

It's the Political Economy, Stupid

November 1 – December 14, 2013
Curated by Oliver Ressler
and Gregory Sholette

Artists * Zanny Begg & Oliver Ressler *
* Filippo Berta * Libia Castro & Ólafur
Ólafsson * Julia Christensen * Paolo
Cirio * Noel Douglas * Field Work *
Yevgeniy Fiks, Olga Kopenkina & Alexandra
Lerman * floxø * Melanie Gilligan *
Jan Peter Hammer * Alicia Herrero *
Institute for Wishful Thinking *
* Sherry Millner & Ernie Larsen *
Isa Rosenberger * Dread Scott



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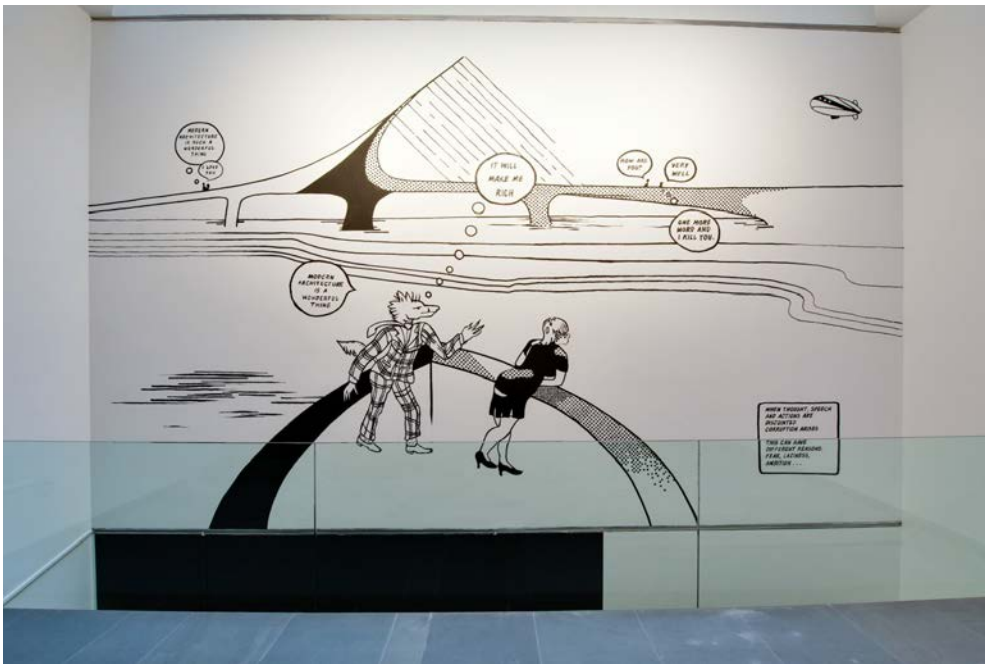
A cycle of exhibitions curated by Oliver Ressler and Gregory Sholette

2011-2016

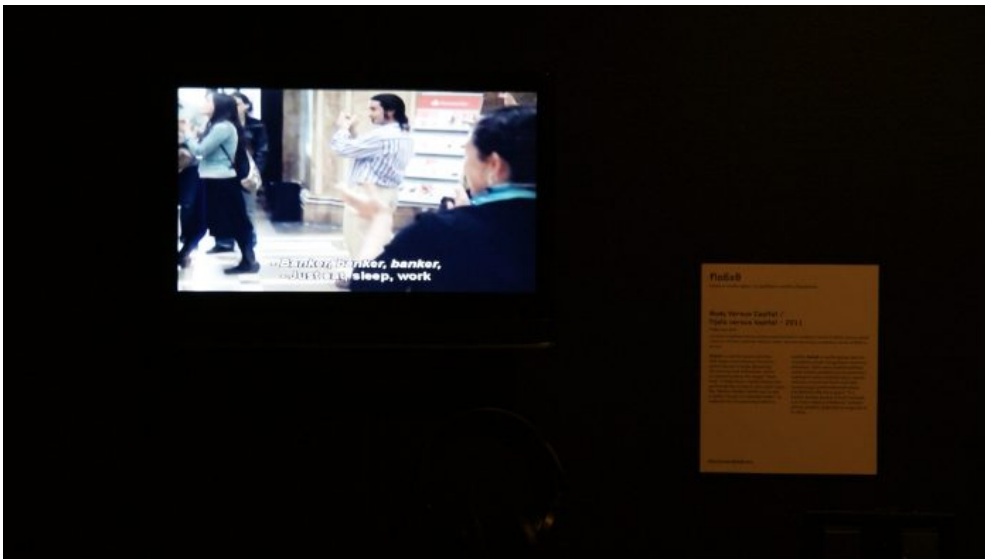
Globalization, privatization, flexible work schedules, deregulated markets; 30 years of neoliberal capitalism has driven most of the world's governments to partly or wholly abandon their previous role as arbitrators between the security of the majority and the profiteering of the corporate sector. It comes as no surprise therefore that when problems in the US real estate and financial sectors resulted in a global financial crisis starting in 2008 governments all over the world pumped trillions of dollars into banks and insurance companies, essentially creating the largest transfer ever of capital into the private sector. One argument often cited for this unprecedented action was that many of these transnational corporations were 'too big to fail.' Still, despite these enormous expenditures millions of people soon lost their homes and livelihood, and the economic and social damage has not yet ended.



Zanny Begg & Oliver Ressler "The Bull Laid Bear"; Linda Bilda, "Labor and Capital". Installation view: "It's the Political Economy, Stupid", Austrian Cultural Forum, New York, 2012 (Photo: David Plakke)



Linda Bilda, "The Future and End of the Golden World". Installation view: "It's the Political Economy, Stupid", Austrian Cultural Forum, New York, 2012 (Photo: David Plakke)



flo6x8, "Body Versus Capital". Installation view: "It's the Political Economy, Stupid", Galerija Nova, Zagreb, 2014

The cost of these bailouts is staggering. States borrowed capital to rescue financial institutions resulting in growing national debt and virtual insolvency for some countries. Managing these budget deficits might have been possible if wealthy transnational corporations were forced to assist the economy, but neoliberal governments instead chose to introduce belt-tightening programs that radically reduce public services and social welfare. Needless to say, these austerity measures do not necessarily reflect the will of the majority, and increasing voter apathy is one serious side effect of such top-down decision-making.



Paolo Cirio, "Loophole for All". Installation view: "It's the Political Economy, Stupid", Gallery 400/University of Illinois at Chicago, 2013



Noel Douglas, "Abstract Forces"; Libia Castro & Ólafur Ólafsson, "Lobbyists"; Zanny Begg & Oliver Ressler, "The Bull Laid Bear". Installation view: "It's the Political Economy, Stupid", Galerija Nova, Zagreb, 2014

Today, we are facing a catastrophe of capitalism that has also become a major crisis for representative democracy. The very idea of the modern nation state is in jeopardy as the deterritorialized flow of finance capital melts down all that was solid into raw material for market speculation and bio-political asset mining. It is the social order itself, and the very notion of governance with its archaic promise of security and happiness that has become another kind of modern ruin. Theorist Slavoj Žižek puts it this way, 'the central task of the ruling ideology in the present crises is to impose a narrative which will place the blame for the meltdown not on the global capitalist system as such, but on secondary and contingent deviations (overly lax legal regulations, the corruption of big financial institutions, and so on).'[1]



Noel Douglas, "Abstract Forces". Installation view: "It's the Political Economy, Stupid", Center for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade, 2013 (Photo: Vladan Jeremic)

"It's the Political Economy, Stupid" [2] brings together a group of superlative artists who focus on the current crisis in a sustained and critical manner. Rather than acquiesce to our current calamity this exhibition asks if it is not time to push back against the disciplinary dictates of the capitalist logic and, as if by some artistic sorcery, launch a rescue of the very notion of the social itself.

[1] Slavoj Žižek, *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce*. Verso Books, London/New York 2009, S. 19

[2] Der Ausstellungstitel *It's the Political Economy, Stupid* basiert auf Slavoj Žižeks

Umformulierung der weitverbreiteten Redewendung „It's the economy, stupid“, die während der erfolgreichen Präsidentschaftskampagne von Bill Clinton 1992 gegen den amtierenden Präsidenten George Bush Senior zirkulierte.



Filippo Berta, "Homo Homini Lupus"; Sherry Millner & Ernie Larsen, "Rock the Cradle". Installation view: "It's the Political Economy, Stupid", Pori Art Museum, Pori, 2013



Field Work, "The Revenge of The Crystals". Installation view: "It's the Political Economy, Stupid", Pori Art Museum, Pori, 2013



"It's the Political Economy, Stupid", Center for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade, 2013 (photo: Srdjan Veljovic)

The exhibition is accompanied by a publication, "It's the Political Economy, Stupid: The Global Financial Crisis in Art and Theory" (Pluto Press, 2013), featuring essays by Slavoj Žižek, Brian Holmes, Judith Butler, David Graeber, Julia Bryan-Wilson, John Roberts, and others.

"It's the Political Economy, Stupid" was presented in the following art institutions:

Open Space, Open Systems, Vienna (AT), 2011

Participating artists: Zanny Begg, Libia Castro & Ólafur Ólafsson, Damon Rich, Superex

Austrian Cultural Forum, New York (US) 2012

Participating artists: Linda Bilda / Julia Christensen / Yevgeniy Fiks & Olga Kopenkina & Alexandra Lerman / o6x8 / Melanie Gilligan / Jan Peter Hammer / Alicia Herrero / Institute for Wishful Thinking / Zanny Begg & Oliver Ressler / Isa Rosenberger / Dread Scott

Centre of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki (GR), 2012

Participating artists: Filippo Berta / Linda Bilda / Libia Castro & Ólafur Ólafsson / Julia Christensen / Yevgeniy Fiks & Olga Kopenkina & Alexandra Lerman / o6x8 / Melanie Gilligan / Jan Peter Hammer / Alicia Herrero / Institute for Wishful Thinking / Sherry Millner & Ernie Larsen / Zanny Begg & Oliver Ressler / Isa Rosenberger / Dread Scott

Pori Art Museum, Pori (FI), 2013

Participating artists: Filippo Berta / Julia Christensen / Field Work / Yevgeniy Fiks & Olga Kopenkina & Alexandra Lerman / o6x8 / Melanie Gilligan / Jan Peter Hammer / Alicia Herrero / Institute for Wishful Thinking / Sherry Millner & Ernie Larsen / Libia Castro & Ólafur Ólafsson / Zanny Begg & Oliver Ressler / Isa Rosenberger / Dread Scott / Superex

Center for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade (RS), 2013

Participating artists: Filippo Berta / Libia Castro & Ólafur Ólafsson / Paolo Cirio / Field Work / Yevgeniy Fiks & Olga Kopenkina & Alexandra Lerman / o6x8 / Melanie Gilligan / Jan Peter Hammer / Alicia Herrero / Sherry Millner & Ernie Larsen / Zanny Begg & Oliver Ressler / Isa Rosenberger / Dread Scott / Julia Christensen / Institute for Wishful Thinking / Noel Douglas

Gallery 400/University of Illinois at Chicago (US), 2013

Participating artists: Filippo Berta / Libia Castro & Ólafur Ólafsson / Julia Christensen / Field Work / Yevgeniy Fiks & Olga Kopenkina & Alexandra Lerman / o6x8 / Melanie Gilligan / Jan Peter Hammer / Alicia Herrero / Institute for Wishful Thinking / Sherry Millner & Ernie Larsen / Zanny Begg & Oliver Ressler / Dread Scott.

Galerija Nova, Zagreb (HR), 2014

Participating artists: Filippo Berta / Libia Castro & Ólafur Ólafsson / Julia Christensen / Paolo Cirio / Field Work / Yevgeniy Fiks & Olga Kopenkina & Alexandra Lerman / o6x8 / Melanie Gilligan / Jan Peter Hammer / Alicia Herrero / Sherry Millner & Ernie Larsen / Zanny Begg & Oliver Ressler / Isa Rosenberger / Dread Scott / Institute for Wishful Thinking / Noel Douglas

NeMe Arts Centre, Limassol (CY), 2014

Participating artists: Filippo Berta / Christopher Christou / Noel Douglas / Libia Castro & Ólafur Ólafsson / Paolo Cirio / Yevgeniy Fiks & Olga Kopenkina & Alexandra Lerman / Field Work / o6x8 / Melanie Gilligan / Institute for Wishful Thinking / Jan Peter Hammer / Alicia Herrero / Sherry Millner & Ernie Larsen / Suzanna Phialas / Zanny Begg & Oliver Ressler / Isa Rosenberger / Dread Scott / Marios Theophilides / Pavlos Vrionides

DAAP Galleries, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati (US), 2016

Participating artists: Filippo Berta / Libia Castro & Ólafur Ólafsson / Paolo Cirio / Noel Douglas / Field Work / Yevgeniy Fiks & Olga Kopenkina & Alexandra Lerman / o6x8 / Sylvain George / Melanie Gilligan / Jan Peter Hammer / Alicia Herrero / Institute for Wishful Thinking / Sherry Millner & Ernie Larsen / Zanny Begg & Oliver Ressler / Isa Rosenberger / Dread Scott