

Twenty-First
Century
Political Art:
the Freee
Manifesto for
Art & Twenty-
First Century
Socialism

by the Freee art collective (from the writing of Marta Harnecker)

Freee produce manifestos and instigate group readings of manifestos for the action of agreeing or disagreeing. Participants are requested to read the given text and make their own minds up about what they subscribe to. When present at the group reading, the participants only read out the words of the manifesto they agree with. The reading then becomes a collective process in which individuals publicly agree as well as disagree and declare their commitment to Freee's manifesto. While the use of a specific text by Freee is a given the text itself can be used and reworked by those who read it to formulate their own opinions just in the same way Freee has reworked it from the original. Freee acknowledge that ideas are developed collectively through the exchange of opinion. In this way Freee offer a text that they produced but one that becomes the basis for the action of critical thinking.

The content of Freee's manifestos are an explicit call for the transformation of art and society and Freee readily take and use existing historical manifestos, speeches and revolutionary documents, such as, The Manifesto for a New Public (2012) based on Vladimir Tatlin's The Initiative Individual in the Creativity of the Collective (1919) and the UNOVIS, Program for the Academy at Vitebsk (1920), and the Freee Art Collective Manifesto for a Counter-Hegemonic Art based on the Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1848). Freee here use the Marta Harnecker's Twenty First Century Socialism as inspiration for Twenty-First Century Political Art: the Freee Manifesto for Art & Twenty-First Century Socialism.

1st edition of the manifesto published January 2014 by the Freee art collective for the exhibition *Critical Machines*, at AUB Byblos Bank Art Gallery, American University of Beirut (Lebanon) Art Galleries. First published in *Manifesto Now! Instructions for Performance, Philosophy, Politics* edited by Laura Cull & Will Daddario, published by Intellect, 2013.

Twenty-First Century Political Art

Political radicalism amongst Socialists, Communists and Revolutionaries has customarily been judged in terms of the pace at which it advances. Slow progress always seemed to belong to the reformists at the moderate end of the Left, while the call for a sudden, fatal blow to the system was seen as the calling card of the far Left. In political art, too, radicalism has been measured according to speed. The more explicitly political the artist, we might say, the quicker art is dispensed with in order to engage in the committed territory of politics. Any artist who dawdled in this regard - who gave too much time to questions internal to art rather than to politics at large - was looked on suspiciously as not political enough. Marta Harnecker argues, by distinction, that we should not judge politics on its pace but rather in terms of the direction it is taking. This shift from pace to programme is typical of "twenty-first century socialism."

Why talk of socialism, communism, revolution? Have these not become defunct concepts since the collapse of the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries? For many years after Soviet socialism disappeared, intellectuals and progressive forces talked more of what socialism must not be than of the model that we actually wanted to build. Some of the facets of Soviet socialism that were rejected—and rightly so—were: statism, state capitalism, totalitarianism, bureaucratic central planning, uniform collectivism without differences, productivism (which stresses the growth of productive forces as a good in itself), dogmatism, atheism, and the need for a single party to lead the transition process.

Why talk of political art? Have we not heard clearly enough that the avant-garde is dead, that history has come to an end, that political art is self-defeating (a contradiction in terms)? Since the heyday of political art was snuffed out by formalism, aestheticism, the art market, the professionalization of art, critical art's accelerated incorporation by big state museums and funding bodies, the institutionalization of institutional critique, and a million other obstacles (including the association of political art with statism, totalitarianism, dogmatism and so on), artists, writers and curators have been at pains to distance themselves from the naïve practices of political art.

There is a very powerful reason to speak once again about socialism, communism, revolution and political art. Simply, capitalism since the fall of communism has piled catastrophe upon catastrophe. Here, we quote David Harvey on neoliberalism: 'The neoliberal project ... has been directed toward the increasing accumulation of wealth and the

increasing appropriation of surplus-value on the part of the upper echelons of the capitalist class'. Harvey lists its techniques: 'Bring wages down and create unemployment by technological changes that displace workers, centralize capitalist power, attack workers' organizations, outsource and offshore, mobilize latent populations around the world and depress welfare levels as far as possible'. Global capitalism gives us flights into space, the internet and unprecedented sports coverage on TV, while allowing 800 million human beings to go to bed hungry every night. There are about two billion people in the world who don't have basic services. Art has never been so well catered for in the marketplace and in the enormous global biennial circuit. We have cars, we have planes, now we are thinking about going to Mars, wonderful! But down here on earth there are people who have no basic services, there are people who have no education. There is so much wealth, but there are 200 million unemployed people in the world. It is this starkly unequal distribution of the world's wealth that creates the kind of crisis that we are experiencing at the moment. Cuts to public spending will not prevent the system from collapsing again but will make it inevitable as the gap between rich and poor opens up even further. One of the tasks of political art, then, is to prevent art from becoming nothing but a luxury within this globally divided economy of extreme wealth and extreme poverty.

The need for a political art is not to be confused with the potential for artists to propagandize about the injustice of global capitalism. Instead of making art that simply states that this is a society which generates too many contradictions, which pours forth knowledge, science, and wealth, but which simultaneously generates too much poverty, too much neglect, a properly political art must also question the status of the artist as a 'public figure' as someone with a privileged status in relation to cultural visibility. A properly political art must be twice political: first, political art must engage in the political struggles of the day (against neoliberalism and global capitalism and for a twenty first century socialism); second, political art must transform the social relations of art itself, to rid art of its historical elitism, its privileges, its hierarchies and its cultural capital. Political art cannot be political if it leaves art's values, categories and institutions in place.

When one talks of socialism, one is talking of something quite different from the extremes of wealth and poverty that we see today. And we must think of political art as something quite different from art today, with its emphasis on the commodity of the marketplace, the ideological

symbol in the museum, the authority of the canons of art history, and the all too familiar cast of its privileged figures, the artist, curator, critic, dealer, collector, viewer, audience, public.

As is well known, Hugo Chávez, the Venezuelan President, at first thought that he could move ahead with social transformations, leaving capitalism untouched: "the third way". Art is overpopulated with those who believe that art can remain untouched in order for it to have a positive effect on the miserable world around it. For them, art itself is "the third way" because it lives and breathes the alternative values of aesthetics, open dialogue, and difference. However, even though Chávez soon realized that this wasn't possible, the artworld does not learn from its mistakes.

Every time politically engaged artists transform the discursive, institutional and aesthetic conditions of art practice the dealers collude with the bureaucrats and aesthetes to organize a coup d'état. Sometimes the coup fails but often it succeeds in redirecting art's activities towards formalism, beauty, the visual and uncritical affirmations of quality. When the coup fails, the vested interests in art try to paralyze the politicisation of art by promoting the new critical art as a conventional movement or school. The institutional affirmation of critical art is the most efficient way of sabotaging it. This experience, along with two other factors, convinced us that we have to find another way to move toward a different kind of relation between art and society, toward what we call a "twenty-first century political art." These two factors were the realization that the heartrending problems of world poverty, class society and globalized capitalism can not be solved either within art itself or by using the bourgeois state apparatus bequeathed to us.

Freee Consolidates the Term "Twenty-First Century Political Art"

On November 10, 2010, at the first plenary session of the Historical Materialism conference, held in SOAS, London, Freee surprised the audience by declaring, for the first time, that 'art must engage on all five fronts of struggle: the economic struggle, the political struggle, the social struggle, the ideological struggle and the armed struggle'. This was the first time the term 'twenty-first century political art' was used in public. A few weeks later, when they spoke at the Liverpool Biennial on November 28, 2010, in Alfredo Jaar's 'Marx Lounge', Freee reiterated the need to overcome the limited concept of the political with a new politics of art, and build an art completely committed to the struggle for socialism. But we also warned: 'We have to reinvent a politics for art. It can't be the kind of political art we saw in the

Adorno, Lukacs, Debord or even Brecht.' Moreover, it's not a matter of 'rejecting these one-dimensional approaches to art's politics, but of drawing on all of them according to the new slogan - not only political art, but also a politics of art.' If we do not politicise art on every level - from the artwork to its modes of reception and institutions but also the artist's participation in the construction of publics, resistance to art's market, collective resistance to state violence against artists, and democratisation of art - we will fall 'into the same distortion as Western Marxism did.'

Then, at a conference in Loughborough on February 25, 2011, we said that there was no alternative to capitalism other than socialism, and no alternative to political art than the full politicization of art. But, we warned, it had to be different from the narrow politics of art that we have known; we would have to "invent twenty-first century political art."

We can say without a doubt that Free brought critical attention to the term "twenty-first century political art," and that, in so doing, we sought to differentiate the new politics of art from the errors and deviations of the Marxist and Anarchist models of political and engaged art in the twentieth century.

We must keep in mind that the artworld's first 'nervous breakdown' began in the late 1960s in the form of Conceptualism, with the triumph of the politicized artists brought about with the successful usurpation of the art critic and expert by the intellectual artist, anticipated by the leftist tradition of workers' self-education. It was defeated by an aesthetic coup six years later. If our generation learned anything from this defeat, it was that if you want to travel defiantly toward that goal, you have to rethink the relationship between the avant-garde project in art and the socialist project in general. Up until then, that relationship had been assumed to be something given or immanent to the world as rather than as something that needed to be built and struggled for. Therefore, it was necessary to develop another project better adapted to political and cultural reality and to find a pragmatic way to build it. Krzyztof Wodzicko hits the nail on the head when he says, 'the key task of critical Art and Design in Public Space is to engage in creative and collaborative projects developed with and by ... emerging Democratic Agents,' which points us towards the idea of building a committed and politicized art rooted in democratic socialist society.

Thus, it's not a matter of importing political models into art or of

exporting aesthetic strategies into politics (à la Michel de Certeau); it's about building a model of cultural, social, economic and political commons in which each sphere guarantees the democratic integrity of all spheres.

Naturally, the separate spheres will share some features. These features include three basic components that Chávez has pointed to in his formulation of Twenty-First Socialism: economic transformation; participative and protagonistic democracy; and socialist ethics. These socialist ideas and values are very old, Harnecker says. They can be found, according to Chávez, in biblical texts, in the Gospel, and in the practices of indigenous peoples. We say that the future socialist society will have to update the values of what Marx called 'primitive communism', so that every aspect of life is revolutionized and democratized, resulting in the most democratic, cooperative, agonistic, communicative, responsive, communal and self-organized society the world has ever known.

Like José Carlos Mariátegui before him, Chávez thinks that twenty-first century socialism cannot be a carbon copy of any antecedent society, culture, nostalgic Golden Age or Utopian vision; rather, it has to be a "heroic creation." Twenty First Century Art likewise, cannot be simply Courbet + Tatlin + Eisenstein + Heartfield + Brecht + Godard + Art&Language + Rosler. Chávez talks of a Bolivarian, Christian, Robinsonian, Indoamerican socialism: a new collective existence, equality, liberty, and real, complete democracy. We talk of a politicized, intellectual, active, public, interrogative, collective, self-organized art, and a complete break from the capitalist commodification of art, the modernist isolation of art, the governmental instrumentalization of art, the bureaucratic recuperation of art, the scholarly academicization of art, and so on. Chávez agrees with Mariátegui that one of the primary roots of the new socialist project can be found in the socialism of indigenous peoples, and he therefore suggests that those indigenous practices, imbued with a socialist spirit, must be rescued and empowered. We agree: and we must rescue and empower the ordinary practices of self-organization, self-education, debate, protest and campaigning that will be the bedrock of the twenty-first century public sphere. This is the oxygen of our Twenty-First Century Political Art.

A Socialist Society, Fundamentally Democratic

Chávez has stressed the fundamentally democratic nature of twenty-first century socialism. He warns that "we must not slip into errors of the past," into "the Stalinist deviation", which bureaucratized the

party and ended up eliminating people's protagonism. In art, the error equivalent to the Stalinist deviation is not Socialist Realism, but Formalism. A politics of art boiled down to an immanent politics of artistic form gives the false impression that 'holding the right line' (being true) is everything, while 'making a difference' (engaging in the contingencies of history) is nothing. We want to reverse the polarity of this modernist creed. Democracy, with all its noise, false-starts, trade-offs and frustrations, is nevertheless always preferable to the Mandarin's truth.

The practical and negative experience of real socialism in the political sphere cannot make us forget that, according to classic Marxist tenets, post-capitalist society always has been associated with full democracy. Marx and some of his followers called it communism, others have called it socialism, and Harnecker agrees with García Linera that it doesn't really matter what term we use. What matters, they say, is the content. This is true, and yet, words matter, too. We will fight for the democratization of everything, but we will also fight for the words 'democracy', 'socialism', 'communism', 'Marxism', 'political art' and 'the public sphere'. If we allow our enemies to win the symbolic battle while we focus on the 'real' battle for the transformation of art, culture and society we will find that we have no content left because we have lost the language for thinking it.

Few people are familiar with a brief text about the state by Lenin, which is contained in a notebook and predates *The State and Revolution*. In it, he says that socialism must be conceived of as the most democratic society, in contrast to bourgeois society, where there is democracy for a minority only. Comparing socialism to capitalism, Lenin observes that, in the latter, there is democracy for the rich only and for a small layer of the proletariat, whereas in the transition to socialism, there is almost full democracy. Democracy, at this stage, is not yet complete because of the unignorable will of the majority, which must be imposed on those who do not wish to submit to the majority will. However, once communist society is reached, democracy will be finally complete. We just want to add, here, that twenty-first century socialism cannot be democratic only in the political sphere. Everything must be democratized. We must also build a democratic economy, a democratic society, a democratic sphere of material production, a democratic culture and a democratic art.

Lenin's view was inspired by the writings of Marx and Engels, who said that the society of the future would make possible the full development

of all human potential. Fully developed human beings would replace the fragmented human beings produced by capitalism. As Engels writes, in his first draft of *The Communist Manifesto*, we must “organize society in such a way that every member of it can develop and use all his capabilities and powers in complete freedom and without thereby infringing the basic conditions of this society.” “In Marx’s final version of the *Manifesto*,” this new society appears as an “association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.”

But how long will it take us to reach this goal? History has shown that “heaven” cannot be taken by storm, that a long historical period is needed to make the transition from capitalism to a socialist society. The same is true for a genuinely democratic, collective, social, political art. Art today is shaped by individualism, class division, specialization, privilege and so on. Twenty-First Century Political Art will not simply be a new way of occupying the roles assigned to the artist, viewer, critic, curator, tourist, administrator, funder, and so on; it means constructing a whole new social arrangement for art. This will not happen overnight just because we have a strong idea of what we want. It will take time. Some talk in terms of decades, others in terms of hundreds of years, still others think that socialism is the goal we must pursue but perhaps may never completely reach.

We call this historical period “the transition to socialism.” And, rather than imagining that we can simply dream up and create Twenty-First Century Political Art in one day and out of nothing, we need to prepare for this and to build it. The period in which we build Twenty-First Century Political Art can be called ‘the transition to political art’.

Some Features of Twenty-First Century Socialism

Our socialist conception of how art must be transformed does not start off with the idea of people as individual beings isolated, separated from others (e.g., artist, viewer, critic, curator), but with the idea of people as social beings, who can only develop themselves if they develop together with others (e.g., publics, collectives).

As the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre understood, there is no such thing as an abstract citizen, someone who is above everything, who is neither rich nor poor, neither young nor old, neither male nor female, or is all of those things at once. As Miodrag Zecevic said: “What exist are concrete persons who live amongst and depend on other people, who associate with and organize in various ways with other people in

communities and organizations in which and through which they make real their interests, rights, and duties." But we need to be careful here not to think of the real social individual in an abstract way. When we emphasize the materiality of the social individual against its ideological abstraction – the individual as such – we need also to recognize the material effects of ideology, frameworks, structures and traditions. This means that the roles that are assigned to individuals – such as husband, wife and neighbour, child, mother and father, teacher, pupil and truant, policeman, criminal and vigilante, artist, viewer and philistine – are real, and have material effects. Therefore, we must abolish these old roles, play with them and subvert them, as well as establish new roles for the social individual to occupy in specific, material practices.

The goal of twenty-first century socialism is full human development. It cannot, therefore, come into being because a government or an enlightened vanguard says so; it cannot be decreed from above; it is a process that is built with the people, in which, as they transform their circumstances, they transform themselves and the roles that they can occupy. It is not a handout; it is something to be conquered and something to be produced actively and collectively through innovative practices.

Participative Democracy and Protagonistic Participation: Democracy and Participation by the People

We have spoken of full human development, but how can that be achieved? Michael Lebowitz says that "only a revolutionary democracy can create the conditions in which we can invent ourselves daily as rich human beings." He refers to a "concept...of democracy in practice, democracy as practice, democracy as protagonism." "Democracy in this sense—protagonistic democracy in the workplace, protagonistic democracy in neighborhoods, communities, communes—is the democracy of people who are transforming themselves into revolutionary subjects." Art needs a cast of protagonistic, transformative and revolutionary subjects too! This is why talk of participation is so insipid. Does participation shake the artworld to the ground with popular democratic force? No, participation is a reformer's fantasy of philanthropic managerialism, bureaucratic problem-solving and preventative reconciliation. All they produce is soup kitchens!

We can see the limits of participatory art very clearly by looking at the limits of paternalistic bourgeois democracy. This is why it is not only a matter of giving democracy a social content—as Alfredo Maneiro, a Venezuelan intellectual and political leader, said of solving the people's social problems (access to food, health care, education, etc.)—but also

of transforming the very form of democracy by creating spaces which allow people, as they fight to change their circumstances, to transform themselves as well. It is not the same, Maneiro said, if a community, for instance, manages to get a pedestrian bridge that it has organized and fought for, as when it is given the bridge as a gift from a paternalist state. State paternalism is incompatible with a popular protagonism. It tends to turn people into beggars. We must move from a culture of citizens who ... [missing clause?] to become a culture of citizens who make decisions; who implement and control; who manage things themselves; who govern themselves. As Krzysztof Wodzicko says, 'the creative task must be taken over by the user-performers. It is their art, that of public testimony and performance, that is most important'. We have to move from an art for the people to people's self-organized art, to a point where the people take power over art.

Participation, protagonism in all spaces, in art as well as politics and society, is the precondition for human beings to transform themselves into self-activating agents of their own destiny, that is to say, for human beings to develop humanly. We insist that Twenty-First Century Political Art must emphasize popular participation in all cultural affairs and stress that it is this protagonism that will guarantee complete individual and collective development of art and society. The people's participation in creating, implementing, and controlling the public sphere in which art exists is the necessary way to achieve the protagonism that ensures the full development of every individual and the collective body, as well as a living culture of art. Artists, curators, critics and administrators in art can play a vital role in the transition. They cannot implement a new arrangement of art themselves, on behalf of the people, but must make the passage easier for the popular control of art. We can help, for instance, through educational and practical initiatives to allow people to develop their capacities and abilities. The new artworld, like the new society, must be built on the blossoming of "self-management, cooperatives of all kinds...and other forms of association that are guided by the values of mutual cooperation and solidarity."

Creating Appropriate Spaces for Participation

The transition to Twenty-First Century Political Art will never go beyond mere talk if appropriate spaces are not created where popular protagonistic democratic processes can take place freely and fully for the transformation of art's institutions, roles, practices and goals. Chávez's initiative to create communal councils—which was followed some time later by his proposal for workers' councils, student councils, and peasant councils—is an important step toward forming real popular power and can provide strong hints that we can use to

organize art for the new society. The point is not to subject art to the democratic power of the political communes, but to set up popular councils for art. It is only if a society based on worker self-management and the self-management of community residents is created that the state will cease to be an instrument over and above the people. And it is only if an art based on self-management is created that the state support for art can become something other than the implementation of minority culture for the masses.

One of the most revolutionary ideas of the Bolivarian government is that of promoting the creation of communal councils, a form of autonomous organization at the grassroots level. These are territorial organizations unprecedented in Latin America because of the small number of participants. They number between two hundred and four hundred families in densely populated urban areas; between fifty and one hundred families in rural areas; and an even smaller number of families in isolated zones, mostly indigenous areas. The idea was to create small spaces that offered maximum encouragement to citizen involvement and facilitated the protagonism of those attending by putting them at their ease and helping them to speak without inhibition. Every public art project ought to be organized by a grassroots council of this kind.

The kind of democratization of art that we propose is against any imposition of solutions by force, including the force of markets, marketing and aggregates of individual preferences; instead it advocates winning over the hearts and minds of the people to the project that we wish to build—in other words, obtaining hegemony in the Gramscian sense and using that hegemony to build it. This can only be done by creating a million temporary public spheres in which discussion can take place. These public spheres will then be converted into practical organizations for putting collectively agreed decisions into practice. The new artworld will be built democratically or it will be imposed on the people like all the monuments that litter the streets. Who will construct the new art world? Workers' councils for art must have all the workers in the firm as its members; the communal councils for art have to be composed of all the residents in a given area; the ethics councils, the technical construction committees, the energy committees, and the cultural groups have to have all those interested in working on these matters. No one who, in good faith, wishes to work for a collective, for the welfare of that collective and the revolutionary transformation of art, seeking solidarity with other collectives, should be excluded.

Guide to Judging Progress

Thus far, we have tried to analyze the characteristics of the processes of building socialism and the new art for the twenty-first century. Now, we would like to propose some criteria that could allow us to make an objective assessment of the progress of our governments and art institutions towards this aim.

Attitude to Neoliberalism: What is the attitude of our governments and art institutions toward neoliberalism and capitalism in general? Do they lay bare the logic of capital? Do they attack it ideologically? Do they use the state to weaken neoliberalism? Do they protect art from market forces and prevent capital and capitalists from bending art to their own narrow self-interests?

Attitude to Unequal Income Distribution and Cultural Distinction: Are they moving to diminish the gap between the richest and the poorest, the cultivated and the philistine (giving the advantage in every instance to the latter)? Are they giving the poor and philistine better access to education, health, and housing? Do they understand education not as teaching the poor and philistines to be more like the rich and cultivated, but to understand how social divisions are embedded in knowledge and taste?

Attitude to Inherited Institutions: Do they convene constituent processes to change the rules of the institutional game both in politics and art, knowing that the inherited neoliberal state apparatus places huge obstacles in the way of any progress in building a different kind of society?

Attitude to Economic and Human Development: Do they consider that the goal of satisfying human needs is more important than that of accumulating capital?

Do they understand that human development cannot be achieved in a state or artworld that is merely paternalistic, one that solves problems by transforming its people into beggars? Do they understand that human development can only be achieved through practice and, therefore, strive to create spaces in which popular protagonism is possible?

Attitude to National Sovereignty: Do they reject foreign military intervention, military bases, and humiliating treaties? Do they combat the Americanization of culture and New York's commercial domination of contemporary art? Are they recovering their sovereignty over natural

resources? Have local, national and regional traditions of popular, amateur cultural engagement within temporary public spheres been recognized and celebrated?

Have they made progress in finding solutions to the problem of media hegemony, which until now has been in the hands of conservative forces? Are they promoting the recuperation of grassroots national cultural traditions?

Attitude to Role of Women: Do they respect and encourage the protagonism of women?

Attitude to Discrimination: Are they making progress in eliminating all types of discrimination (sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity, religion, etc.)?

Attitude to Means of Production and Producers: Is social ownership of the means of production increasing, and are workers more and more the protagonists in the workplace? Is the democratization of art's institutions growing? Is the distance between intellectual and manual work growing smaller? Is the bureaucratic dependence on expertise in art's institutions being displaced by self-education and democratic debate? Is the workers' capacity for self-management and self-government growing? Are art's publics becoming agents in the decision-making processes of art's institutions? Is the distance between the countryside and the city diminishing? Is the chasm between craft and art diminishing?

Attitude to Nature: Are these governments and art institutions dealing with the problem of industrial pollution, energy use and natural resources? Are they implementing educational campaigns to promote environmental protection? Are they encouraging and taking practical measures for recycling rubbish?

Attitude to International Coordination and Solidarity: Are they looking for ways to integrate with other countries in the region and in distant nations across the planet? Are these institutions alterglobalist in both theory and practice?

Attitude to Popular Protagonism: Do these governments and art institutions mobilize the workers and the people in general in order to carry out certain measures, and are they contributing to an increase in their abilities and power? Do they understand the need for an organized and politicized people, one able to exercise pressure to weaken the state apparatus and thus drive forward the proposed

transformation process? Do they understand that our people must be protagonists and not supporting actors?

Do they listen to the people and let them speak? Do they understand they can rely on the people to fight the errors and deviations that come up along the way? Do they give them resources, and call on them to exercise social control over the process? In sum, are they contributing to the creation of a popular subject that is increasingly the protagonist and gradually assuming the responsibilities of government?

Dave Beech, Andy Hewitt and Mel Jordan work collectively as the Freee art collective. Formed in 2004 Freee is concerned with the publishing and dissemination of ideas and the formation of opinion, or what Jurgen Habermas describes as the 'public sphere'. Freee's practice combines and links a number of key art historical elements; the use of text (as slogan), print, sculptural props, installation, video photography and montage – we develop speech act theory and theories of arts social turn. We attempt to complicate the notion of the convivial in social practice by using witnesses instead of participants and we develop theories of place and space from radical geography, theories of hegemony and the multitude, the theory of the philistine and the political theory of parrhesia in our projects.

Freee's recent exhibitions include: 'We are Grammar', Pratt Manhattan Gallery, New York, 2011, 'Touched' Liverpool Biennial 2010; 'When Guests Become Hosts', Culturgest, Porto, Portugal, 2010.

www.freee.org.uk.

Twenty-First
Century
Political Art:
the Freee
Manifesto for
Art & Twenty-
First Century
Socialism