fig. 1 THE RADICAL RACCOMMODEUSE

collective HOUSE

lace FACTORY

fig. 2   THE CABARETIER

performance explores perspectives of those affected by e-waste dumping

instructions for fly system at Wardrobe electronics

notes for backstage runners

interviewed tonight on menders.fm

Grey hats, white hats

...op on hacktivist...

assembly on civic site access freedoms

seeking volunteers for taking ninth...

...te at any of the five Repairgrounds

the referendum date has been set

from Repairground_urban will vote next Friday

Repairground polls

popular initiative against CRS deployment

Who attended yesterday's review

showcase at Wardrobe-textiles on Saturday

...ght repair symposium to be held in Calais this year

ballot papers distributed through Repairgrounds

in favour of the women's shelter

communicating to the confederation
and beyond

fig. 3 THE ARCHITECT

the studio under the stage

diploma supplementary written submission 2020   body text: 30,390 characters
student: Ila Colley, nr.: 180146   KADK, Political Architecture: Critical Sustainability

abstract_ this piece of writing inspects some of the main issues, actors and ideas at play in the corresponding diploma project. It is a multi-stranded conversation between the imagined characters of the **Radical Raccommodeuse** (mender), the *Cabaretier* (performer) and the *Architect* (designer). These are flexible roles open to anyone involved in the Calais repair community. The **Raccommodeuse** embodies repair and education, which the *Cabaretier* communicates and provokes a discussion which the *Architect* responds to and designs from, these designs are acts of community repair which the **Raccommodeuse** attends to, and so the loop goes around. Here they are imagined as speaking at the start of a public showcase, introducing and explaining the Repair confederation to those new to it.

fig. 4   Text site: stage in the Wardrobe building

(*the Radical Raccommodeuse enters stage right. She is wiping her hands on her apron as though she has just wheeled herself from the underbelly of a car, or finished washing the dishes. She makes her way downstage to where the time clock shoulders the boards, and she docks her card, performer side up, in slot 0*)

THE RADICAL RACCOMMODEUSE (MENDER) (*addressing the audience*) Well, good evening to all of you! (*she gestures with palms upward*) For those of you new to the Repairground, let's begin with a thought about community. We might call this gathering an event of community. Each of you sits next to another distinct individual, and another next to them. Is it this proximity that makes a community? Is it the fact that if you were to turn and speak to your neighbour, you would be able to communicate through a common tongue? Is it the sense you might share common goals or opinions? Or is it the binding words of the story of an originary togetherness?

I sense we no longer find these questions useful, as they belong to the discussion of a mythic and static identity. Instead, we have come to recognise community as acts of sharing ourselves, as singular beings, something only possible at the limit of self and other.[1] We are able to share ourselves, experiencing the alterity of the other, as it meets the alterity of ourselves.[2] Therefore, I doubt this will be a monologue; I see some of you already making your complaints and your responses known, and in this, let us revel.

(*she pauses for a second, then retrieves a chair from the wings. She unfolds it and sits down*) So let's think about beginnings, which is not a myth but a record. Some years ago we discovered a practice, that of repair, through which we could rekindle the routes of solidarity that were well-trodden in the old Calaisien world of lace. Where once Calaisiens had related to each other through the production of this valuable material, we now attend, together, to what is broken. In-between, there had been a moment of freefall, the terrestrials who co-existed in this town had found themselves in a struggle with external forces that deprived them of their vocation or their mobility. The situation principally generated callousness, though many experienced worse repercussions. (*she fishes from her pocket a wrapped sandwich, which she eats slowly between sentences*)

This is not a situation that is fixed, yet we do not regard anything as being fixed, as a binary. Repair includes action and emotion, it is caring about, it does not reach a summit nor find an exit. We did not simply arrive here, we derived and fostered a conduct, taking inspiration from cabaret culture, that invited disorder and diversity into civil society. With this **cabaret conduct**, and this **repair practice**, a community took shape, claimed sites and made tools for the people to engage in discourse and make direct, democratic decisions. For those who are curious, tonight will constitute a sketch of this mending practice, and this cabaret conduct, and we will reflect and speculate on the ways they have been tested in the physical fabric of our city, the conduct of our bodies, the electric patterns of our minds

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[1] Jean-Luc Nancy, and Peter Connor, *The Inoperative Community* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 32.
[2] Ibid, 33

and the green flow of knowledge through digital and sensory realms. (*exits stage left, a minute passes and the Cabaretier enters stage left, laden in lace*)

THE CABARETIER (COMMUNICATOR) So, yes, a costume change is allowed. How tiring to wear only one mask! We can thank the cabaret for its many disguises, each ironic yet faithful. Here in the Repairgrounds, where we learn to mend, where we mend and re-make, review, resist, organise, speculate, we must also represent and communicate, to those in the next workshop making noise and never closing the curtains, to those in the other Repairgrounds, and to those who aren't repairing. Discourse flows better between the dressing and undressing of argument.

But first, a story about cabaret, remembered here in Calais from the lace-worker's struggle as places to meet, laugh, vent, and share ideology and strategy. The first cabarets were essentially taverns, offering food and drink, with musical or magical entertainment. With the evolution of the 'cabaret artistique' in Paris, these venues became vessels for fierce social and political satire, visited by patrons across the social strata.[3] A decade after the Commune, in the 1880s. the city had undergone surgery to prevent insurrectionist barricades, forcing dissidence underground. The shadowy lanes of Montmartre hosted the underbelly of Parisian society, renown for provocation and parody, critiquing the rich and powerful as well as middle-brow culture.[4]

To enter the cabaret was to subject oneself to critique, as well as participate in the critique of others. In popular memory, the cabaret is associated with lavish licentiousness or seedy indulgence, rather than the power of its alternative political discourse. Songs from the cabaret could be slanderous or rallying and were passed orally in streets or cafes, a kind of people's newspaper, provoking close surveillance and suppression from police. In the cabaret, dissensus was expressed through dialogue between audience and performer. The response of those watching was the other half of the conversation, co-constitutive, so the show should never be didactic.

Just as we do not take the performer completely seriously, we cannot take ourselves seriously either, though we will pretend, for the sake of the show. We embody these agonistic roles in order to work things out, relieved of the preciousness of self-identity. The owner of the famous Chat Noir, one of the first of the bohemian cabarets, used spoofs to induce facetiousness, even faking his own death for audience intrigue. The '10 Commandments of Cabaret Life' illustrate the performance of the audience member, "no. 6. Time your noisy interjections so they erupt precisely where they don't fit. This contributes enormously to enlivening the program."[5]

What a chaotic community the cabaret could be! A deviant bag of shabby poets alongside virtuosos, industrialists, dancers…

THE RADICAL RACCOMMODEUSE (*from offstage*)… machinists too…

THE ARCHITECT (*from offstage*)… artists sitting beside engineers …

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[3] Lisa Appignanesi, *The cabaret* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2004), 41.
[4] Ibid, 15
[5] from Munich cabaret Simplicissimus Künstler-Kneipe in ibid, 63

THE CABARETIER … policemen, professors, all jostling for a decent view of the stage;[6] mutating between adversaries and comrades, sans any clearly prevailing vectors of opposition. This was cabaret at its most progressive, a conduct of critical response to both world and self. Yet cabaret couldn't always hold its diversities in equilibrium, occasionally falling prey to nationalist rumblings and ethnic hostilities,[7] when performances manage to contrive consensus, and become dogmatic. At rare moments, cabaret made a foray into conventional politics, for example when the owner of Chat Noir called on Montmartre to elect him mayor and declare their independence, though ultimately it wasn't to be... (*the Cabaretier flourishes her lace shawl and tiptoes off stage right*)

THE RADICAL RACCOMMODEUSE (*enters with hands in pockets, speaking as though in mid-conversation*) It was a time of continual unrest in France, to which the cabaret became a mouthpiece. In our industrialised town of Calais, the ideas of anarcho-syndicalism became popular during this era, inspiring lace-workers to act against the state, politicians and bureaucrats, towards systems of cooperative economics and workers' direct democracy. So they built the Bourse du Travail, the trade union congress, a monumental translation of underclass dissent from the cabaret to a more sober and pragmatic organisation, a crystallised collectivism. Now it stands cavernous and quiet, like our old lace factories were before we reimagined them as Repairgrounds. We now act as guardians rather than producers, yet the Repair Confederation shares an ideological affinity with these lace-workers, combining their efforts for self-organisation and direct action with the celebratory agonism of the cabaret.

Alas, we find ourselves in a wholly changed economy to the anarcho-syndicalists. We tread the post-industrial terrain of late-capitalism in which labour, the reproductive struggle of subsisting, previously limited to repetitive exertion in the factory or office, now pervades the human faculties of cognition, creativity and political expression.[8] The cultivated human, rather than skilled body, is the primary commodity. We push back against this individualist model of high-innovation, high-consumption, and instead for a collectivism that rejoices in caring for the neglected or dysfunctional. Here, repair pursuits that would usually be outsourced by manufacturers, or attempted in an often-gendered private sphere, are shared and exchanged within the community, where their value creation can be properly recognised. Our acts of repair range in scale and ambition from precise tinkering with motherboards to interventions in urban and social fabric. (*exits*)

THE CABARETIER (*enters*) We can read the playfulness of the cabaret from its spatial dynamics and aesthetics. There were already images attached to the idea of repair: from wastefulness, cracked screens, the mutated landscapes of the Anthropocene, the user-friendliness of consumption, a static freefall into undesirable future, but also patching-up, making-do, a kind of steam-punk, post-apocalyptic bricolage. Developing an aesthetic to activate our caring for and repairing is useful if it remains somewhat fluid, evocative rather than reductive, or prescriptive.

Critics of the historic cabaret feared contagion and imitation. The performance aesthetic had become characterised by tics, jerks and grimaces, inspired by the public interest in psychiatric theory and stimulus-response physiology in late

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[6] Appignanesi, *The cabaret*, 89
[7] Ibid, 58
[8] Pier Vittorio Aureli, "Labor and Architecture: Revisiting Cedric Price's Potteries Thinkbelt," *Log*, no. 23 (2011): 99.

19th century France.[9] The imaginary of the period was intrigued by ideas of corporeal unconscious, the base instincts of the body, like the response of automata to its mechanical configurations. It was feared that these movements triggered a primal response, inducing hysteria in the audience.[10] Fear of mind control is no less potent now when we consider the plasticity of our cognitive patterns to the codes that dictate information retrieval online. It isn't a stretch to imagine that *the intelligent system that now confronts the wider world is biological-you-plus-the-software-agents*,[11] who are like modern-day magnetizers. We must remember, though, the potential of cabaret to inspire critical responses, we might even say that when it begs imitation, it is no longer cabaret. Another cabaret aesthetic is possible, in place of hysteria and corporeal shocks, and perhaps I'm not to one to speak further on this.

(*the lights begin to flicker and brighten, a commotion can be heard in a corner of the room. The Cabaretier shields her eyes. Elsewhere in the building a low whirring and a pop as the electrical system overloads, printers go offline, computers hibernate. Footsteps, then muttering and jostling, a few more figures join the audience. The lights bleach the room, the Cabaretier retreats and exits. Lights dim again*)

act II_disposition

THE ARCHITECT (DESIGNER) (*enters with a notebook and a glass of water. Those close to the stage might notice prompts scrawled on the back of her left hand*)

Here we are within the lace fabric of Calais that consists of lasting stuff: brick, mortar, steel, timber. The spatial disposition of these buildings was rather one-dimensional, it motivated lace-making, a labour as a life-force. By disposition I mean, well, the way 'active' form can impose a field of potentiality onto space, can offer a repertoire of game-play.[12]

THE CABARETIER (*from offstage*) Oh yes, just like how the original disposition of cabaret was constructed through an appropriation of marginal or abandoned space, embellished with a bricolage of church candelabra, old clubhouse paintings and medieval weapons, thematic and scenographic in all of its zones, from the stage… to the lavatory!

[9] Rae Beth Gordon, "From Charcot to Charlot: Unconscious imitation and spectatorship in French cabaret and early cinema," *Critical Inquiry* 27, no. 3 (2001).
[10] Ibid, 523.
[11] Andy Clark in Warren Neidich, "From Noopower to Neuropower: How Mind Becomes Matter," in *Cognitive Architecture: From Biopolitics to Noopolitics. Architecture & Mind in the Age of Communication and Information*, eds Deborah Hauptmann and Warren Neidich, (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2010), 565.
[12] Keller Easterling, "Disposition," in *Cognitive Architecture: From Biopolitics to Noopolitics. Architecture & Mind in the Age of Communication and Information* eds Deborah Hauptmann and Warren Neidich, (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2010), 255.

<u>THE ARCHITECT</u> Yes, individual rooms told stories. Yet as a whole the cabaret was a nonsense of salvage and parody, which acted as cultural props for wide-ranging commentary. *In order to produce sense, architecture must admit the forces of nonsense*,[13] we might take this from Deleuze.

As itself a work-in-progress, our Repair architecture attempts to demonstrate its transitionary character. It is dispositional in that it contains information which is shared with the user in order to gain feedback. Investigating the remit of aesthetics, as distinct from active form, you could ask the question, *how does democracy taste to the individual?*[14] Political or ethical transformation through aesthetics is usually a tangle of individual judgement and collective feeling, and therein lies potential. As opposed to matters of taste, aesthetics denotes an unlocking of private judgement to a collective perspective, *a political capacity that truly humanizes the beautiful and creates a culture*.[15]

Aesthetics can exercise resistance through its subversive and slippery nature. In the context of the factory, we might have spoken about resisting biopower, defined as techniques for the subjugation of bodies and the control of population. Instead, the 'edufactory' becomes the location of concern, especially considering our adoption of repair as a re-education of the city. The edufactory concept originally described higher education as producing the new cognitive workers.[16] The form of labour students would now undertake had subsumed previously independent realms of political thought, cooperation and social exchange into its production of economic value.[17] This type of immaterial production can happen anywhere, anytime, feeding the precariat. (*the Architect rolls a screen onstage and motions to the wings. A short grinding sound as a projector is lowered.*)

In the 60s, English architect Cedric Price drew, somewhat inadvertently, a blueprint for the edufactory. His project 'Potteries Thinkbelt' superimposed a modular, mobile education network onto Staffordshire's industrial heritage with the ambition of designing indiscriminatory education for wage-earning students. The project's use of free space and flexibility facilitated the flow of market demands into socio-spatial form.[18] The architecture could be populated by a flux of situations, presentations, meetings, performances, in hindsight perpetuating the novel public and communicative mode of production under late capitalism.[19]

The concept of 'noopolitic' goes further in describing new cognitive subjugation, which includes the mediation and control of *brains operating in unwitting collaboration*,[20] a kind of malleable mass intellectuality.[21] We are increasingly docile, plugged into a flow of algorithmically promoted information, *exporting our self-reflective capacities into our external hardware*.[22] If we understand that a principle role of government is to police and maintain

fig. 5   Cedric Price, Fun Palace, London, 1960-64. Interior perspective.

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[13] Hélène Frichot, "Stealing into Gilles Deleuze's baroque house," In *Deleuze and space*, eds Ian Buchanan and Gregg Lambert, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 65.
[14] Russ Castronovo. *Beautiful Democracy: Aesthetics and Anarchy in a Global Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 1.
[15] Arendt in ibid, 6.
[16] Aureli, "Labor and Architecture," 117.
[17] Ibid, 99.
[18] Ibid, 102.
[19] Ibid, 106.
[20] Hélène Frichot and Sara Vall, "Urban Biopower Stockholm and the Biopolitics of Creative Resistance." *Field: a Free Journal for Architecture* 6, no. 1 (2015): 52.
[21] Lazzarato in Neidich, "From Noopower to Neuropower," 545.
[22] Frichot and Vall, "Urban Biopower," 52.
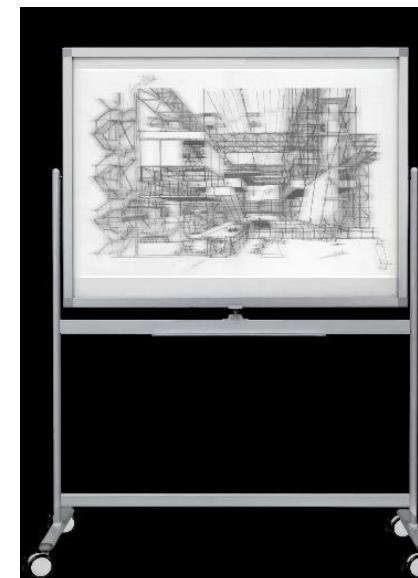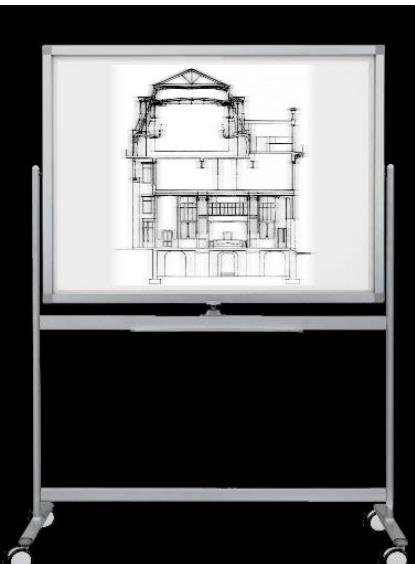
a sensibility among its people,[23] this can now be attempted through sophisticated influencing of our brains by intensifying select stimuli and making it user-friendly,[24] a kind of cognitive ergonomics so-to-speak. An example might be patterns of undeclared, targeted political advertising.

In the face of this, we prefer to engage the idea of dissensus rather than resistance, rather than naming what can be a slippery multi-form antagonist.[25] So, we attempt to create architecture that stimulates dissensus through a lateral dispositional shift rather than inversions of a preceding system.[26] A deviation from existing patterns, to some extent an improvisation, a gesture that frees itself from the plan, like the co-evolving responses of jazz musicians to their fellow players.[27] This artistic disruption to the sensible hopes to de-automate perception[28] by creating something unfathomable to bio or noo control, from our own bio and noopower.

For us, a cabaret conduct engenders a more organic terrain of brains engaged in processes of confusion, critique, clarification, contestation. As in Cedric Price's project, receptivity, performance and play are important to how we use our Repairgrounds, but we have sought after an aesthetics independent of the market, instead privileging the cognitive faculties of people, not as commodities, but as motivators of spatial agency. It's an architecture of varying resolution, with some elements highly specified, while other zones left abstract or in-between states. And of course, nothing here is fully finished or cleared away, each iteration is a conversation with a previous state. Performativity is integral to our cabaret conduct, yet along with moments of reveal, it is possible to conceal, to veil, drape, to rest and regroup backstage.

Perhaps we could call this gesturing an articulation of peculiarities, which is in essence the articulation of a community, an inscribing act whose ultimate meaning is infinitely deferred. The refusal of the definite demonstrates the political urgency of a community in momentum, and its need for continuous description of the peculiarities of that moment[um].[29] Any and all of you who participate in the Repairgrounds have a role in its articulation, so architecture is a mode of community self-description which includes the forwards, backwards and downwards looking of the present moment. (*the Architect switches to the next slide*)

fig. 6   Building section, Maison du Peuple, Brussels, designed by Victor Horta.

[23] Rancière in Neidich, "From Noopower to Neuropower," 580.
[24] Ibid, 551.
[25] Easterling, "Disposition," 264.
[26] Ibid, 264
[27] Neidich, "From Noopower to Neuropower," 572.
[28] Ibid, 578
[29] Nancy, *The Inoperative Community,* 76-81.
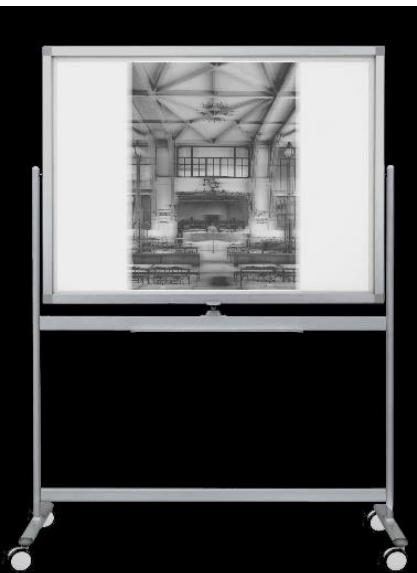
The grand dining room at the Maison du Peuple, Brussels, designed by Victor Horta.

We take a cue from 'The Houses of the People,' initiated by the Belgian Workers' Party at the end of the 19ᵗʰ century, whose dramatic and celebratory articulation combined neo-Baroque and Art Nouveau influence with allegorical workerist scenes and an insurgent socialist program.[30] They are attentive to peculiarities, which are expressed through ornamentation at the level of structure as well as the dressed surface. Focusing resources on small-scale grass-roots organisations meant the Workers' Party could make their presence known in the city by offering its people moments of exuberant spatial experience. The Bourses du Travail movement in France embodied similarly radical politics, but their monumental classicism was only sometimes infused with a flourish of Art Deco. In the Calaisien Bourse, lace-making reliefs and insignias are simply inserted into its surfaces.

But we motivate that when iconography is freed from permanence, it can become active, so we've explored an ornamentation that follows our iterative repair practice. Visual signification is placed at locations of high maintenance, for example the frescoes we paint on our stages are repeatedly trodden, worn out and re-imagined. Ornament is integrated into a mobile and practical architecture, where it builds a disposition, mediates faces and orientations, or nooks and exchanges at the junction of surface and structure. Ornament is rarely out of reach, and existing at an interface with the body means inciting care from the user, and care between its co-users.

This labour of remedial re-imagining is integral to how we operate as a community, it's a part of the discourse. We are trying to deviate from a monetary understanding of labour creating value, or at least prioritise the value created in exercising curiosity, collaboration. This value, paired with a renewed custodianship of the material, attempts an economy oblique to the ruling one. This is of course challenging, but represents a general ambition. Ambition demonstrates both grandiosity and vulnerability, the cultivation of a complex, often chaotic, multi-scalar aesthetic, is purposeful, it is like a dare, where the rigidity of community becomes receptive again. (*the Architect closes her notebook and wheels her screen offstage*)

THE CABARETIER (*carries a table lamp under one arm, already lit up, and sets it down centre-stage*) Let me take scale as a segue then, and zoom out to think about the city. A bit like the organisation of our old trade union congresses, we established here a confederation of Repairgrounds, autonomous in their domain of repair but in close alliance with each other. To assess and share the state of our practices we host monthly reviews in the Repairground for those at Electronics, quarterly showcases here in the Wardrobe for any members of the confederation, and regular assemblies and referendums to progress issues raised during these performances. Our shared repair practice potentializes a repair praxis through which concerns in the community and the wider city can be addressed. In this, we are testing the city as a possible scale at which to generate progressive, post-nationalist politics.[31] So, we take the neutral concept of the municipal and attempt to transform it into a radical unit for developing social solidarity, the commons and mechanisms of direct democracy, and explore opportunities for autonomy. (*exits stage left*)

The mosaic panels of Émiel van Averbeke and Jan van Asperen's Maison du Peuple.

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[30] Owen Hatherley, "Socialist class: the Houses of the People," *The Architectural Review* 244, no. 1454 (2018): 37.
[31] Plan C, "Radical municipalism: demanding the future," https://www.weareplanc.org/blog/radical-municipalism-demanding-the-future/

act III_dynamic

<u>THE RADICAL RACCOMMODEUSE</u> (*enters stage left*) And to go down a scale within our confederation, each Repairground and its Wardrobe exist in a symbiosis of experimentation and communication. Tonight you find yourself here at Electronics, in two buildings from the early 20th century, this, a collective workers' house, designed by Bourse du Travail architect Roger Poyé, and our Repairground, once a lace atelier and factory. (*she points to the back of the room, where the tall shutters are swung open*) To get here you travelled through our strange neighbourhood consisting of the husks of modern-era lace production before its demise in the last decade, the poker-faced utilitarian apartments, schools, dealerships, and the wide wasteland along Rues des Quatre Coins where factories, shops and houses were demolished to dispel displaced people who sheltered there. This old communal house was known as La Chapelle in the neighbourhood, probably after the arched entrance you saw on the way in, and because it was known as a lively place to gather. In the old factory, Calaisiens learnt a body language of lace, a set of movements and interactions in concert with the materials of lace-making, from the heavy iron of the looms, to the fragility of silk threads, to the resistance of Jacquard punch-cards.

Some things do change quite profoundly, and demand that we learn new ways of mending. When Calais was building itself on the bounty of lace, Ada Lovelace was using her poetical science to write the first computer algorithm. *We may say most aptly that the Analytical Engine weaves algebraic patterns just as the Jacquard loom weaves flowers and leaves*, in her own words.[32] We hold the product of her lineage in our hands, in our pockets, or on our desk at home. Computers and their programming have come to shape modern life, tools of great control as well as empowerment. At this Repairground we deal with all electronics, however intelligent, in the interest of maintaining the resources of the community rather than consuming new, as well as reducing waste.

It was felt that we should open up discourse from the Repairgrounds to broader geo-solidarities, addressing injustices within the tech global supply chain including communities affected by dangerous mining and waste processing. E-waste is the fastest growing waste stream, with underdeveloped recycling infrastructures and controversial export patterns.[33] Our approach includes research, advocacy and direct action, alongside learning the practical skills of mending broken devices.

You'll have heard of the Right to Repair movement, which addresses the corporate enclosure of the afterlife of electronic products, which is defended by outlawing disassembly, repair and modding in order to protect the 'intellectual property' of the manufacturer and maintain their lucrative repair market.[34] These obstacles to repair enable manufacturers to design for obsolescence, devices that are built to break or made incompatible with future hardware and software, forcing consumers to constantly upgrade. In alliance with Right to Repair, we're making

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[32] Yasmin Kafai and Jane Margolis, "Celebrating Ada Lovelace," *MIT Press blog*, last modified 11th October 2016, https://mitpress.mit.edu/blog/celebrating-ada-lovelace

[33] Nathan Proctor, "Corporations Are Co-Opting Right-to-Repair," *Wired*, accessed 17 May 2020. https://www.wired.com/story/right-to-repair-co-opt/

[34] The Repair Association, "The Association," accessed 1st June 2020, https://repair.org/association

progress increasing the accessibility of parts, tools, schematics and software, demanding a sensitive design approach to afterlife, as well as pushing the legalisation of tinkering and re-selling.

In our community, we don't share a set of in-common beliefs, no such hegemonic common sense exists, yet we style ourselves around *the* common, free access and engagement with resources. The expansive cooperative social networks in which wealth is created now should reward the entire network, but should belong to nobody, *property should become nonproperty and wealth must become common*.[35] In our Repairground, we push back against both enclosures against physical fixing, as well as the hierarchical control of the internet; once seen as the information commons, a revolutionary democratic tool, the web is revealed as a zero institution easily hijacked by communicative capitalism[36] as well as regime censorship and surveillance. So in Electronics, our repair praxis extends to web education and action, including aspects of hacktivism that concern bypassing censorship, supporting free software and open content. Where material mending meets its immaterial counterpart, we demanded a physical arena. The irl foundations of a forum. A stage, even. (*hesitates a moment then exits, untying her apron*)

THE CABARETIER (*enters*) A stage! Or a table. Or a pin-up board. (*taps her foot on the wood below*) There is a difference between administering a *space of appearance*, being allocated one, and creating it. And the difference is theatricality: your performance here produces what *here* means and looks like; [37] and the theatrical becomes a representation of participation.

It seemed the desire to participate in community was waning in the last 50 years, that youth became eager to fix a self-image in advance of experience, protecting themselves from the disorder and dislocation of encountering differences in the world.[38] The community solidarity was once so strong between workers seemed to morph into a mythic solidarity of will rather than action.[39] When workers could become consumers, withdrawal became possible and prevalent: self-contained homes, intense family lives and a simplified, bureaucratised engagement with the external city.[40] The character of the urban mosaic, in which parts were open to myriad persons and purposes, and in which the little guys could cajole or feel the closeness of help, [41] gave way to more enclosed, generic and corporate sites of socialisation.

In our town, this motion intensified in recent decades, particularly due to the dynamic of migration. On the side of the displaced, their violent mistreatment by the police, the antipathy of many locals and the need to avoid relocation or fingerprinting meant an imperative to stay hidden. On the side of Calaisiens, the securitisation of their city, the diversion of their narrative, the appropriation of their heritage buildings to squatters, developers or demolition crawlers all led to a bunker mentality legible through the town's distinct spatial segregation and the depletion of

[35] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, "How to Open Property to the Common," In *Assembly*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 94.
[36] Simon Springer, "Public Space as Emancipation: Meditations on Anarchism, Radical Democracy, Neoliberalism and Violence," *Antipode* 43, no. 2 (2011): 538.
[37] Ibid, 537.
[38] Richard Sennett, *The Uses of Disorder: Personal Identity & City Life* (New York: Knopf, 1970), 13-18.
[39] Ibid, 39.
[40] Ibid, 28.
[41] Ibid, 70.

diverse urban life. The stage vacated, the conversation stagnated. And above all of this, was the purposeful hand of the state outlining this hostile environment.

In this respect, the conduct of cabaret was an invitation, a nudge for Calaisiens to participate in the disorder of life again, to share their experience with those who are different. In our Repairgrounds, we cut open facades, projected stages and platforms outwards, forcing cabaret to spill onto the street, hoping to disturb bordertown isolationism and the monolithic mundanity of neoliberal public space.[42] This cabaretesque spatial anarchy is a kind of honesty, a refusal of ignorance, but not without its own pains. The pain of navigating situations that are out of your control may result in momentary bitterness, but develops self-criticality, and possibly humility.[43] To subject yourself repeatedly to these situations is to foster a curiosity, a caring-about for the others that you can't control.[44] This is the dynamic of the Repairgrounds, to share experience and knowledge and space, to deal with each other rather than privately intensify grievances. In doing so, the particularities of our otherness are appreciated as a constellation rather than in opposition.[45]

Accepting this constellation of conflicts within our democracy means celebrating the parallel presence of consensus and dissensus. Democracy, as we experience it, can be a protean process which resists the archic logics of sovereignty and capitalism.[46] This kind of democracy defuses possible hostilities by transforming antagonism into agonism, in which confrontation ceases to be a competition between elites or enemies, but rather a dialogue between equal adversaries.[47] Our democracy manifests as a community happening, as we share our stages, a contestation of and in public space. Our issues and concerns change over time. The idea of the repair confederation is processual, it moves between convening around a broken hard disk, to addressing issues in the repair confederation, for the city and its terrestrials, out towards exercising transnational solidarities through a relational understanding of space, and the subject of our repair. As we learn to repair, our city generates a level of cultural and economic autonomy from the state, enabling us to question its prescribed roles and make our own demands on issues in which we are protagonists, including the oppressive border regime. (*exits*)

THE RADICAL RACCOMMODEUSE (*enters*) Throughout these rooms you'll find hoists, screens, curtains, interactive elements for probing the environment, for mediating degrees of exposure to the community. These intermissions between seen and unseen, vast and miniature, emulate the way lace-making precision work could liberate the creative interior of the individual through its peculiar temporality. In this enacting of interiority and exteriority, the donning of different roles, we understand the community as an unscripted production, of innumerable nested narratives where notes and cues are inscribed in space. The community is like the ship of Theseus, it's a sock

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[42] Springer, "Public Space as Emancipation," 544
[43] Sennett, *The Uses of Disorder*, 91.
[44] Ibid, 97.
[45] Ibid, 149.
[46] Springer, "Public Space as Emancipation," 531
[47] Ibid, 530.

darned over and over until none of its original yarn remains. It's a resistance to immanence.[48] The community is not a work to be done, but an infinite task. And now for the main event.

(*she hangs up her microphone and steps down from the stage, undocking her card. Behind her the curtains begin to rustle, the sound of wheels rolling in the east wing. The spotlight blinks, dips, steadies itself*)

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[48] Nancy, *The Inoperative Community,* 55.

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fig. 1 _*THE RADICAL RACCOMMODEUSE*, author collage

fig. 2 _*THE CABARETIER*, author collage

fig. 3 _*THE ARCHITECT*, author collage

fig. 4 _*text site: stage in the Wardrobe building*, author drawing

fig. 5 _*Cedric Price, Fun Palace, London, 1960-64. Interior perspective* in Aureli, Pier Vittorio. "Labor and Architecture:
Revisiting Cedric Price's Potteries Thinkbelt". *Log*, no. 23 (2011): 97–118.

fig. 6 _ *Building section, Maison du Peuple, Brussels, designed by Victor Horta*. Hidden Architecture, accessed 2nd June 2020
http://hiddenarchitecture.net/maison-du-peuple-house-of-people/

fig. 7 _*The grand dining room at the Maison du Peuple, Brussels, designed by Victor Horta* in Hatherley, Owen. "Socialist class:
the Houses of the People" *The Architectural Review* 244, no. 1454 (2018): 36-39.

fig. 8 _ *The mosaic panels of Émiel van Averbeke and Jan van Asperen's Maison du Peuple*, in Hatherley, Owen. "Socialist class:
the Houses of the People" *The Architectural Review* 244, no. 1454 (2018): 36-39.