

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Organized By: Lauren van Haften-Schick and
Kenneth Pietrobono (Uncertainty Labs)

July-September, 2020

Hosted Virtually:

www.projectspace-efanyc.org/redistribution

New content released every Wednesday.

EFA Project Space is pleased to virtually host REDISTRIBUTION: an online collaborative discussion series with researchers, workers, and artists exploring the complications, contradictions, and entanglements in the escalating need and demand to redistribute. Articulated as a tool to remedy continued inequity and accumulation of wealth, this series investigates the barriers to enacting redistribution, the challenge of redistributing power, and potentials for restorative equity within redistributive acts. Hosted by Lauren van Haften-Schick (PhD candidate, Cornell University) and Kenneth Pietrobono (artist and researcher, Uncertainty Labs), the series examines the complexity within redistribution and contributes to ongoing efforts to understand the political, social, and economic limits to equitable distribution and the pursuit of alternatives.

The collaboration between van Haften-Schick and Pietrobono began in 2018 with a roundtable series at Pioneer Works focusing on the legacy and efficacy of artists' rights laws including moral rights and resale royalties. Through these conversations more pressing concerns were clear: the failure of existing frameworks to address worsening inequities, concentrations of wealth, and the structures that maintain them. Throughout REDISTRIBUTION, participants and organizers will consider artworks and practices that limit and divert the rights embedded in individual ownership as experiments toward collective benefit—specifically because the law has not. How do these efforts illustrate the inability and/or unwillingness of regulation to enforce limits on individual ownership and accumulation in a time of increasing collective need? What do these strategies reveal about the complications of redistribution as we mobilize toward more equitable distribution?

New discussions and content will be released every Wednesday on the website of EFA Project Space, with the first discussion released on Wednesday July 29, 2020.

The list of discussion topics are as follows:

1. What do we mean? What exactly are we redistributing? When is something redistributive?

- a. Part 1: Amy Whitaker, “Redistribution is the repair work of democracy.”
- b. Part 2: Catherine Green, “If these inequities continue, this country will fall.”
2. Discussion 2: What is at stake? Who gets, who gives, and who decides?
3. Discussion 3: How is the willingness to redistribute generated?
4. Discussion 4: Individual rights versus collective rights? Collective rights via individual rights? If redistribution requires a limit to the rights of individual owners, how does the law maintain collective interest above individual interest?
5. Discussion 5: Redistribution at scale: When is something redistributed enough? Can we tell the difference?
6. Discussion 6: Speculation as redistribution? Where and who do we take from when we financialize to redistribute?
7. Discussion 7: Redistribution in the era of infinite wealth debt. Can you redistribute an infinite pie? Is redistribution always good?
8. Discussion 8: Accumulation, maintenance, sustainability, circulation. How could we support equitable distribution and care for the humanity it requires? What do we take and what do we give?
9. Discussion 9: A sharp image of a blurry object: An open space for reflection and the questions we can’t see from here.

REDISTRIBUTION IS A PRACTICE

Join the conversation. Send us your thoughts, projects and related content at redistribution@efanyc.org and follow #RedistributionWednesday on EFA’s social media accounts for selected submissions to be shared.

- Do you have an artwork or project that incorporates elements of redistribution?
- Do you have examples of, or proposals for redistribution (current and historical)?
- Do you have thoughts on redistribution, relevant writing, articles, memes, anecdotes or other content?
- Where do you see redistribution in action?

TOO BIG TO ANSWER

In this program, the organizers have shaped eight frames to help us distinguish overlapping considerations within calls for and acts of redistribution. These frames are incomplete proposals and there are topics in our discussions and have referred to as “too big to ask” because they extend within, beyond and through each discussion. Perhaps these are questions which (for us) may not be addressed as single topics but that are engaged as we work.

1. Distribution vs. Redistribution: Does an argument for “redistribution” simply maintain the imbalances of our current systems of accumulation? Do we affirm unequal accumulation of wealth by becoming dependent on redistributing it?
2. If the goal is to end inequity, is redistribution an end in and of itself or a step towards something else?
3. Is redistribution always good? How have logics and acts of “redistribution” historically been used to justify theft and extraction?

4. Would a system of perfectly equitable distribution provide enough “opportunity” for competitive development and growth? Is the goal to minimize imbalance, maintaining enough opportunity for growth but limited to mitigate dysfunctional disparity? Are competition and growth necessary?
5. Is an argument for redistribution a step towards equitable reparations? Are the concepts at all interchangeable and what can the differences teach us? What form and scale would equitable reparations take? Who would decide?
6. Are taxes a sufficient form of redistribution? Are socialist practices of broad public assistance and “safety net” redistribution?

INTENTIONS

1. We are committed to the ongoing work of including and amplifying the voices of individuals and communities impacted by, calling for, and already doing the work of redistribution, reparation, and abolition.
2. This project and its hosts do not approach the topic neutrally; we are in support of redistribution.
3. This project is not a complete accounting, or absolute statement, but an ongoing and open engagement with the theme of redistribution.
4. We support direct action and offer this project and its considerations in parallel to direct action movements.
5. We and this program commit to undoing whiteness, and the tension of both holding space for marginalized voices while not asking others to do the work of racial and economic justice.

ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS

Lauren van Haften-Schick is an art historian and curator from New York City. She is a PhD Candidate in the History of Art and Visual Studies at Cornell University researching artists’ interventions in law since the 1960s, with a focus on artists’ contracts and collaborations between artists, lawyers, and technologists. Lauren is a 2020-21 Predoctoral Fellow at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, and from 2018-2019 was a Digital Life Initiative Doctoral Fellow at Cornell Tech. Publications include “Conceptualizing Artists’ Rights: Circulations of the Siegelau-Projansky Agreement in Art and Law” in the Oxford Handbooks in Law, and a forthcoming co-edited collection of Seth Siegelau’s writings and interviews. Her curated exhibitions “Non-Participation” (2014-16) and “Canceled: Alternative Manifestations & Productive Failures” (2012-14) traveled in the US and abroad. From 2015-17 she was Associate Director of the Art & Law Program in NYC, in 2011-12 served as a research assistant for Siegelau, and has held positions in galleries and non-profits. She has presented her research at the Georgetown University Law Center, New York University, and SOMA Summer among other art and academic institutions, and received grants from the William Nelson Cromwell Foundation, the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, and the Terra Foundation for American Art.

Kenneth Pietrobono is a conceptual artist, writer and researcher living in New York City. His ongoing work, Uncertainty Labs, is an artist-run think tank for non-knowledge offering research and proposals for understanding an “age of no remedy”—a state in which knowledge fails to overcome the power of misconstruction, misalignment, contradiction and subjective interest to govern beyond sovereign regulation—even when we already know.

His exhibitions include “Whisper or Shout: Artists in the Social Sphere” (BRIC Arts Media, 2016) and the “Whitney Biennial” (Whitney Museum of American Art, 2017) with Occupy Museums. He is an alumnus of the Socrates Sculpture Park Emerging Artist Residency (2013/2014), the Art & Law Program, New York City (2016), the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council Workspace Residency (2018/2019), and is an upcoming participant in the Onassis AiR School of Infinite Rehearsals residency (2021).

An Engaged Opportunity Grant from the Office of Engagement Initiatives at Cornell University funded this community-engaged project.

PRESS INQUIRIES

Judy Giera, Program Manager
EFA Project Space Program
[212-563-5855](tel:212-563-5855) x 233 / judy@efanyc.org

EFA Project Space, launched in September 2008 as a program of **The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts**, is a collaborative, cross-disciplinary arts venue founded on the belief that art is directly connected to the individuals who produce it, the communities that arise because of it, and to everyday life; and that by providing an arena for exploring these connections, we empower artists to forge new partnerships and encourage the expansion of ideas.

The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts (EFA) is a 501(c)(3) public charity. Through its three core programs, **EFA Studios**, **EFA Project Space**, and **EFA Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop**, EFA is dedicated to providing artists across all disciplines with space, tools and a cooperative forum for the development of individual practice. EFA is a catalyst for cultural growth, stimulating new interactions between artists, creative communities, and the public. www.efanyc.org



A Program of The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts
323 West 39th Street, New York City, 10018
212-563-5855 x 244 | projectspace@efanyc.org
www.efanyc.org



The logo for Engaged Cornell is contained within a thick black rectangular border. The words "Engaged" and "Cornell" are stacked vertically in a bold, sans-serif font. A small black square is positioned to the left of the word "Cornell".