

Quart, Issue 59: The Work of Deflation

Deadline: Dec 2, 2020

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Call for papers to Issue 59: The Work of Deflation: Unlearning, Deskillling, Epistemologies of Ignorance

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Ils (...) rien n'est exprimé que ce qu'ils ont eux-mêmes balbutié, balbutié si souvent qu'ils arrivent parfois (...) à formuler ce qu'ils souhaitent formuler. (...) Mais que de fatigues, que d'imperfection, que de grossièretés!

Guillaume Apollinaire

Unlearning and all other deflation tactics (e.g. deskillling) played an important role in modern art: as a source of many changes, they contributed to redefining the field of power. Dissapointing of expectations was one of Manet's strategies. The good old example of Duchamp's Fountain demonstrates the critical and emancipatory potential of a lack of mastery by challenging existing patterns and by being able to become what and who one wants. Duchamp's deflation tactics also contested projects that might hide in themselves some new ideals to pursue. Epistemologies of ignorance effectively served to get rid of the language that naturalizes violence and were beneficial in postcolonial or identity studies.

Artists continue to use unlearning for critical purposes, exploring, among others, cognitive dissonance or misunderstanding as a way of resistance to the authority of power and its oppression – it is then a prelude to the production of supporting and liberating knowledge. Unlearning, therefore, is not necessarily a way merely to better assimilate new knowledge and improve the future, it is a chance for emerging of a yet shocking surprise of everyday life, of what is poor, failed, ordinary, other and in a position of weakness.

Nowadays, however, deflation strategies and deskillling are Janus-faced, moving into areas that produce strict hierarchies and dependencies. By choosing the Fountain and becoming its author, Duchamp marginalized the actual designer and craftsman. Today, similar strategies can link as much to cooperation, shared authorship and exchange based on dialogue as to exploitation, as they are often applied in relation to the poor periphery: the division of labour makes it possible to hire (for little money) someone who knows and is able, and to take possession of their work. In the deflation tactics recycled by neoliberalism, power and efficiency are still at stake in the game. After all, epistemologies of ignorance function in the context of knowledge produced and distributed as an economic good.

We invite authors to consider the following topics, among others:

- designing the future as a new formatting "ideal",
- parasitism or sharing: deskilling as a trick used by subordinated others and/or a tool to subdue the periphery,
- dememorization – a power strategy? (e.g. in Eastern Europe),
- the effect of disappointment with a work of art as a criterion for positive evaluation,
- position of weakness,
- epistemophilia and knowledge production versus ontological turn (post-Cartesian artist).

The deadline for submission of papers: 2 December 2020

The issue will be published in the 2nd half of March 2021

Special editor of the issue: Prof. Dr. hab. Anna Markowska

Papers (from 20,000 to 40,000 characters, in Polish or English, with up to 7 illustrations) should be submitted in format specified in the guidelines (to be downloaded from the website: <http://quart.uni.wroc.pl/wytyczne.html>) to the address: quart@uwr.edu.pl in accordance with the indicated deadlines indicated. The editors reserve the right to select given papers. All the submitted papers will be subject to a double-blind review, in line with COPE guidelines.

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Reference:

CFP: Quart, Issue 59: The Work of Deflation. In: ArtHist.net, Feb 12, 2020 (accessed Mar 30, 2026),

<<https://arthist.net/archive/22619>>.