

# THE € ECONOMY IS \$ SPINNING

With contributions by  
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Jan Hoelt, Hanne Lippard, Toril Johannessen, Robertas Narkus,  
Antonis Pittas and Nick Thurston

Opening 5 June, 2016 4PM  
Exhibition continues 9 June – 17 July, 2016  
Open Thursday-Sunday 1-5PM and by appointment  
Save the date: 16 July, 2016 – finissage with performances

*How does the economy speak to us? Does it speak through us?  
Sometimes its voice trembles with fear, at other times it whispers  
with hope and sings in excitement about better days to come.*

Economic jargon settles in and makes things sound correct by making them sound familiar; it comes to our aid when troubles arise and comforts us with its reasonable-sounding justifications. Like religion, it gives hope and solace, soothes worry and anguish. The doctrine is everywhere, oozing out of academic studies and financial newspapers; ‘efficiency’ has become the measure of the everyday, as cost-benefit analyses guide us to make decisions in the interest of the greatest possible return. This logic promises freedom in exchange for leaving things to take their own course: *laissez faire, laissez passer*.

The ‘invisible hand’ of the market should ensure that needs and wants are met without any outside intervention or regulation. Yet needs and wants are not governed by rational rules: the desire to have it all, to have it now and without limits, is a notion without end, with irrationality as its command.

*The Economy is Spinning* looks into various manifestations of the language of economics and finance, a language that permeates our vocabularies and builds the boundaries of our imaginations. The exhibition considers the economy as a ‘performing body’ that reveals its state of mind in its language. With contributions by nine artists, the exhibition accentuates and exaggerates the absurdity of this language and of its underlying mechanisms.



An accompanying publication will be launched in September 2016.

## ONOMATOPEE

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**Mercedes Azpilicueta** (1981 La Plata, Argentina) uses primarily voice and the affective quality of language as material for her work. She is currently a resident at the Rijksakademie, Amsterdam. Azpilicueta earned an MFA from the Dutch Art Institute/ArtEZ, Arnhem and a BFA from Universidad Nacional de las Artes, Buenos Aires; where she also did the Artists Program from Universidad Torcuato Di Tella.

**Zachary Formwalt** (1979, Georgia, USA) is an artist and filmmaker based in Amsterdam. He has presented solo projects at the Salon of the Museum of Contemporary Art Belgrade (2015); Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam (2014); Wexner Center for the Arts: The Box, Columbus, OH (2010); and Kunsthalle Basel (2009). In 2013, his film, *Unsupported Transit*, received a Tiger Award for Short Films at the International Film Festival Rotterdam

**Jan Hoelt** (1982, DE) in his work often interrogates contemporary globalized society where he employs conceptual photography, video and public interventions. He studied at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne, the Academy of Fine Arts Karlsruhe and the University of Karlsruhe. In 2013-14 he was a resident at the Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht.

**Monique Hendriksen** (1982, NL) graduated the Dutch Art Institute in Arnhem at AKV St. Joost in 's-Hertogenbosch and Breda. Prior to education in art she studied at the Business Economics at Fontys University Eindhoven and a Pre-Master in Philosophy at Tilburg University. This background informs her work where she aims to create a space to discuss and radicalize the entangled relations between art, theory and economics.

**Toril Johannessen** (1978, NO) interdisciplinary practice engages with scientific themes through empirical and theoretical investigation of the relationship between art and science. She obtained her MA in Fine Arts from Bergen National Academy in 2008 and attended the Mountain School of Arts in 2011. Her work has been widely exhibited in galleries and institutions in Norway and internationally, as well as at dOCUMENTA (13) (2012); The Istanbul Biennial (2012).

**Robertas Narkus** (1983, LT/NL) describes his practice as the ‘management of circumstance in an economy of coincidence’. He brings together the ordinary and the absurd to explore notions of chance economics, hypothetical experiences and spiritual commerce. Recently he exhibited at de XII Baltic Triennial, de Appel arts centre, Stroom den Hague, Establiment de’ en Face, Brussels.

**Antonis Pittas** (1983, GR/NL) creates context-sensitive installations, informed by architecture, art-historical references, the performative aspects of installation art, and its social dynamics. Amongst others he had solo exhibitions at De Nederlandsche Bank, Amsterdam, Hessel Museum of Art & CSS Bard Galleries, Annandale, New York (2012), Benaki Museum, Athens (2011), Van Abbe Museum, Eindhoven (2011).

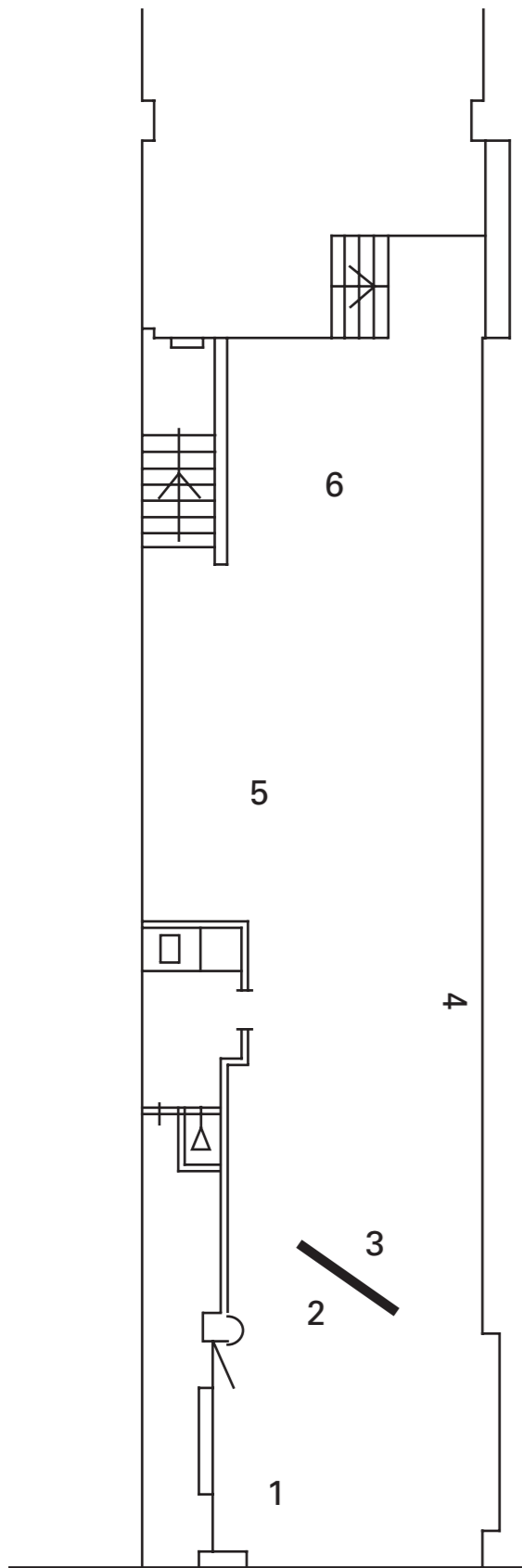
**Hanne Lippard** (1984 in Milton Keynes, UK) is a writer and visual artist living and working in Berlin. Lippard’s practice explores the voice as a medium. Her education in graphic design informs how language can be visually powerful; her texts are visual, rhythmic, and performative rather than purely informative.

**Nick Thurston** (1982, UK) is a writer who makes art works. He is the author or co-author of several books, is co-editor of the publishing imprint Information As Material (York), and his print and sculptural works are held in public and private collections internationally. He has been an Associate and Visiting Lecturer at various art academies in the UK and since 2012 joined the faculty of the School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies at the University of Leeds.

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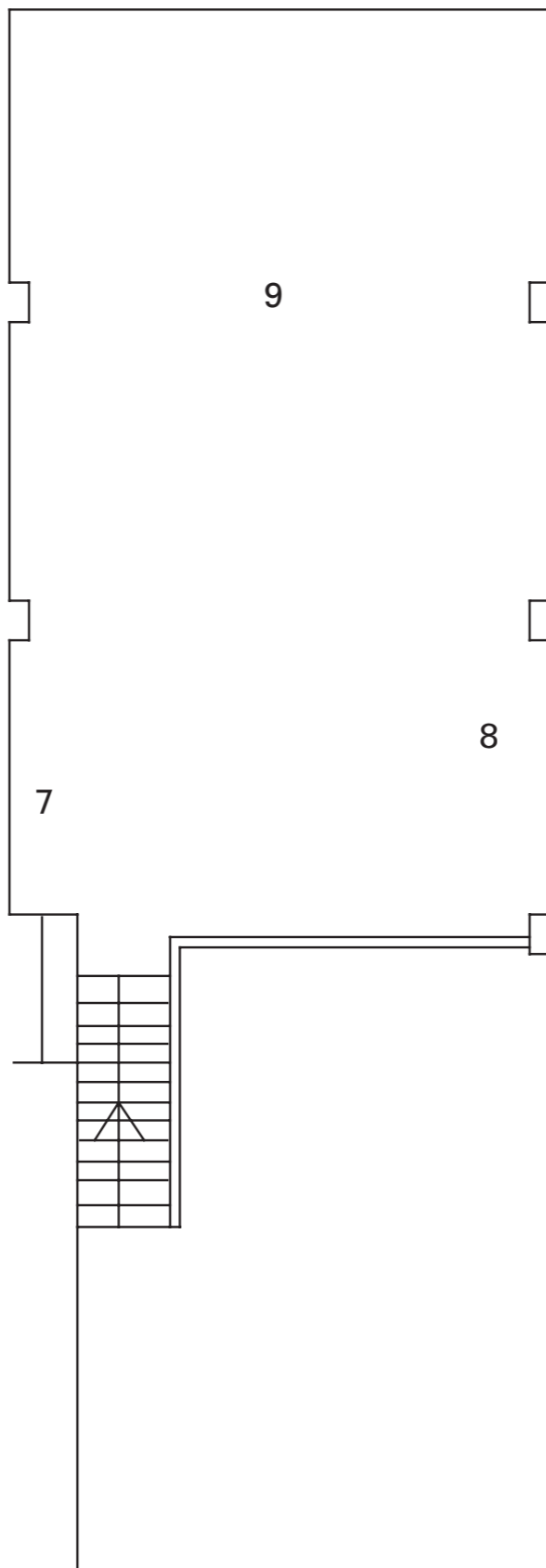
“Reason is always a region cut out of the irrational”. So say D&G. It is “a region traversed by the irrational. Underneath all reasons lies delirium, drift. Everything is rational in capitalism, except capital or capitalism itself. The stock market is certainly rational; one can understand it, study it, the capitalists know how to use it, and yet it is completely delirious, it’s mad. It is in this sense that we say: the rational is always the rationality of an irrational.”

(Deleuze and Guattari in: *Chaosophy*, ed. Sylvere Lotringer, Autonomedia/Semiotexte, 1995)



GROUND FLOOR

- 1 Hanne Lippard
- 2 Zachary Formwalt
- 3 Nick Thurston
- 4 Toril Johannessen
- 5 Antonis Pittas
- 6 Jan Hoeft



FIRST FLOOR

- 7 Robertas Narkus
- 8 Monique Hendriksen
- 9 Mercedes Azpilicueta

GROUND FLOOR

**1**  
**Hanne Lippard**  
*The Ssecret to SsucceSs iSs in the Ss-eSs*  
 (sound, 7'14")

Business strategy rhetoric provides the guidelines for human success (or failure?) in Hanne Lippard's sound poetry. *The Ssecret to SsucceSs iSs in the Ss-eSs* introduces seven principles for achieving greatness in ones life as an entrepreneur when life's purpose has been equated with business success. The sound piece accentuates a strangely familiar sounding business rhetoric where the measure of ones prosperity is based on a seven-point checklist.

**2**  
**Zachary Formwalt**  
*Kritik der Politik und Nationalökonomie*,  
 photograph 35cm x 30cm

On 1 February 1845, Karl Marx signed a contract with the publisher Carl Leske for his first major work on political economy, a two-volume work that was to be titled *Kritik der Politik und Nationalökonomie*, and was to be finished by the end of summer. Leske urged Marx to finish the work in a purely scientific manner, without any political polemics, in fear of confrontation with the Prussian government. Marx rejected such changes, stating that his "work is scientific, but not scientific in the sense of the Prussian government". Two years later, Leske cancelled the contract with Marx, who never finished the work. The photograph here shows the verso of Marx's copy of the contract, which is held in the archives of the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam.

**3**  
**Nick Thurston**  
*Van de onderaanneming of, Principles of Poetic Right* (30min silent film, looped; data projection, 2016)

The poems that appear in Nick Thurston's work were commissioned through Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk service, which provides access to workers who perform customized tasks for minimum payment. The film captures the moment of these poems being translated from English into Dutch, and depicts the emerging iconography of cloud living as well as our fantasies of automation. The work reduces the poetic imagination to that of exploited labour, and at the same time elevates "artificial artificial" intelligence to the status of the poetic. In doing so, it explores the all-too-real changes that are reshaping every form of labour, each day more quickly, under the surface of life.

A Dutch language edition of the complete collection of poems is available through the print-on-demand service Lulu.com, only for the duration of the exhibition,

**4**  
**Toril Johannessen**  
*Words and Years - Physical and Economic Expansion and Recession; Crisis in nature and science; Logic and Love in Art*  
 (silkscreen prints, 76 x 56 cm, 2010)

*The Words and Years* series charts the use of particular words in various academic journals and news magazines. The frequency of the use of selected words is mapped by going through the complete volumes of the journals from their first issues to the present day. The resulting strangely poetic diagrams raise questions about the motivations underlying scientific enquiry and its graphic representations.

**5**  
**Antonis Pittas**  
*Donkey* (steel structures with neon light, 139 x 75 x 44 cm, 2015-16); *Clip (Untitled)*, (steel and marble, various dimensions, 2015)

Steel copies of standardised trestles form a barricade, and at the same time provide light with which to view the content on the surrounding clipboards. These ubiquitous items of office stationery are now constructed with precious marble and steel. The images that they display set fragments of a revolutionary past against the gestural performances of contemporary austerity politics: images from the archive of the avant-garde constructivist photographer Gustav Klutis and of the artist's own hands are apposed to images of the hand gestures made by politicians speaking in the context of our contemporary crisis. This gestural language, meant to emphasize what is being said, often delivers messages of anger, fear or power.

**6**  
**Jan Hoeft**  
*Exit Strategies* (film, 6'30" on loop, 2014)

Images of the vacant fire escapes of large office buildings, warehouses and other industrial sites are the basis of Jan Hoeft's film. These strange appendices of universalized corporate architecture are shown in a sedate sequence while we listen to the confession of someone's desire – presumably an employee's – to "make use" of these structures. Are they an arsonist or a psychopath? Or simply an everyman hoping for a change in the monotony and aimlessness of their situation?

FIRST FLOOR

**7**  
**Robertas Narkus**  
*Contract* (text on wall, dimensions variable)

Hedge fund founder and pharmaceutical firm CEO Martin Shkreli became "the most hated man in the World" and the "poster child of greed" after he acquired the rights to a widely used medicine and raised its price by 5000 per cent overnight. In 2015, this "most hated man" also bought the "most exclusive rap album of all time": the only known copy of

the Wu-Tang Clan album *Once Upon a Time in Shaolin*. The Wu-Tang Clan have imposed an 88-year commercial ban on releasing further copies as they believe the number 8, a rotated infinity sign, has a mystical importance. The text on the wall is a transcript of a video made by Shkreli and addressed to Wu-Tang, and echoes a Faustian pact – a deal with the devil in exchange for diabolical favours.

**8**  
**Monique Hendriksen**  
*On Nature* (film, 9'20", 2016)

How to visualize and represent capital is the essential question of *On Nature*, a speculative exploration of capital's real abstraction and its aesthetics. In an era when we are accustomed to a God's eye view, and capital has grown into an unintelligible complexity, the problem of capital's representation is hidden deeper. The false sense of mastery given by our screens and maps feeds a sense of control when in fact we are not in command. This film decomposes images of our abstract, built and imagined environment in an attempt to adequately visualize the false feeling of unlimited progress and universality that is the only nature we have left.

The performance *Delusional Cause* will take place on the 16th July.

**9**  
**Mercedes Azpilicueta**  
*Geometric Dancer Doesn't Believe in Love, Finds Aspiration and Ecstasy in Spirals*, video-projections (20'30", loop) on aluminum sheets, 2015

In this performative video installation the artist re-enacts the soundscape of the port city of Rotterdam. Her ghostly appearance recites sounds and words collected on the marketplace, at the harbour and in the city's streets. In what resembles an instructional yoga video, methods of mindful meditation and the acceleration of bodily limits intertwine. Yet instead of providing relaxation, the performance ultimately exposes the delirious processes of cognitive capitalism.

NOT IN THE EXHIBITION

The office monitor shows a film by the Danish artist group Superflex that is not formally part of the exhibition. This short film, *Financial Crisis (Session I-IV)*, is a four-chapter therapy session with a hypnotist who treats the financial crisis as a psychosis. The viewer is guided through four of its symptoms, in one chapter experiencing life inside George Soros' skin, feeling the rush and excitement of buying and selling stocks, while in another experiencing anxiety and a loss of control as the free hand of the market malfunctions.