

Editorial

Jacques Rancière and The (Re)Distribution of the Sensible: Five Lessons in Artistic Research

I – The Distribution of the Sensible

*'Me too, I'm a painter!'*¹

The current issue evolved from the two-day conference *Aesthetics and Politics: With and Around Jacques Rancière* co-organized by Sophie Berrebi and Marie-Aude Baronian at the University of Amsterdam on 20 and 21 June 2006. A transcript of the keynote lecture 'Aesthetic Separation, Aesthetic Community: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art' delivered by Rancière to the conference on 20 June is published here for the first time. Also published are the papers by Stephen Wright and Jonathan Lahey Dronsfield presented during the final panel of the conference which focused on the question of contemporary art as is a transcript of the exchange with Rancière which followed. Published here for the first time in English is a translation of an interview conducted with Rancière by Marie-Aude Baronian and Mireille Rosello in the months following the conference, and which appears here in a translation by Gregory Elliott under the title 'Jacques Rancière and Indisciplinarity'. Why is Rancière's thought important to ethical and political questions of contemporary art practice and research? How does the term 'indisciplinarity' help us advance understanding of possible approaches to artistic research? Does artistic research understood in this way contribute to a politics of emancipation?

Rancière's most celebrated contribution to recent aesthetic and political debates is his focus on what he terms *le partage du sensible*. *Le partage du sensible* has variously been translated as the 'partition of the perceptible' the 'division,' 'sharing' and, more persistently, the 'distribution of the sensible'::

The distribution of the sensible reveals who can have a share in what is common to the community based on what they do and on the time and space in which this activity is performed... it defines what is visible or not in a common space, endowed with a common language, etc. There is thus an 'aesthetics' at the core of politics that has nothing to do with Benjamin's discussion of the 'aestheticization of politics' specific to the 'age of the masses'... It is a delimitation of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, of speech and noise, that simultaneously determines the place and the stakes of politics as a form of experience. Politics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time.²

Furthermore, for Rancière, the 'distribution of the sensible' is tied not simply to the declension of aesthetic regimes, but to the very concept of democracy, and thus to a political

‘redistribution’: ‘Democracy, in fact, cannot be merely defined as a political system, one among many, characterized simply by another division of power. It is more profoundly defined as a certain sharing of the perceptible, a certain redistribution of its sites.’³ Herein lies the centrality of the concept to a politics of emancipation as demonstrated in his reading of nineteenth-century workers’ literary journals – ‘the thinking of those not “destined” to think’ – as a ‘redistribution of knowledge and truth’.⁴ Thus it is in both its operation of a symbolic violence and an emancipatory potentiality that we find the meaning of the ‘distribution of the sensible’ as it works through Rancière’s pronouncements on aesthetics and politics. As Rancière explains, the sense of ‘cutting’ and of ‘redistribution’ is central to the definition of the term:

I understand by this phrase the cutting up [decoupage] of the perceptual world that anticipates, through its sensible evidence, the distribution of shares and social parties... And this redistribution itself presupposes a cutting up of what is visible and what is not, of what can be heard and what cannot, of what is noise and what is speech.⁵

The centrality of the concept of ‘the distribution of the sensible’ to his thinking is maintained by Rancière in his Afterword to *The Philosopher and His Poor* (2004): ‘This dividing line has been the object of my constant study... the vital thread tying together all of my research.’⁶ Given its importance to Rancière’s research, some account of the context of this term is perhaps useful by way of introduction.

The (re)distribution of the sensible, for example, is implicit in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation* (1991). This book offers Rancière’s account of the eccentric educational practices of the exiled lecturer in French literature at the University of Louvain, Joseph Jacotot, who in 1818 proposed that it was possible to teach what one did not know oneself. Jacotot realized a system of ‘intellectual emancipation’ based on the method of ‘universal teaching’ which rejected dominant repressive educational practices based upon the ‘explication’ of facts to ignorant students by knowing masters. As Rancière suggests: ‘It is the explicator who needs the incapable and not the other way around; it is he who constitutes the incapable as such. To explain something to someone is first of all to show him he cannot understand it by himself.’⁷ It is through a recognition of education’s part in producing and preserving an unequal distribution of the sensible that we are able to read an educational experiment to overturn a pedagogic system founded upon explication as a project of both intellectual and political emancipation:

We know, in fact, that explication is not only the stultifying weapon of pedagogues but the very bond of the social order. Whoever says order says distribution into ranks. Putting into ranks presupposes explication, the distributory, justificatory fiction of an inequality that has no other reason for being. The day-to-day work of explication is only the small change of the dominant explication that characterizes society.⁸

It is an understanding of the connection between distribution and domination which accounts, in part, for Rancière’s insistence elsewhere on the articulation of the ‘regimes’ of art. And it is in this context of violence and domination implied in political and aesthetic regimes, and regimes of knowledge, that we must recognize that Rancière’s terms build upon their use in the writings of Foucault and Deleuze.

II – A Dissensual Community of Equals

In *The Birth of the Clinic* Foucault writes of the structure of nosology in the ‘*perspective distribution* which enables us to see in paralysis a symptom, in syncope an episode, and in apoplexy an organic and functional attack...’⁹ In the chapter ‘Strata or Historical Formations: the Visible and the Articulate (Knowledge)’ in his study *Foucault*, Deleuze expands upon the concept of ‘strata’ in terms similar to those employed by Rancière above:

An ‘age’ does not pre-exist the statements which express it, nor the visibilities which fill it. These are the two essential aspects: on the one hand each stratum or historical formulation implies a distribution of the visible and the articulable which acts upon itself; on the other, from one stratum to the next there is a variation in the distribution, because the visibility itself changes in style, while the statements themselves change their system... A way of saying and seeing, discursive practices and forms of self-evidence: each stratum is a combination of the two, and in the move from one stratum to the next they vary in terms of composition and combination.¹⁰

How Rancière’s take on the ‘distribution of the sensible’ might differ from that of Foucault and Deleuze, whilst nonetheless building on their formulations, lies in the emancipatory capacity and potential he finds in individuals and collectives to redistribute knowledge and assume a ‘community of equals’. Rancière’s insistence on a ‘community of equals’ based on an ‘equality of intelligence’ holds important implications for undertaking and understanding the potential of ‘artistic research’, the equal undertaking of which by artist and audience alike is a key aspect of the artist’s emancipatory lesson:

We know our ‘equality’ with Racine thanks to the fruit of Racine’s work. His genius lies in having worked by the principle of the equality of intelligence, in having not believed himself superior to those he was speaking to, in having even worked for those who predicted that he would fade like a season. It is left to us to verify that equality, to conquer that power through our own work. This does not mean making tragedies equal to Racine’s; it means, rather, employing as much attention, as much artistic research as he, to recounting how we feel and to making others feel it, despite the arbitrariness of language or the resistance of all matter to the work of our hands. The artist’s emancipatory lesson, opposed on every count to the professor’s stultifying lesson, is this: each one of us is an artist to the extent that he carries out a double process; he is not content to be a mere journeyman but wants to make all work a means of expression, and he is not content to feel something but tries to impart it to others. The artist needs equality as the explicator needs inequality... We can thus dream of a society of the emancipated that would be a society of artists.¹¹

Rancière’s conclusions appear to echo Joseph Beuys’s famous utopian proclamation: ‘Jedermann ist ein Künstler’ [‘Everyone is an artist.’] To which Gustav Metzger once curtly replied: ‘Himmler auch?’ [‘Himmler also?'] However, like Metzger, Rancière is resistant to unwieldy utopian thinking: ‘... there is no such thing as a *possible* society. There is only the society that exists.’¹² Turning away from artistic utopias, Rancière’s emancipatory project celebrates the productive yet uncertain ground of ‘artistic research’ - productive in that it celebrates equality of intellect, uncertain in its claims to ‘scientific validity’ as a discipline, woven into an emancipatory refusal to claim intellectual superiority over others.¹³ Rancière’s position chimes with the ethos attributed to the inter-relationship of art and research, with ‘the uncertain and open that is included in the *and* which binds together these two orientations.’¹⁴

Equally important in the present context however is the connection between Rancière's lessons in emancipation and recent formulations on artistic research by Mika Hannula and others which claim: '[It is] possible to follow the interests of emancipatory knowledge in artistic research. In this case, the goal is the study of some phenomenon, raising awareness of some societal or social injustice.'¹⁵

Social injustice, or in Rancière's terms 'the incommensurability of wrong,'¹⁶ plays a vital part in his philosophy, but it is to the implications for questions of community of such concepts as 'the distribution of the sensible' and the related concept of 'aesthetic regime,' which Rancière turns in his text, 'Aesthetic Separation, Aesthetic Community: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art,' with reference, among others, to the work of the artist collective, *Urban Encampment*. 'Aesthetic Separation, Aesthetic Community' begins with a reflection on a line from Mallarmé - 'Apart, we are together'. Mallarmé's paradox invites Rancière to reflect on the problem of community in a way that has echoes of the thought of Agamben and Nancy:

The paradoxical relation between the 'apart' and the 'together' is also a paradoxical relation between the present and the future. The art work is the people to come and it is the monument of its expectation, the monument of its absence. The artistic 'dissensual community' has a double body: it is a combination of means for producing an effect out of itself: creating a new community between human beings, a new political people... To the extent that it is a dissensual community, an aesthetic community is a community structured by disconnection.¹⁷

Such communal dissensus and structural disconnection runs through the problematic of political, ethical and aesthetic efficiency. As Rancière writes: 'Aesthetic efficiency means a paradoxical kind of efficiency that is produced by the very break of any determined link between cause and effect.'¹⁸

III - Indisciplinarity

In the interview published here for the first time in English (in a translation by the noted Althusser scholar and translator, Gregory Elliott), Rancière is asked, 'Would it be right to suggest that your work is not so much inter-disciplinary as a-disciplinary?' His reply holds many implications for those undertaking artistic research:

Neither. It is 'indisciplinary'. It is not only a matter of going besides the disciplines but of breaking them. My problem has always been to escape the division between disciplines, because what interests me is the question of the distribution of territories, which is always a way of deciding who is qualified to speak about what. The apportionment of disciplines refers to the more fundamental apportionment that separates those regarded as qualified to think from those regarded as unqualified; those who do the science and those who are regarded as its objects.¹⁹

Rancière's refusal to accept disqualification from any discourse is a political proposition as it is founded upon on the supposition of an existing 'community of equals', as he argues elsewhere: 'Equality is actually the condition required for being able to think politics.'²⁰ In this sense, Rancière's 'indisciplinary' appears to have an affinity with what Mika Hannula and others have called, in the context of artistic practice and research, 'methodological diversity' and the 'democracy of experiences'. The 'democracy of experiences' is the precondition of a non-hierarchical research environment whereby 'art is free to criticize science, philosophy to criticize religion, religion to criticize science, and so on. It would also mean that there are no first philosophies or metaphysics that can not, in principle, be touched

by empirical criticism'.²¹ However, Rancière's 'indisciplinarity' is not to be understood as advocating a kind of *lassaiz faire*, ill-disciplined or expedient appropriation of methodologies nor as an ethical embodiment of cultural pluralism in the field of communication. It is fundamentally more disruptive and destructive a term than any ethical embrace of diversity. As such, it is perhaps closer to a position Kathrin Busch has asserted more recently: 'Art functions as a disturbance of established knowledge structures, so as to reveal their innate power structures and restrictions. It also becomes the site of the production of a different knowledge... knowledge that is equally ambivalent, incommensurable, and singular.'²² Nonetheless, the position Rancière outlines in the interview concurs with these recent articulations on the position of artistic research, particularly in his conclusion: 'there is no historical necessity, nothing irremediable in this landscape of our intellectual objects and forms.'²³ This recognition and Rancière's refusal to search for a metapolitics attuned to mathematical universality (*a la* Alain Badiou) which might secure for art and ethics a position equivalent to a truth indifferent to the political contingencies of a distribution of the sensible are also perhaps echoed in Tuomas Nevanlinna's concept of the *divisible truths* of artistic research:

... indivisible, mathematical, truth is not 'partitioned' into different versions but remains the same... Then there is another mode of truth. This truth is associated with the emergence of things that may be called works. Works cannot exist unless they become divided into multiple voices at the very moment of reception... Divisioning, partitioning is the necessary condition for its truth, not an obstacle to it.²⁴

Division and singularity, equality and antagonism, community and incommensurability: the preconditions of artistic truth and politics alike.

IV – The Visible and the Invisible - The Flesh of Art

It could be argued that any journal issue is largely a 'dissensual community' of images and texts, of saying and seeing, but the theme of the distribution of the sensible - or more accurately here, the distribution of the visible (of the visible and the invisible) - and 'indisciplinarity' are consistently (both consciously and unconsciously) at work throughout the essays, exchanges, artworks and interviews which feature in this issue. Each in their way engage in a practice which interrogates the role, function and limits of the visible and the political, ethical and aesthetic efficacy of the invisible.

The co-efficiency of visibility and invisibility of an ostensibly critical arts practice is central to Stephen Wright's 'Behind Police Lines: Art Visible and Invisible', which draws upon Foucault and Rancière, in particular the latter's writings on the police (the police in question here also being the 'art police'), as a context within which to approach the ostensible paradox of envisioning an invisible art practice:

Envisaging an art without artwork, without authorship and without spectatorship has an immediate consequence: art ceases to be visible as such. For practices whose self-understanding stems from the visual arts tradition – not to mention for the normative institutions governing it – the problem cannot just be overlooked: if it is not visible, art eludes all control, prescription and regulation – in short, all 'police'. In a Foucauldian perspective, one might argue that the key issue in policing art is the question of visibility.²⁵

The visible and the invisible is also central to the subsequent heated exchange with Rancière, Wright and Jonathan Dronsfield, who in turn disputes Rancière's statement that art must have 'a readable political signification'. In contrast to both Wright and Rancière, Dronsfield's paper 'Nowhere is aesthetics contra ethics: Rancière the other side of Lyotard' argues:

... the aesthetic regime, one which welcomes any material whatsoever into the field of art, negates any pragmatic criterion for isolating this singularity: no criterial principle exists for differentiating the aesthetic sphere from what it is not. The artwork is its differentiation – and thus a question about its own finitude.²⁶

Echoing Badiou's 'inaesthetics' perhaps, Dronsfield adds: 'Artworks... are absolutely indifferent to our responses to them.' In the interest of extending contributions to the debate on Rancière's reading of aesthetics and politics, we have included as an end piece Sophie Berrebi's essay 'Jacques Rancière: Aesthetics is Politics', which originally appeared in Dutch in the magazine, *Metropolis M*, and which appears here in English for the first time.

The theme of the political efficiency of visibility or invisibility which punctuates the exchange between Wright, Dronsfield and Rancière is also at stake in the Lithuanian philosopher Audrone Zukauskiute's essay on gender and national identity in recent Lithuanian art, an essay which draws upon Lacanian psychoanalysis and Peggy Phelan's concept of 'active vanishing' and asks 'what is this mysterious x, persisting at the core of national identity?', and 'How to invent new forms of visibility?'

Regimes of image production are the focus of Sean Snyder's *Optics. Compression. Propaganda*. - 'a series of ongoing experiments with the malleability of images and the mechanics of their production'. The Archives of the corporation Carl Zeiss AG – who manufacture 'instruments for visualization' - acts as a primary research context for the development of this project which develops Snyder's interest in both 'analog regimes of image production' and the visibility or readability of compressed digital images, their potential to host encrypted data and the political paranoia thereby produced.

Visibility and invisibility is part of the dialectical method of Michael Rakowitz's, 'The invisible enemy should not exist' in which 'The artefacts stolen from the National Museum of Iraq, Baghdad in the aftermath of the US invasion of April 2003 are reconstructed to scale using the packaging of Middle Eastern foodstuffs and local Arabic newspapers, moments of cultural visibility found in the US'. The visible trace of contemporary everyday life of Arabic communities in the US in these reconstructions of museum artefacts pillaged in Iraq, performs a double archaeology of knowledge, in that the visible objects and their catalogue entries testify not only to the invisibility of the missing historical artefacts themselves (and the resultant risk to Iraq of not only western-dominated economic, political but also of historical 'reconstruction') but to the political invisibility of diasporic communities.

Rancière's concept of 'indisciplinarity' was one of the contexts which prompted an interview with Jörg Heiser who works as a writer, editor, curator, doctoral researcher and songwriter. The interview focuses upon the context of his recently curated exhibition *Romantic Conceptualism*, which brought together a number of significant conceptual art works produced over the last 40 years, and his new book, *All of a Sudden: Things that Matter in Contemporary Art*, which opens with a discussion of the importance of slapstick as a method in contemporary art.

Indisciplinarity and invisibility are pertinent also to the work of Chris Evans who consistently resists any consensus on the social function of public art and legitimate territories of ostensibly critical art, dissenting even from its visibility and identity as critical art as such; in effect, it forms a 'dissensual community', to borrow Rancière's terms, within the

institutional and economic contexts it inhabits, a characteristic which Dan Kidner describes more succinctly as ‘socially awkward’. Presented here is the trailer and film script for Evan’s recent film *The Freedom of Negative Expression* which revolves around an estranged telephone dialogue between Philip, a bourgeois Nihilist artist, and Gillian, a former member of the British Constructivists (evidently Gillian Wise) interrupted by the Overture from Wagner’s *Faust*. In the voice of The Nihilist, we encounter the language of Rancière albeit in ironic mode as he discusses the bourgeois ‘regime of culture’. In the end, the exchange of views between the British Constructivist and the Nihilist performs an intertwining with Merleau-Ponty’s reflection: ‘Everything really does come down to a matter of thinking the negative rigorously.’²⁷

In her series of portraits and installations with smell, Clara Ursitti has consistently worked at the limits of the visible and the invisible and the paradoxes therein for questions of aesthetics. Most recently she has embarked upon a new series of work which evolved out of two research contexts; research into the inter-special communication between humans and dolphins, which draws upon research funded by the US military, and also her research project for the ACE Helen Chadwick Fellowship at the British School in Rome and at the Crossmodal Research Laboratory at the University of Oxford. *Oxford/Rome* presents a selection of images taken during this period of research. The interview published here was conducted during the context of her participation in *Communication Suite*, an exhibition at the Medical School of the University of Glasgow (8 July – 1 August 2008) curated by Christine Borland. Ursitti’s pursuit of a non-visual aesthetics across the phenomenology of olfactory perception (of smells, scents and bodily secretions), her practice at the limits of human and non-human communication, and her negotiation of the interplay of scientific and artistic research, presses home repeatedly upon the flesh of art.

Andrew Sunley Smith’s practice might equally be said to engage with the flesh of experience in the context of migration (the artist himself has recently migrated from Australia to Scotland). Sunley Smith’s works for *Migratory Projects* renders visible the marks and traces of migration and, more forcefully perhaps, in his *Drive Out Cinema* domestic objects are spot-lit as they are dragged by an unseen automobile along unlit single-track roads, their resultant disfiguration and destruction a visceral metaphor of the violence of economic and geographic dispossession and displacement. It is not simply the aesthetic which provides a key touchstone for the *Migratory Projects*, however, but the ‘co-efficiency’ of art, and during his exhibition *Migratory Projects* at CCA, Sunley Smith organized the symposium ‘The New Co-Efficiency in Art’ (17 October 2006, CCA, Glasgow). As an aesthetic term, ‘co-efficiency’ heralds from Marcel Duchamp’s essay ‘The Creative Act’ (1957), which has provided one of the contexts for the development of Nicolas Bourriaud’s *Relational Aesthetics*. The term is also employed in the present issue by both Rancière and Stephen Wright. The need to further unpack this term and its relation to contemporary artistic practice and research and to his own practice-based PhD in Australia provided the context for the interview. The selection from his *Micro Gestures* series presented here traces the modifications he performed to a Ford F100 carrier to transform it into an ecologically run autonomous system.

Brian O’Connell ‘Ghostly Media: What Would an Invoking Medium Look Like?’ is a direct reply to Jan Verwoert’s article, ‘Living with Ghosts: From Appropriation to Invocation in Contemporary Art’, which appeared in the previous issue of *Art and Research*, in that it attempts to visualize the spectres which haunt Verwoert’s text.²⁸

Sarah-Neel Smith's review '*Nightcomers* at the 2007 Istanbul Biennial: revolution or counter-revolution?' considers the economic and political context of interventionist public art strategies and their legacy as 'hit and run gentrification'.

I have no wish to explicate these works further for the important reason that it is crucial to recognize that the critique of such practices lies at the heart of Rancière's emancipatory project.

V - The *Décor* of Democracy

*'All means and methods of knowing are valid: reasoning, intuition, disgust, enthusiasm, lamentation. A vision of the world propped on concepts is no more legitimate than another which proceeds from tears, arguments, or sighs – modalities equally probing and equally vain.'*²⁹

Although on first inspection there appears to be a congruence between the thought of Rancière and commentators on artistic research such as Nevanlinna and Hannula, et al., it is perhaps necessary to recognize that this congruence also leads to a division with respect to definitions of democracy. In answer to their question: 'How is it possible, even in principle, to claim that the two terms "art" and "research" go together, not to mention to claim that "artistic research" forms a practice that is viable and coherent?'³⁰ Hannula et al., as indicated above, build their vision of artistic research on the twin metaphors of a 'democracy of experience' and 'methodological diversity,' and regard any kind of hierarchies of knowledge as intrinsically anti-democratic. As a coherent alternative to scientific hierarchies of knowledge, which might effectively exclude the contribution of artistic experience as a ground for legitimate contribution to knowledge, they advance a form of democratic pluralism as a hallmark of artistic research:

The democracy of experiences is defined as a view where no area of experience is in principle outside the critical reach of any other area of experience... The idea in the democracy of experiences... is quite simple: art (or artistic experience) can criticize science (or scientific experience), not to mention the possibilities of intra-artistic or intra-scientific criticism. In this sense, experiential democracy is co-terminus with the multi-directionality of criticism.

In this way, we get a new interpretation of the criterion of (scientific) openness... it is in principle possible to question and criticize any and all forms or areas of experience from the point of view of any other area of experience.... Doing research is in itself a way of producing intersubjectivity with regard to an area of experience that has been void of ways of communicating in a shared language.³¹

The methodological indifference operative here is foregrounded as an ethical guarantee of a democratic universality. However, it might be considered optimistic to claim that maintaining a fidelity to the democracy of experience in one's approach to the conduct of artistic research is in itself productive of an equality which is the groundwork of political democracy per se, as Hannula et al. imply. And here a division opens up which revolves around democracy and indifference. Far from a 'democracy of experiences' based upon 'tolerance and multi-directionality of critique' and 'a mutual understanding based on a common foundation'³² for Rancière, democracy – and politics itself, defined as 'who has the ability to see and the talent to speak,' – is born of division: 'For politics, that fact that the people are internally divided is not, actually, a scandal to be deplored. It is the primary condition of the exercise of politics.'³³ Rancière's reading of the dissensus of democracy is tied to his reading of the aesthetic of literary indifference he finds in the style of Flaubert. Flaubert's literary indifference, Rancière argues, is not analogous to democratic indifference but produces a 'conflict between forms of equality'. Rancière writes:

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http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n1/v2n1_editorial.html

At the heart of *Madame Bovary* there is a struggle between two forms of equality. In one sense, Emma Bovary is the heroine of a certain aesthetic democracy. She wants to bring art into her life, both into her love life and into the décor of her house. The novel is constructed as a constant polemic against a farm girl's desire to bring art into life. It contrasts 'art in life' (this will later be called the aestheticization of daily life) with a form of art that is in books and only in books.

Nonetheless, neither art in books nor art in life is synonymous with democracy as a form of dissensus over 'the given' of public life. Neither the former nor the latter, moreover, is equivalent to the indifference inherent in the reign of commodities and the reign of money.³⁴

For Rancière, Flaubert's literary indifference assumes a 'microscopic equality' effectively blind to 'social inequality' and political injustice, summed up for Rancière when Flaubert claims to be 'less interested in someone dressed in rags than in the lice that are feeding on him'.³⁵ As such, Flaubert's aesthetic indifference amounts to a décor of democracy forever divorced from any coherent form of 'political subjectivization' articulated around an ineradicable wrong. One concern here is that the emphasis upon 'experiential democracy' and 'diversity' in research methodologies is engaged, in the last analysis, in an aestheticization of equality which fails to take into account 'the incommensurables of the equality of speaking beings and the distribution of social bodies'.³⁶

Although the democratic pluralism expounded by Hannula et al. may be as distant from an aestheticization of equality as it is from advancing a model of consensus or deliberative democracy³⁷, the ethico-political third way proposed for artistic research as a democracy of experiences lacks a significant engagement with democracy as dissensus, (falling back as it does on the vague assertion that if individuals display antagonism or wilfully misunderstand one another in the public sphere, it is simply 'because they are not ready or complete'³⁸). In short, Rancière's work demands that any attempt to claim the methodological and experiential pluralism of artistic research as inherently democratic consider the dimension of dissensus inherent to democratic politics, or the 'agonistic pluralism' which Chantal Mouffe contends is central to the project of radical democracy.³⁹

In conclusion, if we attend to the 'distribution of the sensible' and to an equal 'redistribution' which renounces categorical destinations in its adoption of methodological 'indisciplinarity', we unfold the full implications of Rancière's emancipatory project not only for the conduct of artistic research, but for the practice and politics of art:

Aesthetic experience has a political effect to the extent that the loss of destination that it presupposes disturbs the way in which bodies fit their functions and destinations. What it produces is no rhetoric persuasion about what has to be done. Nor is it the framing of a collective body. It is a multiplication of connections and disconnections that reframe the relation between bodies, the world where they live and the way in which they are 'equipped' for fitting it. It is a multiplicity of folds and gaps in the fabric of common experience that change the cartography of the perceptible, the thinkable and the feasible. As such, it allows for new modes of political construction of common objects and new possibilities of collective enunciation.⁴⁰

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- ¹ Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, translated by Kirstin Ross (Stanford, Cal.: University of Stanford, 1991), p. 65.
- ² Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, translated by Gabriel Rockhill (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 12-3. See also Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*, translated by Julie Rose (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1999), p. 57-8.
- ³ Jacques Rancière, *The Flesh of Words: The Politics of Writing*, translated by Charlotte Mandell (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 2004), p. 104.
- ⁴ Jacques Rancière, *The Nights of Labour: The Workers' Dream in Nineteenth-Century France*, translated by John Drury (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), p. xii; p. 22.
- ⁵ Jacques Rancière, *The Philosopher and His Poor*, translated by John Drury, Corinne Oster, and Andrew Parker, edited by Andrew Parker (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), p. 225.
- ⁶ Rancière, *The Philosopher and His Poor*, p. 225-7.
- ⁷ Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, p. 6. The challenge to orthodox teaching methods mounted by Jacotot in nineteenth-century Belgium and recounted by Rancière as a political fable and intervention into debates on education reform in 1980s France, remains as a challenge to current pedagogic procedures and also holds lessons for any engaged in the widespread project of 'knowledge transfer'. See for example the recent debate on the front page of *Education Guardian* surrounding methodologies of language teaching following the publication of Jonathan Solity's *Michael Thomas: The Learning Revolution* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2008). Anthea Lipsett, 'My message: "Anybody can learn"', *The Guardian, Education Guardian* (Tuesday 02.09.08), p. 1-2. Solity's book (erroneously titled *The Language Revolution* by Lipsett) profiles the ostensibly emancipatory methods of Michael Thomas in language teaching who proclaimed: "I wanted to demonstrate that anybody can learn. I didn't devise my system to teach languages quickly – I did it to change the world." (p. 2) Despite the emancipatory rhetoric of this remark, Thomas's methods in fact amount to a reversal of Jacotot's in that they maintained, according to Solity, 'all learning was down to the quality of the teaching, and the teacher rather than the student'. (p. 2)
- ⁸ Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, p. 117.
- ⁹ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Vintage, 1973), p. 6. [My emphasis].
- ¹⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, translated by Seán Hand (London: Athlone Press, 1988), p. 48.
- ¹¹ Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, p. 70-1.
- ¹² Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, p. 75.
- ¹³ As Mika Hannula concludes: 'this uncertainty in artistic research is something that must be endured and accepted.' Mika Hannula 'The Responsibility and Freedom of Interpretation' in Satu Kiljunen and Mika Hannula (eds), *Artistic Research* (Helsinki: Academy of Fine Arts, 2002), p. 83.
- ¹⁴ Sven-Olov Wallenstein 'Art and Research' in Kiljunen and Hannula (eds), *Artistic Research* p. 45.
- ¹⁵ Mika Hannula –Juha Suoranta – Tere Vadén, *Artistic Research – Theories, Methods and Practices* (Helsinki: Academy of Fine Arts, 2005), p. 67.
- ¹⁶ Rancière, *Disagreement*, p. 21.
- ¹⁷ Jacques Rancière, 'Aesthetic Separation, Aesthetic Community: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art'. www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n1/ranciere.html.
- ¹⁸ Rancière, 'Aesthetic Separation, Aesthetic Community'. www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n1/ranciere.html
- ¹⁹ 'Jacques Rancière and Indisciplinarity: An Interview'. www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n1/jrinterview.html.
- ²⁰ Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 52.
- ²¹ Hannula, et al., *Artistic Research*, p. 31.
- ²² Kathrin Bush, 'Artistic Research and the Poetics of Knowledge', in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Researcher*, edited by Dieter Lesage and Kathrin Busch, AS Mediatijdschrift / Visual Culture Quarterly, No. 179 - 2007 (Antwerp: Belgium, 2007), p. 41. The reference is of course to Jacques Rancière, *The Names of History: On the Poetics of Knowledge*, translated by Hassan Melehy (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1994).
- ²³ 'Jacques Rancière and Indisciplinarity: An Interview'. www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n1/jrinterview.html.
- ²⁴ Tuomas Nevanlinna, 'Is "Artistic Research" a Meaningful Concept?' in Kiljunen and Hannula (eds), *Artistic Research*, p. 64.
- ²⁵ Stephen Wright, 'Behind Police Lines: Art Visible and Invisible'. www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n1/wright.html
- ²⁶ Jonathan Lahey Dronsfield, 'Nowhere is aesthetics contra ethics: Rancière the other side of Lyotard'. www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n1/dronsfield.html
- ²⁷ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, edited by Claude Lefort, translated by Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), p. 63.
- ²⁸ Jan Verwoert, 'Living with Ghosts: From Appropriation to Invocation in Contemporary Art', *Art and Research: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods*, Volume 1. No. 2. (Summer 2007). <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v1n2/pdfs/verwoert.pdf>
- ²⁹ E. M. Cioran, 'The Décor of Knowledge', *A Short History of Decay*, translated by Richard Howard (London: Quartet, 1990), p. 146.
- ³⁰ Hannula, et al., *Artistic Research*, p. 25.
- ³¹ Hannula, et al., *Artistic Research*, p. 30-32.
- ³² Hannula, et al., *Artistic Research*, p. 34; p. 55.
- ³³ Rancière, *Disagreement*, p. 87.
- ³⁴ Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 56.

³⁵ Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, p. 56.

³⁶ Rancière, *Disagreement*, p. 39.

³⁷ They write: 'our view of ethical encounters and cross-cultural communication is dialectical and Hegelian rather than idealized and Habermasian'. Hannula, et al., *Artistic Research*, p. 54.

³⁸ Hannula, et al., *Artistic Research*, p. 54.

³⁹ As Mouffe writes: 'One of the keys to the thesis of agonistic pluralism is that, far from jeopardizing democracy, agonistic confrontation is in fact its very condition of existence.' Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2000), p. 103.

⁴⁰ Rancière, 'Aesthetic Separation, Aesthetic Community'. www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n1/ranciere.html.