

HOW TO WORK TOGETHER





Type of output:
Collection of
Creative and
Critical Work

by
Andrea Phillips

DOUBLE WEIGHTED

Cover:
Installation shot of Ahmet
Ogut's film featuring Phillips
as interviewer of all the artist's
collaborators.

*Photo credit: Mark Blower,
courtesy of Chisenhale Gallery*

Left:
Phillips in conversation with
Stewart Martin at conference
Maria Eichhorn:
5 Weeks, 25 Days, 175 Hours
that she co-curated in April 2016.

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SUMMARY

This output is a collection of critical and creative work authored by Andrea Phillips as part of a three-year Arts Council-funded project, *How to Work Together* (HTWT).

Phillips was invited to contribute to HTWT at its inception in 2014 by the directors of three London galleries: Chisenhale, The Showroom and Studio Voltaire. HTWT had two strands: a commissioning programme and a think tank. Phillips contributed significantly to both these strands resulting in two published online critical essays, three interviews, a film and a conference.

Phillips works at the intersection of academic research, artistic collaboration and cultural institutional cooperation. Trained as a theatre practitioner she is influenced by the counter-normative processes exemplified by community art, and the pedagogical revolution epitomised by Paolo Friere (1970), Augusto Boal (1979) and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988). Her involvement in HTWT provided a strategy to activate institutional discussion and change within the field of artistic and curatorial production. Working as a critical friend and ally rather than exterior voice, Phillips translates the complex history of inequity and value production in the arts into dialogues with the professional industry with a view to finding routes to transformation.

She aims to speak to and work with audiences and participants that are constituted more broadly than those reached through traditional academic publishing and speaking. She does this by:

- developing events such as HTWT with local, national and international institutions to disseminate ideas on alternative artistic organisational structures;
- collaborating in this work with a wide range of actors, from internationally celebrated curators to small, unfunded arts organisations;
- staging these debates with a democratic approach that encourages powerful and less powerful actors to listen and learn from each other.

INTRODUCTION

Phillips was commissioned as a writer, a dramaturg and event organiser by the production team of *HTWT* to produce the intellectual and theoretical context for the themes of the project: collaboration, labour, art-related economics and investment. This eventuated in two published online critical essays, three interviews, a film and a conference.

HTWT received an initial Arts Council Catalyst grant of £191,065:

Year 1 £70,000

Year 2 £70,000

Year 3 £51,065

In addition to this each institution fundraised from other sources for commissions (see <https://howtoworktogether.org/about/>).



Above: *HTWT* website: homepage for Phillips' essay *Invest in What?*
Image credit: An Artists' Union march in the USA in the 1930s, Courtesy of ScopeNI <https://scopeni.nicva.org/article/life-garret-art-work-ni>

RESEARCH CHALLENGE

Phillips' aims and objectives within *HTWT* were:

1. To critically examine inequalities of value production within the contemporary arts sector in the UK through published, publicly discursive and creative outputs;
2. To generate critical response to and around the context of the project: its funding, institutional locations and its viability as a production model;
3. To examine the differences between the claims of *HTWT* regarding collaboration and the unequal financialised framework of the commissions.

Phillips collaborated with both artists and producers of the project, generating through her discussions with them, and through her outputs, self-reflexive critical analysis of the format in which the project was undertaken and its often contradictory aims.

Right: Phillips in conversation with
Isabell Lorey, author of *State of Insecurity:
Government of the Precarious* (2015) at the
conference *Maria Eichhorn: 5 Weeks, 25
Days, 175 Hours*, April 2016.
Photo credit: Mark Blower, courtesy of
Chisenhale Gallery



CONTEXT

Over the past ten years Phillips has published widely on the conditions of artistic production, the role of art schools and institutions and on the shaping effect of capital accumulation upon discursive and productive practices within the field of contemporary art. Her work has diagnosed an increasingly divisive context of artistic production in which the respective ideas and practices of galleries and museums on the one hand and those of artists on the other, have become pitted against each other in competition. This was the “problem” which *HTWT* sought to address.

Whilst questions of economic and aesthetic value in the arts have a long historical tail that has been identified by Phillips (Phillips 2015, 2020), the topic has recently become a matter of debate in the UK as public funding for the arts is questioned at governmental level and through NGO activity (Crossick & Kaszynska 2016). As academic analysis has attempted to ‘prove’ cultural value in recent years, there has been a growing debate about who controls and mediates what is valuable (Brook, O’Brien & Taylor, 2018).

Before and during the process of *HTWT*, Phillips was involved in organising a number of broader public discursive events on the topics of artists’ rights, payment and shifting concepts of value, including with the organisation Common Practice (which has branches in London, New York and Los Angeles, for example: <http://www.commonpractice.org.uk/>) as well as Swedish (see Klister: <https://marabouparken.se/samarbeten/klister/?lang=en>) and wider international debates on the topic (see Cluster: <https://www.theshowroom.org/relationships/cluster> and Arts Collaboratory: <http://www.artscollaboratory.org/>).

‘[S]ocial engagement in the arts not only fulfils private and public criteria of inclusion ... but also maintains – does not disrupt at all – the modes through which the person – the participant-subject – is utilised within a scheme that is entirely wrought through European histories of benevolent liberal governmentalisation.’

(Phillips 2016)

Right:

Phillips chairing discussion at conference *Maria Eichhorn: 5 Weeks, 25 Days, 175 Hours* April 2016.
Photo credit: Mark Blower, courtesy of Chisenhale Gallery



METHODS

Phillips uses the following methods:

1. Public talking [conference and exhibition events, interviews]: whilst it is common for academics to give keynote speeches and join academic debates within their contexts, since her early training as a socially engaged theatre maker, Phillips has sought spaces to take complex sociological and art historical ideas into public and professional debate. This enables the idea of 'public talking' as a practice-based methodology.
2. Public writing [Think Tank online essays]: much of Phillips intellectual output over the past decade has involved publishing short (c 4000ww) texts in nonacademic published format: books on artistic practice, catalogues, compendiums published by galleries, museums and related organisations. These necessitate the translation of complex political and philosophical ideas in the public and professional realm. This opens up a space of 'public writing' as practice.
3. Collaboration: all of the outputs listed here have emerged through long and short-term collaborations with cultural institutions and their actors. Public talking and writing as practice does not exist outside of a collaborative ethos; both require an emphasis on porosity and responsiveness as core to understandings of knowledge production.

Phillips has been publishing, delivering talks and organising events that analyse the current infrastructure of British, European and American contemporary art institutions for a decade. The numerous outputs that she has organised, co-organised and been invited to participate within have been public events, by which is meant that the discussions have been largely set in non-academic or para-academic environments and have been deliberately open to public participation (Habermas, 1962). Her public events usually take place alongside – or in – exhibitions and performance contexts.

In recent years, the development of multi-disciplinary events, in which discussion, performance and installation, for example, co-exist within a public cultural institution, have become more familiar (David 1997, Nollert & Rogoff 2006, Staal 2012, Hlavajova & Sheikh 2017, Osten & Watson 2019). In particular Phillips has been involved with groups of European institutions who have identified the need for institutional change and begun work on dismantling institutional practices (L'Internationale 2009, Common Practice 2009, Klistler 2011, Choi et al 2014, ICF 2007). It is this form of porous modelling – in which academic delivery sits alongside and within the infrastructures of professional practice in order to create direct rather than indirect impact – that makes Phillips' method original (Cruz 2016).



Top right: Phillips interviewing collaborators for Ahmet Ogut's film, April 2015.

Photo credit: Mark Blower, courtesy of Chisenhale Gallery

Right: Phillips in discussion with Kodwo Eshun, co-Director of the Otolith Group and Charlotte Higgins, Chief Culture Writer for The Guardian, Public Assets, *Common Practice* conference, London, 2015.

Photo credit: Mark Blower, courtesy of Chisenhale Gallery



DISSEMINATION

Interview with Emily Pethick:

<https://howtoworktogether.org/think-tank/andrea-phillips-interview-with-emily-pethick/>

Interview with Joe Scotland:

<https://howtoworktogether.org/think-tank/andrea-phillips-interview-with-joe-scotland/>

Interview with Polly Staple:

<https://howtoworktogether.org/think-tank/andrea-phillips-interview-with-polly-staple/>

Analysis:

<https://howtoworktogether.org/think-tank/andrea-phillips-how-to-work-together/>

Analysis:

<https://howtoworktogether.org/think-tank/invest-in-what-how-to-work-together-the-arts-councils-catalyst-fund-and-arts-contemporary-economic-infrastructure/>

Exhibition:

<https://howtoworktogether.org/commissions/ahmet-ogut/>

Conference:

<https://howtoworktogether.org/events/maria-eichhorn-symposium/>

Press coverage:

<https://howtoworktogether.org/press/>

To date (October 2020), the website has had:

128,695 page views;

51,617 unique users and;

68,100 sessions overall

(88% of users were first time visitors and 12% repeat visitors).



Phillips on set with Ahmet Ogut's collaborators, April 2015
Photo credit: Mark Blower, courtesy of Chisenhale Gallery

Appendices

Appendix 1:

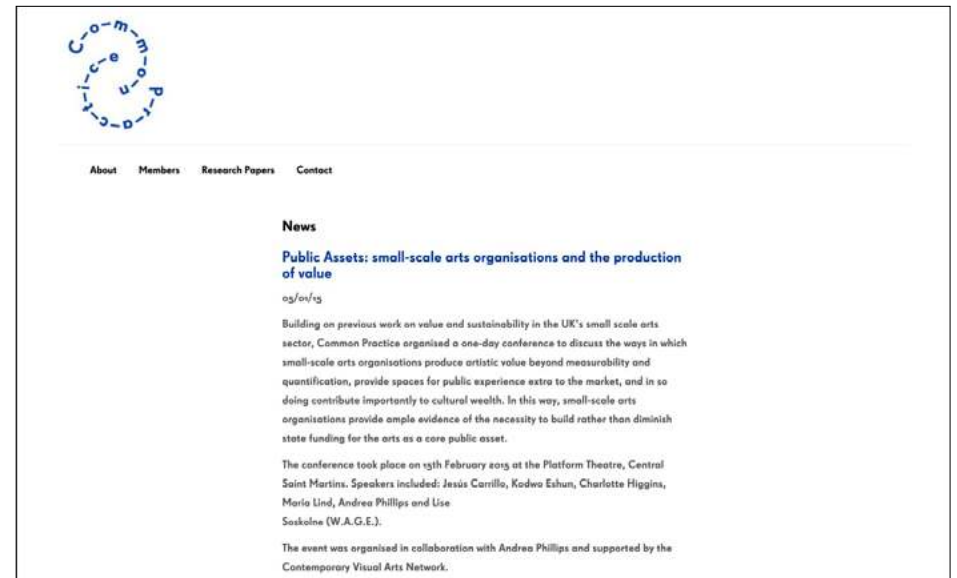
<http://howtoworktogether.org/>



Above: *How to Work Together* webpage
Above right: *Common Practice* webpage

Appendix 2:

<http://www.commonpractice.org.uk/public-assets-small-scale-arts-organisations-production-value/>



REFERENCES

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Boal, Augusto, *Theatre of the Oppressed* (London: Pluto Press, 1979).

Brook, O'Brien & Taylor, *Panic! Social Class, Taste and Inequalities in the Creative Industries* (Create: London, 2018) <https://createlondon.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Panic-Social-Class-Taste-and-Inequalities-in-the-Creative-Industries1.pdf>

Cluster <https://www.theshowroom.org/relationships/cluster> [accessed 27/01/2021].

Common Practice <http://www.commonpractice.org.uk/> [accessed 27/01/2021].

Crossick & Kaszynska, Understanding the Value of Arts and Culture: The AHRC Cultural Value Project (Swindon: AHRC, 2016) [accessed 27/01/2021]; <https://ahrc.ukri.org/documents/publications/cultural-value-project-final-report/>

Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1970).

Klister <https://marabouparken.se/samarbeten/klister/?lang=en> [accessed 27/01/2021].

Phillips, Co-editor and contributor: PARSE Journal for Artistic Research issue 2: *The Value of Contemporary Art* (Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg, 2015).

Phillips, 'Critical production, or, the intelligence of collective technicity' in ed. Maria Lind, *Art Encounters 2019* (2020).

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in Nelson, Cary; Grossberg, Lawrence (eds.). *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988).

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