

leon Bonaparte). The validity of that quote is not questioned in the book.

The author, Niall Ferguson, is an award-winning British historian and professor at Harvard University. He focuses on economic and political history. Ferguson is also a columnist and writes regularly for some of the renowned world newspapers and magazines. While writing this book, he had the opportunity to talk to Kissinger, so the book helps us understand the work and activities of one of the most influential players in US foreign policy.

The author also used parts of Kissinger's previously published autobiography. Ferguson's book is without a doubt an interesting read, recommended for all admirers of Henry Kissinger.

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Review

**Gregory Sholette
and Oliver Ressler
It's the Political Economy,
Stupid: The Global Financial
Crisis in Art and Theory**

University of Chicago, Pluto Press, 2013, 192 pp.

The book *It's the Political Economy, Stupid*, edited by Gregory Sholette and Oliver Ressler, reflects the impact of the 2008 economic crisis and global recession on society and art, featuring a number of colorful illustrations. It is a mixture of different perspectives; from dry empirical studies, philosophical observations to artistically written essays, but altogether expressing neo-Marxist and critical (even anarchist) sentiments. Thus, the central theme that makes this collection a sensible whole is that people are interconnected through the global system of capitalist globalization, which reflects all spheres of social activity, including art.

The first essay, *Unspeaking the Grammar of Finance* by editors Gregory Sholette and Oliver Ressler, deals with the capitalist modes of art today. Their central argument is that in order to "exist" in the contemporary world one necessarily has to be capable of making a profit. Therefore, even artists are conditioned by the market oriented rules of modern capitalistic existence, trying to capitalize on their work. Furthermore, the authors criticize modern

state policy, arguing that states have become mediators of interests in the capitalist system, rather than serving as the insurers of citizens' wellbeing. This has specific implications for the development of contemporary art, as it is included in this complex structure of the cost-benefit mentality.

The highlight of this book is Slavoj Žižek's essay *It's the Political Economy, Stupid*; the title used for the whole collection. Žižek deals with the problem of the liberal market and democracy. The economic crisis of 2008 is so deep, that even experts are not able to find singular and effective solutions. The essay identifies that the crisis of capitalism emerged from the basic levels of capitalism's foundation; the trust and the credit system (which is grounded in trust). Žižek stresses that the crisis was supposed to have happened earlier, but the real estate market was subsidized, which makes the whole issue even more bizarre. On the one hand, there is the problem of unemployment if corporations, such as General Motors, are to go bankrupt and not receive any financial aid from the state. On the other hand, the subsidies for corporations is nothing but socialism for the rich. Thus, Žižek advocates a Keynesian approach to the crisis with self-aware and active citizens. He also implies that capitalism and the welfare state can work together, but the system must undertake a change from credit risks to safe investments.

Other interesting contributions to this topic were those of Liz Park, John Robert, and David Graeber, who wrote about the anarchistic elements in the Occupy Wall Street movement. However, because the book is mainly about art, some of the

essays should specifically be singled out. Melanie Gilligan argues that in modern times, art has simultaneously developed alongside capitalism. Gilligan claims that modern society is based on money as a medium of commodity. The problem lies in the fact that commodity itself has become a value: "the medium of exchange becomes an object of exchange". For Gilligan, the issue with this change in the social system of values is that it consequently makes the economy of today less valued in terms of productivity and much more by mere expansion. In comparison, art and capitalism are not that different: capitalistic abstract expansion has become the purpose for itself, which has curiously been the case with art since the 19th century.

In the essay *Occupational Realism*, Julia Bryan-Wilson deals with the controversial artistic project of Ben Kinmont, whose artistic performance was starting his own bookshop business. Thus, the point is being made that the line between art and business is quite thin. According to the author, this lifelong performance fulfills the criteria to become art. The text leads to a redefinition of labor because the author stresses out that labor is not merely an instrument of survival but something that gives pleasure (or satisfaction) to human being and creates more than material values.

Sick Sad Life: On the Artistic Reproduction of Capital by Kerstin Stakemeier, is another interesting philosophical observation. The author examines the impossibility of representing capital in photography. The figurative representation of capital always fails unless it is shown as money. Without the money segment, capital

remains too abstract to be set in a photo. The author's main argument is that capital is basically an unobservable order of production that manifests itself in all aspects of social activity; thus, it is not possible to capture capitalism in an art form.

Especially interesting is the last essay by Brian Holmes, *Art after Capitalism*. The author claims that the post-capitalist form of art has already begun. According to Holmes, this new form of art should have a therapeutic and educational role in the contemporary capitalist world. He stands for critics of the modern capitalist system, but with a certain objectivity. Holmes implies that art, as any other social branch of activity, should be involved in a global economic and political system, and not distanced from it, for its moral role could have a great influence. A similar point could be read from *Art from the Exhibition: It's the Political Economy, Stupid* by Thom Donovan, who advocates the educational function of art.

In the context of mutuality of art and economy, the book offers an original, interesting and insightful approach on how the interdependent modern world actually works. The overall point the book makes is that it is impossible to ignore the influences of the global economic crisis on all spheres of society, with a specific emphasis on art.

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Review

Zoran Kurelić (ed.)
Violence, Art, and Politics

Politička misao, Zagreb, 2015, 214 pp.

Violence, Art, and Politics edited by Zoran Kurelić is an effort to bring together various perspectives on three different, but interrelated concepts important for the fields of “film studies and gender studies, political science, media studies, history of art and philosophy” (7). The divergent contributors' vocations (twelve of them) as well as the combination of modernist and postmodernist (methodological and epistemological) influences blend together through the loosely connected structure of the book. While politics and violence conceptually direct the discussion, it is the concept of art that is put forward as a platform, or a register, of ideological and political relations which finds its way of expression through various mediums. In the manner of Fredric Jameson, Louis Althusser, or Slavoj Žižek, it is seen as an appropriate “object” of political studies which, more or less, dialectically or in the last instance, consciously or unconsciously, reflects the dominant or marginalized, prevalent or silenced structures of power in a specific historical moment. Even if one is not a post/neo-Marxist, art can still be seen as the articulation of its own material/cultural/ideological conditions, through which one is able to grasp the constitutive elements of political “reality” – of