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## **DEMOCRACY & ART, THE NEW WORLD ACADEMY AND THE OUT-OF-PLACE SPACE OF THE INEXISTENT**

In any world there are inexistent beings who are alive, but on whom the world confers minimal intensity of existence. Any creative affirmation is rooted in identification of the inexistent of the worlds. Basically, what counts in any genuine creation, whatever its domain, is not so much what exists as what in-exists. It is necessary to learn from the inexistent, for that is where the existential injuries done to these beings, and hence the resource of equal-being against these injuries, are manifested.

Alain Badiou<sup>1</sup>

Jonas Staal (born in 1981, Zwolle, The Netherlands) wrote in his booklet *Art in defense of Democracy* the present sentence: “the struggle of art in the twentieth century is characterized by an aspiration for freedom. Art has battled the church, the state, and the wealthy bourgeoisie in order no longer

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<sup>1</sup> Badiou, A. (2012) Event and Political Organization, *The Rebirth of History*, Verso Books, 68.

to serve religious, political, or economic agenda.”<sup>2</sup> It is indeed a very strong declaration where Staal discusses his own position as an artist, as a cultural agent and activist, in relation to the aims of art in contemporary European societies. In it, Staal defines this problematic and paradigmatic condition of art as a tool for ideological purposes. According to him, art has been deprived of its political potential by the ideological *depolitization* orchestrated by postwar States. In particular, due to the complex relation between art and ideology, and particularly within Nazi, Fascist and Stalinist systems, any political aim expressed from art was seen as a recovery of that authoritarian and totalitarian use of it. Correlative to Alain Badiou’s critique of the replacement of Politics by the capitalist mechanism of Management, Staal exposes in this text the importance of Art as a practice, and social tool, in defense of a notion of Democracy that overrides the status quo serving a Capitalist Democracy. Departing from this point, I will discuss one of the last works of Staal, a work developed in partnership with the art platform BAK in Utrecht: *The New World Academy* and how in this sense, being Art a form of defense of Democracy, this work advocates for the instituting power of the inexistent.

But first, it is necessary to ask: What is Democracy? Or rather, what would democracy mean today? Since the 9/11 events, we have been witnesses of a series of changes within the form of democracy as it was understood between the SWW and the fall of the Berlin Wall. The supremacy of the American Economic-Democracy, driven by an ideological conception of free market, a market flux happening without any intervention or chains from the State was, after 1989, almost, unquestioned. But 9/11 changed the form through which that hegemonic discourse had been managed. Suddenly,

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<sup>2</sup> Staal, J. (2012) *Art in Defense of Democracy*, Pamphlet, published in NRC Handelsblad Cultural Supplement and NWS handbook, <http://www.jonasstaal.nl/geschreven%20werk/Art%20in%20Defense%20of%20Democrac y%20-%20Jonas%20Staal.pdf>

and at the same time that the speeches of war were being delivered<sup>3</sup>, another ideology was being prepared: surveillance within the country. This discourse was justifying the necessity of crossing the borders of individual privacy, basic to the first model of Capitalist Democracy, in order to maintain everyone safe. It was a one-way road for spying anyone in complete secrecy. The approval of the President’s Surveillance Program by executive order of George W. Bush after 9/11 attacks and the Patriot Act<sup>4</sup> opened a new era of State surveillance. Such policy has been countered by the political courage of different international whistle-blowers such as Julian Assange, Chelsea Manning and former NSA agent Edward Snowden. All of them have paid high price for their actions.<sup>5</sup>

Acknowledging these circumstances, we can ask if it is still possible to understand the notion of Democracy in contemporary days. After the last crack in the international economic net, operated in 2008, the European Economic Community has fallen. The “Welfare State” fall under heavy attack by the same ideology of the free unchained flux market that collapsed the entire economic system. The South European economies (named PIGS: Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain) were in the fringe of total collapse at that point. Today we can see how deeply in trouble the central economies of Europe are as well. England, France, Germany, and also some of the “developed” societies of the far North: The Netherlands, Norway, Finland and Sweden are struggling for not exposing their weakness, even though, at the same time, the crisis discourse constitutes the perfect alibi for executing

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<sup>3</sup> Here I am referring to the well-known false defense delivered before the UN Security Council (February 5, 2003), by US General Collin Powell, arguing for the existence of WMD in the hands of Saddam Hussein regime; or George W. Bush speeches plagued by political trademarks as “the smoking gun/mushroom cloud” (October 7, 2002) and “Axis of Evil” (January 29, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-107publ56/pdf/PLAW-107publ56.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Until now Julian Assange, WikiLeaks editor-in-chief, lives at the Ecuador’s Embassy in London; Chelsea Manning remains imprisoned, condemned to 35 years, and former NSA agent Edward Snowden lives in hiding in Russia.

profound changes in the economic and political sphere. The entire original economical project of the EU was, and still is, under attack. Safe until now, the net of social rights has fallen and far Right Wing political discourses are rising up<sup>6</sup>, not only in the countries wounded by the crisis, but also within those still immune to the general situation as Austria or Switzerland<sup>7</sup>. Acknowledging this panorama, how can be democracy defined? Democracy today is a complex system configured by representative mechanisms of deliverance that, generally, are designed to conform the population to a voting-process, and at the same time, to a tight dependence from the schizo-algorithmic apparatus of financial economy<sup>8</sup>. The performativity of democracy has exposed a theatrical scenario within which the citizen plays the role of an exceptional figure, in the sense of being a figure without importance. New old nationalisms, new old annexing processes, new old segregationist actions are taking place in Europe. The obscure event of the UE, as the ultimate goal of the Western civilization as a communal heaven of the equals, a dream that started in 1789, seems to be fading away, forever.

Since the beginning of 20th Century, Art has been a force trying to expose a capacity or possibility for change “in” the world. Avant-gardes were

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<sup>6</sup> At the moment (November 2015), France has been attacked twice. These attacks have been the perfect alibis for the fast uprising in polls and elections of the far right-wing party Front National. As a solution to this situation, the current Socialist Government of Hollande has reinvigorated discourses upon the exceptionality of France as a Nation and developed a deep shift regarding the competences of the State in the private life of its citizens. Due these facts, France has declared a State of Exception, which is still in place.

<sup>7</sup> In February 2014, Swiss voters backed a popular initiative "against mass immigration" presented by the populist Swiss People's Party. As a result, the Swiss government presented legislation to introduce immigration quotas in 2017, including for cross-border workers. The initiative was accepted by a majority of the electorate (50.3%).

<sup>8</sup> Rossi Braidotti, interviewed by Andrea Mura, has referred to advanced Capitalism as a system that “contradicts, always unequal to, itself, differing within itself”. A “bulimic culture” that doesn't work in any way within the frames of logical linear thought, and because of that, exerts a violent demand against the bodies of human and non-human beings. The schizophrenic condition of the Capitalist system, following Deleuze-Guattari's notion, maintains the populations in a state of excitement and anxiety from where it seems impossible to step out.

proposing-driving social and political futures, destabilizing the old rules of society. Within the revolutionary discourses of the time, Communism and Fascism, in tandem with the technological changes in transportation, communication and war, Art appeared as part of the methodologies of emancipation. Today, after the first decade of 21th Century, it is possible to say that Art has deepened that condition. Due to the economic crisis, but not only, the field of Art has experienced a resurgent phenomenon of political and social engagement. At the moment of this text the 56<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale, being its chief curator Okwui Enwezor, is composing a "democratic" discourse on "All the World's Futures", the Cuban artist Tania Bruguera is being kept in a kind of no-where state in La Havana, meanwhile the Havana Biennale takes place normally, and Jonas Staal is exhibiting *The New World Academy* in a museum<sup>9</sup>. These are just three general examples of a field that is active in its own engagement with social, economic and political issues worldwide. Art has returned to its alliance with critical and reflective discourses about reality. Art has been seen again as a tool to not only present, represent or expose the sickness of contemporary societies, but rather as a direct tool to forge a new deal within them<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://centraalmuseum.nl/bezoeken/tentoonstellingen/new-world-academy/>

<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, I agree with Ketii Chukhrov's critics on contemporary "artivism". Ketii Chukhrov states that besides its purposes and desires, Contemporary Art stays within its own paradoxical condition as institution, constantly self-institutionalizing itself: "So when participatory or socially engaged projects denigrate art in the name of non-art—yet are looked upon as democratic art practice—they often ignore that those whom they integrate into education or participation might be able to think and act in terms of ethical, artistic, and general dimensions no less than any artist or thinker. Ignoring this point, they underestimate many capacities of human life that are not reduced to skills and education. Hence the paradox: the more democratic art tends to be, the less open it is to those who constitute the *demos*." Chukhrov, Ketii (2014) *On the False Democracy of Contemporary Art* in e-flux journal #57, 09/2014. Chukhrov points out the nutshell within which Art has jailed itself. Art "has been transformed into the loosening of art in the name of its fusion with middle class creative activity—democratic, available, accessible. Art is as permissive as ever in its all-inclusive observations, comments, documents, experiences, forms of activism, and creativity. In this case, democracy becomes synonymous with reducing the artistic dimension to the very flow of mundane needs, as if those who happen to be detached from culture do not possess the capacity to experience the dimension of the non-

As Jonas Staal himself has explained<sup>11</sup> during the first session of the *The New World Academy*, this project started “with (another) initiative, *The New World Summit*, an artistic and political organization that develops what we call alternative parliaments”<sup>12</sup>. These alternative parliaments are offered to cultural and political stateless organizations banned or directly defined as terrorists by the *all mighty truly* democratic Western countries and friends. The *New World Academy* is “A new academy that invites political organizations invested in the progressive political project to share with artists and students their views on the role of art and culture in political struggles. Together, they engage in critical thinking through concrete examples of transformative politics and develop collaborative projects that question and challenge the various frameworks of justice and existing models of representation. NWA proposes new critical alliances between art and progressive politics, so as to confront the democratic deficit in our current politics, economy, and culture”<sup>13</sup>. NWA is an agora, but not only understood as the place for the appearing and deployment of political statements, which would only be a form of propaganda, but exactly what counter the political agenda as ideology, which is the space for reflection and discussion. The entire project understands art as a tool for educational

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mundane, non-utilitarian, or to grasp the dimension of the general, the category which is as artistic as it is ethical and political.” The democratic capacity of art, as a form of political action, has just flatten the conditions of the political, transforming the emancipatory means into a material archive for self-representation and its own re-institutionalization. And this is why is important to bring Chukhrov’s critics here. Staal’s work is not an exception. Nevertheless, by being inhabited by the others directly, and through the work with them and not about them, NWA disseminates its artistic condition, becoming vulnerable as a state of existence.

<sup>11</sup> <http://bakonline.org/en/Program/NewWorldAcademy/Session1?parent=Index>

<sup>12</sup> The *New World Summit* had its first appearing in the 7<sup>th</sup> Berlin Biennale of 2012. Berlin Biennale that has been heavily criticized for the *spectacularization* of political means. In the same Biennale you could see, for example, a “real” tent encampment of Occupy Wall Street movement. <http://www.berlinbiennale.de/blog/en/1st-6th-biennale/7th-berlin-biennale>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.bak-utrecht.nl/en/Research/Itineraries/NewWorldAcademy?parent=Research%2FItineraries%2FCitizensAndSubjects>

purposes and a space from where it would be possible to build new forms of social and political support between different organizations struggling for similar issues. An Academy, if we return to the first notion of it, is the place where someone can be instructed in a series of disciplines. This re-institution of the Academy, as a place for presenting what seems to be inexistent, constitutes also a constellation of knowledge against the prohibition by official culture. In this sense the NWA builds a space for the defense of Democracy, in fact, a defense of Radical Democracy, which will exceed the conditions where it takes place.

For a better understanding of the political place where NWA appears, it would be worth bringing Antonio Gramsci's notion of *interregnum*: "The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear"<sup>14</sup>. Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman applied Gramsci's notion of *interregnum* to what he calls our "times of uncertainty"<sup>15</sup>. In this text, Baumann names three major contemporary concerns: migration, endurance of the planet and what he calls "institutional disparity". NWA, and perhaps the entire political and artistic project of Staal, answers to our contemporary state of endless *interregnum*.

Morbid symptoms are those reflecting the state of a dying corpse. The interregnum is that frame of time where the only certainty at hand is that of an endlessly dying existence of the old, which is its own form of resisting death, and the uncanny condition of the new, which tries to be born through it. What is the new then? And how can we name such a thing? The new is that radical event that has been confused, for a long time now, with the

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<sup>14</sup> Gramsci, Antonio (1971) *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, London: Lawrence & Wishart. 276

<sup>15</sup> Bauman, Zygmunt (2012) *Times of Interregnum*, *Ethics & Global Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 1. <http://www.ethicsandglobalpolitics.net/index.php/egp/article/view/17200>

morbid symptom of the potential. The new is not something in a state of dormant<sup>16</sup>, waiting in mere potentiality within the already given world. The new is something completely different from the old, because the contrary would be just the stinky reform of-from the old, or worst, a rather well-designed *apparatus* produced by and from the old with the purpose of confusing our present, composing then a performative form of *pretending to be a new*. The new is a radical inexistence which becomes existent by itself, besides and despite the rules in place.

Following this idea, the NWA should be understood as a place which answers to that morbid symptoms belonging to the death carnival of capital. A public space where banned forms of the new already at work, build not only a potential but a practical existent radical new. Factually, The NWA was composed by five seminars developed from 2013 to 2015 in Utrecht. It is necessary to say that The NWA is a work developed in partnership between Staal and BAK<sup>17</sup>.

The entire program of The NWA comprehends a series of Sessions where different political organizations deliver their reflections and statements: These Sessions were: NWA #1. Towards a People's Culture, with the *National Democratic Movement of the Philippines*. 15.11.-24.11.2013; NWA #2. Collective Struggle of Refugees. Lost. In Between. Together, with the collective of refugees *We Are Here*. 29.11.-08.12.2013; NWA #3.

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<sup>16</sup> "But we can't say either that the truth of an event is simply the immanent fulfillment of the thinking of the Being. There must be a break or a discontinuity. The new -the unheard truth that arises- is not present in a dormant state as a potential which is hidden inside the formerly- within the already existing situation. The task consists rather into articulate the *evental* emergence upon a separation or split at the heart of the normal representation of the Being." Bosteels, B. (2014) "Du potentiel à l'inexistant" in *Failles* No. 3, *Inexistence/Existence*, NOUS MMXIV, Université Paris 8 – Laboratoire d'études et de recherche sur les logiques contemporaines de la philosophie (LLCP), Paris.

<sup>17</sup> BAK is a "space for art, knowledge, and activism" founded in 2003 in the city of Utrecht, The Netherlands. As its own name points out BAK, *basis voor actuele kunst*, is a Base for Contemporary Art. Its artistic Director, Maria Hlavajova, always highlights this important condition for BAK: to be a base from where different alliances can be forged.

Leaderless Politics, with international *Pirate Parties*. 13.12.-22.12.2013; NWA #4. The Art of Creating a State, with the *National Liberation Movement of Azawad* (MNLA), 17.10.-19.10.2014; NWA #5. Stateless Democracy: The Revolution in Rojava Kurdistan, 21.10.2014.

In each seminar, a political organization had the opportunity to expose its case, explaining the conditions of its existence and its connections with different ways of cultural resistance. I will briefly expose here, two cases: the first case is that of the collective of refugees *We Are Here*, presented in session #2, Collective Struggle of Refugees. Lost. In Between. Together. (29.11. –08.12.2013). Staal (2013) states that "The political group *We Are Here* [Wij Zijn Hier] is the first large-scale organization of refugees in the Netherlands to protest the structural denial of its members' rights to citizenship. The organization's members come from a variety of different countries, though most hail from Africa and live in a juridical and political limbo, as their countries of origin either refuse to allow them to return, or international law and other reasons prohibit the Netherlands from sending them back to their homelands. The group started with support of the diaconate in Amsterdam, the overarching structure of Protestant churches, which in September 2012 allowed a small group of seven refugees to build a temporary camp in its garden. What began as a marginal encampment soon evolved into a continuously expanding collective, aided by the support of citizens who provided donations in the forms of food and clothing. Through collective organization and solidarity between the group and civil society, the refugees began to move out of obscurity and gain visibility."<sup>18</sup>

"*We Are Here* is an organization of refugees" united in order to bring their collective struggle in the Netherlands into public discussion. "Consisting of

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<sup>18</sup> Staal, J. (2013) *Collective Struggle of Refugees. Lost. In Between. Together*. New World Academy Reader #2, 14-15. <http://newworldsummit.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/NWA-reader2.pdf>

some 225 immigrants from approximately 15 countries all around the world, their search for asylum has failed, and yet for a variety of reasons they cannot be sent back to their countries of origin.”<sup>19</sup> As Yoonis Osman Nuur, one of the spokespersons of the collective stated in an interview with Staal, after having been asked where the power of the group rests, stated: “Visibility. Visibility in the sense that we stick together as a group. We are in a strategic place in the world today. We live in the capital of this country—even tourists from all over the world visit us. *We Are Here* is becoming a worldwide recognized organization. I believe in my heart that if we remain together and carry on with what we believe in, we will find a solution.” Today, *We Are Here* is developing another project, parallel to the NWA which is called *Here We Are Academy*<sup>20</sup>.

The second example, of *Kurdish Women Movement* was addressed in the session 5<sup>th</sup>: *The Stateless Democracy, Kurdish Women Movement*. The current situation of Kurds appears as an invisible and inexistent event to the world, an event without place. The Rojava region, north of Syria, declared its political autonomy in 2013. During this period of time, and because of the withdrawal from the region of the Assad’s regime forces, due to the pressing assaults of ISIS, the Rojava region found itself alone in its defense. Proclaiming a self-determined stateless democracy, the Kurds declared three autonomous cantons that function under conditions of great despair and emergency. As Dilar Dirik<sup>21</sup> explained, the politico-philosophical project has been based in the ideas of the imprisoned political leader Abdullah Öcalan on Democratic Autonomy: “The creation of an operational level where all kinds of social and political groups, religious communities, or

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<sup>19</sup><http://newworldsummit.eu/academy-year/we-are-here/>

<sup>20</sup> <http://heretosupport.nl/we-are-here-learning/>

<sup>21</sup> Dirik, D. (2014) <http://www.bak-utrecht.nl/en/Program/NewWorldAcademySession5/TheRevolutionInRojavaKurdistan?parent=Program%2FNewWorldAcademySession5>

intellectual tendencies can express themselves directly in all local decision-making processes can also be called participative democracy."<sup>22</sup>

"The aim is not to wait from freedom that may never come, but create your own freedom no matter what happens around you" says Dirak at the conference on the *Kurdish Women Movement*, where she and Dilsah Orman (co-president of the Kurdish Democratic Society Congress in Europe, KCD-E), among other scholars presented the case of the Rojava Revolution and its struggle against the apparently unstoppable advances of ISIS<sup>23</sup>.

In the light of such considerations, I suggest here that we can recognize in Staal's work the notion of the inexistent. But, what is an inexistent, though? And in what sense can I recognize such a notion in a work like *The New World Academy*? This philosophical and political notion has been used by French philosopher Alain Badiou to state the effective conditions within which some population exists. Badiou has used the inexistent, for example, to refer the case of the *Sans-Papiers* in France. The sans-papiers live within the French society. The French society is their locality, their place. In fact, many of them are bound to France by the history of colonialism, in relation determined by language, history and culture. But they are not fully recognized as citizens of France. They are there without any proper

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<sup>22</sup> Abdullah Öcalan is one of the founding members of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). He made dramatic turn, which began in the 1990s, from the lionized leader of the PKK to an intellectual who largely eschews the violence of his past. Öcalan currently resides in the Turkish prison of Imrali, where he penned his three-volume *Prison Writings*. Öcalan, Abdullah (2007) *Prison Writings: The Roots of Civilisation*, trans. by Klaus Happel, Pluto Press; Öcalan, Abdullah (2011) *Prison writings II: the PKK and the Kurdish question in the 21st century*, trans. by Klaus Happel, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform; Öcalan, Abdullah (2012) *Prison writings III. The road map to negotiations*, International Initiative.

<http://kurdishquestion.com/index.php/insight-research/from-marxism-and-nationalism-to-radical-democracy-abdullah-oecalan-s-synthesis-for-the-21st-century>

<sup>23</sup> Dirik, D. (2014) *New World Academy #5: Stateless Democracy: The Revolution in Rojava Kurdistan*: <http://www.bak-utrecht.nl/en/Research/Itineraries/NewWorldAcademy/NewWorldAcademy5StatelessDemocracy/TheRevolutionInRojavaKurdistan>

acknowledgment delivered by the State. They are there, but not fully present. At least not for the State's machinery, and certainly not for the whole society. The immigrant body illegal condition is determined by state laws, restricts her or his existence within a specific world. A world that we cannot see, a world that cannot exist, at least, not as a full existence within the frames of the intelligibility in place. They (We), illegal immigrants, exist through a delayed existence that can never be fully present. An existence that cannot become an absolute presentation. They have to survive through a conditional and potential presence, but not in a complete state of presentation. Their appearing occurs as an inexistence then, namely an existence with a very low degree of intensity. It is this specific matter of force, in the notion of the inexistent, that intrigues me. Inexistence is not something that does not exist. It is not about non-being. It is about something that, being existent, is not recognized as such by the norms in place. The frames of intelligibility, what makes the reality visible, dematerialize the effective bodiness of what the inexistent is. It is this degradation of the existence of another that makes the reflection about the form of an inexistence interesting. And our schizophrenic contemporary western culture, particularly with its never ending indebted correlation to existence, makes more evident the flagrant condition of inexistence, a conditional site where the majority of humankind lives. If inexistence is not something that does not exist but on the contrary, something existing which its existence is denied, then the current situation of the migrant, the homeless, the indebted, the jobless is that precisely political condition of the inexistent.

This is the case for the collective of refugees *We Are Here*. It is said that its first *appearing* in the public sphere, as an affirmative condition of its own existence, within the borders of The Netherlands, occurred because of a speech that not only negated its evident existence, but was also asking for

their complete vanishing. The mayor of Amsterdam asked them to disappear, directly. To go away. To become not-there anymore. Or at least, to become invisible, which is a condition of the inexistent within the frames of intelligibility given by the State itself. There, at that precise moment when the Mayor of Amsterdam exhorted them to disappear, the people started to shout: "We are here! We are here!!!" not only in a desperate attempt to describe their real existence, their being-here, but also as a way of being existent as such. "We", because they were recognizing themselves not as group of individuals but a set, not only the sum of ones; "Are", which basically affirms their raw existences; "Here", referring the specificity of the place where their existences appear. The group was not an abstraction that could be counted and reduced to administrative reduction, its existence as a collective was not only data to expel and discard, and the persons in it certainly were not ghosts to ignore.

"*We are here*" is a very strong statement. It is not only a description without place<sup>24</sup>, it is at the same time a decision. It is a political definition, a demand and address to those surrounding them. "*We Are Here*" is addressing an institutionality. By doing it, the collective institutes a new space within the ruled political sphere, suspending themselves from that rhetorical public sphere praised by contemporary democracies. As described, due to the conditions of migrant laws in The Netherlands, these people could not be expelled from the country. At least, not legally. In the majority of cases their countries have already disappeared, have a new government, or are simply under social and political turmoil. Without the support of the state, which did not offer them political asylum, they found themselves in a legal limbo, in a *non-citizen condition*, basically in a no-where-land, but being there. The collective *We Are Here* (2013) states: "Here in the Netherlands, our

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<sup>24</sup> And here I refer to the notion of *description without place* noted by Alain Badiou from Wallace Stevens' poetry. Badiou, A. (2014) *The Age of the Poets*, Bruno Bosteels, Verso Books, 75-82.

existence is structurally denied. But this does not mean that we do not exist. *We are here*. We are living on the streets or in temporary shelters. We are living in a political and legal vacuum—a vacuum that can only be filled by the recognition of our situation and our needs.”<sup>25</sup>

Alain Badiou distinguishes between the ontological legislation of the being qua being, which is mathematics, and that of the appearing, which is logical<sup>26</sup>. The appearing is delimited by a network of relations in a given world. The appearing of multiple-beings is *defined* by its localization in a world by the transcendental. What is a transcendental? Badiou argues that, due to the inconsistency of being, which can be presented as consistent only through the count-as-one, the manifestation of the world must be “enabled” by immanent transcendental operations. The transcendental articulates and operates the rules that enable the appearing of a being in a structured situation, within a world. This transcendental constitution would permit the “appearing” of a being within a localizable situation, or a world. Being-there as appearing-in-a-world “has a relational consistency”, meaning that every world has a “singular transcendental organization” that allows the multiple to come forth as essentially bound. Singular beings only manifest themselves in their being locally. Appearing is then regulated within a world already given. Then the being is also being-there. Appearing is a logic for Badiou because “it is nothing but the coding of differences, world by world”<sup>27</sup>. The transcendental is the logical legislation that operates permitting the coherent appearing “in” one of the worlds in which multiples come to be.

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<sup>25</sup> *We Are Here Manifesto* (2012) *NWA Reader 2*, <http://newworldsummit.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/NWA-reader2.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> Badiou, A. (2009) 1. Necessity of a Transcendental Organization of the Situations of Being in *Logics of Worlds*, Alberto Toscano, Continuum, 101-102.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

The inexistent multiplies, without needing the State's dogmatic effectiveness to account its inexistence. As such, the actions of the inexistent emerge without exercising authoritative conditions. These actions are not utopian islands but, on the contrary, they should be seen as effective counter-spaces where spaces of anomie can be built. Political anomie<sup>28</sup>. Political action consists in making existent what is inexistent in any given order. It consists in occupying the empty place left and also transforming the fixed laws of a given place, by the process of instituting others. If we consider the notion of infrapolitics, coined by James C. Scott, as the cumulative set of invisible actions, procedures and strategies that work by resisting, emancipating, eroding and countering the situation as it is, it is evident that in the case of the NWA, what it creates are out-placed spaces of/for anomie<sup>29</sup>. Spaces from where effectively rise existence to what remains inexistent. This is a notion of change which inaugurates a new time within the periodization of changing. Referring to Theatre and its relations with Politics, Badiou (2013) has said that "the political rupture is not a question of virulence in words, nor is it a matter of causing a superficial *furor*. It is patient and thorough process, which builds its own figures and its immanent places, which sets its own dates, and which never lets the choice of space or time be dictated to it."<sup>30</sup> It is indeed a patient and thorough process of creating spaces and times, forces and forms. The NWA, as an art work that creates space, functions as an *out-of-place*. What do I mean by a space out-of-place? I am referring here to Badiou's *hors-lieu*. It is necessary to say that, in that case, Subject does not correlate with a notion

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<sup>28</sup> Anomie here should not be seen from a negative point of view, but on the contrary as the necessary normless situation detaching a collective from the oppressive rules and constituting an out-of-place which will work as a new shelter for imagining and producing new spaces of collective action.

<sup>29</sup> Scott, J. C. (2009) *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, Yale University Press.

<sup>30</sup> Badiou, A. (2013) "The Political Destiny of Theatre" in *Rhapsody for the Theatre*, trans. Bruno Bosteels, Verso Books, 118.

of individual or human being. The Subject in Badiou exists when, after an Event, a body faithfully continues to echo the truth inaugurated by the Event. While the Event is something unusual, new to the situation, the subject born from it does not belong to the situation either; on the contrary, it appears out-of-placed to that world. It is in that sense that, in the case of the NWA, the entire apparatus of its existence composes an *out-of-place space of the inexistent*<sup>31</sup>. It is a space openly public, which uses the platforms of well-known institutional art for its performing appearing, but at the same time, an out-of-place, because it operates as an excess to the regulatory conditions of the institution. NWA inaugurates a space that, as such, does not belong to the forms of public sphere recognized by Capitalist Regime. It is in this sense that we are before a practice of Radical Democracy. Not in the sense of a mechanism of decisions, which would still remain caught within the material transcendental of false democratic dialectical game. Its *radicality* resides in the act of occupying the space of knowledge production. NWA is a structure of radical education because of its emancipatory political implications. NWA is an occupation. It creates different forms of alliances which, together, enable the appearing of instituting inexistent, homeless and migrant political forces that, being autonomous, belong only to themselves.

Is the work of Jonas Staal already an abandonment of the static procedures of contemporary art? Is it composing an alter space in its out-placed description of the inexistent? Is it a remaining trace of what was called revolutionary in the old philosophical and theoretical mechanism of the

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<sup>31</sup> “This localized rallying in a square, on avenues or in factories, this quantitative contraction or compaction –all this acts as reality, because what informs it is a super-existence, intensive and subjectivized, of pre-political truth, or the violent restitution of an inexistent, correlated, in the form of an historical riot, with a ‘disengagement’ from symbols of the state. It emerges from nothing; it has the dictatorial power of a creation ex-nihilo.” Badiou, A. (2014) Event and Political Organization, *The Rebirth of History*, Gregory Elliott, Verso Books, 62.

Western Left? I think that it is indispensable to maintain the word Art as a mechanism of sense in relation to Staal's thinking. There, it would perhaps be still possible to exercise the freedom of thinking as such, not only as a form of creation without property, but also as the action that Art imposes autonomously upon the worlds. If, as Love and Politics, Art remains a conservative and empty body, it also remains, in the same way, a force-form, an intensity of weakness, plastically open to new radical operations to forge. NWA operates this subtraction, inexistent to those still working for the existent world.

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