



The Museum of Non Participation is a participatory practice that challenges the idea of sole authorship and asserts the value of collective labour in artistic production.

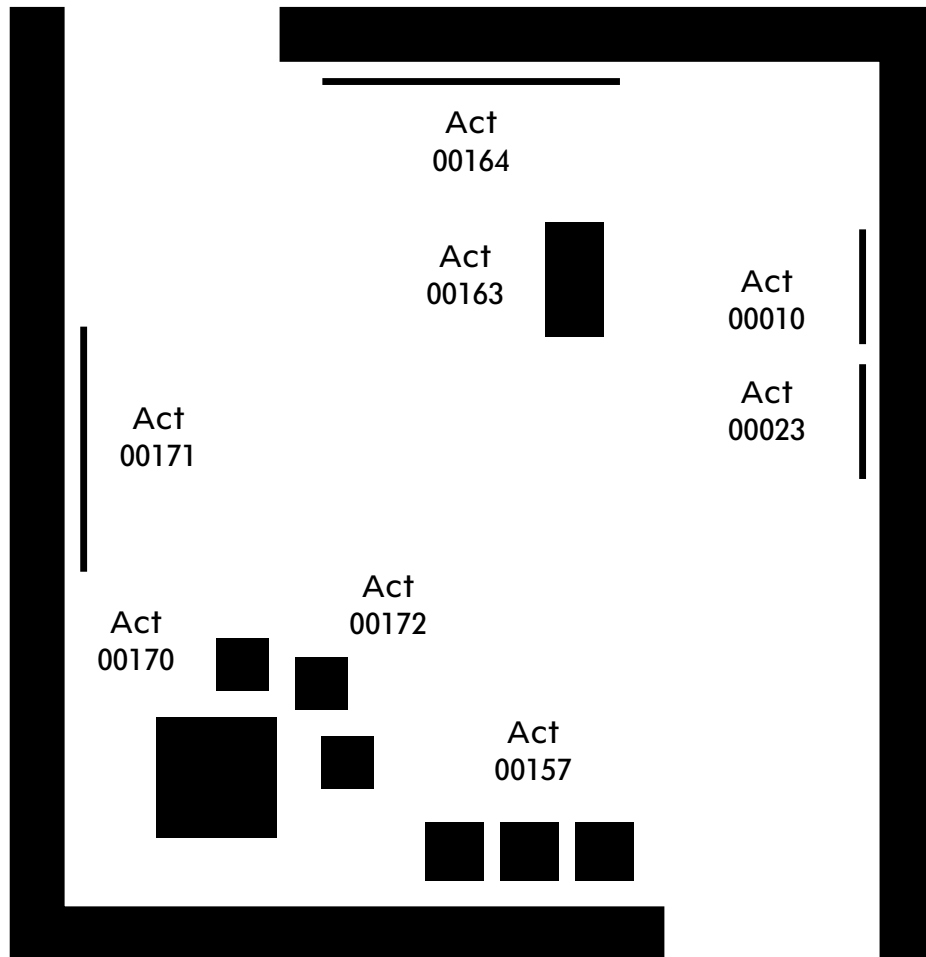


CO-WORKERS
KHALID ABDALLA
CHRIS X 56A INFOSHOP
NABIL AHMED
ARIELLA AZOULAY
GABRIEL BIRCH, PAVILION
HELIOS CAPDEVILA
TINA DI CARLO
DAVID CUNNINGHAM
LARNE ABSE GOGARTY
SOPHIE YETTON, PAVILION

Our Thanks To:

THE AESTHETICS OF
RESISTANCE READING GROUP
HANA AL BAYATY
JOERG BADER
LUCY BADROCKE
GALERI NON
NAV HAQ
CHINA MIEVILLE
NO.W.HERE
PRECARIOUS WORKERS BRIGADE
DAVID SPRAGGS
WATERSIDE CONTEMPORARY





What is the Museum of Non Participation? And what is a museum of non participation doing participating in an exhibition on the museum itself? How can we understand the place of the Non? And, more importantly, how can we understand the Non as both a noun and a verb in the work of Karen Mirza and Brad Butler? What follows here — in this exhibition, in this text, and in the accumulation of works — is a series of acts, or what the artists call the performative utterance of folded, contested spaces.

Act, Act(s), Act(ion), Act(ivist), (Speech) Act, Act(uality), (Abstr)act, the Acts listed below and exhibited in the gallery enact and open the place of the Non, inhabiting and proposing it as a threshold, a fulcrum, an axis of artistic practice, of speech, of utterance. Considered things that gather rather than objects that stand inertly before one, these acts nevertheless refer to the etymology of former *obicere* — to present, oppose, cast or throw in the way of, to bring forward in opposition. They have been created to intervene, to disrupt, sometimes to efface and disassemble, thereby presencing even more strongly political acts. These acts are active strategies.

The texts that follow here — similar to the way in which one enters the gallery and encounters

the first two works off-axis, laterally, from the side — are proposed from the same position. For Museum of Non Participation is not an overriding structure. Nor is it a museum that houses objects, like its etymology suggests. Rather it acts, is actor, author, agent, participant. The Museum of Non Participation is an open-ended, generative art process that collects and gathers, a conceptual critical frame that produces and intervenes in the space through the place and act of the Non.

Acts

Tina Di Carlo with Karen Mirza & Brad Butler

<p>Act 00010</p> <p>2008</p> <p>This Act is an image-object, emblematic of the fullness of things and things that gather and collect, albeit in this case ironically through the emptying out into space. Something has transpired, a banal event, a spilling of milk around which people gather. The spilt milk becomes quasi-subject — both object and subject — instrumental and agent to assemble. The traditional subject, a witness or viewer, becomes quasi-object, collected as one thing among others through the act of spilling. The photograph shown here is not merely the representation of this event, but an event, an act, in itself. It assembles and collects, is collected and produced, within and by, the spatial environment, which in this case, is the space of the gallery. The concrete mounting by the artists Pavilion emphasises the work's status as image-object, its materiality and occupation of three-dimensional space.</p>	<p>which Mirza and Butler witnessed from within the National Museum in Islamabad. Is this a journalistic photograph? What does the red tape delineate? Is it the destruction of a building? Its yet unrealised construction? A future plan? Enigmatic and ambivalent this red frame draws a relation between the inside and outside of knowledge, the urbanity of Karachi and a series of forces — social, political, economic, aesthetic, cultural — that coalesce within the (un)built environment. Conceived as a critique of the (political) boundaries of the frame of the museum and the photograph itself, Act 00023 calls our attention to what is outside the frame by delineating its boundaries — be it the city of Karachi or the spaces of the gallery and museum.</p>
<p>Act 00023</p> <p>2008</p> <p>Considered an exframing Act 00023, sited in Karachi, is one of the Museum of Non Participation's first acts. It was conceived during the 2008 Lawyers protest in Pakistan,</p>	<p>Act 00157</p> <p>2011</p> <p>Conceived across three monitors, these (speech) acts perform utterances from the voice to the body, the body to voice as an exposition of voice, silence, gesture, and authority. Each performer is cast in relation to their own interests. They include: actor and activist Khalid Abdalla in Cairo; an interpretation of the exhibition Act of State curated by Ariella Azoulay; artist Nabil Ahmed speaking on labour issues and the language movement</p>

from Bangladesh. While each work is a speech act that is self-contained, the accumulation of the voices speak to each other and the exhibition as a whole through the spatio-temporal strategies of adjacency and (off)setting of timing. A choreography of images and temporalities collect a collective practice.

<p>Act 00163</p> <p>2011</p> <p>"The Government Art Collection showcases British art in Government buildings including Downing Street, the Home Office and British Embassies and Residences in nearly every capital city across the world, and this is the first exhibition dedicated to this collection held in a public gallery in its 113 year history. This 2011 exhibition entitled <i>At Work</i> is curated by seven public figures: Lord Boateng, Nick Clegg, Samantha Cameron, Lord Mandelson, Dame Anne Pringle, Sir John Sawers and Ed Vaizey."</p> <p>Here the Museum of Non Participation effaces the official exhibition catalogue for the Whitechapel's 2011 exhibition <i>At Work</i>. Covering up all information about the artworks and leaving only the commentary by the public figures intact, this act of concealment intervenes to reveal the complex conditions within, and precarity of power and labour, that surround and permeate, the arts. It foregrounds the social relations and apparatus behind</p>

the distribution, ownership and purchasing of works and state responsibility to art. Shown here in dialogue with a pamphlet protesting the Whitechapel exhibition, the double-paradox of economic laundering is ushered forth.

<p>Act 00164</p> <p>2011</p> <p>These four UN Resolutions on Iraq are dated 1990(x2), 2002 and 2003. Each Resolution is one sentence, situated within a network of cause and effect designed here in collaboration with Helios Capdevila. For the artists their mere display becomes instrumental. It reveals a conflation of author(ity) complicit within the violence of language. While the Resolutions and their consequences are open source to promote complete transparency, the sheer abundance of language (and its resulting complexity), obscures, enacting what the artists call an aesthetics of fatigue. Extreme legibility paradoxically leads to extreme opacity which leads to non action. Legal language becomes operative and complicit in sociocide — an accomplice that legitimises the silent and invisible deaths inflicted by US and UK governments. In this sense the Resolutions participated in the Museum of Non Participation long before their presentation here. Questioning "how one creates an image of the scale, desolation and vast level of corruption of these</p>
--

sanctions" Act 00164 performs fatigue and self-education in the space of the gallery, aiming to fall short of its own possibility.

Act 00170 2011

"...You would like to place Zubaydah in a cramped confinement box with an insect. You have informed us that he appears to have a fear of insects. In particular, you would like to tell Zubaydah that you intend to place a stinging insect into the box with him. You would, however, place a harmless insect in the box. You have orally informed us that you would in fact place a harmless insect such as a caterpillar in the box with him. If you do so, to ensure that you are outside the predicate acts requirement, you must inform him that the insect will not have a sting that would produce death or severe pain..."

In this account, the language of the Deep State addresses the participant directly. This is the Deep State talking, a state within the state, where political practices and arrangements, deliberate and not, are repressed to protect the interests of the State against threats from the public, and occasionally the constitutional government. "These people are the actors. There is no possibility of escape. In fact the spectators have no choice. They are obliged violently to participate."

Act 00171 2011

The neon sign acts both as a verb and a noun, a doing and a naming of the temporary and nomadic site of the Museum of Non Participation. Text becomes image, image text, text action to open a discursive space of the Non. The sign invokes a language of resistance that questions our paradoxical, contemporary condition of participation and withdrawal. Its literal reading juxtaposes the Roman English and popular Urdu translation *larta lucki ka aijib ghar*, which when translated back into English reads: "the museum of non participation, the house of the unexpected". Thus hidden within both the language and the sign itself is praxis of intervention and disruption. The blackboard ground on which the neon sign performs itself is a pedagogical tool in which the pamphlet *The Aesthetics of Resistance* rests.

Act 00172 2011

"I've always thought of Karachi as the future imaginary, not as dystopian, but as a positive, emancipatory survival. There is a pessimistic strength in the future imaginary of an urban life of a Karachite reflected in the attitude of the lost objects".

The term Lost Objects is used here to describe what is commonly referred to as the furniture of the exhibition. These

concrete objects were made through collaboration with the artist Gabriel Birch and architect Sophie Yetton whose practice Pavilion attempts to reframe the space of the exhibition by constructing an alternative physicality to the spaces of the white-cube art gallery. The invitation to intervene in the Museum of Non Participation was accepted by Pavilion to address an idea central to their practice — the city as museum — to observe and erect an abstract model of the city that rethinks the institutional archetype.

Collect-Collectivity

How does the Museum of Non Participation collect as a discursive space of the Non, when it eschews its etymological origins as a house of the muses to contain and collect? What does it mean to collect when collecting foregoes ownership and the accumulation of inert objects?

The Acts present here are called upon and call upon us in different ways. They assemble through disruption, through the tearing out of context, through conflict, through revealing the violence of acts to assemble a collective. To collect resides not merely in the assembly of objects, but an act that assembles and ushers forth action and agency and does so through disruption. As the Museum of Non Participation travels, it is produced by and produces, collects through

disruption the places of the Non. Violence, fatigue, silence, deletion, absence, dissemblance — all assemble. Each act of absence, subtraction, silence, conflict is intimately bound to presence, addition, speech, peace within a scale of gradients. The Museum of Non Participation is not a negation of participation. It is not the in between. Rather it is a threshold — a political plastic — that expands and contracts, is unstable and malleable. This space of the Non — like the banner of the Museum itself or the spilling of milk — gathers and coheres, collects and is collected. It is agent. It acts, is re-enacted. It becomes animated beyond the authors intentionally, more so because neither artist nor the Museum itself possesses sole authorship. The Museum of Non Participation assembles multiplicity and a multiplicity of readings, a multiplicity of authors, a multiplicity of voices that inhabit a common stage through the place of the Non.

Graphic Design
Helios Capdevila
www.capdevila.co.uk

THE
MUSEUM
OF
NON
PARTICI-
PATION
