



WORK BOOK BOOK

NO

ON

STAY

On questioning art's role in activism...

Should all art involve activism or is making art already an act of activism in itself? If art and activism are separable, are artworks that don't involve activism not as important, are they lesser than those that do? Thinking about the term 'useful art' (coined by Tania Bruguera), where art has a real effect in society, what are 'useless art' and do they really have no use at all? Who gets to decide the criteria of what is useful and what is not?

This workbook came about as I contemplated art's role in activism and ended up with numerous questions about art, mostly concerning its purpose, role and value in society. My mind also gravitated towards thinking about what conditions enable an individual to make art and under what circumstances can an individual afford not to express something? As activism implies challenging and changing power relations, it is important to think about our individual positions in society, our privileges, our relationships with worthiness, our value systems, society's structure and what those in power value and support. From here, we form a web of different connections and positions, which perhaps could illuminate steps towards possible actions, but where does art come in and does it need to?

I believe art creates a space to test things out which could then help us live life. Art also enables us to encounter, confront and process challenging and uncomfortable things. I've read in an online article once that said "art doesn't change the world, but it is how we use it to help us change", perhaps art is more of an activation than activism.

Some answers cannot be given to us straight away, as Rilke suggested to live the questions and gradually we will live into the answers. I therefore decided to transform some of my questions around art and its role in activism into a series of absurd exercises for myself and those interested to act out. They are ridiculous enough to have a bit of fun and play a little, but at the same time create a space to experiment and contemplate from a more playful and sometimes nonverbal perspective and perhaps will enable new ideas or further questions to emerge.

What is your problem?

Answer the question in the form of gestures and movements.

Extra:

If your problem is a sound what would it sound like?

Do the gestures and movements to this sound.

CYCLES

ACTION:

- » Think of something that you did or a situation that didn't work.
- » Interpret and reduce it into a series of movements.
- » Perform these movements and repeat over and over again until you collapse.

What will be good to perpetuate in your life?

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Extra: turn the action into a GIF.

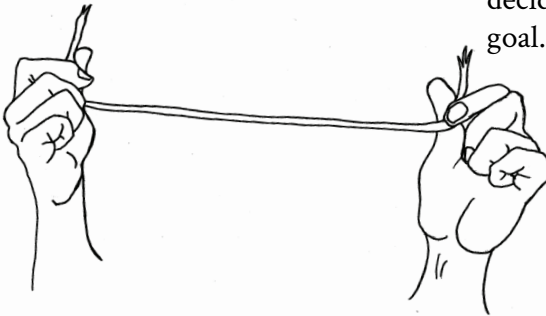
MAPPING



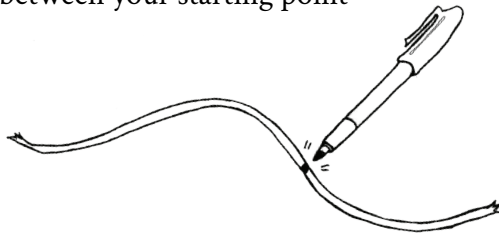
» Take a piece of string (approx. 60cm long).

» One end represents a goal of yours. This could be the change you are working towards or the thing you want to achieve/possess.

» The other end represents your starting point, the time when you decided to pursue this goal.



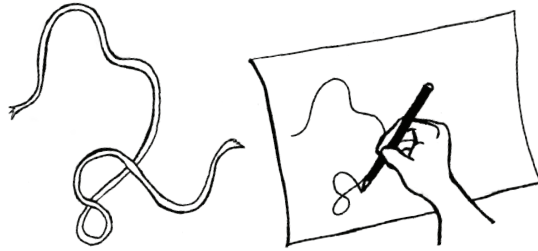
» Take a colour pen and mark where you think you are at right now between your starting point and your goal.



» Hold both ends of the string and drop it on the floor.

Exercise 3 cont.

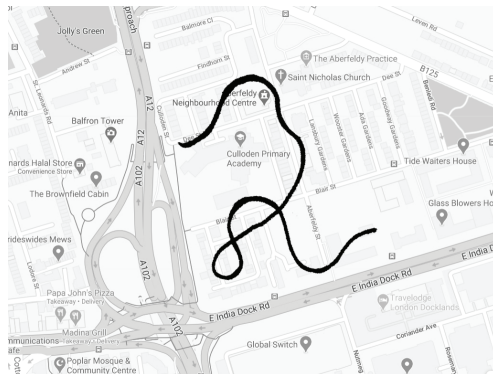
» Copy the line formed by the string on a piece of paper and clearly mark the points (starting point, current location and goal).



» Look at this line, it is now a path. Analyse this path of yours. If you feel it has more or less twists and turns redraw it on another piece of paper.

» Design a walk based on the shape of your path, perhaps put it over a map of anywhere of your choosing.

» Go for a walk and follow this path however you like.



» Think about your starting point, your current position and your goal in relation to where they are physically as you take this walk.

Extra: Find friends who share your goal and take this walk together.

DISCERNMENT

» Make up a set of 5 criteria for anything of your choosing, this could be for art, a relationship, a job or a holiday. They can be silly, absurd or true to you.

» Swap your criteria with someone without telling them what they are for.

» Now judge everything around you against your new set of criteria and categorise the things/people/places you judged into:

- 'Good' (fits most of the criteria)
- 'Mediocre' (fits half of the criteria)
- 'Bad' (fits one or none of the criteria)

» Record your findings into a table like this example below.

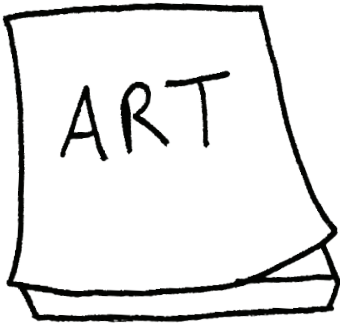
	CRITERIA:					RESULT
	1	2	3	4	5	
Thing 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	GOOD
Thing 2	✓	X	✓	X	X	BAD

» How do you feel about this table?

Design and perform an action that reflects your feelings using this table as a prop.

LEGITIMACY WHO HAS THE POWER?

- » Take two packs of post-it notes, each of different colour.
- » Write 'ART' on one pack and the other 'ACTIVISM'.
- » Walk around your local area, your home or your workplace.
- » Stick the appropriate post-it on things and/or people you come across.



Extra: Which parts of your body are 'ART' and which 'ACTIVISM'?

Stick the post-it accordingly.

DISMANTLING THEN REBUILD

- » Write on a piece of paper:
 - 3 things you don't like about the world and why.
 - 3 things you like about the world and why.
- » Cut up the sentences into individual words.
- » Mix up the words to form new sentences that seem to bear interesting meaning to you.

Extra:

*Intepret these new sentences as instructions
and follow accordingly.*



WORKBOOK is created by Bettina Fung | 馮允珊 for Young Blood Initiative's 'Wake Up & Smell The Tear Gas' project that explores the relationship between art and activism and reflects on what art could do in moments of turmoil and unrests.

This workbook is a starting point. An **online workshop** will take place on 19 September 2020 at 3pm (UTC+1) in order for people to meet, explore the questions together through the exercises and share thoughts. The aim is to unite and exchange ideas on the project theme with the hope that we come out of it with some new approaches and perspectives.

'Wake Up: WORKBOOK', a closed Facebook group, is formed for those who have come across this book via attending the workshop or on YBI's website. It is a place to share interpretations of these exercises and perhaps come up with new ones too. I would hope this place would allow those interested to continue existing conversations as well as to start new ones with each other beyond the workshop and the project.

About Young Blood Initiative:

An art organisation, a platform, a community, a collective. Young Blood Initiative aims to showcase collaborative practice, creating a community where artists can explore other ways to create, acting as a platform where they can experiment to go outside of their usual practice and to play. Since launching in 2014, Young Blood Initiative has brought to the public showcases themed around current affairs, fusing different creative disciplines through art exhibitions, live art events, lectures and public interventions.

<http://www.youngbloodinitiative.com>

About the artist:

Bettina Fung | 馮允珊 is a Hong Kong born, British-Chinese artist. Her practice centres on the expansive and immediate nature of drawing. She creates two dimensional, performative and site specific works. Themes of ritual, futility, purposelessness and notions of belonging and progress are subjects of interest. She has exhibited nationally in the UK and abroad and was the recipient of awards such as the a-n Artist Information Company's New Collaborations Bursary in 2014 and Arts Council England's Grants for the Arts award in 2018. Bettina was a part of Syllabus IV, an alternative peer led artist development and learning programme delivered by six UK arts institutions, and is an Associate Member of the Asia-Art-Activism Research Network.

Selected performances and exhibitions include: Manchester Art Gallery, UK; Eastside Projects, Birmingham, UK; Guest Projects, London, UK; Surface Gallery, Nottingham, UK and Draw to Perform 2&3: International Symposium of Drawing Performance, London, UK; Art Central Hong Kong; The Pier-2 Art Centre, Kaohsiung, Taiwan; Festival Vrrrr, Musée d'Art, Toulon, France.

<http://www.bettinafung.com>

