

Introduction

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The present popularity of “community” as a topic in art and theory goes hand in hand with the big changes currently taking place in how community is envisioned and experienced. For several years the work of many artists and theoreticians has been increasingly orienting itself on questions around forms of living together, in the private as well as the collective social sphere. Epoch-making changes are occurring in recent histories after 1989, such as the idea of a new Europe with its (geo)political changes and globalized work and relationship structures which create new closenesses and possibilities for working together, but which at the same time corroborate or extend old power structures in underhanded ways. These new experiences raise many questions that the essays collected here approach from different points of view. This reader endeavours to bring together and discuss the relevant discourses in the broader art context.

Some of the essays in the reader are papers from two conferences I organized around the topic of communities: Nikos Papastergiadis and Brian Holmes participated in the symposium “New Communities” at Moderna Museet in Stockholm,¹ and Maria Lind, Simon Critchley, Luis Jacob, Jon Davies, Emily Roysdon, and Saara Liinamaa gave the papers published here at the symposium “We, Ourselves and Us” at The Power Plant in Toronto.² We have also been fortunate in acquiring additional contributions by Carlos Basualdo, Reinaldo Laddaga, and Raqs Media Collective.

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1 The symposium took place on November 7, 2008. It was organized in collaboration with the Royal University College of Fine Arts in Stockholm and part of a seminar and workshop with students over two semesters.

2 January 23 and 24, 2009.