"**Commoning the Networks**": CIRCLE online symposium 2014/Part 2

Sunday 21ˢᵗ September (9.30am to 5pm, BST, ie UK time)
Physical venue: Evolution House, 78 W Port, Edinburgh EH1 2LE, UK
YouTube link: http://youtu.be/QAETvRKZq3U

<u>**THEME**</u>

How do debates about Networks intersect with those on the concept of the Commons? Is it possible to undertake a process of "commoning the networks"? How could this be implemented in practical terms? Which are the techniques, technologies, language requirements and relevant methodologies to make this possible? What can we learn from the ways in which interactions occur amongst networks, both vertically/horizontally and rhizomatically/progressively? How could a feminist methodology facilitate movement, processing and exchange of ideas and practices in multiple directions amongst and across diverse networks, within an ethos that engages with creativity through a process of "commoning the networks?"

This event was a follow-up from CIRCLE online symposium 2014/Part 1 (please see information in the Appendix) and was designed as an ***intensive reading group*** to undertake focused discussion informed by reading materials circulated in advance.

The reading materials included the following three papers:

1) Federici, Sylvia (2011) *Feminism And the Politics of the Commons,* in The Commoner: A web journal for other values, http://www.commoner.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/federici-feminism-and-the-politics-of-commons.pdf

2) Conway, Janet (2008) *Geographies of Transnational Feminisms: The Politics of Place and Scale in the World March of Women*, in Social Politics, vol. 15 (2), pp.207-231

3) Nafus, Dawn (2011) *'Patches don't have gender': What is not open in open source software*, in New Media & Society, vol 14(4), pp.669–683

<u>**SCHEDULE**</u>

09.00 – 09.30	Arrival to the venue and coffee
	Setting up Hangout links with remote participants
09.30 – 11.00	**Session 1: key terms and definitions**
11.00 - 11.30	Coffee Break
11.30 – 13.00	**Session 2: examples of practice**
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch (will be provided in the Evolution House)
14.00 – 15.30	**Session 3: main issues**
15.30 – 15.45	Break
15.45 – 17.00	**Session 4: ideas and plans for the future**
17.00	Close

Some of the participants gathered in Evolution House in Edinburgh (**Daphne Dragona, Sophia Lycouris, Hadi Mehrpouya, Cornelia Sollfrank, Penny Travlou** and **Helen Varley Jamieson). Natalia Avlona**, **Simon Biggs**, **Mariza Dima**, **Sue Hawksley**, and **Nancy Mauro-Fluede** connected remotely via Google Hangouts on Air.

Biographies

Natalia- Rozalia Avlona is an independent researcher and currently Wikipedia educator based in Athens. She is a graduate of Athens Law School, King's College, and Royal Holloway and her work merges legal, geographical and artistic practices. She has worked on issues of art and digital- physical spaces in Greece, UK and Belgium, whist she was researcher in Royal College of Art from 2011 to 2013**.**

Simon Biggs (born Adelaide, Australia 1957) is a media artist, writer and curator with interests in digital poetics, auto-generative and interactive systems, performative environments, interdisciplinary research and co-creation. His work has been widely presented, including at Tate Modern, Tate Liverpool, Tate Britain, Institute of Contemporary Arts London, Centre for Contemporary Arts Glasgow, Kettles Yard Cambridge, Centre Pompidou Paris, Academy de Kunste Berlin, Berlin Kulturforum, Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Kunsthalle Bergen, Maxxi Rome, Palazzo della Arti Naples, Macau Arts Museum, Oi Futuro Rio de Janeiro, Arizona State Art Museum, San Francisco Cameraworks, Walker Art Center Minneapolis and the Art Gallery of New South Wales. He has presented at numerous international conferences, including the International Symposium on Electronic Arts, ePoetry, Society for Literature, Science and the Arts, Electronic Literature Organisation and Festival International Literature Electronica Sao Paulo and at Cambridge, Newcastle, Cornell, UC Davis, UC Santa Barbara, Paris8, Sorbonne and Bergen Universities, amongst others. Publications include Remediating the Social (2012, editor), Autopoeisis (with James Leach, 2004), Great Wall of China (1999), Halo (1998), Magnet (1997) and Book of Shadows (1996). He has been lead investigator on a number of significant international research projects and supervises several PhD students. He is currently Professor of Art at the University of South Australia and Honorary Professor at the University of Edinburgh. His URL is http://www.littlepig.org.uk/

Mariza Dima Interaction designer, Post-Doc researcher at Creativeworks London (Capturing London's Audiences cluster) and Queen Mary University. My work focuses on the design and development of interactions using tangible, mobile, and haptic interfaces in socio-cultural contexts, prominently in performance art, theatre, and cultural heritage. I have a particular research interest in collaborative and participatory design processes of applying technology creatively, which I study in parallel to a project. My broader interests include political philosophy, theory of media and culture, performance studies, and design for societal transformation.

I am currently researching design-led strategies for audience engagement in the creative industries, trans-disciplinary collaborations within co-design processes, and the structure of network collaborations, within London's visual arts, museums, and performing arts sectors. I have worked in a hybrid role between academia and industry since my doctoral studies which has greatly informed my holistic understanding of both fields and enabled me to work comfortably in both environments.

I hold a PhD in Interaction Design and an MSc in Design and Digital Media from the University of Edinburgh, and a BSc in Applied Mathematics and Physical Sciences at National Technical University of Athens. My work has been published widely in journals and leading academic conferences (Siggraph Asia, HCI International, NordiCHI, Springer).

Daphne Dragona is a media arts curator and researcher based in Athens and Berlin. She studied Archeaology and History of Art at the University of Athens and Museum Studies at University College London. From 2001 to 2007 she worked as a program curator of Medi@terra Festival at the Center for Digital Culture Fournos. Since then she has been working as independent curator and she has collaborated for exhibitions, workshops and media art events with centers, museums and festivals in Greece and abroad. Among them are the National Museum of Contemporary Art of Athens, the center Alta Technologia Andina in Lima, the center LABoral in Gijon and the festival of Transmediale in Berlin. She has participated with lectures and presentations in different conferences and festivals and articles of hers have been published in books and magazines of different countries. Her interest lies in the fields of commons based peer production, networked creativity and in forms critical resistance emerging from artistic practices in the era of datafication and quantification of everything. ludicpyjamas.net

Sue Hawksley is an independent dance artist and bodywork therapist. Her initial dance training was with Shirley Rees Edwards' Southern Ballet School in Bournemouth, then at the Royal Ballet School in London, graduating in 1983 with the Teaching Diploma - Dip.RBS(TTC).

Sue has performed with Rambert Dance Company, Mantis, Scottish Ballet and cie. Philippe Genty among others, working with choreographers such as Merce Cunningham, Trisha Brown, Siobhan Davies, Richard Alston, Ashley Page and Michael Clark. She has undertaken many freelance projects as performer, choreographer or educator, acquiring skills in contemporary dance and somatic movement practices, puppetry, and working with new technologies. She qualified as a massage and bodywork therapist in 1991 and this practice profoundly informs her approach to dance.

Her choreographic practice is concerned primarily with movement and issues around identity and territory, and she is particularly interested in interdisciplinary and collaborative practices. She holds a practice-led PhD in Dance & Choreography from the University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh College of Art. Her research explores how choreographic and somatic practices, philosophy, and mediation through performance and technology can be employed in the critical engagement of concepts of embodiment.

Sue has extensive teaching experience including at the Northern School of Contemporary Dance, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the Scottish School of Contemporary Dance. Most recently she was in post as Senior Lecturer in Dance, and course co-ordinator for the MA Dance Performance and Choreography at the University of Bedfordshire. http://www.articulateanimal.org.uk

Sophia Lycouris is an artist working with movement/dance, choreography, improvisation and performance for over than twenty years, who gradually developed a dialogue with new technologies. She is also an academic currently working at the University of Edinburgh, interested in interdisciplinary research methodologies, including approaches informed by creative practice. She is researching the potential of choreographic methods in interdisciplinary and collaborative and introduced the terms 'choreographic environments' and 'interdisciplinary choreography' during her AHRB Fellowship in the Creative and Performing Arts at the Nottingham Trent University (UK), (see "Choreographic Environments: New Technologies and Movement-related Artistic Work" in Butterworth, J. and Wildschut, L. (eds) Contemporary Choreography: A Critical Reader, 2009), which informed her subsequent projects City Glimpses, Haptic Experiments, Emergent Objects – Snake, and Choreography of Social Movement. She is currently co-editing a book on Dance and Wellbeing. www.recalesce.net

Nancy Mauro-Flude is a Tasmanian performing artist and theorist. Her work explores how we articulate the resonances and dissonances between performing arts and computer science, within the context of the contemporary art. Driven by the demystification of technology, and the 'mystification' that lie in and through the performance of the machinic assemblage. Contributing to developments in performing arts, technology and the public domain, Nancy has collaborated with leading institutions and festivals worldwide and has led numerous cross-disciplinary programmes that examine contemporary society in a digital age. She is an honorary researcher at the Institute of Network Cultures and founder of Miss Despoinas Media Salon.

http://www.steirischerherbst.at/2014/english/program/4-ministry-of-hacking.php

http://networkcultures.org/performanceofcode/2014/09/15/feminist-technology-and-the-performance-of-code/

http://networkcultures.org/performanceofcode/

Hadi Mehrpouya is a computer programmer and artist, currently working at the University of Edinburgh (Edinburgh College of Art). He has several years of professional experience in programming and software engineering and has spent the past two years collaborating on art projects. Hadi's work has been exhibited in the Edinburgh Art Festival, Edinburgh International festival and in September of 2012 his collaborative project proposal was awarded the Alt-W funding by New Media Scotland and this piece will be exhibiting at InSpace as part of the 2014 Edinburgh International Science Festival. Hadi's collaborative data visualisation of British Library Reading Rooms was awarded the 'Best Demo of the Year 2013' at EVA Conference, London.

His wider academic research interests are around ideas of the Network Society, affective networks, Digital Art and Technology; Conceptions of space and society, digital networks, sociology of commons, physical computing and hacking. Hadi is currently particularly interested in the relationships between digital commons, design and design studio in the context of 'off grid' communities.

http://www.designinformatics.org/   www.omniad.co.uk

Cornelia Sollfrank initially trained as a painter at the Art Academy in Munich and in Fine Art at the University of Fine Arts Hamburg, Cornelia Sollfrank developed an interest in digital media with the advent of the Internet in the mid 1990s. After two years of professional practice as product manager in the media industry, a DAAD research grant allowed her to explore the Internet's potential to act as an artistic medium from an early stage in its development.

The challenges art has had to face under digital networked conditions and their potential for yielding new art forms have formed the centre of Cornelia's artistic research and practice: she is has become one of the pioneers of net.art and cyberfeminism. Based on gender specific and institution-critical approaches, she has explored hacker culture and experimented with technology-based forms of self-organization, and created independent publication platforms and settings for collaborative and inter-disciplinary work. In parallel she has continued classical avant-garde strategies within the digital medium: experimenting with new models

of authorship and various forms of artistic appropriation as well as deconstructing myths around originality and the notion of genius.

By challenging the basic principles of aesthetic modernism Cornelia's work caused conflicts with its institutional and legal framework and led to her PhD research on copyright and art. In 2012 she completed her thesis with the title Performing the Paradoxes of Intellectual Property: A Practice-Led Investigation Into the Conflicting Relationship Between Copyright and Art. Her current research project Giving What You Don't Have explores copyright critical art practices on the basis of interviews with artists.

Penny Travlou is a Lecturer in Cultural Geography and Theory at the Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, University of Edinburgh. Her research is interdisciplinary, focusing on the politics of public space, urban theory, visual & digital culture, transdisciplinarity and ethnography. She has been Co-Investigator at the EU-funded (HERA JRP) project "Electronic Literature as a Model of Creativity and Innovation in Practice". Through her ethnographic fieldwork, she has looked at how creative networked communities of digital practitioners form within transnational and transcultural contexts in a globalised and distributed communications environment. Penny has also been Principal Investigator on the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council funded project "Creation and Publication of the Digital Manual: authority, authorship and voice" (http://sites.ace.ed.ac.uk/digital-manual/). Penny teaches both undergraduate and postgraduate courses on architectural theory, cultural geography and space/place. She also supervises PhDs across the College of Art.

Helen Varley Jamieson is a writer, theatre practitioner and digital artist from New Zealand, based in Germany. She holds a Master of Arts (Research) investigating cyberformance - live performance on the internet – which she has practiced since 1999. She is a founding member of the cyberformance troupe Avatar Body Collision, co-founder of UpStage (an open source platform for cyberformance) and co-curator of international online festivals and events. She is the "web queen" of the Magdalena Project, an international network of women in contemporary theatre, and is active in many international networks.

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Creative Interdisciplinary Research in Collaborative Environments research network (http://circle.eca.ed.ac.uk/)

CIRCLE's members are researchers and creative practitioners at the University of Edinburgh and elsewhere. They work across the creative arts, architecture, the humanities, the physical and social sciences. Their research focuses on developing creative collaborative environments, employing methods across disciplines. Their aim is to develop effective and affecting interactive environments, within a critical framework, seeking the insights that interdisciplinary inquiry might allow.

For further information, please contact Sophia Lycouris: s.lycouris@ed.ac.uk

APPENDIX

"Network the networks": CIRCLE online symposium 2014/Part 1:
(https://sites.eca.ed.ac.uk/circle2014/)

CIRCLE symposium 2014 set to explore how circulation of information might result in knowledge exchange, and how the maximisation of active engagement with the circulated information might trigger appropriate transformations of the initial pieces of information through which new (areas of) knowledge might be accessed or generated. The role of interdisciplinary research encounters was considered central in this process.

CIRCLE symposium 2014 was initially structured as a three stage 'playful' event, and was designed to 'unfold' during May 2014 as an on-line event, through use of multiple platforms and tools, occasionally involving physical meetings amongst participants as well. The aim was to find ways to "network the networks", this meaning to create interactions between CIRCLE members and other researchers who are not in CIRCLE but belong to groups in which CIRCLE members also belong. It was set up as a *game* involving concepts, processes and online technologies, aiming to create activity between the targeted groups of researchers.

The game consisted of three stages:

1) Each network was expected to offer a piece of material (an idea, a question, a process, an example of something) for a pool of materials for everybody to use.

2) Each network was expected to select a piece of material offered by another group and propose a way to use this material.

3) Each network, or even individual people, or even new temporary groups were expected to select one of these propositions and try to undertake the proposed process in some way over a period 3 days (26 to 28 of May). During this stage there were also some live online events, such as presentations and discussions, however the main bulk of the activity was expected to be about 'activating' the processes which would be proposed during stage 2. A small team of 3 persons was expected to oversee these activities (with the support of website in which the working teams were expected to provide documentation of their processes through posting updates about their work), and create some small interventions, which would be improvised as the process unfolded for the purposes of intensifying interaction. The role of these interventions was considered as a form of curating online interaction between groups.

The ultimate aim of this symposium was twofold:

a) to explore how to run a hands-on participatory multi-layered event of this type and what actually happens, how a networking environment facilitates exchange, and how space is understood, used and created as part of this exchange, and

b) to see whether there are any new ideas relating to the themes explored in the symposium and which emerged through this process and are worth pursuing further in some way through an appropriate research process.

Brief evaluation of Part 1/ aims for Part 2

Certain parts of the original plan were not possible in Part 1. The game structures were too complicated and heavily relying on the energy that leading researchers in each group could invest. Due to other commitments, these researchers spent less time than anticipated and certain stages of the *game* had to be simplified.

As stated above, an important part of the process during Part 1 was to observe parallel online working processes for projects undertaken by the participating groups. The observation was made by a small team of three researchers (Sophia Lycouris, Dafni Dragona and Penny Travlou), who also evaluated the results of Part 1 and designed Part 2.

Part 2 was designed as a working group meeting with invited external participants, and members of CIRCLE and the participating groups in the online CIRCLE symposium 2014, Part 1, in order to explore the following three themes through shared readings and discussions:

1) Balance between directing the process and allowing for maximum initiative and self-management in communication and activity via networks. Part 1 was designed as a fully self-directed process, in which the participating groups were expected to generate activities in response to a loose game structure proposed by the Online Symposium organiser. This approach was not as effective as anticipated and it became evident that more direction or a different form of direction was necessary.

2) Tools of communication while working in hybrid conditions of space (physical and virtual). Typically tools such as Skype, Hangouts and other similar video conferencing tools are used to run online presentations and undertake online group discussions. However, in Part 1, we discovered that when the exchange involves practical activities, such as making things in studio spaces, rehearsing across different physical locations, the communication via online tools requires codification in order to function properly, including the consideration of where to place cameras, how to move in the respective spaces, so that activities are clear to participants who can only access them virtually etc.

3) Use of Open Source tools, and issues of development of own tools. This topic is an extension of topic number 2, and refers will explores issues of ownership and emancipation through focusing on relationships and communication between skilled and non-skilled users.

The above three themes informed the questions explored in "**Commoning the Networks**": **CIRCLE online symposium 2014/Part 2,** as mentioned at the beginning of this document.

How do debates about Networks intersect with those on the concept of the Commons? Is it possible to undertake a process of "commoning the networks"? How could this be implemented in practical terms? Which are the techniques, technologies, language requirements and relevant methodologies to make this possible? What can we learn from the ways in which interactions occur amongst networks, both vertically/horizontally and rhizomatically/progressively? How could a feminist methodology facilitate movement, processing and exchange of ideas and practices in multiple directions amongst and across diverse networks, within an ethos that engages with creativity through a process of "commoning the networks?"