

The underbelly, the apparatus that presents the work, is also the work. Forgetting this can be easy depending on the situations and structures that construct the frames around the work.

Moreover, an artwork also comprises its journey: from question to form to presentation to archive/storage to trash pit. What I'm saying: institutions, their capital, can be quantified.

As the works are animated, are the shelves rubbing against the wall? Moreover, should they be?

Adjustment responsiveness, efficiency, pace, and its acceleration, are the keys here. These pieces are the result of broad presumptions about institutions and the way capital flows within their veins:

1. Works of art are a vehicle for speculation and money laundering through the exploitation of various tax codes and loopholes.
2. The prevalence of tax shelters for the purchase and trade of art on the secondary market is a perversion:
 1. For instance, the momentary display of Francis Bacon's *Three Studies of Lucian Freud* at the Portland Art Museum in my home state of Oregon—one of five states in the United States with no state sales tax—after its 2014 acquisition at auction by Elaine Wynn. At the time the price of the triptych set an auction record for a work of art of \$142.4 million USD.
 2. The prevalence of freeport warehouse structures near global market exchanges such as ARCIS in Manhattan and Le Freeport in Singapore, Luxembourg, Dubai, and previously: Basel.
 3. Last year, the United States filed a lawsuit against Swiss bank UBS for committing fraud in the subprime loan mortgage crisis a decade prior.⁵ The Swiss Banking Act which contains a provision on secrecy also came under scrutiny.⁶ These changes in the manner in which quiet money moved offered new challenges to Switzerland's decades-long facilitation of tax-free trade in art. Unsurprisingly, capital adjusts, and quiet money in the form of untaxed art transactions has found a new home in the aforementioned freeports. There remains a freeport in Geneva.

Art ascending and descending on the wall. Isn't its movement intoxicating? What does your quick smile mean? What is sacrificed in order to execute this mobility? What is the traffic?

In 2011, Cornelius Gurlitt was on a train returning to Munich from Zurich when he was apprehended with a large sum of money in pocket from the sale of an artwork. Subsequently, an investigation was opened into Gurlitt's alleged tax fraud. Cornelius Gurlitt was the son of Hildebrand Gurlitt, an art dealer and war profiteer in Nazi Germany who had been appointed by Hermann Göring to acquire art works for the "Führermuseum" Hitler wanted to build in Linz. In addition, he was one of only four dealers appointed by the Commission for the Exploitation of Degenerate Art to market confiscated art works abroad. After Hildebrand passed away in 1956, it was his son Cornelius who inherited an extensive trove of looted art and furthermore established a close connection with various entities in Switzerland to occasionally peddle that work at a duty-free freeport warehouse in Basel, amongst other places. Switzerland has been a haven for the market in this story.

In 2014, Cornelius Gurlitt (1932-2014) named the Kunstmuseum Bern as sole heir to his collection. Gurlitt's estate includes some 1,500 works of art and approximately 25,000 documents.⁷

In response to this gift, Kunstmuseum Bern founded a department of provenance research. What role does the newly-formed department play in inoculating the museum's collection against liability while researching the museum's collection? Executive Director of Kunstmuseum Bern Nina Zimmer notes, "the museum's provenance research department is currently entirely funded by foundations and private donations."⁸

Thus far, "[w]ith the current state of provenance research it has been possible to single out nine works as looted art. By August 2019 six works could be restituted to their rightful owners."⁹

It is my opinion that the Gurlitt bequest to the Kunstmuseum Bern and its subsequent decision to research the provenance of the artworks is the single most important institutional development in the arts in decades.

Engaging with the hard facts, not to mention the implications of the Gurlitt transfer to Kunstmuseum Bern is not a quick thing. For its part, the institution has been transparent in discussing the complications of the reception. Zimmer has been vital to the manner that this has happened. Zimmer states, "Gurlitt was a great opportunity for Bern, which we were able to implement in a positive way thanks to the responsible handling of the Foundation Council."¹⁰



What happens when a loophole closes? A man dies. In this case, an institution like Kunstmuseum Bern accepts the responsibility. It is an opportunity. It is a burden.

142-147cm centerline is the height for viewing artwork.

What is the algorithm that is pushing these works? *Applicate 2.1* presents the ideal viewing height of each individual work in the Gurlitt trove as it was donated to the Kunstmuseum Bern Foundation. I conveniently acquired this data from the list of works published as an appendix in the catalog that was produced at the time of this bequest's initial exhibitions.

Applicate 2.2 presents the ideal viewing height of each individual work in the Kunstmuseum Bern's collection. I acquired this information from a comprehensive list of works in portable document format from the Kunstmuseum Bern website. There was surprisingly minimal friction in acquiring this data.

What I want to talk about here is the adaptive mobility of the Kunstmuseum in order to accommodate this opportunity. This athleticism is not unrelated to what author and academic Mimi Sheller in her book, *Mobility Justice*, calls "kino-elitism:"

Barriers to access and controls over mobility are implemented...to serve elite interests...via formal and informal policing, gates, passes, clothing, regulation of public space, and surveillance systems that limit the right to move, filter entry and exit, and selectively apply protection of the state.¹³

The museum makes catalogs; it hires people; its profile is elevated; it commits to decades of labor on behalf of this opportunity. There is an

The institution continues to research and retribute artworks. Zimmer has said that Kunstmuseum Bern will only take possession of work which is proven not to be looted.¹¹

In his essay "Switzerland—Market or Hub?" Georg Kreis writes:

Objectively speaking, 'market' is the more neutral term, but that, too, raises questions. Markets are not simply there; they must develop and then, if conditions prove favourable, and if there is a demand and existing possibilities are made use of, they can evolve and become established.¹²

Favorable conditions for the market of art in Switzerland include "the quality of the infrastructure (including the unproblematic convertibility of the Swiss Franc), the large number of private and public collections, the simple customs formalities, the favourable taxation conditions, banking confidentiality, and in general the 'discretion of the Swiss.'" This is in addition to the "tax-free warehouses."

Neutrality is a position. I think of this the way I think of institutions in general. These are structural entities that are not neutral, entities to which we as artists, patrons, and arts workers are beholden.

Much recent and continued scholarship is being devoted to the Gurlitt trove. However, what I had a much harder time researching was the transformation that Kustmuseum Bern executed institutionally in order to become the recipient of such a "gift?"

This opportunity is the work.

institutionally structural aspect of this bequest that is less transparent than the narrative of restitution and archive. This dramatic institutional adaptation is the point of departure for this work.

Within the arts, we are kino-elites, and to what extent we acknowledge and seek to expose rather than veil the nature of this elitism is an underlying question of this work.

Kino-elitism is a source of economic darkness. Art as well as the individuals who make and present it are eminently mobile. Art fairs and biennials peddle in kino-elitism; its gallerists and directors, clientele, crates, the valorization of busy-ness, and the metabolism for movement are the stuff of mobility injustice. Pace and mobility are linked.

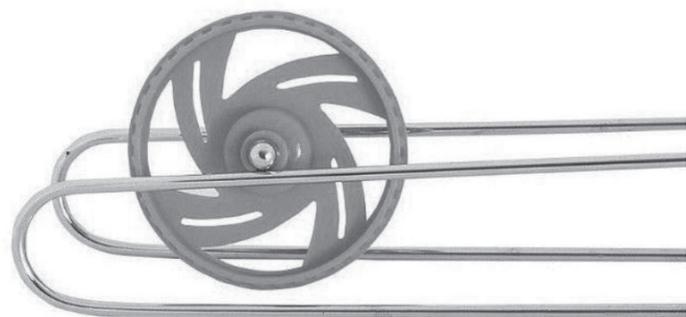
How do vacancies so easily become form? Is it because the structures that surround those voids are work, too?

Again, the adaptation is the work. This is what progress looks like. Progress, and the entirety of a narrative such as this, is your quick smile.

Why is it so hard for institutions to scale down? Why does adaptation connote growth?

Do you know about this exhibition that Jacques Derrida curated at the Louvre, *Memories of the Blind*? It was part of a series that the Louvre did in the early 1990s called *Taking Sides*. Derrida's show presented works from the Louvre's collection depicting blindness. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, translators of the English edition of the catalog text, posed in their introduction that: "*Memoirs of the Blind* is about, among many other things, the debt at the origin of all drawing."¹⁴

This is how I think about this animated shelving. They are inverted paintings. The support is the form. Structurally, we are indebted to the institution and its problems. The opportunity itself is the work.



Opportunity: ANODE

Here, I would like to discuss the phrase "impact washing." Impact washing is the practice of drawing attention away from suspect activities (whether individual or corporate) by investing in noble causes, e.g. art institutions.

Art institutions can also be understood as opportunity zones. There is no singular, shared mandate for institutions as they present culture. Each has a different understanding of its mandate and a different relationship to the ways that it engages in impact washing for its patrons. Some institutions impact wash more aggressively than others. Some pretend not to do it at all. And some engage directly and critically with the practice by presenting work that addresses structural and social issues in a manner that is sincere. Many circumstances within cultural institutions determine the extent to which they impact wash or interface with structural issues.

On December 22, 2017, the US Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which received bipartisan support, was signed into law. The act created the Opportunity Zone or OZ, a scheme designed to "spur economic development" in "distressed communities" or census tracts that meet the criteria for a "low-income community" by providing "tax benefits" to investors who "make investments"—read: purchase and develop property—in these zones. In practice, tax breaks are given to organizations and individuals with the means to purchase and develop property in these areas. The result of the OZ for investors is that capital gains invested in land and business development in these zones are not taxed.

To my surprise, the building that houses Yale Union, the art institution that I co-founded in 2008 and currently run, was placed in one such zone in Portland, Oregon. This development has inspired the swift and dramatic refiguring of the neighborhood from one of aging light industrial buildings to a forest of apartment buildings over ground floor retail. Yale Union once was adjacent to a vacant lot inhabited by a herd of goats. Now four floors of apartments tower over a grocery store and other ground floor retail. The Inner Eastside Portland skyline is still studded with building cranes.

The Yale Laundry building was built in 1908 to house a steam-powered industrial laundry. As Portland is located in the Cascadia subduction zone and thus, despite low levels of seismicity compared to other subduction zones, there are a number of earthquakes of various types regularly recorded. In order to meet contemporary building codes in the face of the threat of significant earthquake activity, Yale Union's unreinforced masonry requires a multi-million dollar seismic upgrade. It is nearly impossible, writing this in Switzerland, to quantify the enormity



of this fundraising challenge in Portland, Oregon, in the United States of America. Yale Union, over the years, has predominantly relied on funding its exhibitions and operations on "earned income," e.g. renting its facilities as a site for weddings or for product photo shoots by international sports apparel companies.¹⁷ One scheme floated to achieve this seismic upgrade was to build an office/condominium tower in Yale Union's parking lot which would serve as a seismic anchor for the original brick building while offering the promise of future income to support the institution's programming and operations.

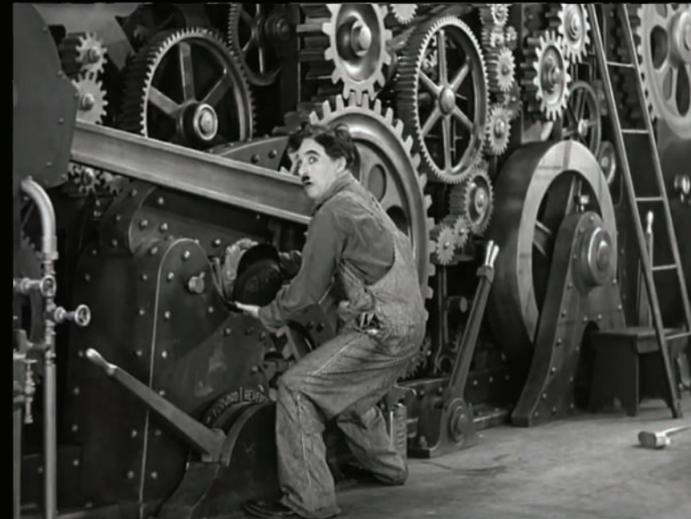
The Ghost Ship, located in Oakland, California, was an exhibition and performance space sited in an industrial warehouse. Artists also lived in this warehouse, paying less rent than what was typical in the San Francisco/Oakland rental market. In December of 2016, during a concert where people from my own community were attending and performing, a fire started, killing 36 people inside the Ghost Ship. San Francisco, with its grotesque recovery from the subprime loan mortgage crisis and its aggressive metabolism for gentrification, had pushed less-affluent individuals to the peripheries of homelessness or illegal living situations (such as those at the Ghost Ship). In the media coverage following the Ghost Ship warehouse fire, the unregulated nature of the domestic living situation of this tragedy was



"What's the use of trying?"

"You're great! I'll give you
a steady job."

"Get your coat. We're on
strike."



often cited to demonstrate the necessity of economic development in such underprivileged areas. The property where the Ghost Ship was once located is now within an Opportunity Zone.

Here are some assumptions:

1. Capitalism, at its core, is freeloading on the natural resources of this world, like zinc. This is pure opportunism.
 1. Just as it benefits from the labor of the working class, another major input of capitalism is literally, the earth.
 2. As such, art and capital are intrinsically linked and the waste inherent to the arts is exploitative of nature.
 3. Art and its various tentacles play an abstract role in the increasingly swift swallowing of natural resources.
2. Natural resources are finite. Yet, capitalism inherently adapts to new conditions with new mutations of itself.

Here is a cedar door to no aperture at scale. To whatever extent I, as an artist, you, as a viewer in the country of Switzerland, or it, as a physical and heavy artwork, accept responsibility for our own complicity within this nexus of opportunism notwithstanding, I'd like to welcome you to the chaos and darkness of our industry.

What we end up with is the naive, hopeful, and potentially cavalier idea that we can progress or learn from the placement of objects in space, from speculation and the presentation of ideas, or from the questioning of norms within institutions. What will happen?

Opportunistic TRANSITION SPACE

Listen, about materials, accelerated processing, and opportunity:

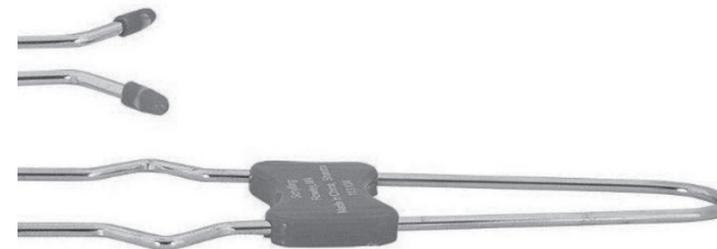
Camphor is a wood known for its therapeutic properties, see: Vicks® VapoRub™. CNC routing, endearing itself to rational movement, uses a bit/knife to reduce material instead of printing the material. It is a subtractive rather than additive process. This is key.

Although all of the material in this exhibition is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, let's be honest, scarcity is an inherent property of this material. We are implicated in the consumption of these finite resources. The printing presses that I use to make work are known as proof presses. These machines are long out of production. There is a lack of information about their service and maintenance. However, the machines treat their consumable material (paper) with impression. It is a reductive process.

Moreover, operating these machines is not an ergonomic process. The operator's human capital is compromised through long hours of printing. Bodies become lopsided. Shoulders dislocate.

Game Ready is the brand name of a relatively-respected company that supplies thermal management devices for post-surgery clientele. Their products are bladders and pumps. Powered by DC power, the pump is a cooler attached via hose to an body-appendage-shaped bladder.

Game Ready is a piece that is concerned with adaptability and resilience through reductive processes. "Game ready" is also a term that connotes preparedness. The athleticism or mobility involved in simply being ready is a privilege not afforded to those



less economically or otherwise mobile. That a device specifically services clients who are in no way mobile, but whose brand name sells mobility, is perverse. This is us living within late capitalism! A bladder wrapped around a body part being tethered by a hose to a pump/cooler is mobility restricting.

I apologize for bringing speculative fiction into this, but there is a character in *Chronicles of Riddick* that I am frequently thinking about. This character is called a "Lensor." This character is a very slow-moving humanoid who is leashed to a more mobile lord/ruler individual. The Lensor has a fancy pair of goggles that outputs to a display held by the mobile operator. It is a master/slave scenario via data leash, where information of the past is the currency. And it happens very slowly!



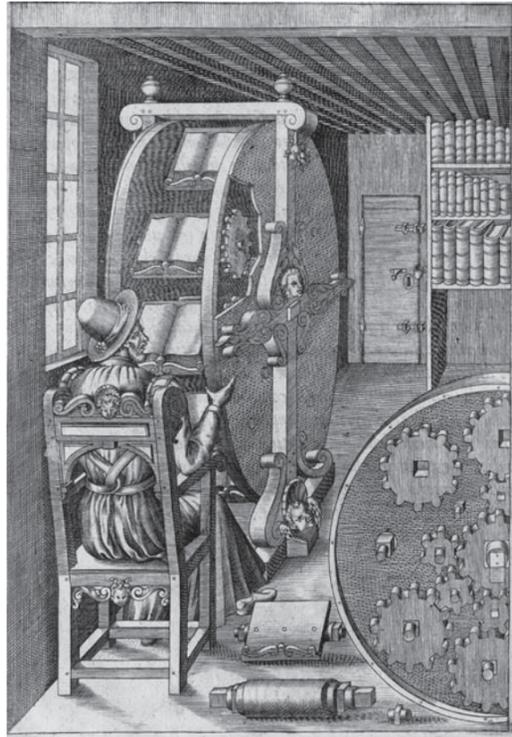
What is the tool? Can a tool ever be neutral? Can an institution ever be neutral?

Listen, much of the work in this exhibition visibly ties my hand to the articulating arm of a router through the use of scarce but simultaneously recycled materials in an opportunity zone such as a Swiss kunst halle.

Tense!

Would you like to quantify what material is more ethically sourced in exhibition making? Perhaps some material is rendered in less aggressive, less free-loading processes? Perhaps some material grows more quickly or is easier to recycle? Perhaps the most ethical way to make exhibitions is simply to read and write? To rely on these sort of quantifications disregards fundamental aspects of our industry and its metabolism for wastefulness. We can always do better, but I am unsure if it ever gets better. There is always sacrifice. Zinc is always now.

What are made here are impressions. The paper is a transfer matrix, receiving the pressure. The multiples, the sheets, the impression visible on recto and verso, the cradling of materials, this movement is also still. As a pad, in multiple: here.



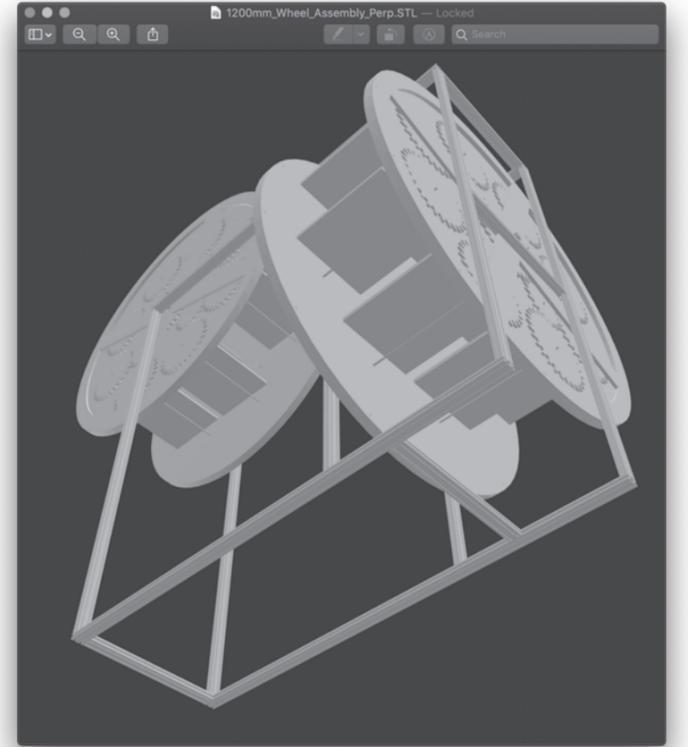
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Opportunity: Opportunity Zone

In the 16th-century, an Italian military engineer named Agostino Ramelli designed what is known as a reading wheel. In the mutation of the design here, the central spindle of this device is square. Human power could be served to the machine for its function.

What function?

When was the last time you plugged an electrical apparatus into a wall and it did not work? What confusion was inspired? How did you go about problem solving this lack of functionality? The arc of acceleration reveals the underbelly of progress, and this is where we are deposited. High water mark or tide line. It is a passive server. Is it broken? Where is the motor?

Where is the motor.

What is equilibrium? Is the structure (institution) facilitating its balancing?

This server is made out of raw recycled plastic sourced here in Switzerland. The other primary component is 7075 aluminum (which, as a composition, has plenty of zinc). It is another sacrificial anode. The profile bears the weight. It is fragile while the plastic is impossible.

With the speed and pace and traffic manipulation afforded to us by information's ability to adapt, mobilize, accelerate—here is the speculative opportunity for its service.

This is where Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* could serve us.

Is this opportunistic?

I scratch my head.

This is not all.

The title of this exhibition is *Opportunity Zones*.

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Notes

- 1 [corrosionpedia.com](https://www.corrosionpedia.com), The Online Hub for Corrosion Professionals.
- 2 Tangentially, but not metaphorically unrelated: zinc is also a primary component in most sunscreen.
- 3 Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen plan set delivered to artists when planning exhibitions.
- 4 Sacrificial zinc anode before and after implementation.
- 5 reuters.com/article/us-ubs-group-lawsuit/u-s-sues-ubs-alleges-crisis-era-mortgage-securities-fraud-idUSKCN1ND37E
- 6 reuters.com/article/us-swiss-secrecy/era-of-bank-secrecy-ends-as-swiss-start-sharing-account-data-idUSKCN1MF13O
- 7 kunstmuseumbern.ch/sehen/688-heute-120.html
- 8 theartnewspaper.com/news/gurlitt-bequest-spurs-provenance-research-in-switzerland
- 9 kunstmuseumbern.ch/en/service/media/media-releases-2019/23-09-19-gurlitt-ausstellung-jerusalem-2213.html
- 10 aargauerzeitung.ch/kultur/buch-buehne-kunst/gurlitt-ist-eine-chance-fuer-bern-die-direktorin-zieht-bilanz-132802420
- 11 monopol-magazin.de/das-gurlitt-erbe-bern: "In Berner Besitz kommt nur, was erwiesenermaßen keine Raubkunst ist", betonte Zimmer. "Das Gurlitt-Erbe in Bern," Monopol. 08.07.2017.
- 12 Kreis, Georg, "Switzerland - Market or Hub?" in *Gurlitt: Status Report*. Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 2018. 60.
- 13 clereviewofbooks.com/home/mobility-justice-sheller
- 14 Derrida, Jacques, *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins*. Translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990. 12.
- 15 My phone takes a picture of a page from the book *Gurlitt: Status Report*. Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 2018, with image representing previous freeport in Basel, Switzerland.
- 16 The building that was previously a freeport in Basel, Switzerland is now the Academy of Art and Design. fhnw.ch
- 17 See #yaleunion.
- 18 Yale Union from the vantage point of a construction crane in 2018.
- 19 Chaplin, Charlie. *Modern Times*, 1936.
- 20 Twohy, David. *Chronicles of Riddick*, 2004.
- 21 *Le diverse et artificieuse machine* by Agostino Ramelli, 1588.
- 22 *Intermundium Machine XVIII* by Daniel Libeskind, 1988
- 23 *Das Leserad* by Veronika Spierenburg, 2013 at Sitterwerk, St. Gallen.
- 24 *Opportunity Zones* by Aaron Flint Jamison at Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen, 26 October 2019 - 5 January 2020.