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## Editorial: Issue 117: Translation

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For this issue, we chose several of the most compelling unsolicited proposals received over the past few months and allowed an issue theme to emerge from them, rather than commissioning articles on a pre-established topic. The result is a series of articles and artist projects that—in various ways—deal with the translation of forms (images, language, objects and histories), and which sometimes puts them back into circulation in innovative and critical ways.

For example, in *When Platitudes Become Form*, which is part of an ongoing project by Christopher Kulendran Thomas, the artist purchases artworks from commercial galleries in Sri Lanka, incorporates the pieces into his own compositions and then repositions them in a European contemporary art exhibition context. Profits from the works' sales are then used to support resistance in the former Tamil-occupied territories in the North and East of Sri Lanka. In this case, the artwork is not just simply the material art object but also the enactment and subversion of the economic and cultural systems through which it circulates and accrues meaning and value.

Also in this issue, Hito Steyerl and Patricia Reed consider the role of objects and images as mediums—and also the notion that we might transform their place within relations of production as part of activist practices. Most interestingly, they draw attention to the fact that being *implicated* in such

relations or systems—not unlike Kulendran Thomas' project—is also a form of agency, creating what Steyerl describes as a shift from “condemnation or complicity” to “involvement or situational presence.” This gestures towards an important ethical role for artists—which Steyerl compares to that of Jackie Chan—in engaging objects, images, ideas and the systems through which they circulate in ways that are critical and dynamic.

Further exploring the idea of material translation, but this time as a poetic device, Jacquelyn Ross and Tiziana La Melia discuss La Melia's work incorporating poetry, painting, sculpture and theatre. Translated between different media, words and gestures become abstracted to the point of becoming simply a pattern or a rhythm. Similarly, Kristin Campbell writes about the work of Kristiina Lahde, who transforms discarded newspapers and flyers, business reply envelopes, and other source material into beautiful abstract collages that reference the idea of chance and systems of measurement. In both of these artists' work, their approaches to translation create new visual forms from other kinds of media or discarded materials.

This issue also deals with the framing, presentation and discursive translation of the history of feminism within the exhibition *elles@centrepompidou* at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, which was recently re-mounted at the Seattle Art Museum. Writer Ania Wroblewski

looks at how the curators of this exhibition avoided the discourses, debates and demands of feminism, presenting it simply as a show of work by women artists, while also examining initiatives that specifically counter this gesture. And discussing much less mainstream institutions than the Pompidou, Diana Sherlock reports on the conference *Institutions by Artists*, recently held at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, highlighting a number of projects that provide important sites for critical discourse and alternative community-building. Bridging these two articles is an artist project by Toronto's Feminist Art Gallery (FAG), where the artists present documentation of a wall of nametags, displayed following their collection from gallerygoers asked to write alongside their own names that of a “feminist/queer/politicized artist, poet, rock star, writer, friend, inspiration, mentor, matron or lover.” Through this gesture, the artists explain, the nametag wearers implicate themselves within a broader set of strategies aimed at bringing particular histories and communities into visibility.

What is at stake in all of these acts of translation, reframing and strategic circulation discussed in this issue, is nothing less than the transformation of objects and processes, how we relate to them and, together, what we are able to accomplish. x