

Set of Instructions for the Curators/Outsourced Labourers

Items:

Wall space: 2mx3m = 6m sq

68 nails (make sure that the nail head fits through the key hole)

68 keys (all copied from the Master key)

1 hammer

1 notice 'Please Take One, The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home, 7 Bright Street, Liverpool, L6 1DL, UK'

Task:

Imagine the word UTOPIA in capital letters on the wall in 6m sq. Concentrate. Decide on the best position for the letters. Do not use pencils or other helpers to make it right. Start with the first nail and bang it directly into the wall at the top left hand side of the first imagined letter 'U'. You are doing well. Concentrate. Repeat the action 67 times, making necessary adjustments as you go. Remember to make sure there is enough space between the nails so that the keys can fit on them without touching. Don't worry if one letter is smaller or larger than another. This will not be perfect. Once all 68 nails are nailed on the wall, pick up the first key and place it on the top left hand point of the letter 'U'. Repeat this 67 times, making the necessary adjustments as you go. Take the notice 'Please Take One'. Attach this to the wall at the bottom right hand side of the final letter 'A'. Have a coffee and relax; the installation is over. Remember to return the Master Key by post.

The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home is a home-run initiative, run out of the spare room of a council house in Everton, Liverpool, UK. The Institute is run by a family of two adults and three kids, collectively, twoaddthree (Gary Anderson, Lena Simic, Neal, Gabriel and Sid). The Institute is a self-sufficient and sustainable initiative drawing from 10% of all income from its members. The Institute is concerned with dissent, homemade aesthetics, financial transparency as well as critiquing the capitalism of culture embodied in Liverpool08, currently European Capital of Culture. The Institute is interested in social transformation and has refigured a part of the family living space into a meeting place for artists, activists and cultural dissenters. This activity is undertaken in order to develop and extend dialogues about a 'culture' not necessarily driven by market forces.

The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home
www.twoaddthree.org

PROPAGANDA PAMPHLET 0426102008

A Key to UTOPIA

from

The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home
7 Bright Street
Liverpool
L6 1DL
UK



Please Take One

The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home
www.twoaddthree.org

Extracts from Email Correspondence between the Institute and the Curators

Subject: Salon of the Revolution
From: theinstitute@twoaddthree.org
To: ivana.bago@g-mk.hr
CC: antonia.majaca@g-mk.hr

Sent on 26/08/2008 21:41:14

In case this amount is not possible, we have thought of PLAN B. This would involve outsourcing the labour of the event to a local artist for the minimum wage. This would be in the light of recent capitalist modes of production (and recent artistic practices) where, in the interests of maximising profits, the work is 'outsourced' to cheaper labour markets. The ethics of this particular practice are deeply questionable in the market place, but as an arts event that seeks to make visible the workings of capital (in order that it is critiqued and rejected) we feel it might add an interesting layer to the piece. We offer this solution though only in the case of limited funding for travel from Liverpool to Zagreb. Otherwise the piece would cost the same (cca £300) plus postage and packaging and the wage for the local artist. We would include all this in the A4 programme write-up on the project.

Sent on 11/09/2008 10:51:32

We are assuming that the outsourced labourer would be one of you, either Ivana or Antonia or both. In that sense the piece would be multilayered and complex in that the actual outsourcing of work BEGINS with you the curators, and is reflected back onto us as 'artists' and the ones who outsource the labour back to you. We understand that you will be very busy with other work and we will try to keep our instructions (all of which will appear on the propaganda pamphlet) simple and low impact.

We do like this idea very much and are excited by the way in which this can help us to think about (and critique) current capitalistic modes of production through an artwork - this is one of the 'key' aims of the Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home.

Looking forward to your response
All the best from Utopia
twoaddthree

Sent on 15/09/2008 21:02:21

We are delighted that you will be the outsourced labourers and appreciate your thoughts on that. We agree with you wholeheartedly that the outsourcing of this piece from you - to us - back to you, is indicative of the perils of cheap labour markets AND (perhaps even especially) a form of critical engagement in the circulation and exploitation of social and symbolic capital. We are all invested in this process - the point, as our correspondence testifies, is to try to make those processes visible, to offer them up for discussion and further action. We are delighted again to be part of the asking of these searching questions with you. We have often been frustrated by arts organisations' reluctance to engage in the issues and themes of a piece of work THROUGH the actual processes that produce the work - meaning the mechanisms of the arts world. It is a blind spot for many curators and organisations, so we welcome your thoughts on this work all the more. We hope to reflect this in the pamphlet and will use some of your formulation in these emails for this purpose.

We would applaud the decision to make the budget transparent. The Institute is always happy to let people know the 'bottom line' in terms of monies. We have found this very useful in building trust between people AND a way of intervening in the normative practices of financial secrecy that arts venues have become adept at.

You have a very laudable take on 'refusing' to be paid financially, rather symbolically and socially/culturally. We respect this position very much and feel in the circumstances that - as long as the audiences are made aware of this process - this is the best way forward. We will put it in the pamphlet that, in this instance, cultural capital is being preferred over financial.

Subject: Salon of the Revolution
From: ivana.bago@g-mk.hr
To: theinstitute@twoaddthree.org
CC: antonia.majaca@g-mk.hr

Sent on 23/08/2008 18:24:53

Dear Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home,
I am happy to inform you that your proposal for the Salon of the Revolution has been selected for the exhibition that will take place in Zagreb, October 4-26 2008 and I also thank you once again for your application and interest.

Sent on 01/09/2008 09:11:34

Concerning the production, we must again get back to the cheap labour markets topic and our own situation as the cheap and non-profit culture market. The material production itself including 68 nails, 68 keys, hammer, 200 printing copies would definitely cost considerably less than £300 in Croatia and it would also include reduction on the shipping costs as shipping a lot of metal should be very heavy and expensive. We would suggest that you send us a single key and we would make copies here, as well as buy the exact kind of nails that you would want. In this way and with the outsourced artist-worker the idea of outsourcing too would be complete as it would refer to the entire production including raw material taking place in the cheap East whereas only the 'design' was created and 'delegated' from the West. Looking forward to your reply. Many kind greetings from Zagreb!
Antonia & Ivana

Sent on 11/09/2008 11:40:31

I can happily say that YES, we can be your outsourced labourers! I was really happy to read this in your email and it definitely adds up yet another layer to the project, so we are also very much enjoying our correspondence with you. Not only that, as you said: "the piece would be multilayered and complex in that the actual outsourcing of work BEGINS with you the curators, and is reflected back onto us as 'artists' and the ones who outsource the labour back to you", but also it again continues on the 'cheap culture market' story from our previous email and the fact that the principle we work according to or the one we are sometimes forced to work according to, is always almost exceeding the maximum with very minimum means, and so much is based on the circulation and exploitation of not financial but social and symbolic capital. As we have, through our work as curators, and now as curators of the Salon, been accustomed to often being the ones whose actions in the project range from its conceptualization, text writing, working with artists, researching etc. to fundraising, organizing, PR-ing, painting the walls and pinning the nails, we find that us being outsourced by you to set up your work and reproduce and spread the 'master key' (we love this term!) will in no way be only a decoration in which artists outsource curators for manual labour, (in the decorative way that is often seen in the so-called practices of institutional critique in the west)...

Sent on 22/09/2008 20:44:51

Thanks for sending the key, we are expecting it every day now. Just wanted to drop an info for the pamphlet - we will definitely get the keys copied for free, as I suspected before. The shop that is glad to become our supporter in making this project is called Super brava - Super Lock. So now we are taking the Master Key to Super Lock! ...

We feel that this long-distance and 'blind' exchange of emails is definitely a component of the piece itself and what was discussed also in the first emails about the invisibility and the 'never-really-there' aspect of the promised Utopia. And the text in the catalogue also makes a statement about that - a statement why, in the end, we all feel that what we do is really worth it. So we really hope that the process of sending, receiving and distributing the key will not stay frozen as a symbolic gesture in the context of an exhibition and its catalogue but stay a reminder of a door that we will all wish to keep open not only now as a one-time exchange but for the future.