Bruksela/ Poznań): Reclaim education - conclusions of global struggles of students and workers 2006-2010.

Maciej Gdula once wrote that granting mass access to higher education and progressive proletarianisation of students can lead to the outbreak of a Polish May 1968. Yet time passes and nothing heralds the forthcoming revolution. The anti CPA movement in France, ondo anomala in Italy, instances of campus occupation in California, protests in Puerto Rico or recent mass demonstrations of students and trade unions against budget cuts in Great Britain – all these events had the potential reaching far beyond the postulate of free public education for all. Apart from outlining a map of global protests, I will also try to answer the following questions: What practical conclusions can be drawn from the experience of global students' and workers' struggles against the privatisation of public education? What strategies applied in the course of numerous protests and occupations can be used in resistance to the neoliberal reforms of higher education in Poland? An effective attempt at answering these questions may decide whether the Polish May 1968 will take place or not.

14.00 - 14.30 - Przerwa // Break

14.30 - 15.45

Radical Education Collective (Lublana): Beyond the factories of knowledge: for a world without capitalist exploitation.

»In factories and on universities - resist the dictatorship of the capital!« This was one of the slogans that marked the 2007 student uprising in Slovenia against neoliberal reforms of higher education, which started the series of more, but mostly less connected cases of student resistance against commodification of universities. In our analyses of these practices of resistance, we will not focus on the demands for the maintenance of the autonomy of the scientific sphere, which (autonomy, that is) we find non-sufficient at best, and non-existent at worst. We feel that today's challenge is not to stand on the barricades of the imagined 'old university' that has long been the place of blind reproduction of existing relations between capital and labor. Instead, we believe that we have to build autonomous production of knowledge beyond hierarchy, alienation and commercialization, but we also think that autonomous universities surrounded by capitalist society are pointless if not impossible. This is why we will try to think how student demands and political innovations in their organizing can translate to the wider social struggle for a world beyond capitalist exploitation.

15.45 - 17.00

Kuba Mikurda (Kraków): Analysis of "National Program for Development of Human Sciences".

On the 8th of November, by virtue of the decision of the Minister of Science and Higher Education, the National Programme for the Development of Humanities" entered into force, which is to constitute a "genuine answer to the expectations of humanistic circles in Poland". The departure point for the debate will be the extraction of the programme's premises and objectives, the analysis of the ways in which it operationalises the "developmental needs of Polish humanities", and the reconstruction of the definition and functions of humanities, as stated explicitly and implicitly in the programme (in the context of the broader debate on the identity – the crisis of identity? – of contemporary humanities).