

The Critical Art Institution and the Neoliberal State

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Focusing on the predicament European art institutions have faced as a result of the neoliberalisation of cultural policy since the 1990s, this thesis considers how critical art institutions like Liberate Tate and the Free Art Collective can open up spaces of resistance that are capable of rewriting art's neoliberal value system. The critical methodology I propose here draws on Simon Critchley's meta-anarchic strategy of taking an interstitial distance to the state, aspects of which I argue offer a vital alternative to existing critical methodologies which attempt either to reform the public art institution from within (Chantal Mouffe's post-Marxist strategy of 'engagement'), or abandon it completely in order to establish autonomous, extra-statal institutions outside of the state and its art institutional landscape (the Autonomous Marxist strategy of 'exodus'). // Moreover, where these extant critical methodologies adhere to fixed ideological positions and operate either inside or outside the state (and by analogy the public art institutional landscape), this third approach - which I term the 'institution of interstitial distance' - refuses this dialectic and instead adopts a negotiated moving position between these fixed positions, enabling it to overcome many of the flaws inherent to these approaches. // The second and interrelated argument I put forward is that by virtue of adopting a 'public spherian' approach and publishing 'texts of resistance' in the public domain that propose alternatives to art's neoliberal value system, the critical art institution can produce counterpublics capable of implementing these collectively agreed values and ultimately rewriting art's neoliberal value system.