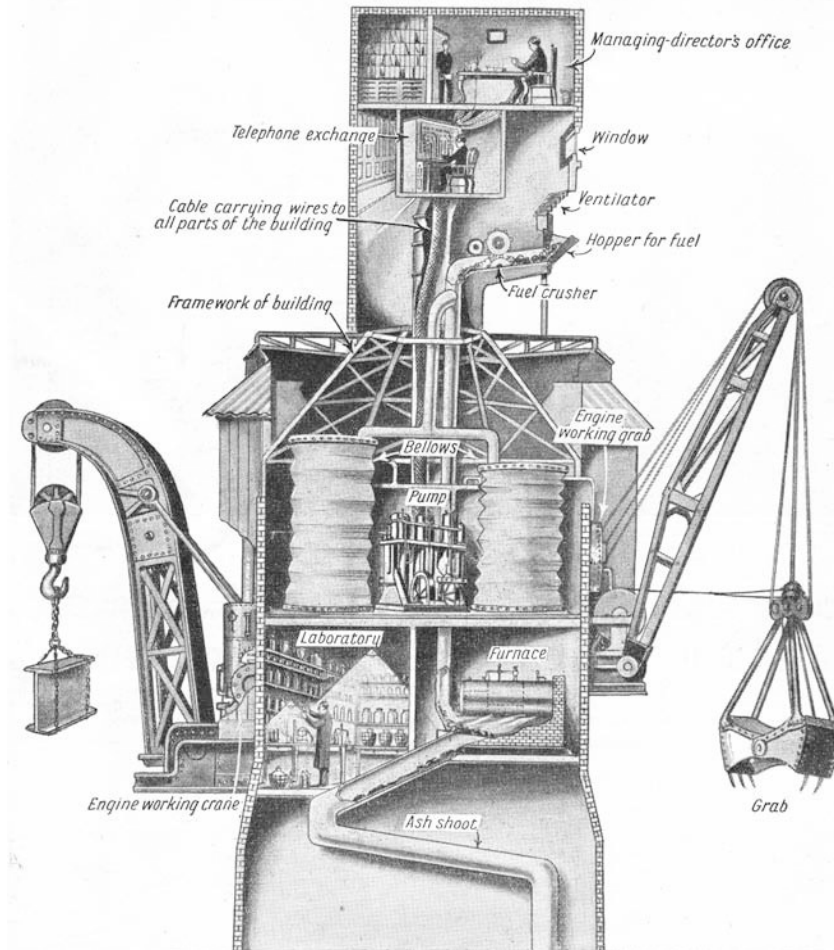


**TRANSMISSION: AGENCY**  
**(LABOUR, WORK, ACTION)**  
2013

PENNINE LECTURE THEATRE  
HOWARD BUILDING, CITY CAMPUS  
SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY

**TUESDAYS FROM 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.**



From October 2012 to March 2013 Sheffield Hallam's Fine Art Transmission Lecture Series will be a discursive platform to address the theme of **AGENCY (Labour, Work, Action)**, developed in collaboration with Art Sheffield 2013.

The economic value of work, labour and art have been much discussed throughout the last three centuries and have been critical drivers in the thinking around Art Sheffield festivals over the last decade. The last four years have accelerated new interests in these discussions as a restructuring of international financial interests intersects with communities lived experience across the globe. Sheffield is not unique, nor is it the same as anywhere else. People, place, and history in relation to shifting economic values remains a central interest for the curatorial team developing Art Sheffield and the collaboration with the Transmission Lecture Series is a marrying of concerns and conversations in our developing understanding of work and labour.

Each session will be hosted by an artist currently teaching in Fine Art, Sheffield Hallam University, or a member of the Art Sheffield consortium.

### **AGENCY (Labour, Work, and Action)**

The political theorist Hannah Arendt refused to be called a philosopher, for philosophy, she said, deals with the singular, while she addressed the plural, that humans not man inhabit the world. She proposes that freedom is constructed in community, in common space, and it is associative, performative, and public (which we saw in the events of Tahrir Square in Egypt, for example, and we may also look to models such as the Paris Commune of 1871). In her book *The Human Condition* (1958), she develops her theory of political action, drawing out the distinctions between what is social and what is political, and that which lies at the heart of our lecture series: what is labour, what is work, what is action (and thus, how is agency achieved, the capacity to act, to make choices, undetermined by supposedly natural forces). Arendt proposes three important human activities: labour, work, and political action. She is as materialist as Karl Marx: labour is a biological activity, a vital necessity operating under constraint. The goal of production is to produce, and there is a constant exchange of objects. It is never-ending, consumed quickly, making a slave of the labourer. Work may be thought of differently, most usefully with the term 'œuvre': as what lasts or remains, as 'technique' and *poiesis*, as what is not spent or wasted and is transmitted; a 'common world' where life unfolds and objects endure beyond the act of their making. Transmission, in Arendt's sense, is a struggle against death, and thus already a form of liberty. It is, one might say, the distinction between what is kept and what is thrown away. Yet this freedom is only partial, for work is still instrumental, determined by causes and ends. While Arendt has been criticised for overly restricted characterisations, her distinction between *praxis* and *poiesis* (between action and making) may help to lead us to new formulations of identity and meaning. To work and labour, then, like Arendt, we will add an essential action, when 'something new is started which cannot be expected from whatever happened before', and frame these by AGENCY, asking what role might be played by the artist or work of art.

**29 January**

**Guest: Susan Collis**

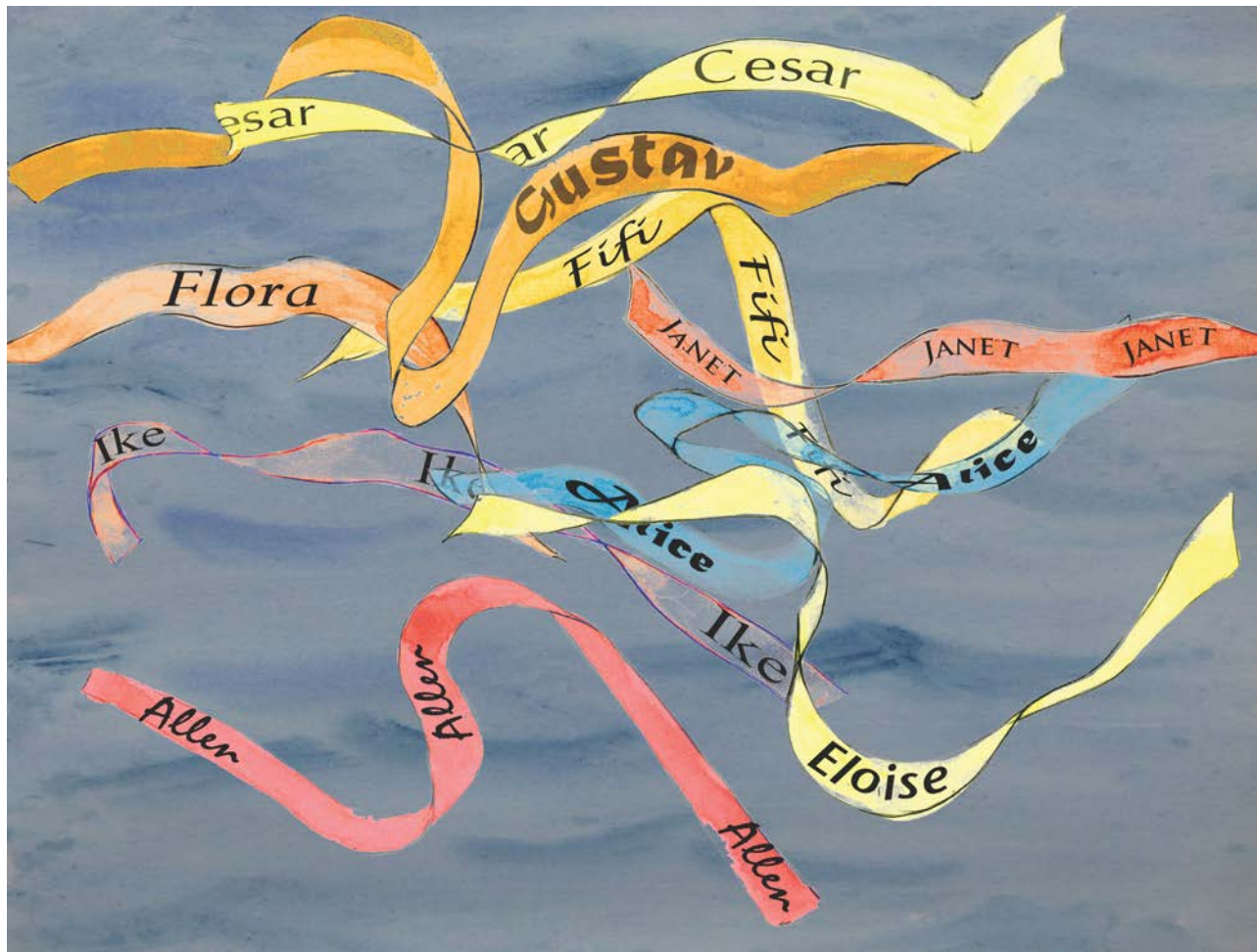
**Host: Julie Westerman**

**Susan Collis** uses a variety of techniques and strategies to investigate interpretation, craft, value, and labour. Everyday objects are etched, splattered and stained with marks of work, wear and tear. Initially, the marks seem to be the accidental results of normal use, and seem meaningless and not worthy of examination. She is interested in the shift of perception that takes place upon discovery that they are, in fact, careful, intentional acts, and that the materials used are valued for their financial or decorative properties. A stepladder is meticulously inlaid with diamonds, pearls, and opals, simulating paint drips. A bucket catching a drip from the gallery ceiling is not the result of neglect, but rather a complex staging of pumps, water-tanks, and false walls artificially creating the scene. Typically, works involve momentous amounts of hidden labour to produce an object that may easily go unnoticed, but is replete with value, material or conceptual. This visual gamble results in a conceptual pay-off, rewarding concerted investigation by the viewer.



*SWEAT, 2012*

**Julie Westerman** works across sculpture, drawing, film, and animation, and as a curator. Her research engages with global warming, using images of structural failure and climatic events, and recent works were exhibited in *Afterwards*, Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre, 2010, and published in *Transmission Annual: Catastrophe*, 2012. Curatorial projects include *Brutalist Speculations and Flights of Fancy*, 2011: artists and writers were invited to speculate on the future of Brutalist architecture in an age of an architecture of facades: *Tegel: Flights of Fancy* invited thirty artists from Britain and Germany to produce films based on Tegel Airport in Berlin, and will be followed by a publication in 2013. A cross-disciplinary research project with Dr John Hart developed a film crossing the boundaries between art and science, *Fly Birdie Fly*, 2011. She will be ISI Fellow at Durham University in 2014, engaging with cross-disciplinary research.



*Noah was responsible*, 2012, watercolour,



**5 February**

**Guest: Margarita Gluzberg**

Host: Lesley Sanderson

**Margarita Gluzberg's** practice spans drawing, performance, sound installation, photography, and moving image. The work expands on the themes of desire and consumption. Solo exhibitions include: *Funk of Terror into Psychic Bricks*, 2007, a study of boxing; *The Money Plot*, 2008, a study of how money affects human relations (both at Paradise Row, London); *The Captive Bird Society*, Dublin Edition 2009, Kevin Kavanagh Gallery, Dublin; and *Phonofrapicon*, 2010, at Zonca & Zonca, Milan, both addressing fashion and the mechanics of capture. Her recent project, *Avenue des Gobelins*, Paradise Row, 2012, presented a new analogue photographic work in the form of slide projection: a meditation on the ritual nature of commodity displays. Her ongoing sound project: *The Captive Bird Society*, was performed at the MacVal Museum, Paris, and an expanded version was commissioned for the official programme of Nuit Blanche, Paris, in 2009. Gluzberg's work has been included in group shows at major international spaces such as CAC, Vilnius; Rooseum, Malmo; KAdE Kunsthal, The Netherlands; Lunds Konsthall, Lund; and Baibakov Art Projects, Moscow.



*Captive Bird Society*, 12-hour performance-installation, incorporating the Haute Couture collection of Didier Ludot, Nuit Blanche commission, École Normale Supérieure, Paris, 2009

**Lesley Sanderson** has worked in collaboration with Neil Conroy as Conroy/Sanderson since 1998. Their drawings, photographs and videos explore culture and place to reflect on a shifting globalised world, where subjectivities are contingent, the body is vulnerable and visibility is called into question. Their work often uses self-portraits although their identity is frequently disguised, hidden or obscured in an exploration of agency, control and disaffection as experienced by individuals. Their exhibitions include ‘Negotiable Values’, Manchester and Chongqing, China (2010); ‘East-South: Out of Sight’, Guangzhou Triennial, China (2008), ‘Cruel/Loving Bodies’, Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong (2004/2006); ‘Strangers to Ourselves’, London & Maidstone (2003/2004); ‘EAST International’, Norwich (2000). Solo exhibitions include *Out of nowhere*, Chinese Arts Centre, Manchester (2006); *Here we are*, PM Gallery, London (2005); *Elsewhere*, Crawford Museum & Art Gallery, Ireland (2003).



*Gaza*, work-in-progress, 2012 13

12 February

Guest: Ella Gibbs

Host: TC McCormack

Since the mid-nineties Ella Gibbs's investigation into public and social space has led to the development of a range of process-led projects, encouraging the invention of self-organised structures that integrate skills exchange and informal learning systems – sometimes described as utopian prototypes or models for living and working together. In 1997 she co-founded *Belt*, a space *in between*, in an old factory space in Vyner Street, London, as a live/work laboratory for dialogue and experimental projects. Commissions include: *Look Ahead Housing and Care*, 2007; *Spare Time Job Centre*, Chisenhale Gallery, 2003; and *Night Stop Cinema*, on the boat *Jubilee* on the River Lea, 2001. She established Pilot Publishing with artist Amy Plant, developing a wide range of community-based experimental projects including *Laburnum Pilot*, a street magazine commissioned by the Drawing Room, 2004, and *Energy Café*, a horsebox transformed into a mobile off-grid community kitchen. Now living and working from a boat, her research into local food production, off-grid cooking, and seasonal foraging continues.



*Strawberry Fayre, Spitalfields, London*

**TC McCormack** is an artist, writer, researcher, and co-founder of the curatorial agency: OA [objectabuse.com]. His work currently investigates the shifting identity of materiality, the absence of human agency, and the possibility of language to delineate the relational affinities of forms. A multidisciplinary approach offers a means to inhabit a number of artistic strategies, his practice starts with and returns to three core constituents; assemblage, film, and drawing. He has exhibited both nationally and internationally, and his work has been screened at the ICA; London; Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin; Goethe Institute, New York; Platform, Istanbul; Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; Kunsternes Hus, Oslo; and FACT, Liverpool. He is co-author of *Dumb Fixity: The Impossible Question*, in collaboration with Martin Gent and Esther Leslie (Artwords Press, 2010).



*Just because I am wrong, does not mean that you are right*, print in a series (dimensions variable), 2011



**19 February**

**Guest: John Smith**

Host: Rose Butler

**John Smith** is a British film and video artist known for his playful subversion of documentary imagery. Drawing on the raw material of everyday life, his work explores and exposes the language and manipulative power of cinema. Since 1972 he had made over fifty film, video, and installation works that have been shown in galleries and independent cinemas around the world, and awarded major prizes at many international film festivals. Recent solo exhibitions include *Bildstörung*, Kestnergesellschaft, Hanover (2012); *Horizon (Five Pounds a Belgian)*, Turner Contemporary, Margate (2012); *Worst Case Scenario*, Weserburg Museum for Modern Art, Bremen (2012); and *unusual Red cardigan*, PEER Gallery, London (2011). John Smith lives and works in London and is Professor of Fine Art at University of East London.



**Rose Butler** works with video, photography, sound, animation, and installation. Her work is underpinned by an interest in the spatial and temporal disruption enabled through digital media. Her exploration of gaps, voids, and immersion in earlier multi-screen and interactive work has led to an enquiry into the invasion of psychological space, political control, and resistance. She is interested in demilitarised zones and sites of political stasis, and is currently developing a body of work exploring the death strip of former East Berlin and Stasi control and surveillance methods. Rose Butler has screened and exhibited work internationally; she recently completed a residency at Centrum, Berlin, and will screen a new digital short entitled *Lines of Resistance* at a parallel event to the Berlin Film Festival 2013. The audio work *Ocarina* will be broadcast as part of 'Reuse Aloud' on Basic FM, in March 2013.



Still from *Lines of Resistance*, video, 2012

26 February

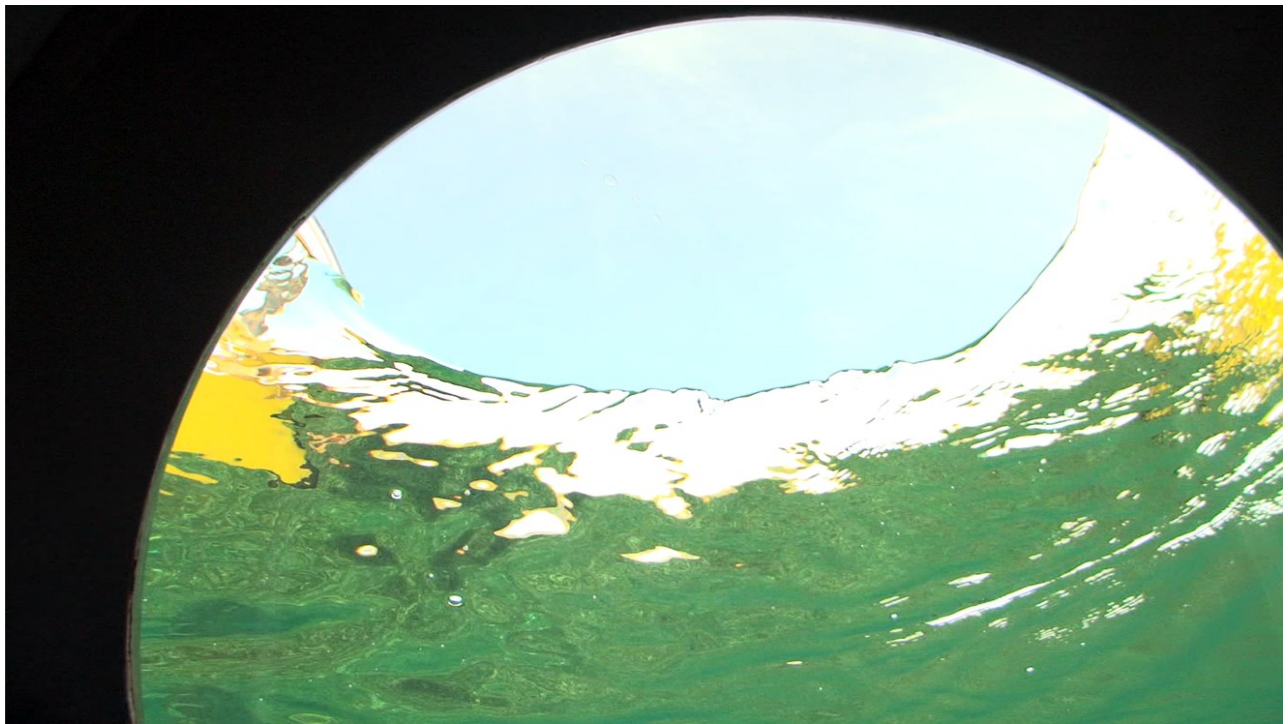
Guest: Lucy Reynolds

Host: Michelle Atherton

**Lucy Reynolds** is an artist, writer, and curator. Her work moves between these different forms, bringing them together through questions of feminism, political space, collective practice and film. Her articles on artists' moving image have appeared in journals such as *Afterall*, *Millenium Film Journal*, and *Vertigo*. She has curated film programmes for museums and galleries, including Tate Modern and Mukha, Antwerp. She teaches the history and theory of cinema and artists' moving image at Central St Martins, Kingston University, and Goldsmiths College, London. Her films, performances, and installations have shown at the National Film Theatre and galleries in London and Europe, most recently in *The Politics of Amnesia* at the Cafe Gallery, *My Body Lying in the Heather* at Milton Keynes Gallery, and *Film in Space* at Camden Arts Centre.



**Michelle Atherton's** work explores the way we move and are moved in our everyday life. There is a trajectory in her work that uses certain cultural phenomena as starting points to discuss current structures and systems. She is currently working on a trilogy of videos; the first, *Dreams of Flying*, has been shown as part of the Tatton Biennale 2012, and exhibited at the Zeppelin Museum, Germany, in 2011 and the RAF Museum, Cosford, in 2009. The second work in the series, entitled *Absorbing red photons* explores what is involved in a brief act of submersion in 2012, and is due for completion early next year. A related research paper on the project was presented at the *Water: Image International Conference*, Plymouth University, in 2012.



Still from *Absorbing Red Photons* (working title)



**5 March**

**TRANSMISSION: AGENCY**  
**(LABOUR, WORK, ACTION)**

**SYMPOSIUM**

Hosted by Transmission and SCAF

Speakers to be confirmed

**12 March**

**Guest: Chris Kraus**

**Host: Jaspar Joseph-Lester**

**Chris Kraus** is the author of four novels, most recently *Summer of Hate*, and two books of art criticism, *Video Green: Los Angeles Art and the Triumph of Nothingness* (2004), and *Where Art Belongs* (2011). Her monograph on 'participant' art, *Kelly Lake Store & Other Stories*, was recently published by Companion Editions at Reed College. She received the Frank Jewett Mather Award in Art Criticism in 2008, and a Warhol Arts Writing Grant in 2010. In spring 2012, Kraus co-curated the exhibition 'Radical Localism Art, Media and Culture from Pueblo Nuevo's Mexicali Rose' at Artists Space in New York. A frequent contributor to *Artforum* and other magazines, she is a Professor of Writing at European Graduate School, and a co-editor of *Semiotexte*.



Chris Kraus, photograph by Christy Fields

**Jaspar Joseph-Lester** is an artist based in London whose work explores the role images play in urban planning, social space, and everyday praxis, latterly focusing on conflicting ideological frameworks embodied in urban regeneration projects. He is currently lead artist on the Dallas Pavilion and has recently completed a photo-essay titled 'A Guide to the Casino Architecture of Wedding' for the next issue of *COLLAPSE: Philosophical Research and Development*. Author of *Revisiting the Bonaventure Hotel* (Copy Press, 2009), co-editor of *Episode: Pleasure and Persuasion in Lens-based Media* (Artwords, 2008), he is a director of the Curating Video research group, and Reader in Fine Art at Sheffield Hallam University.



Jaspar Joseph-Lester, *Spirit*, from a photo-essay, 2008

**Site Gallery** is the international centre for contemporary art in Sheffield. It aims to support new artists, new work and new audiences. Site started life as an independent photography gallery in the Walkley area of Sheffield in 1978. Since 1995 it has expanded its programme to incorporate new and experimental digital and multimedia work alongside traditional image production. Site is committed to showcasing both emergent and established artists, often alongside each other. The gallery always strives to tackle contemporary debates and issues, and also supports the dynamic field of live art.

### **Art Sheffield**

Sheffield Contemporary Art Forum initiates and organises citywide events.

To date these have included:

[Art Sheffield03](#)

[Art Sheffield 05: SpectatorT](#)

[Art Sheffield 08: Yes, No & Other Options](#)

[Art Sheffield 2010 Life: A User's Manual](#)





## SUGGESTED READING

- Adorno, Theodor W., *et al.*, *Aesthetics and Politics*, London: Verso, 2007
- Agamben, Giorgio, *Homer Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. by Daniel Heller-Roazen, Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998
- Almenberg, Gustaf, *Notes on Participatory Art: Toward a Manifesto Differentiating it from Open Work, Interactive Art and Relational Art*, London: AuutohouseUK, 2010
- Benjamin, Walter, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, trans. by J. A. Underwood, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2008
- Arendt, Hannah, *The Human Condition*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999
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- Bishop, Clare (ed.), *Participation*, London: Whitechapel Gallery, 2006
- Cavarero, Adriana, *For More Than One Voice: Toward a Philosophy of Vocal Expression*, trans. by Paul A. Kottman, Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005
- Coole, Diana and Samantha Frost (eds), *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010
- Danchev, Alex (ed.), *100 Artists' Manifestos: From the Futurists to the Stuckists*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2011
- Frieling, Rudolf and Boris Groys, *The Art of Participation: 1950 to Now*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2008
- Kester, Grant, *The One and the Many*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011
- Latour, Bruno, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007
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- Rancière, Jacques, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. by Steven Corcoran, London: Continuum, 2009
- Roberts, John, *The Intangibilities of Form: Skill and Deskilling in Art After the Readymade*, London: Verso, 2008
- Sennett, Richard, *The Craftsman*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2009
- Sholette, Gregory, *Dark Matter: Art and Politics in the Age of Enterprise Culture*, London: Pluto, 2011
- Tisdall, Caroline, *Joseph Beuys*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1979

