

## FORMS OF RESISTANCE

Juan Martín Prada

(Martín Prada, J., "Forms of resistance" (2009) text for "Tag Ties & Affective spies" (curated by D. Dragona), National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens (Greece).

With the expansion of "social media", the design of forms of human relationships has become the primary instrumental base of the new economic production. The companies that manage these media produce interpersonal relationships and social life in a highly profitable strategy based on the blurring of economics and communication, from which a new capitalism is emerging which could be called "social" or "affective".

The management of sociability and personal interactions is one of the main drivers of the bio-political production inherent to the business model of "social media", which enables the complex systems characteristic of the new, powerful "industries of consciousness" to be put into use. The policies of affection and their production, management and manipulation are actually the aesthetics that characterize the bio-power inherent to this second phase in the Network Society.

Therefore, power in networks has become diffuse, immanent in the connected social body, definitively located within it. We are speaking here not of power but rather of power relationships, as control is no longer a unilateral relationship. Instead, it operates through shifting, unstable power plays based on seductive, diffuse strategies for the circulation and transmission of communicative and affective pleasures.

The primary aim of the large corporations that promote "social media" is that there be nothing we can be against. To that end, they constantly foster the proliferation of strategic plays of liberties and personal initiatives based on participatory logic and pleasurable flows of communicative social activity. Consequently, there is an almost inevitable acquiescence to the economic interests the entire system rests on, given that they are based on the most inalienable aspects of life: interpersonal communication, friendship, contact among people, feeling close to others, etc.

However, resistance to the fascination exerted by "social media" involves first and foremost a political analysis of their operating dynamics, limitations and exclusions. For "to resist" is to reflect critically on the processes of inclusion of the individual in the new network economy and his or her adaptation to it, demonstrating the strategies and effects that characterize the process as corporative interests colonize the forms of human interrelations. And the top priority of new forms of resistance must be an attempt to rescue –although in a merely anecdotal or symbolic way- the principles that currently comprise the foundations of online economic production, which are communication, affection, cooperation, friendship, company, etc., from the control of business.

And as artistic practices may be the most creative dimension of the exercise of this form of dissention, it is logical that their most interesting approaches focus not only on the creation of works about the social conditions of what occurs and is managed in the field of networks, but also and above all on the presentation of the networks as a spectacle in their own right. They should aim to take part in actually structuring the systems of production and circulation of meanings and operating processes, exposing how the new forms of power act in them. As a result, the most critical artistic practices—optimal forms of resistance in the context of the new networks—would be an extreme forecast of the constituent power of the multitude. That is, the world the connected multitude could build at a time of "freed liberties"—that is, of freedom without economy as its

parasite—is foreseen constituted by the most critical artistic proposals, always evidence of the demands of interpretive thought and critical and meaningful communication.

In sum, we must oppose the destruction of uniqueness inherent to the connected multitude. That is, stand against the coercive unification of the multiplicity of active individualities comprising that multitude, which corporate interests attempt to simplify to regulate it and adapt it to fit their business models. And perhaps only through this form of resistance will we be able to see what is truly “social” about “social media”.