

ARTICLE

Concept Generation

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Concept Generation is an event where participants create new innovations from market led criteria and trade this intellectual property for beer and peanuts. This critical and comedic project engages participants with a design process appropriated from surrealist techniques, in order to glibly mine the depths of product and service niches, where creative industries have not yet ventured. This workshop investigates the spectrum between creative industries and aesthetic art practice and asks participants to form their own critical position. The social contract between the host and the participant is transparent – the event is free, but participants must create marketable ideas to pitch to the artist, in order to exchange their concept for a beer. The artist has sole right over the intellectual property. This exchange mirrors the exploitation of precarious creative workers, for whom work and lifestyle blend, where a workshop can also become a party. Concept Generation presents the mutability of work and leisure, of consumption and production, of art practice and creative industry, and of creative thinking and marketing. In a satire of ideation, participants are asked to sell their ridiculous idea, and many get carried away with the farce. Production is the only imperative, and the more ridiculous the ideas are, the more we believe they might actually succeed.

Keywords: Participation, critique, workshop, ambiguity, art, creative industry.

You enter and I welcome you into a room where I have set conditions for you to take part. I offer you peanuts (which you'll need to shell yourself) and show you a diagram pasted on the wall. You follow the text and the simple request "Combine three stimulus into an invention. Each invention earns one beer". I invite you to pick 3 small, coloured squares of paper, each with a word on them. I have just given you your stimulus, and you can work towards your first invention, and maybe your first beer.

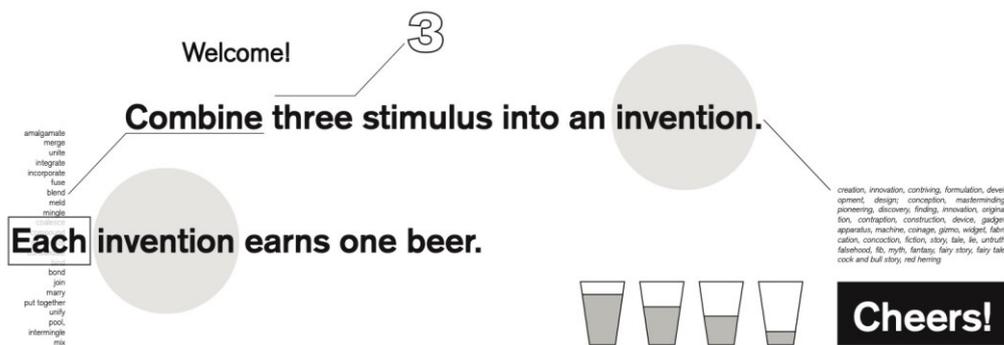


Figure 1: Concept Generation wall diagram
 Source: generated by the author

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Introduction

Concept Generation is a critical workshop activity that explores creativity and the market, labour within structures of production, and how a participatory event can support individual critical response. It sits between an educational framework, a socially engaged practice, and an institutionally critical base that finds a curious balance between over-identification and dialogic practices. Concept generation fosters an encounter and ultimately an inventory of outcomes. Throughout, it represents a critical duality, an undecidability oscillating between aesthetic art practice and entrepreneurial creative industries, which invites participants to ‘walk the line’ between these two disciplines.

As detailed above in the first-person experience, Concept Generation is an event where participants pick one of each of three stimuli at random: resources, goods and services, and emotion. They are tasked with combining these random stimuli into a drawing of an idea or innovation. When they complete their drawing, they can pitch the idea in order to swap the intellectual property for a beer. Participants can repeat the process as much as they like. The workshop has been hosted by an art event and design festivals.



Figure 2: Concept Generation Prague, Meetfactory
Source: generated by the author

Research Background

Concept Generation is part of a larger body of practice-led research, titled *Platform Production*, which investigates the potential for socially engaged art between over-identifying and ameliorative practice. Here a ‘platform’ of activities facilitates labour (‘production’) which encourages critical reflection through embodied experience. Throughout, Platform Production maintains a difficult relationship between referencing and re-performing labour practices – questioning their value and ethics.

The primary debate in socially engaged practice between Bishop and Kester focusses on artwork which seeks to “counter a world in which ‘we are reduced to an atomised pseudo community of consumers, our sensibilities dulled by spectacle and repetition’” (Kester 2004, 29 as cited in Bishop 2012, 11). Kester advocates for ameliorative projects where disparate groups come together with the aim of solving problems (often through dialogue) (Kester 2004; Kester 2011). Bishop (2012, 232) on the other hand prefers troubling experiences where

the hegemony of politics and neo-liberal society is exaggerated to shock participants into realising the conditions of their own, or others', lives. For instance, Bishop references Santiago Sierra's practice of delegating dehumanising performances and revealing the economic conditions of labour which make them possible. Bishop's argument is furthered by the research collective BAVO, who term this methodology over-identification. They highlight the disjunctive potential of this practice as it "eliminates the subject's reflex to make excuses for the current order and invent ways to 'manage it better'" (BAVO 2008, 32). Opponents of amelioration and over-identification question their aesthetics and ethics respectively. What is the aesthetic offering of a staged conversation and what are the ethics of a troubling experience?

Platform Production critically re-captures practices which have been appropriated by capital and offers an ambiguous audience experience. The activity is presented with limited comment, and participants find their own critical voice within it. This practice is closer to over-identification, which extends and warps the status quo to encourage questioning of the system. In Concept Generation, it could be considered a form of satire. This ambiguity of participant's workshop experience demonstrates the pervasiveness of late capitalism, where the participant senses that "something has changed, that things are different, that we have gone through a transformation of the life world which is somehow decisive but incomparable with the older convulsions of modernization and industrialization, less perceptible and dramatic" (Jameson 1991, 21). In this model, the workshop presents a creative opportunity, but one couched by economic gain, which presents the unease that the participant feels. Or, perhaps, the participant has already internalised the flexibility to adapt and thrive on demand, as only they hold the responsibility for their own success (Bauman 2012, 7-8).

This self-reflexivity to protect one's own interests is what Mark Fisher termed "pre-corporation: the pre-emptive formatting and shaping of desires, aspirations and hopes by capitalist culture" (Fisher 2009, 9) whereby our actions are already pre-formatted into a capitalist ideal, because we "can't imagine an alternative" (Fisher 2009, 8). Even creating alternative or independent ideas or styles cannot be achieved by attempting distancing from the market, as they "don't designate something outside mainstream culture; rather, they are...dominant styles, within the mainstream." (Fisher 2009, 9). Primarily, Concept Generation tests pre-corporation by inviting participant creativity on the border of the capitalisation of the artistic imagination - on a spectrum between aesthetic art practice and creative industry.

Pre-corporation is particularly pertinent given the history of the democratisation of 'creativity' since the 1990's, where in Britain and Australia it was used by governments to suggest "classless freedom and personal autonomy" (Hewison 2011, 236): the foundations for entrepreneurship and precarious self-employment. This autonomy of practice according to the market balances on the distinction between art and creative industry, which New Labour in Britain divided into traditional arts, design and media in 1998. Ten years later in 2009, a paper commissioned by the Australia Council found that many practitioners engaged in both traditional arts and more market focussed activities. This paper encouraged the support of creative work which responded to the 'contemporary' regardless of whether it leaned towards aesthetic or market utility (Australia Council for the Arts 2009). In 2016, the Victorian arts body was shifted into an industry department and renamed Creative Victoria. This move sought to support both creative industry and art practice aiming to strengthen "economic, cultural and social impact" (Creative Victoria 2016).

Since then, artists have begun to view creative industries as a threat to state funding of the arts, as market facing practices like fashion, design and gaming received greater subsidies over traditional mediums like painting, sculpture or dance. While art can be socially critical, market facing creatives err on the side of greater sales prospects, which prevents them from taking certain political positions publicly. On the world stage, creative

industries are perceived by government to have a significant cultural message without any political overtones. Fashion is the darling of former Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop who advocates for its soft power and “vast economic potential” (Sams 2019).

Concept Generation

To designers and those in creative industries, the phrase ‘Concept Generation’ is a well-known expression. It refers to divergent-thinking activity of rapid-fire sketching in response to a brief. More broadly, the title doubles as a reference to today’s era: the post-industrial information age which supports immaterial labour and intellectual property as its bastions of growth. The title is the audience’s first encounter with the artwork. By using a common creative industry phrase, those familiar with it may come with expectations of the work. The title functions as a ‘trojan horse’: suspending the audience’s familiarity long enough for them to open their gates and let it in. On the other hand, those placing the emphasis on ‘generation’ expose the titular double entendre, which reduces its readability as an industry-based activity. The two meanings introduce the work ambiguously, sparking some uncertainty from the audience’s very first encounter.

The workshop activities stem from practices in art and creative industries. From art practice, it takes surrealist techniques of combining disparate ‘found’ elements (in the manner of cut-up, exquisite corpse and collage). These are combined in a nonsensical game-like structure, which includes an invitation, activity/ideation/innovation, a pitch, a reward, and the possibility to repeat these steps. The repetition of the structure lends itself to expansive and experimental practices, not linked to a predetermined outcome or client, seen to be a marked difference between design and art practice (Australia Council for the Arts 2009). On the other hand, the workshop game includes design language linked to the market (concept, innovation, pitch) where the content is also market based (the stimuli give random input from several stages of production process). The lack of a specific brief or client is a reference to entrepreneurial tendencies, where creatives define a niche situation in which their idea could be deployed.



Figure 3: Concept Generation Melbourne, Melbourne Design Week
Source: Tobias Titz (reproduced with permission)

In critiquing the spectrum from creative industry to art practice, Concept Generation has a twofold effect of appearing as two things at once and oscillating between them. Is it a workshop where participants learn entrepreneurial skills, or a surreal art practice which critiques consumerism? The action of applying a methodology from one field in another bears interesting repercussions for the borders between disciplinary territories where “a critical sense of their innovation will differ depending upon what medium they understand themselves to be disrupting, i.e., which medium is on the other end of whose ‘post’” (Jackson, Shannon 2011, 2) Rather than any disruption, Concept Generation’s potential is in the mutability and ambiguity between two ends of the spectrum.

Production

Similar to the ‘trojan horse’ effect of the title, the recognisable trope of a workshop uses language of the educational turn, where participants undergo instruction to try out a new activity. Concept Generation goes one step further, by inviting participants to form their own critical position through embodied experience over passive witnessing or textual analysis. Concept Generation was held at an arts event in Prague and a design festival in Melbourne. In Prague, the site was a disused railway factory, repurposed into an artist studio. In Melbourne, the workshop was held at a temporary arts space, Testing Grounds, on the site of the future Contemporary Art Museum. It took place as part of the Melbourne Design Week¹, with the theme of “Design Values. What does design value and how do we value design?” (NGV 2017). In both, participants were likely to be already engaged in the arts or creative industries. From the moment they entered the workshop space, the aesthetic of production under the guidance of hosts put them at ease. Communal workbenches were arranged in rows with chairs huddled around them. Music with a loud bass beat blared from speakers, which gave the space a party-like atmosphere. Drawings by other participants crowded the walls. A host welcomed participants and led them through an instructive poster which outlined the task. They were first invited to pick pieces of paper at random from three stimuli categories.



Figure 4: Concept Generation Prague
Source: generated by the author

¹ Melbourne Design Week is an initiative of the Victorian Government in collaboration with the NGV.

The stimuli themselves refer to a critical reflection on art/design production and are ‘found’ or retrieved from three categories. The first category, ‘Resources’, is an inventory of world natural resources, compiled by the World Bank. This category echoes how design and production plunder the earth, echoing a history of extractive colonialism. Importantly, these materials were once seen to herald from one specific place, but have now been collated in a generic list. Examples from this category are mahogany, seaweed, sand and uranium. The second category, ‘Goods and Services’, is derived from a list of goods and service groupings that can be advertised on Google AdWords, considered to be a rough analysis of marketing today. These goods and services form the backbone of the international market, where the advertising of these goods drives consumerism. The sale of these goods and services is responsible for their ongoing production in a supply and demand model. This category defines what the material is formed into, and how ‘innovation’ can increase its value. Examples from this category are: Pharmacy, Rain gear, Shaving and Grooming and Vacation Packages. The third category, ‘Emotions’ appropriates the range of emotions which focus groups can identify when giving feedback on a product or service. Designers intend users to form an emotional connection or impact with the goods or services that they design. A specific emotional affect may be part of a brand’s identity, or could be included in a client brief for a new design. Examples from this category include meditative, thrilled, intelligent and bitter.

The three stimuli bear three junctures that participants travel through as they innovate, oscillating along a spectrum between viewing the stimuli as an opportunity, to seeing how it functions within a market, or towards a more a critical view. Along this spectrum they begin to find their own position. The ‘Resources’ stimuli spark an initial curiosity in the raw state of objects. Many participants have little existing knowledge of specific materials and turn to their portable devices to identify unusual ores and minerals and what is made from them. Participants asked: “*what can be made from Lobster?*” (conversation with participant, Prague). Saskia Sassen considers that this disconnection from place always returns in a ‘territorial moment’ (Sassen 2006, 19). After their initial intrigue participants may consider how utilising a material devoid of its situational context amounts to an extractive colonial mindset. Similarly, with the ‘Goods and Services’ stimuli, there is a simultaneous attraction and repulsion dynamic – comparable to when one receives a commission in a formerly unexplored medium or industry. The appeal of the novelty transforms into confusion as the participant feels out of their depth and questions the mutability of practice/expertise into other fields. The ‘Emotion’ stimuli can present the most difficulty for participants who are unsure how to affect a particular feeling.

However, as audience/users they/we have considerable experience on the receiving end: of how things make us feel. Changing roles to be the one affecting emotion can unmask the role as manipulative. On one hand, artists hope that their work will be affective on their audience, but prescribing this affect seems distasteful. Affect in creative industries is less critically viewed and achieving an impact can be a key skill, for instance in filmmaking. The question of whether it is ethical to manipulate users’ emotions gives rise to workshop participants strongest reactions. The seed of the quandary sowed by each stimulus is compounded when participants begin to combine them into an innovation, where they must use all three stimuli. Although the word *combine* is similar to convergence, the process is a combination of divergent and convergent thinking (Runco 2003). The initial novelty of the stimuli spurs divergent analysis, where the qualities of each could lead to many combined outcomes. The participant then evaluates – with some intuition learned from their existing knowledge (Cropley 2006) – the most valid of these combinations, that they then proceed to illustrate. The quality of the outcome depends on the creative capacity of the participant and their persistence with creative constraints (Boden 1994). These skills are also honed through habit (or repetition), hence why second and subsequent innovations displayed a better combination of stimuli.

Generally, participants combined the stimuli in a linear fashion, where they used the Resource to make an object

within the Goods and Services category, which resulted in the Emotion. Outside of the suspended reality of Concept Generation, production processes are weighted on either end of this sequence. A more local and material focussed process uses available materials to form a commodity, and is not limited by outcome (i.e. many products made from one plentiful material like bamboo). A globalised manufacturing/outcome-focussed process aims for a particular user utility or emotion, but is not limited by material (more complex objects like electronic devices utilise a myriad of materials). The three un-weighted stimuli challenge the participant to find a path of compromise between them, where they shuttle back and forth between the three stimuli, looking for an idea which combines their position on each.



Figure 5: Concept Generation Prague
Source: generated by the author

You ponder over the task and make a mind map of what you know about each of your stimuli. With all the words on the page, you sit back. You chat with your table neighbours. You shell and eat some peanuts. Slowly you find connections between the words and a concept begins to appear. You reformulate your idea several times by re-hashing it in your head. After some tweaking, you have your concept. You flip the page over and draw it out – showing how the stimuli feature. You're ready to pitch.

The Entrepreneurial pitch

The pitch of Concept Generation is the peak of the project's over-identification with capitalist production methodology. The production period is filled with options for participants to rebel against or submit to a neo-liberal conception of resource extraction, production and labour. But the pitch, with its marketing language and final option of payment in beer, sharpens these senses.

As participants draw, they chat and munch on complementary peanuts, the shells of which soon litter the tables and floor. The walls are covered with completed innovations and motivational slogans, like 'FAIL FAST, DONT TRY AND HIT THE TARGET', and 'CHASE THE VISION'. Some people settle in after finishing a couple of drawings and sip their beers and chat. Strangers compare their drawings and seek feedback from others. The food, drinks, conviviality, and leisure-work lend themselves to playful thinking, but stop short of frivolity. When participants

finish their drawing, they approach the bar to pitch their innovation (in order to swap it for a beer). The criteria for the host were that the participants conviction was more important than the merit of the idea. In all sessions, hosts unquestioningly rewarded first innovations with a beer. This whet participant's appetite for the process.

Participant's innovations cover a wide range. The majority of first ideas are a clumsy attempt to combine the three stimuli with little nuance. Lobster, hair care and excitement become a lobster shaped hair dryer. After the first drawing many savour their beer and walk around the room to investigate other's works. There they find that some have a certain knack, where the innovation makes a strange kind of sense. For instance, the combination 'titanium', 'TV/Video' and 'malicious' leads to a drawing of spy golf clubs which could be used to record secret conversations on the putting green (Figure 6). Complete with a drawing of Trump, the participant created an innovation with parts of practicality, humour and criticality.

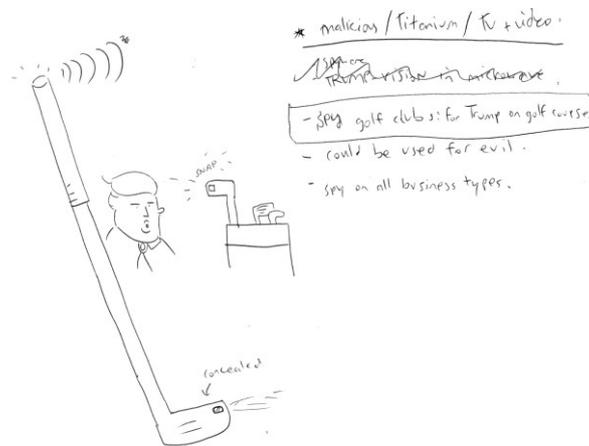


Figure 6: Spy Gold Clubs
Source: generated by the author

Another successful drawing was of 'Pregnantea' an "invigorating tea which invokes the experience of pregnancy" (Figure 7). The stimuli were 'tea', 'baby', 'parenting and family' and 'curious'. These innovations fall onto the continuum between a designed object and an art experiment, but also are reminiscent of a joke product. They hold a certain wry understanding of their own humour – their suspicion of conspiracy and satire of health claims dovetail seamlessly into their respective markets.

Invigorating Tea that invokes the experience of Pregnancy

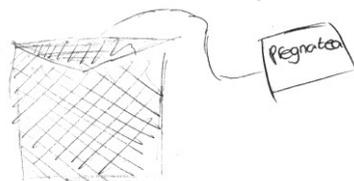


Figure 7: Pregnantea
Source: generated by the author

For the second and subsequent innovations some beer swaps were declined, and the participants were given a nudge in a different direction. This was to ensure critical engagement and to reiterate the hierarchy of the activity. During the pitch, if the innovation was solid, some participants negotiated on the intellectual property, agreeing on a 50/50 split in any profits made from their drawing. Others refused to sell their idea, even after more generous offers were made. All these transgressions from the agreed process evidenced an understanding of the participant's role within a flexible system, and their own critical subjectivity.

Labour and Delegated performance

In Concept Generation, the transparency of the exchange reveals the relation between the artist, the participant and the institution. In a further twist, the brand leverage for the beer company in its relation to art and innovation is significant. They have either given the beer in exchange for exposure or at a generous discount. The project leans into the learned and embodied experience of the precarious creative practitioner. In the spirit of re-performance of pre-corporated practices in Platform Production, the participant is put in the shoes of the artist or creative who must negotiate the sale of their work. They may alternatively refuse their own absorption.

Initially, the production process of Concept Generation could be viewed as a delegated task. In comparison, Santiago Sierra delegates menial or humiliating tasks to workers. Through focussing on 'payment' in the title of the works, he illuminates the structural inequalities within the art market, "turning the economic context into one of his primary materials" (Bishop 2012, 223). Reviewers and the public have criticised Sierra for exploiting workers. However, in Concept Generation, the workers are the participants. There is no second audience who watch. Other than the lead artist and hosts, all are participant/audience. Rancière investigates the spectator's emancipation and the similarity in quality between passive contemplation and active participation (Rancière 2009). However, in Concept Generation, all participants are active and absorbed "into the belly of the beast" and they all serve "immaterial production" (Rancière 2009, 34). Further, Hito Steyerl suggests that a museum itself is the new site of production of social forms, relying on exploiting audiences' affective effort. Here, the "aesthetic faculties and imaginative practices" of viewers creates an ideal post-Fordist production line of culture (Steyerl 2009). Concept Generation makes the 'immaterial production line' visible, through the actual production of intellectual property.

The slippage between factory and museum is particularly pertinent given the mass casualisation of workers into precarious positions. Throughout the 1990's, this move of outsourcing created a precarious labour force, and later forced workers to bear responsibility for their own employment, often in informal and risky circumstances. Today, creative industry has embraced a culture of self-exploitation; accepted limited remuneration and re-exploits interns who volunteer their labour and time in return for 'experience'. Concept Generation re-performs some of the questionable aspects of precarious artistic labour and over-exaggerates them.

Reframing audience as participants has significant repercussions for labour and value exchange. In socially engaged art (SEA) practice, there are best-practice approaches for entering into mutually accepted arrangements with long term collaborators or performers (Benton, 2019). SEA projects staged in museums model audience ticketing on visual art rather than performance, whereby audience do not pay for a particular experience. Of course, they are also not paid. But where is the line between an audience member who participates and labours as part of a project and a long-term collaborator who is remunerated? Perhaps we can turn to an educational frame, where 'teaching artists' are paid to instruct others in a task, but those undertaking the task experience the value of participation in return for their labour. When does an arduous task, without a rewarding return, become

exploitation? Concept Generation takes the neoliberal mindset of 'payment' for any menial task and rewards it with a tokenistic beer.

The exchange of 'a beer for an idea' brings together two disparate points – the value of engagement of the audience, and the tokenistic exchange for creative work, in materials, consumables, merchandise, experiences or even 'exposure'. Initially, the exchange of a participant's innovation for a beer was modelled on start-up culture lifestyle, where intellectual property (IP) is the "oil of the 21st century" (Ross 2003, 32). Dot com companies which grew from the 1990s onwards bore both the gig economy and a slippage between work and leisure. For instance, Google installed cafeterias, gyms, childcare, doctors' surgeries, dry cleaners and hairdressers in workplaces, to ultimately keep workers at work for longer (Chang 2006). This slippage occurs in both directions – employees relax at work and work at home. From an intellectual property perspective, workers can also work on personal projects in work time (for example Google's '20 percent time'). Generally, companies hold IP rights over work regardless of whether it is self-initiated or 'creative'. The 'beer exchange' is a metaphorical emblem of the rewards of leisure/work, and has the effect of merging work and lifestyle into a heady combination of both.

The beer exchange agreement presents a glib take on participant labour within a SEA project. Another currency of visibility is in play, whereby participant's 'enduring image' (documentation of their engagement) is one of the most valuable outcomes for artists. Due to the educational turn and subsequent absorption of SEA practice into institutions, this documentation forms a currency for the artist and their ongoing career. The lead artist solely benefits from future bookings of the project, while those shown enjoying the process become a currency traded on the art market.

Critical Thinking

Concept Generation seeks to amplify and warp production in art practice/creative industry, to spark participant's critical thinking. Throughout the process, participants are invited to try out a variety of critical processes. They initially use collage to bring together production methodologies in a commodity form, then use satire in the pitch to play on marketing techniques. Ultimately, they are implicated in a debate on labour and intellectual property (when they come to exchange their innovation for a beer); they may proceed with the project's logic or disrupt it through negation.

Collage is the primary technique of Concept Generation's production game. Collage itself is "a negation of consumption that turns the process into a positive practice of production while remaining completely within and working through the commodity form in consumer culture" (Banash 2013, 14). Rather than repurposing 'readymade' end-products in collage, by using elements of production as the collage stimuli, Concept Generation participants critique the process of ideation, production and marketing. The outcomes "contest and reproduce the alienation of a world mediated by the commodity form" through the inclusion of the production process of the commodity form (Banash 2013, 14).

Rancière considered political collage to form a "balancing-point in that it can combine the two relations and play on the line of indiscernibility between the force of sense's legibility and the force of non-sense's strangeness" (Rancière 2004, 47). However, I suggest that for participants in an encounter which invites critical thinking, the balancing-point is much wider than a narrow fulcrum. The workshop environment legitimates the process and encourages a split from either a wholly critical or collaborative position, to one which sustains at least a sliver of each. For instance, a participant's honest effort to make a marketable and successful product will still hold a fraction of absurdity which germinates from the original stimuli. On the other hand, a participant's aim to create a satirical 'joke' product can still trigger a sense that it could be successful. For instance, the innovation of

Pregnantea has elements of critical reasoning and humour.

This ‘wide fulcrum’ on which critical-art-by-encounter participants balance is supported by the ‘inventory’ or archival manner of displaying a mass of drawings which accumulate (Figure 8). The repetition of blue biro on white paper, accompanied by 3 stimuli creates a kind of archive that shows the “kinship between inventive acts of art” (Rancière 2004, 55). Participants can see the connections that others have made, and a drawing of the final innovation, but without the final marketing pitch, that earns them a beer. The mass of indeterminacy of meaning counters society’s “accelerated consumption of signs, playing on this undecidability is the only remaining form by which to subvert the meaning of protocols for reading signs” (Rancière 2004, 54) Walking through the workshop environment, and reflecting on the myriad of innovations promotes a smug in-joke, partly about the ridiculousness of the endeavour. This could be what Bataille referenced as “a subversive jouissance” when experiencing the play between “submission and transgression” (as cited in Kester 2011, 102).



Figure 8: Concept Generation Prague
Source: generated by the author

The final combination of drawing and pitch is the peak of the participants’ critical efforts, which dips into satire. Determining the depth of satire, and its separation from reality is difficult, especially where participants are asked to mimic critical reflectivity. Even after the collage exercise, participants may become attracted to the subject of the satire, and form a “nefarious complicity between the reflection and the reflected which lets itself be seduced narcissistically” (Derrida as cited in Pimental 2019, 140). The underlying but unsaid intention of Concept Generation is to satirise extractive production, ridiculous joke products and manipulative marketing language, but to never forget the origin of the critique. Thus, it is the host’s role to maintain the ‘suspension of disbelief’ of a creative industries workshop, while “building tension and provoking conflict, but, unlike tragedy and comedy, stop short of any reconciliation with its subject” (Quintero 2007, 3). Without reconciliation between two opposing poles, Concept Generation retains its status as a parody of the situation, rather than descending into pastiche. Rather than creating “a field of stylistic and discursive heterogeneity without a norm” (Jameson 1991, 17), instead there are two norms of artistic practice. Without closure as to which one it ‘is’, participants must endure the tension and sustain their criticism.

Deferral of judgement means the participant position is never prescribed. Rosemary Deutsche considers the instrumentalisation of audiences with references to Hans Haacke and feminist artists in the exhibition *Public Vision* (Deutsche 1998, 296). She details how institutional critique in the 1970's sometimes required viewers to find meanings in existing images. For instance, Haacke "invited viewers to decipher relations and find content already inscribed in images but did not ask them to examine their own role and investments in producing images" (Deutsche 1998, 295–296). The critique was revealed in the content of these images, not in the form of the interaction. In contrast, feminist artists, such as Sherrie Levine, Barbara Kruger and Cindy Sherman attended to the viewer as a player in the reception of the images, and therefore acknowledged "the viewer as a subject constructed by the very object from which it formerly claimed detachment" (Deutsche 1998, 295–296). By implicating the viewer through the artwork, the artists formed a model of institutional and medium-specific critique which sought to analyse and disrupt photography itself.

Concept Generation uses this mode of implicating the viewer within the parody between two norms, in order to maintain the political potency of its argument. In contrast, both ameliorative and antagonistic artistic endeavours fail to achieve the same potency when involving participants from the public. Ameliorative projects seek to solve social and political issues, but ultimately require consensus and can be easily instrumentalised. Antagonistic artworks propose a singular vision, held by the artist, and do not permit the participant to make a choice. In the model of Concept Generation, the participant is implicated in the work as the actor who decides the path their work will take. The fruits of their labour sit on the border between a critical artistic project and succumbing to the potential of profit in the creative industries (in the form of a beer). The navigation of this terrain leads participants to find their own subjective viewpoint, which reveals the potency of Concept Generation.

Within Concept Generation, innovation, production, marketing, labour, art and creative industries all come under the spotlight and are interrogated through a satirical process of over-identification. The embodied nature of the audience's experiential critique also includes the medium of its transmission – an art/creative industries workshop. The workshop itself includes many of the factors of labour, instruction, ownership of ideas and power dynamics which are mirrored and warped from labour practices in art and creative industries. In a similar vein, Shannon Jackson explores how post dramatic theatre adapts elements of the stage to undo its own medium. Audience, she writes, "situated within the embedded goals of critique, the unsettling of reality and fiction...provokes new knowledges but also invites reflection upon the conventions of knowing itself." (Jackson 2011, 168). Concept Generation takes Epic Theatre intentions, and extends it through participation, so that those taking part become agents of this epistemological interrogation.

You pitch your work to a host. They ask you a few questions about it and you decide to swap it for a beer. You sign a contract assigning intellectual property to Ben Landau, and receive a beer, which is opened for you. You are asked to pin up your drawing on the wall, with all the other drawings. The workshop is a hive of activity now. You wander around while drinking, reading and watching. All the participants are swept up in their tasks – showing their ideas, laughing and giggling. You find a seat and start the process again.

Conclusions

Concept Generation stems from the practice-led research of Platform Production, which investigates the potential for socially engaged art between over-identifying and ameliorative practices. The labour conducted through Concept Generation asks participants to develop a critical response through a task which over-identifies with a capitalist production model. The workshop setting (which self-references the educational turn in art institutions) introduces questions of labour and intellectual property. Concept Generation exaggerates the production model

while deferring judgement as to its ethical status. This deferral is conducted mostly through maintaining an unresolved duality between aesthetic art practice and entrepreneurial creative industry, ultimately leaving the participant to form their own critical position.

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