

ECONOMY O

The shadow of capitalism's death will outlive its history, and money will continue to accumulate. Avoiding the dialectics of domination and resistance, gains and losses, artist Grégory Chatonsky challenges us to consider an Economy o that is neither opposed to or associated with liberalism.

■ The crisis that we are currently undergoing is not a crisis. It's an extinction. It's also possible that everything will continue as before, but worse. The shadow of capitalism's death will outlive its history, and money will continue to accumulate until it threatens the very conditions of domination. We want to propose alternatives, utopia, annulments, self-management and sharing, open source, donation, solidarity or *blockchain*, whatever, we are desperately searching. We want to overcome it, as another way of continuing.

In 1972, Jean-François Lyotard pointed out the *Zealous* nature of capitalism, and the impossibility of developing an external resistance, because it would mean submitting to the values of + and -, gains and losses, in other words joy and pain, threatened hopes, the mechanism of dominated affects. The revolution is still a matter of profits and balance sheets; its messianism is also a wager on a future gain. *Criticism becomes the subject of its subject, moves into the other's territory, accepts the other's dimensions, directions and space, even as it questions them*⁽¹⁾.

Ad lib exploitation

There is no boundary between the inside and outside of the system, just a random journey, a capacity to integrate everything beforehand, including resistance, to do anything as long as it lasts

on the edge of the precipice. This unregulated integration of capitalism is based on the development of an industrial society that considers all things to be a potential source of *energeia*.

By transforming raw matter, we can use it in such a way that its exploitation is limitless; it applies to the Earth, the cosmos, everything that is. Marx defined money as a general equivalence⁽²⁾. Money is something that is valid for all things, just as any matter can be converted into energy: *Money is not itself a value, but the operator of value. Fundamentally, it is the effect of a collective belief in the efficiency of its liberring power, since everyone, by accepting the money sign, bases their arguments on the fact that others also accept it mutually*⁽³⁾.

Economically neutral

Some contemporary phenomenon seem to escape the dialectics of domination and resistance, gains and losses. Here, the expenses and gains are balanced and cancel emotional expectations. It's an *Economy 0* that is neither opposed to or associated with liberalism. It is indifferent to liberalism, because it knows how much all the counter-proposals to power are a reflection of its iron grasp. Economically neutral designates an apathetic space that is neither outside nor inside the trading system. This "neither nor" logic is not a way to suspend the economy, even

less to denounce it, adopting not a passive attitude, but strategies that defy divisions based on identity.

Some things cannot be appropriated. Losses and gains lead to affects, fears and satisfactions, expectation or precipitation, defense or predation. These affects reduce the force of flows by retaining, delivering and identifying. They attempt to stabilize them in substantial forms. *Economy 0* lets the currents flow, a lot or a little, contingently. Extraction, cutting, decoding and encoding flows are functions attributed to production, not balance. Balance stops the flow, as if treating a hemorrhage. Production expresses contingency: everything is possible. *Economy 0* is not an economy of minimum subsistence. The flowing expenses may be important, but no matter, since there will be neither loss nor gain, neither disappointment nor satisfaction, no hope for a better or worse future, simply the factuality of what is effectively produced.

The contingency of affects

In 2001, a German computer scientist met an engineer at his home, after several online exchanges. In the course of the evening, with the engineer's consent, he devoured him. Every kind of offer can be met online; anthropophagy is *Autophagy*. The Internet is not a space for newfound freedom that runs off with

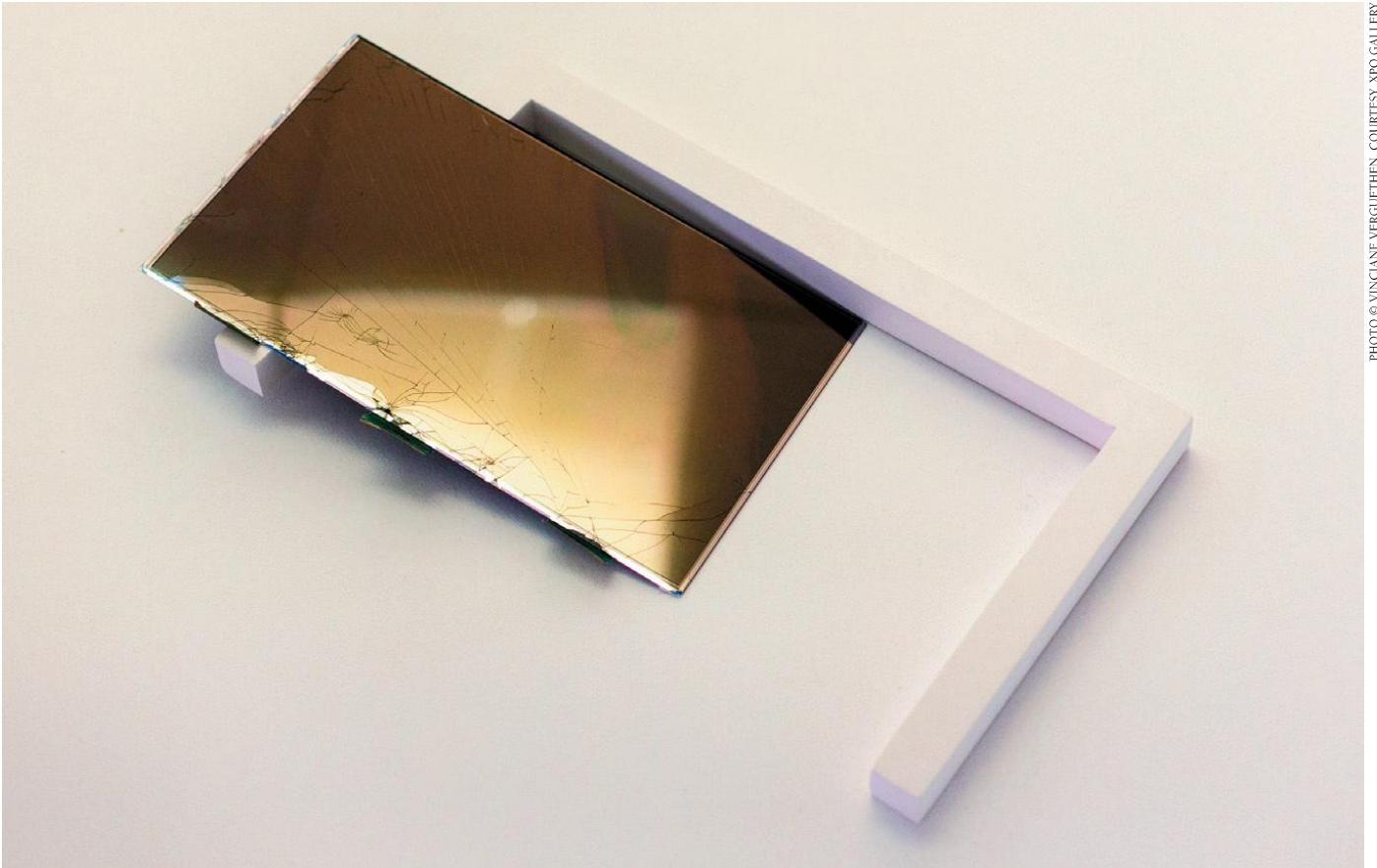


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Grégory Chatonsky & Dominique Sirois, *Mall*.
Installation, 2014.

rhizomes, replacing the verticality of power with the horizontality of the crowd. It is also a matter of protocols⁽⁴⁾, controlled fluidity. It is where everything is possible: everything *can* be because everything is.

Everywhere are images that represent nothing, auto-generated, unpredictable and turbulent, swirling. There is neither loss nor gain, no more convertibility, simply the contingency of affects. Economy 0 works in self-referencing, self-nourishing systems. They adopt cybernetic feedback as a principle of materialistic production. So when Bill Viola plugs one machine into another in *Information* (1973), he not only produces a signal that represents nothing, he loops this production into a continuous and variable process: *Every time I pushed the button, something different happened*⁽⁵⁾.

Self-destructing art

Paolo Cirio's *Google Will Eat Itself* (2005) generates revenue from Google

advertisements to acquire shares in the same company, as if Google were buying itself⁽⁶⁾. Caleb Larsen's *A Tool to Deceive and Slaughter* (2012) is a cube for sale on Ebay that, every 10 minutes, checks to see if its auction has expired, in which case it automatically puts itself back up for sale⁽⁷⁾. If someone buys it, the former owner must send the object to the new owner so that the cycle can start anew. With Stefans Tiefengraber Pixelkino's *User Generated Server Destruction* (2014), people can go to <http://www.ugsd.net> to activate hammers that destroy the physical computer server.

Since 1959, Gustav Metzger has been developing self-destructing art⁽⁸⁾ integrating computers and all of human activity into processes of dislocation that produce no remains or ruins. Entropy is reversed by self-destruction, as a testament to the compulsive nature of consumerism and the programmed obsolescence of objects. It becomes self-production and accelerates⁽⁹⁾ to a

point 0 that is no longer within the range of capital, because it no longer recognizes it. ■

Gregory Chatonsky

Based on a fragment originally written on June 4, 2007: <http://chatonsky.net/fragments/economie-0/>

- (1) Lyotard, J.-F., 1994, *Des dispositifs pulsionnels*, Galilée, p. 24.
- (2) Marx (1872), *Le Capital*, Lachâtre, p. 26.
- (3) Lordon F., 2010, *Capitalisme, désir et servitude*, La Fabrique, pp. 27-28.
- (4) Galloway, A. R., & Thacker, E., 2007, *The Exploit: A Theory of Networks*, Minneapolis, University Of Minnesota Press.
- (5) Interview for *Cahiers du Cinéma* in Paris, february 1984.
- (6) <http://www.paolocirio.net/work/gwei/>
- (7) <http://caleblarsen.com/projects/a-tool-to-deceive-and-slaughter/>
- (8) <http://oldsite.english.ucsb.edu/faculty/ayliu/unlocked/metzger/selections.html>
- (9) <http://criticallegalthinking.com/2013/05/14/accelerate-manifesto-for-an-accelerationist-politics/>

Gregory Chatonsky founded Incident.net in 1994. His practice focuses on technological, physical and anthropological currents. He is represented by the XPO Gallery (Paris). <http://chatonsky.net>