INTRODUCTION

THIS INTRODUCTION WAS WRITTEN in the shadow of the September 11 attacks. While it is impossible to predict their ultimate repercussions, one of the gravest dangers is that these events (and subsequent reactions to them) will further aggravate a global climate of belligerence and defensiveness based on differences of culture, religion, and nationality. Equally alarming is the fact that the currently dominant framework for exchange across these boundaries is a market system that generates its own divisive schisms, based on class and economic status. In this fraught historical moment the situation of art may seem a relatively minor concern. There are, however, a number of contemporary artists and art collectives that have defined their practice around the facilitation of dialogue among diverse communities. Parting from the traditions of object making, these artists have adopted a performative, process-based approach. They are "context providers" rather than "content providers," in the words of British artist Peter Dunn,[1] whose work involves the creative orchestration of collaborative encounters and conversations, well beyond the institutional confines of the gallery or museum.

I will try to make this distinction clearer with a few examples. The first project began on a warm spring day in 1994, as a small pleasure boat set off for a three-hour cruise on Lake Zurich. Seated around a table in the main cabin were an unusual gathering of politicians, journalists, sex workers, and activists from the city of Zurich. They had been brought together by the Austrian arts collective WochenKlausur as part of an "intervention" in drug policy (fig. 1). Their task was simple: to have a conversation. The topic of this conversation was the difficult sit-

FIGURE 1. WochenKlausur, *Intervention to Aid Drug-Addicted Women,* Shedhalle, Zurich, Switzerland (February and March 1994, February 1995). Courtesy of WochenKlausur.

uation faced by drug addicts in Zurich who had turned to prostitution to support their habits. Many of these women were virtually homeless. Stigmatized by Swiss society, subjected to violent attacks by their clients and harassment by the police, they were unable to find any place to sleep during the day. Over the course of several weeks WochenKlausur organized dozens of these floating dialogues involving almost sixty key figures from Zurich's political, journalistic, and activist communities. Many of the participants in these boat talks would normally have taken opposite sides in the highly charged debate over drug use and prostitution, attacking and counterattacking with statistics and moral invective. But in the ritualistic context of an art event, with their statements insulated from direct media scrutiny, they were able to communicate outside the rhetorical demands of their official status. Even more remarkably, they were able to reach a consensus supporting a modest but concrete response to the problem: the creation of a *pension,* or boardinghouse, where drug-addicted sex workers could have a place to sleep, a safe haven, and access to services (eight years later it houses twenty women a day) (fig. 2). WochenKlausur has been working in this consultative manner

FIGURE 2. WochenKlausur, *Intervention to Aid Drug-Addicted Women*, Shedhalle, Zurich, Switzerland (February and March 1994, February 1995). Courtesy of WochenKlausur.

for nearly a decade, developing projects in Italy, Japan, Germany, and Austria as well as Switzerland. For these artists the complex process necessary to bring the boardinghouse into existence was itself a creative act, a "concrete intervention" in which the traditional art materials of marble, canvas, or pigment were replaced by "sociopolitical relationships." The relevant legacy of modernist art from this perspective is to be found, not in its concern with the formal conditions of the object, but rather in the ways in which aesthetic experience can challenge conventional perceptions (e.g., the sex worker as social pariah) and systems of knowledge.

At around the same time that WochenKlausur's "boat colloquies" were unfolding on Lake Zurich, over two hundred high school students were staging their own conversations on a rooftop parking garage in down-

FIGURE 3. *The Roof Is on Fire,* performance with 220 teenagers, by Suzanne Lacy, Annice Jacoby, and Chris Johnson, Oakland, California (1994). Courtesy of Suzanne Lacy. Photograph by Sosa.

town Oakland, California. Seated in parked cars under a twilight sky, they enacted a series of improvisational dialogues on the problems faced by young people of color in California: media stereotypes, racial profiling, underfunded public schools, and so on. More than a thousand Oakland residents, along with representatives of local and national news media, had been invited to "overhear" these conversations as part of a performance art project titled *The Roof Is on Fire* (figs. 3 and 4). The California-based artist Suzanne Lacy, along with Annice Jacoby and Chris Johnson, organized the event. Lacy has developed a range of innovative performance-based projects over the past thirty years involving public dialogues and conversations, including *Whisper, the Waves, the Wind* in La Jolla in 1984 and *The Crystal Quilt* in Minneapolis in 1987. *The Roof Is on Fire* grew out of a media seminar that Lacy, Johnson, and Jacoby taught to Oakland high school students. The image of young people in Oakland immediately prior to the event had been dominated by news coverage of a riot featuring footage of a teenager kicking in a plate glass window. In *The Roof Is on Fire,* Latino and African American teenagers were able to take control of their image and to transcend the one-dimensional clichés promulgated by mainstream news and entertainment media (e.g.,

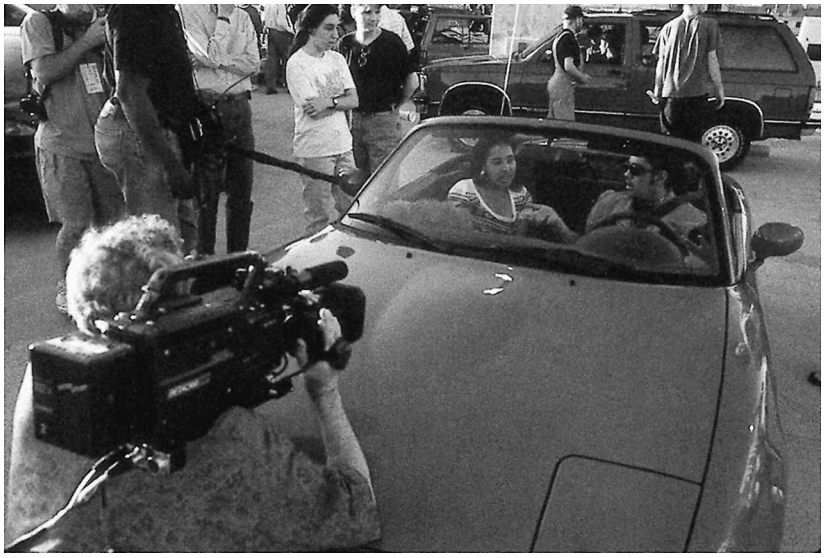

FIGURE 4. *The Roof Is on Fire*, performance with 220 teenagers, by Suzanne Lacy, Annice Jacoby, and Chris Johnson, Oakland, California (1994). Courtesy of Suzanne Lacy. Photograph by Saghafi.

the young person of color as a sullen, inarticulate gang-banger or violence-prone troublemaker).

The rooftop dialogues led to other collaborations and other conversations, including a six-week-long series of discussions between high school students and members of the Oakland Police Department resulting in the creation of a videotape that was used by the department in its community policing program. They also led to a subsequent performance in October 1999 that involved conversations between 100 cops and 150 high school students at the same parking garage. The *Code 33* project, which I discuss in a subsequent chapter, created a performative space in which the police and young people were encouraged to speak and listen outside the tensions that surround their typical interactions on the street and to look beyond their respective assumptions about each other. In the Lacy performances the insular, sequestered dialogue of the Wochen-Klausur project was turned inside out and presented as a media event. At the same time, each performance was preceded by several weeks of intense discussions between smaller groups of young people (and police, in the case of *Code 33*) with only a minimal media presence. These more intimate exchanges laid the ground for, and helped authenticate, the conversations staged during the actual performance.

FIGURE 5. Ursula Burke, *Tommy,* the ROUTES project, Littoral Arts, Old Museum Arts Centre, Belfast (2002). Courtesy of Littoral Arts.

While these projects deviate in many ways from the object-based traditions of modernist art, they also share certain concerns. During the 1930s German dadaists such as Hannah Höch and John Heartfield lifted images out of their context in mainstream picture magazines, allowing them to take on new and unexpected meanings as they were recombined and juxtaposed on the compositional field of a photographic montage. WochenKlausur's boat talks offer a temporal equivalent to this technique by creating an open space where individuals can break free from preexisting roles and obligations, reacting and interacting in new and unforeseeable ways. Lacy's interest in transcending stereotypical images of young people (and in acknowledging their individuality) resonates with attempts by avant-garde artists earlier in the century to challenge the deadening representational conventions of academic art and to reveal instead the experiential specificity of the world around them. Think, for example, of the ways in which the impressionists sought to challenge the static, cliché-ridden neoclassicism of the French Salon by capturing the perceptual effects of an embodied vision.

We find a somewhat different approach in a recent project involving collaborations between artists and bus drivers in Belfast, Northern Ire-

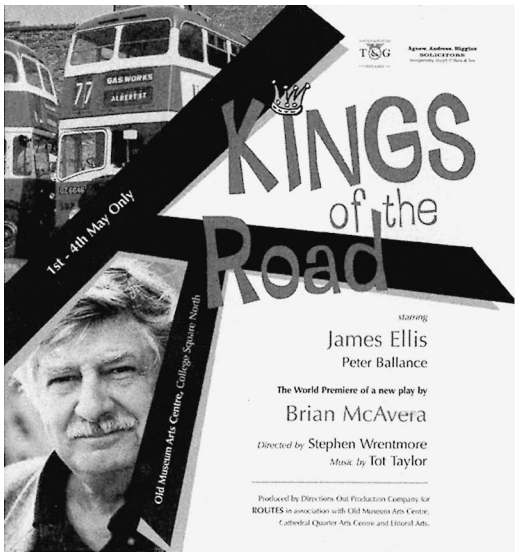

FIGURE 6. *Kings of the Road*, by Brian McAvera, actors Jimmy Ellis and Peter Ballance, the ROUTES project, Littoral Arts (2002). Courtesy of Littoral Arts.

land. The ROUTES project was organized around a series of exchanges involving bus drivers, writers, photographers, filmmakers, and other visual artists beginning in 2001.[2] These dialogues resulted in a range of works, including film installations, public art projects on the buses, performances, and an oral history archive (figs. 5 and 6). At the center of the project was an extended process of listening and documentation in which the drivers were encouraged to recount their experiences over the past thirty years, specifically in relationship to sectarian violence. The bus workers possess a unique perspective on this history. Through the Transport and General Workers Union they decided in 1970 that all drivers would drive all routes in the city regardless of their religious or political affiliation. As a result, public transportation was one of the few areas of life in Belfast in which Protestants and Catholics continued to work together on a daily basis. This decision was made all the more courageous by the fact that the drivers operate at key interface areas of the city (their bus routes regularly take them across the battle lines of Catholic and Protestant neighborhoods). As a result, the buses were frequent targets of hijacking, stoning, and bombing (thirteen drivers have been killed and 1,400 buses destroyed since the early 1970s).

Through their shared experience in the workplace the drivers created a provisional community outside the sectarian oppositions of Republican and Loyalist, Catholic and Protestant. These political and religious differences were reconciled through a larger professional identification that was literally embodied in the spatial movement of the buses back and forth across the divided geography of the city: "I'm not a Catholic, I'm not a Protestant, I'm a bus driver," is how one worker described it. When sectarian conflicts did arise, the drivers and shop stewards developed their own internal mediation techniques to resolve them. These techniques represent a valuable, but unrecognized, cultural practice oriented around the negotiation of difference. The ROUTES project set out to preserve and valorize the historical culture of reconciliation among drivers, but it also sought to "re-purpose" this accumulated knowledge, to learn from it, and to apply its lessons in the context of present-day struggles to mediate the nascent peace process.

Clearly these projects are quite different in a number of ways. The WochenKlausur boat talks were designed to catalyze consensus formation around the specific condition of sex workers in Zurich. The more open-ended conversations in *The Roof Is on Fire* were intended less to generate consensus than to challenge media stereotypes (the project also involved media literacy programs for the students). The ROUTES project, for its part, sought to recover a neglected tradition of workplace interaction that allowed the drivers to transcend existing divisions and identifications. Despite these differences, these projects all share a concern with the creative facilitation of dialogue and exchange. While it is common for a work of art to provoke dialogue among viewers, this typically occurs in response to a finished object. In these projects, on the other hand, conversation becomes an integral part of the work itself. It is reframed as an active, generative process that can help us speak and imagine beyond the limits of fixed identities, official discourse, and the perceived inevitability of partisan political conflict.

The questions that are raised by these projects have a broader cultural and political resonance as well. How do we form collective or communal identities without scapegoating those who are excluded from them? Is it possible to develop a cross-cultural dialogue without sacrificing the unique identities of individual speakers? And what does it mean for the artist to surrender the security of self-expression for the risk of intersubjective engagement?[3] We are all too familiar with the ways in which communication can fail (as I will suggest, a significant strand of modernist art can be understood as a meditation on this failure); what we ur-

gently need are models for how it can succeed. In this book I examine a range of art projects that attempt to develop such models. I also discuss the ways in which these projects affirm certain beliefs associated with the avant-garde tradition (specifically, that the work of art can elicit a more open attitude toward new and different forms of experience) while challenging the assumption that avant-garde art must be shocking or difficult to understand.

This is less a formal art "movement" than it is an inclination that has developed in the projects of a number of artists and groups over the past thirty years. It has clear connections to the community arts tradition in the United Kingdom and to temporary public art in the United States.[4] These works are also indebted to—and in some cases are part of—the post-Greenbergian diaspora of arts practices during the 1960s and 1970s (Allan Kaprow's happenings and performance-based actions were particularly influential for artists in the United States). At the same time, they expand that tradition, often focused on an internal critique of the work of art, into a set of positive practices directed toward the world beyond the gallery walls, linking new forms of intersubjective experience with social or political activism. Important transition figures here include Stephen Willats and the Artists Placement Group (John Latham and Barbara Steveni) in the United Kingdom and Suzanne Lacy and Helen and Newton Harrison in the United States.

While this collaborative, consultative approach has deep and complex roots in the history of art and cultural activism, it has also energized a younger generation of practitioners and collectives, such as Ala Plastica in Buenos Aires, Superflex in Denmark, Maurice O'Connell in Ireland, MuF in London, Huit Facettes in Senegal, Ne Pas Plier in Paris, Ultra Red in Los Angeles, and Temporary Services in Chicago, among many others. Although global in scope, this work exists largely (albeit not entirely) outside the international network of art galleries and museums, curators and collectors.[5] Thus Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle's *Tele Vecindario* project was developed on the south side of Chicago; Littoral has been active in the hill-farming regions of the Bowland Forest in the north of England; and the Singapore-born artist Jay Koh has produced works in Thailand, Myanmar, and Tibet. What unites this disparate network of artists and arts collectives is a series of provocative assumptions about the relationship between art and the broader social and political world and about the kinds of knowledge that aesthetic experience is capable of producing.

For Lacy, who is also active as a critic, this work represents a "new genre" of public art. U.K.-based artist/organizers Ian Hunter and Celia

Larner employ the term *littoral art* to evoke the hybrid or in-between nature of these practices. French critic Nicolas Bourriaud has coined the term *relational aesthetic* to describe works based around communication and exchange. Homi K. Bhabha, in an essay from the *Conversations at the Castle* project in Atlanta, writes of "conversational art," and Tom Finkelpearl refers to "dialogue-based public art."[6] For reasons that will become more apparent in subsequent chapters, I will be using the term *dialogical* to describe these works. The concept of a dialogical art practice is derived from the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, who argued that the work of art can be viewed as a kind of conversation—a locus of differing meanings, interpretations, and points of view.[7]

I will clarify my particular definition of the term in the context of art practice in Chapter 3. Here I simply want to note the interactive character of the projects I have described above. They replace the conventional, "banking" style of art (to borrow a phrase from the educational theorist Paulo Freire)[8]—in which the artist deposits an expressive content into a physical object, to be withdrawn later by the viewer—with a process of dialogue and collaboration. The emphasis is on the character of this interaction, not the physical or formal integrity of a given artifact or the artist's experience in producing it. The object-based artwork (with some exceptions) is produced entirely by the artist and only subsequently offered to the viewer. As a result, the viewer's response has no immediate reciprocal effect on the constitution of the work. Further, the physical object remains essentially static. Dialogical projects, in contrast, unfold through a process of performative interaction.[9]

As I began to investigate this work it became apparent that I would also need to reevaluate some of the normative assumptions of art criticism and art theory. Aspects of these projects simply cannot be grasped as relevant by conventional art critical methodologies. Mainstream art criticism focuses on the formal appearance of physical objects, which are understood to possess an immanent meaning, and the critic's judgments, which are authorized by their individual, pleasure-based response to the object. In her influential book *The Scandal of Pleasure* (1995), Wendy Steiner argues that the primary organizing principle of criticism should be "subjective preference," or what she terms the "I like" response.[10] When contemporary critics confront dialogical projects, they often apply a formal, pleasure-based methodology that cannot value, or even recognize, the communicative interactions that these artists find so important. The results are not surprising: dialogical works are criticized for being unaesthetic or are attacked for needlessly suppressing visual

gratification. Because the critic gains no sensory stimulation or fails to find the work visually engaging, it is dismissed as failed art.[11]

In some cases the critic may question the very status of this work as "art" in the first place, arguing that it is both practically and theoretically indistinguishable from political or social activism. A related response is to provisionally accept its identity as art but to limit critical engagement to a straightforward calculation of political efficacy. Here the critic's job is to simply search out points at which a given work seems to be compromised in some way (if it fails to achieve its stated intention, if it can be seen as complicit with some broader, possibly antithetical, political or cultural agenda, etc.). While I feel that this level of strategic analysis is necessary, I also feel that these projects demand something more. All of the projects I have discussed were presented not as social or political activism per se (although they clearly have activist implications) but as works of art. What does it mean to take this claim seriously? More supportive critics can, on occasion, lapse into their own variant of this political reduction. If the specific social issue or community that the work addresses is seen as laudable or sympathetic (the AIDS crisis, struggles against racism, homelessness, etc.), then the work itself is defined as successful by sheer contiguity.[12] By the same token, criticism of these works is often constrained by fear that one will be seen as disparaging the issue or community involved. This failure to differentiate the work as such from the issue it addresses is not surprising, given the highly charged terrain in which many of these projects operate. At the same time, from a critical and analytical perspective, I feel that it is necessary to treat these concerns separately. My goal here is to understand this work as a specific form of art practice with its own characteristics and effects, related to, but also different from, other forms of art and other forms of activism as well. Further, I hope to develop criteria for the evaluation of this work that are relevant and appropriate to this specificity.

One of the chief difficulties that I have encountered in this process is the lack of resources in modern art theory for engaging with projects that are organized around a collaborative, rather than a specular, relationship with the viewer. The interactions central to these projects all require some provisional discursive framework through which the various participants can share insights, observations, reactions, and so on. But the idea that a work of art should solicit participation and involvement so openly, or that its form should be determined through direct interaction with the viewer, is antithetical to dominant beliefs in both modernist and

postmodernist art and art theory.[13] Beginning in the early twentieth century the consensus among advanced artists and critics was that, far from communicating with viewers, the avant-garde work of art should radically challenge their faith in the very possibility of rational discourse. This tendency is based on the assumption that the shared discursive systems (linguistic, visual, etc.) on which we rely for our knowledge of the world are dangerously abstract and violently objectifying. Art's role is to shock us out of this perceptual complacency, to force us to see the world anew. This shock has borne many names over the years: the sublime, alienation effect, *l'amour fou,* and so on. In each case the result is a kind of epiphany that lifts viewers outside the familiar boundaries of a common language, existing modes of representation, and even their own sense of self.

While the projects I am discussing here encourage their participants to question fixed identities, stereotypical images, and so on, they do so through a cumulative process of exchange and dialogue rather than a single, instantaneous shock of insight precipitated by an image or object. These projects require a shift in our understanding of the work of art—a redefinition of aesthetic experience as durational rather than immediate. As a result, this book proceeds on two fronts, evaluating the status of communicability in modern and postmodern art and art theory and offering case studies of dialogical art projects. From these two inquiries I develop a new aesthetic and theoretical paradigm of the work of art as a process—a locus of discursive exchange and negotiation. I am not claiming to offer the only correct method but simply outlining one possible evaluative approach. By concentrating so intensively on a single dimension of these projects (dialogical exchange), I neglect other important aspects. In particular, I give little attention to the significance of visual or sensory experience in many of these projects (the role played by color, space, and movement in Suzanne Lacy's orchestration of public dialogues, for example). This is the level of analysis at which existing criticism is most comfortable and most effective, whereas contemporary critics and historians have found it particularly difficult to appreciate the experiences in these works that that are not reducible to the visual.

I must also stress that this book does not provide a comprehensive or synoptic survey of activist or community-based art practice. I deal with a limited number of artists and projects that exhibit specific aspects of a dialogical approach. As a result, I neglect many others that are equally deserving of attention. It simply is not possible to do justice to the full diversity of this expanding field while also developing a more sustained theoretical analysis. The (occasionally idiosyncratic) interpretations of

key issues in art theory and aesthetics are my own. As I have noted, more traditional critics have challenged the very definition of this work as an art practice. This is a serious and substantial criticism. To respond to it I work from the ground up, so to speak, developing a theoretical foundation for this work as art and placing the work in the context of avant-garde art practice. I have attempted to make this material as accessible and directly relevant as possible. I concentrate on works that define dialogue itself as fundamentally aesthetic (as opposed to works centered on collaboratively producing paintings, sculptures, murals, etc.). Because conversational exchange is an important element even in more object-centered modes of practice, the critical framework outlined here will, I hope, be relevant to activist and community-based art more generally.

Chapter 1 focuses on the ways that modern art theory at key points in its evolution has responded to art's function as a form of communication. I establish a critical lineage running from Clive Bell and Roger Fry to Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried to Jean-François Lyotard. In each case the antidiscursive orientation of the avant-garde artwork, its inscrutability and resistance to interpretation, is staged in opposition to a cultural form that relies on reductive or clichéd imagery to manipulate the viewer (advertising, political propaganda, kitsch, and so on). These theorists associate the semantic accessibility of cultural forms like advertising with the destructive effects of capitalist commodification. By extension, any work of art that makes itself too accessible, that attempts to solicit the viewer's interaction too overtly, runs the risk of being assimilated by the malevolent forces of consumer society. This paradigm (in its various permutations) has made it difficult to recognize the potential aesthetic significance of collaborative and dialogical art practices that are accessible without necessarily being simplistic. At the same time, this antidiscursive orientation carries with it an important critique of objectifying forms of knowledge that impose abstract conceptual schema (or stereotypes) on the flux of existence. The work of art offers an antidote to this process, embodying an openness to the specificity of the external world that is most often expressed in artists' relationship to nature or the material of their art. Dialogical artists adopt a similar attitude of vulnerable receptivity in their interactions with collaborators and audience members.

In Chapter 2 I explore an important historical reference point for dialogical practice in the art of the 1960s and 1970s, focusing on three key shifts in conceptual and minimal art: the gradual movement away from object-based practices; the interest in making a given work dependent

on direct physical or perceptual interaction with the viewer (as seen in works by Vito Acconci, James Turrell, and Robert Irwin, among others); and a related shift toward a durational, rather than instantaneous, concept of aesthetic experience (as manifested in Dan Graham's early video installations, which require an extended period of viewer participation). Taken together, these transitions set the stage for an interactive, collaborative art practice, informed by conceptual art but located in cultural contexts associated with activism and policy formation (e.g., projects by Helen and Newton Harrison dealing with land use issues, or efforts by the Artists Placement Group in England to make artists part of government and private-sector decision-making processes). I examine contemporary critical debates over the aesthetic legitimacy of this more interactive approach in the writings of Michael Fried, concluding with a discussion of the installation and performance works of Adrian Piper. Piper's work provides a particularly cogent example of an art practice centered on dialogical interaction with the viewer and anticipates certain criticisms of the constraints on dialogue that become evident in later projects.

Chapter 3 outlines my own concept of a dialogical aesthetic. This involves an investigation of the emergence of the aesthetic as a category of knowledge in early modern philosophy. In a range of Enlightenment-era writings, aesthetic experience is associated with a potentially utopian capacity for exchange and communication. This capacity is established, however, through a philosophical system that makes problematic claims for its transcendent authority. To resolve this impasse I draw on the work of the German social theorist Jürgen Habermas, who has developed a model of human interaction that retains the emancipatory power of aesthetic dialogue without recourse to a universalizing philosophical framework. While Habermas's concept of discursive interaction provides an important resource for the elaboration of a dialogical model of the aesthetic, it still tends to underestimate the significance of the specific context in which dialogue takes place. I turn here to recent critical interpretations of Habermas's work by feminist theorists who have developed the concept of a contextually grounded "connected knowledge" (based on a heightened capacity for empathetic identification) in response to the arid proceduralism of Habermas's model of dialogue. The concept of empathy will play a central role in my analysis of dialogical projects in subsequent chapters. Dialogical practices require a transition from a model of art criticism based on the perception of physical objects to an evaluation based on what Habermas terms "discourse ethics." In this chap-

ter I discuss relevant works by Stephen Willats, Jay Koh, WochenKlausur, Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle, and Suzanne Lacy.

In Chapter 4 I apply the theoretical model outlined in Chapter 3 to contemporary community art practices based on dialogical interaction. I examine the emergence of community-based or "new genre" public art during the 1990s and trace its complex relation to debates on race, class, poverty, and privilege, especially as these have been inflected by neoconservative political ideologies. I also discuss the relationship between community-based art practices and the broader history of social reform in the United States. Returning to the question of a discursive ethics introduced in Chapter 3, I present a critical analysis of a project by the artist Dawn Dedeaux, produced in collaboration with young African American men in an art-in-the-prisons program in New Orleans. The resulting large-scale multimedia installation toured a number of American cities during the mid-1990s. Drawing on French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's work on processes of delegation, I point to some of the ethical dilemmas faced by artists who seek to empower or "give voice" to disenfranchised communities. Dedeaux's project illustrates the challenges that dialogically oriented artists can encounter when they work across boundaries of class and race.

The concept of community has emerged as an important point of investigation in recent critical theory as well as more popular political debates. Attempts to redefine community revolve around the complex forms of identification that exist between individuals and larger collective entities (nations, organized religions, ethnicities, and so on). Community contains both a positive and a negative dimension. On the one hand, collective identities encourage us to break down our defensive isolation and fear of others. Further, they serve to honor and sustain a shared consciousness shaped by common experiences of life and labor. On the other hand, collective identity is often established through an abstract, generalizing principle ("the nation," "the people") that does as much to repress specific differences as it does to celebrate points of common experience. These debates can help to clarify the broader political implications of modernist art, especially its concern with challenging cliché, stereotype, and abstraction on behalf of a commitment to the unique specificity of individual perception and experience. In the final chapter I explore these associations as they relate to a concept of dialogical art practice, focusing on the writings of Jean-Luc Nancy. Nancy's book *The Inoperative Community* has been widely referenced in recent critical writing on community-based art. I also elaborate on the concept of a "politically

coherent community" introduced in Chapter 4 and use it to analyze recent works by Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge, Fred Lonidier, Cristen Crujido, Toro Adeniran-Kane, the Art of Change, and Junebug Productions (specifically, the Environmental Justice Project). The chapter ends with a discussion of some of the limitations of a dialogical aesthetic, focusing on what I describe as "dialogical determinism" while also introducing some general questions about the role of the critic or historian relative to dialogical art.