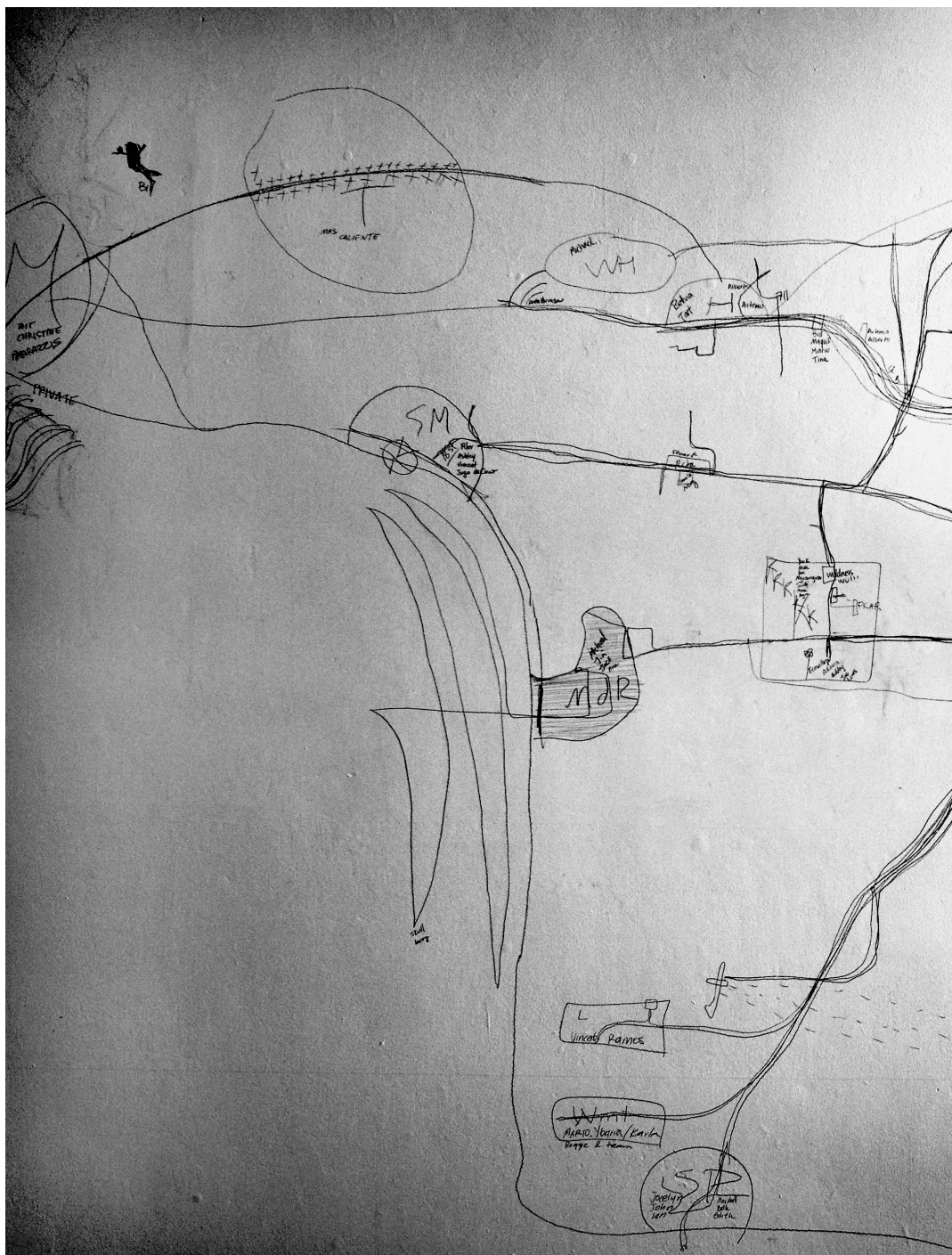


**DAYTODAY**

**2002-2009**







**L.A. MENTALScape. Carolina Caycedo, 2009.**  
**Graphite over wall @ g727 Los Angeles, CA. 12 x 6 feet.**  
**Photo by Kristin Bedford.**

*FOR PIRATES, FARMERS, AND SINGLE MOMS.*

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For more information about DAYTODAY, g727 or this publication,  
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Thanks to all of you generous, lovely and inspiring persons that exchanged with me  
in Los Angeles and during the last seven daytoday years.

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***Sailing trip.  
Los Angeles, 2009.***

# BARTERING WITH DAYTODAY IN L.A.

## A path between art, community, sharing and practicality

### *Pilar Tompkins and Adrian Rivas*

Sometimes the most elementary ideas can appear to be the most unconventional. Current modes of production in the Los Angeles contemporary art scene include a range of activities fundamental to human interaction that we have somehow overlooked, or at least undervalued, in a fast-paced society. At the moment, we find numerous artist communities engaging in all sorts of non-art activities framed as creative works such as bike riding, growing gardens, informative walks through the city, bird watching, examining land usage of parking lots vs. public parks, redeveloping neighborhoods and distilling alcoholic beverages from encountered urban fruit.

Loosely gathered under the concepts of social practice and service aesthetics, this increasingly prominent group of artists and art collectives are building discourses around civic engagement, measuring the distance between community activism and cultural production. This collapse between artistic expression and lifestyle commitment are generated from a desire to ultimately establish a long-term relationship between artist and audience. Within this realm, there is a great amount of overlap between what is considered artistic intervention, performance, public art and community building.

Rather than feeling like a muddled series of un-related and un-artistic events, there seems to be synergy of thinking about sustainability, resourcefulness and an inherent love of the city itself. From Edible Estates to Fallen Fruit, Urban Rangers to CicLAvia, to name a few active groups, a web of like-minded people that care about Los Angeles' urban development are taking aim at fixable problems through creative thinking and effectual means. Clearly California's long history of utopian imaginations is a precursor for these artists' personal approaches to making artwork, yet a distinct dynamism is giving shape to what will surely be regarded as a clear temporal movement when artists stepped out of the studio and into an active community setting.

Carolina Caycedo's project Daytoday in L.A., presented in Los Angeles in the summer of 2009, makes the case for alternative economies and increased inter-personal trust through bartering and exchange. Her interactions in Los Angeles may be viewed as an interesting mirror for the public practices and activities generated from within the city, while taking a measurement of where they stand up within international contexts.

Caycedo, who is a London-born Colombian, currently based in Puerto Rico, has executed Daytoday in several countries and U.S. cities since 2002 and has engaged in public bartering as an artistic method since 1997. Having never traveled to the West Coast before and knowing little of the artistic climate, her arrival in Los Angeles was serendipitous and her work found a ripe platform. Instead of interjecting a countercultural position, as had been the case in most of the previous incarnations of Daytoday, the artist seemed to find that her message weaved itself back into a social network already established in the city.

This led to many discoveries about cooperative actions and offered numerous opportunities for encounters between artists, activists and individuals interested in conscious strategies for urban development.

First and foremost, g727, which hosted Caycedo in her five-week long residency, offered a unique setting for this on-going project. Located in Los Angeles' downtown historic core, g727 is an exhibition space that fosters dialog between art and urbanism. Founded by Adrian Rivas, its director, and James Rojas, an urban planner for the City of Los Angeles, the gallery's six-year programmatic history is filled with not only contemporary art exhibitions reflecting the complexities of urban life, but also with public programs, lectures, symposiums and events that have invited city officials, community activists, architects and urban planners to use the gallery as a creative laboratory for their own topics of discussion. g727 serves as a hub for numerous groups interested in imagining a better, more functional Los Angeles.



***CiclaVia - Map & Model workshop.  
g727, Los Angeles, 2009.***

For Daytoday in L.A., Caycedo used the gallery as a base camp for her project, hosting a series of "family bartering days" where the public was encouraged to bring in items and offer services for a one-to-one trade. Though many items remained untraded at the end of the residency, the act of encouraging individuals to think about their personal items as well as their skill sets (think photography sessions and grant writing) as outside of a capitalistic economic value system was an interesting exercise in good faith trading.

Perhaps Daytoday in L.A.'s most successful component was Caycedo's direct and planned exchanges with individuals and organizations from throughout Los Angeles County. Caycedo used g727's website as a blog to chronicle the trades that took place over her five-week stay. She ferried herself between artist's studios, collectives promoting sustainable



living, and anarchist events, to site a few examples. The inter-personal connections made were opportunities for the artist and the public to discover one another other on a path that advocated for an inclusive understanding of economy. These encounters ranged from intangible exchanges of information and ideas, to personal services and objects.

Caycedo traversed a broad cross-section of impulses and initiatives and brought them together under the umbrella of Daytoday in L.A. The overall result demonstrated an ability to situate non-capitalistic activities as a compliment to, rather than a replacement of formal capital markets. As the investigation of Los Angeles' existing exchange networks grew, Caycedo seemed to be particularly influenced by the tangibility of efforts found here. One such model was the Echo Park Time Bank, where individuals trade services within their neighborhood, providing real solutions to social inequities. In light of such programs, it seems that Caycedo gained a deeper insight into the possibilities of collaboration through community activism - the context of bartering as an artistic proposal may have been overshadowed by the foundation of meaningful and sustained methods of alternative economy. Upon her departure from Los Angeles, Caycedo expressed the need for the implementation of such organizations within her own environment in Puerto Rico.

This resulting publication is an effort to synthesize and map the many activities and groups that were brought together under Daytoday in L.A. and to contextualize the experience within a broader framework of Caycedo's practice.

**September 2009, Los Angeles, CA.**

***IMAGE ON NEXT PAGE: Random objects for barter. LA, 2009.***





# PERFORMING ECONOMIES

***Elana Mann***

In February 2009 I was invited to submit a proposal for a curatorial project at the Fellows of Contemporary Art (FOCA), a non-profit organization in Los Angeles, CA. I had just finished a year-long project entitled *Exchange Rate: 2008*, an international performance exchange I created in response to the 2008 US presidential election ([www.exchangerate2008.com](http://www.exchangerate2008.com)). While developing a concept for the exhibition at FOCA, I was interested in deepening certain ideas and questions that emerged during the *Exchange Rate* project around politics and participatory artwork. I also wanted to highlight a community of Los Angeles artists who are exploring alternative economies of activism and intimacy in this time of global political and economic crises. The project I eventually created was called *Performing Economies* (May, 2009- July, 2009), which included objects, videos, and documentation, as well as performances, panels, and workshops. FOCA was an ideal space to host *Performing Economies*, as it is a model of alternative patronage. The FOCA organization, founded in 1975, is made up of 130 members who pay yearly dues used to maintain the organization and promote philanthropic programs. All of FOCA's programs relate to the development of art in California and most of the fellows are art collectors, gallerists, or art enthusiasts.

Initially I invited twelve individual artists, collaborative duos, and collectives working in Los Angeles to contribute to the exhibition. The participants included myself, the Artists for Social Justice Collective, John Barlog and John Burtle, CamLab, Dorit Cypis, Karla Diaz, Liz Glynn, Marc Herbst, Ashley Hunt and Taisha Paggett, the Journal of Aesthetics and Protest Editorial Collective (Marc Herbst, Robby Herbst and Christina Ulke), Adam Overton, and Vincent Ramos. When approaching these artists I offered the chance to curate live events and projects within *Performing Economies*. In turn the artists themselves invited or included many others in dialogs, performances, participatory projects, and so on. In the end the number of participating artists who contributed original artwork to the exhibition totaled over sixty-two. Since the budget was \$1,000 and the exhibition space under 1,000 square feet this final figure was quite astounding. In many cases each curatorial endeavor by *Performing Economies* artists could have been its own separate exhibition, and this added a great deal of energy to the project.

The artwork and events of *Performing Economies* varied from the poetic and allegorical to the pragmatic and pedagogical. All of the projects created for the exhibit dealt with social change, whether directly or circuitously. Issues of language, the body, and communication were central to most of the artworks. Some of the projects used existing political symbols and contexts, while others manifested as propositions for unconventional systems and structures. There was a fierce dialog between hope and critique that played out in different ways through each artwork. For the purposes of this article I will briefly discuss each project in *Performing Economies*, knowing full well that this surface treatment does not do the artwork justice. For more information and images of individual works I would encourage the reader to visit the FOCA website [www.focala.org](http://www.focala.org), click on the "projects" tab, and then the *Performing Economies* section.

The first artworks I would like to discuss involve elements of communication with artists offering unorthodox means for dialog. These artworks set the groundwork for how viewers interacted in the physical space of the gallery. John Burtles and John Barlog, invented a new form of the English language to be used in the gallery space, entitled "would WE like to try this?" 2008-9. This new form eliminates all pronouns except "we" and "us," abolishes command forms, and eradicates possessives. Instead of "Get me a beer," one would say, "Would we like a beer?" and so on. The executive director of FOCA, Tom McKenzie, said this piece greatly influenced how he interacted in the gallery/office space with visitors as well as FOCA members

Dorit Cypis, an artist and mediator, also deals with the physical and mental spaces between people in her ongoing project entitled Foreign Exchanges. When describing her project, Cypis writes, "Foreign Exchanges blends communication, negotiation, and option setting tools from mediation with perceptual, analytic, and creativity tools for the artist to engage with and transform conflict." For the exhibit Cypis bartered conflict resolution consultations of Foreign Exchanges with local businesses and offered a workshop in the gallery itself around the self and the other. She placed a promotional sign for Foreign Exchanges directly outside of the gallery, and carried a duplicate sign with her when she held her workshops elsewhere.

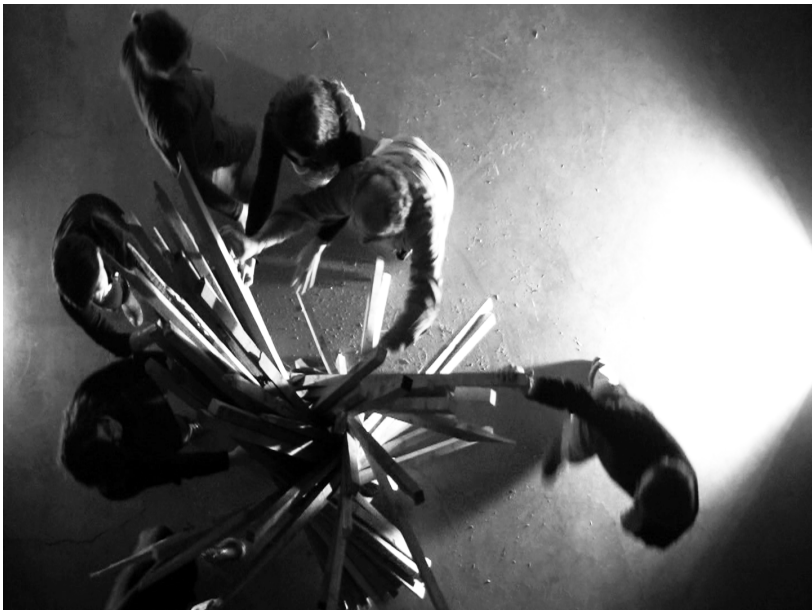
The potentials of socio-political change were addressed in many ways, whether through political discussion, writing and activism, or healing workshops. The Journal of Aesthetics and Protest Editorial Collective "facilitate[s] the meeting of artists, political activists, theorists, and media makers" who contribute to their publications and events. For their piece in the exhibit, the Journal facilitated a panel around "the emotionality of collectivities and social change." Participants in the panel were Matias Viegner of Fallen Fruit, Autumn Rooney and Liz Gerstein of the Echo Park Time Bank, organizers of the Public School at Telic Arts Exchange, and Jessica Fleischmann (Journal of Aesthetics and Protest designer). The panel members discussed emotional trials and triumphs in their own collaborative endeavors.

Marc Herbst, co-editor of the Journal of Aesthetics and Protest, also produced the comic book, Fashion Guide 2012, 2009 for the exhibit. The book concentrated on the next five years of fashion, from re-interpreting success to re-branding shared values and resources, formerly thought of as mundane. Herbst writes that he "refers to this as a project of fashion and style because these are the artistic mediums through which particular social interactions get formalized, solidified, routinized." The comic book mixes jewelry and scarves culled from the pages of Vogue and Elle with bike riding and trips to the farmers market, illustrating a paradigm shift that is stylish and inviting.

artSpa, organized by Adam Overton, invokes social change more obliquely. Instead of focusing on direct activism Overton gathers together an expanding public and private forum for artists, performers, and musicians who have skills and interests in healing, alternative therapy, and wellness. For Performing Economies, Overton worked with various collaborators to create two free artists led workshops geared toward expanding and enhancing visionary and healing abilities. One event was an "open-mic meditation," where Overton led an experimental meditation group and the other was a "free aura reading" with Krystal Krunch (a.k.a. Asher Hartman & Haruko Tanaka).

These workshops provided an alternative framework in which to question and battle the stress and strain of contemporary society.

A few artists in *Performing Economies* worked with direct political symbols and social contexts. Liz Glynn created *No Resistance Is Futile*, 2009, a black and white video work shot in an old train station in Milan, Italy. The train station itself had many architectural remnants from the Fascist era in Italy. The video displays a group of people as they struggle to break up a bundle of sticks (a Fascist symbol) and eventually succeed. In addition to the video, Glynn organized a panel discussion between herself and the artists Andrea Bowers, Olga Koumoundouros, and Karen Lofgren on the economics of making artwork, particularly sculpture.



***No Resistance Is Futile /Still. Liz Glynn, 2009***

Ashley Hunt and Taisha Paggett also used symbology in their artwork, *On Movement, Thought and Politics: Garment Worker's Center, Los Angeles/ En el movimiento, el pensamiento y la política: El Centro de Trabajadores de Costura, Los Angeles*, 2009, which was created during movement and discussion workshops with the Los Angeles Garment Worker's Center. Hunt and Paggett asked that the workers direct each other to physically recreate three educational posters from the Garment Worker's Center. These posters indicate (through simple line drawings) different ways to position one's body in negotiations, confrontations with bosses, and discussions with each other. Hunt and Paggett filmed the workers as they act out the postures of the characters in the posters and added subtitles in English and Spanish to the video.

For my own contribution to Performing Economies I created two pieces that draw upon a global movement of community-determined economies. In each other we trust, 2009, is a diptych of banners displaying images from a network of over 4,000 communities world-wide that have created their own currencies, time-banks, barter, and gifting systems. Complementary currency in three acts: for Advanced Drawing students, for FOCA, for Mañana Por La Mañana, 2009, was a series of original currencies I produced. These currencies were created in consultation and collaboration with the community for which it was made and then gifted to that group. Currently the currencies are being circulated outside of national and international monetary systems.

Inherent in the artwork of Performing Economies are two competing directions; one is a sense of optimism with which to create new socio-economic realities in this time of severe political calamity, while the other is a need to fiercely critique the failure of current political systems. In regards to hope, a few artists presented invitations to dance, perform, and dialog, such as Vincent Ramos' Come on Everybody-Let's Do The Twist, 2009. Ramos created this work in anticipation of the 50th anniversary of singer Chubby Checker's version of "The Twist" a (two-time) number one hit record that sparked an international dance craze of the same name. The piece incorporates six drawings that function as "contractual" invitations geared toward six of Ramos' friends, individuals with whom he wanted to "twist" with. The contracts affirmed that each friend would celebrate "The Twist" with Ramos and at the conclusion of the project, the drawings would be given to each participant. For this piece, Ramos compared the political and cultural optimism present during the emergence of "The Twist" in the early sixties with the renewed hope that Obama's 2008 election sparked. To kick off the year of twisting, Ramos invited the six participants in his project to create performances for an event he organized at FOCA entitled Call me lightning.



***Clonglobation, 2009, by CamLab (Anna Mayer and Jemima Wyman)***, also invited play and interaction through a two-part costume to be occupied by a series of performers. With this garment, CamLab literalized the dynamic of their collaborative process, which works to disrupt conventional ideas of an autonomous body. The garment was passed around each week of the exhibit to another

pair of performers, creating a "chain" of engagements and propositions that attempted to produce a collective body regardless of distance. Documentation of the evolving actions surrounding the suit was presented in the gallery space and grew over the course of



the exhibit. CamLab also performed at FOCA in Swoon Soon Suit, which is a two-person costume that invites a viewer to enter into a fabric tent where CamLab touches, tickles, and plays.

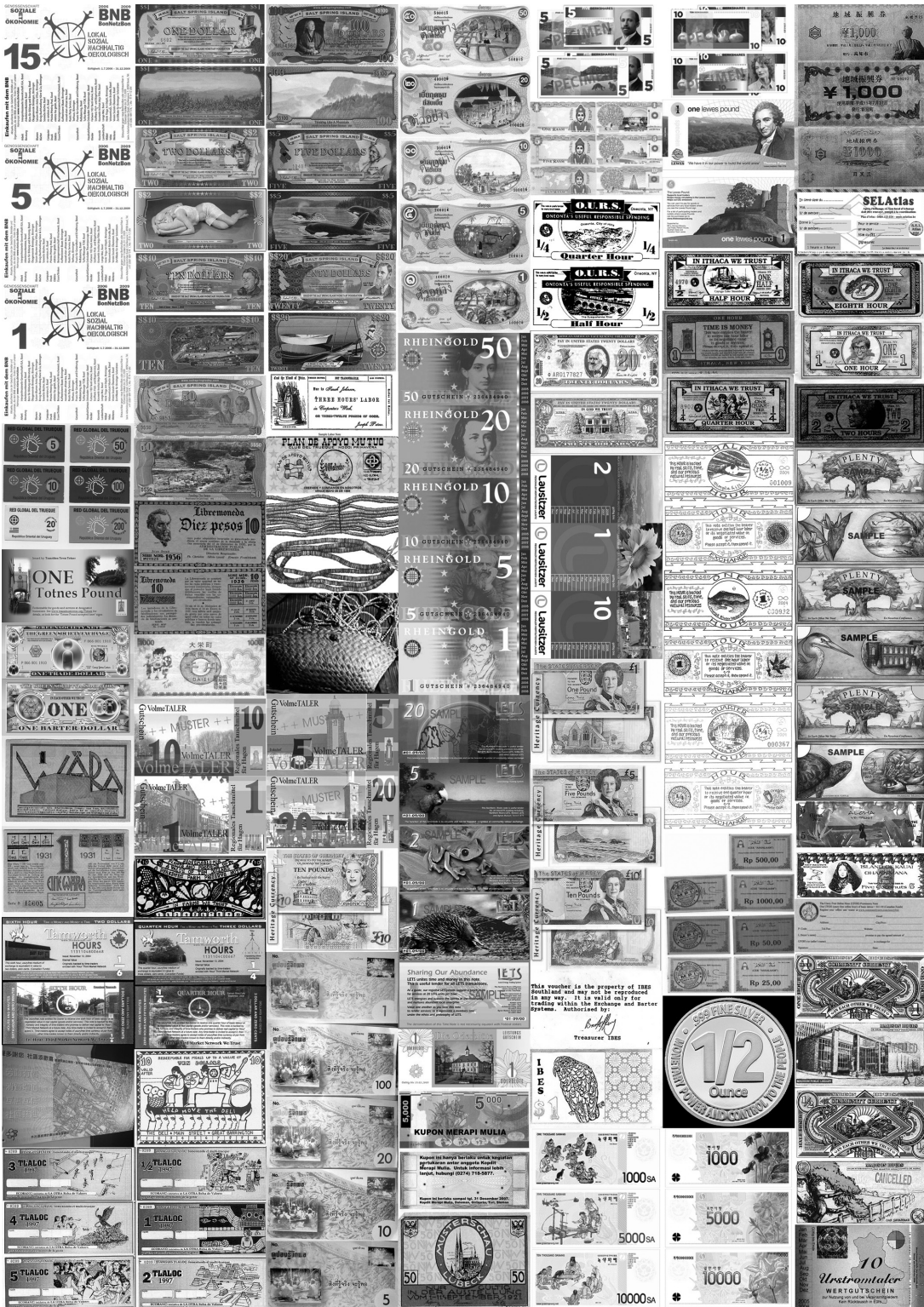
Free Free Market (FFM), an ongoing project created by the Artists for Social Justice collective, embodied both emotions of hope and a deep-seated discontent with the status quo (participants in the FFM included: Yanira Cartagena, Carmina Escobar, Carribean Fragoza, Anne Hars, Matt Lucero, Gil Omry, Astra Price, Evelyn Serrano and Elizabeth Wild). FFM took place over one day and was comprised of a wide variety of gifting, from a woman typing love letters for anyone passing by, to folks with a table of homemade "seed bombs," to a singer offering free voice lessons. One of the artists had a table of goods she was giving away, like cans of soup and jig saws that were all "acquired" (or stolen). Participants in FFM are planning to expand the project to farmers markets, the beach, and other social spaces in and around Los Angeles.

Like the Free Free Market Karla Diaz's performance explored the idea of economy, not as it pertains to monetary value, but rather as it pertains to listening, dialogue, collaboration, and trading stories. Investigating multiple narrative strategies between sound and text, Karla Diaz read a series of poems and stories based on the experience of growing up in Los Angeles. In particular, Diaz explored the neighborhood of Boyle Heights and parts of it that were destroyed to build a bigger Police Station.

Over the past few years there has been a renewed interest in "participatory" artwork that involves artists and art audiences in new and recycled ways. This type of artwork is often positioned as activating a political space. From the recent historical surveys such as Allan Kaprow: Art as Life at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, The Art of Participation 1950-today at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, to exhibitions highlighting new artwork, such as Perific 8- Art As Gift, Biennial for Contemporary Art in Iasi, Romania, artists world-wide are creating salons, swap meets, gardens, walking tours, and schools. Art institutions are focusing on interaction, collectivity and collaboration like never before.

These projects are created for different reasons, to activate the viewer so that s/he will be more active in the world, to counteract the disappearance of social bonds in our communities, to be more inclusive rather than exclusive and question authorship of the singular "I," etc. However, some of these projects are utilizing participatory methodologies as a style rather than a pointed political stance. Some of these types of projects ask people to do things and participate, but have no critical substance behind their actions, or else create a project/experience that ultimately a community doesn't really want or need. The artwork that I chose to highlight in *Performing Economies* emphasizes artists who are investigating the ways in which participatory/collaborative approaches can challenge the socio-political context in which they are produced. These projects connect with artists in Los Angeles and elsewhere, artists such as Carolina Caycedo, Ted Purves, Suzanne Lacy, Temporary Services and Ben Kinmont, artists who continue to inspire and stimulate ideas about politics, society, and culture.

**Elana Mann on *Performing Economies*, Los Angeles, CA, August, 2009.**







*In Each Other We Trust/Dyphthc. Elana Mann, 2009*

## CAROLINA GIVES

SPANISH LESSONS  
 ENGLISH LESSONS  
 SALSA DANCE CLASSES  
 VIDEO EDITING LESSONS  
 SWIMMING LESSONS  
 HAIR CUTTING  
 COOK A MEAL (I MAKE SUSHI!)  
 CLEAN HOUSE OR WORK PLACE  
 MAKE A PORTRAIT  
 FILM A PARTY OR EVENT  
 VIDEO EDITING  
 PHOTOGRAPH RETOUCHING  
 IMAGE SCANNING AND DATA ARCHIVING  
 INTERNET RESEARCH  
 FOLLOW SOMEONE  
 PRODUCTION ASSISTANCE  
 GO TO THE BANK AND PAY BILLS  
 BRING THE NEWSPAPER IN THE MORNING  
 GIVE ADVICE FROM MY POINT OF VIEW  
 TELL MY SECRETS  
 EXPLAIN HOW TO USE THE WORLD WIDE WEB  
 TYPE A DOCUMENT  
 POSE FOR AN ARTWORK  
 PAINT ROOM, ETC  
 TRY AND EXPLAIN COLOMBIA'S POLITICAL SITUATION  
 TALK ABOUT ART  
 PERSONAL ASSISTANCE  
 FLYER AND POSTER DESIGN  
 SING A SONG  
 BABY-CHILDREN SITTING  
 FRESH AND HOMEMADE BABY FOOD  
 READ A BOOK LOUDLY  
 GROCERIE SHOPPING  
 TAKE PETS FOR A WALK  
 TRANSPORT PEOPLE TO THE AIRPORT, DOCTOR, ETC..  
 PICK UP AND DELIVERY OF PACKAGES  
 ESCORT TO A DINNER, PARTY, ETC..  
 TIPS ABOUT LONDON, PUERTO RICO AND COLOMBIA  
 PAY A VISIT  
 WHATEVER PERSONAL BELONINGS I HAVE WITH ME  
 ANTIQUE BIG SUITCASE  
 INFANT CLOTHES AND ARTICLES (1-9 MONTHS)  
 MUSIC MP3 FILES (LATIN, REGGEATON AND MORE)  
 HEAVEN AT 7/11 VIDEOGAME CD  
 DO YOUR LAUNDRY  
 MESSAGE  
 TOUR NY CITY 5 BOROS

## YOU GIVE

FOOD (COOKED OR RAW)  
 BOOKS  
 HOUSE PLANTS  
 BABY DIAPERS  
 MINI DV CASSETES  
 AUDIO MINIDISCS  
 PRINTER  
 SCANNER  
 SURFBOARD  
 WINE  
 MP3 PLAYER  
 USB PEN  
 MEMORY STICK  
 SWIMMING POOL TICKETS OR SUBSCRIPTION  
 SD MEMORY CARD FOR CANON DIGITAL CAMERA  
 2 AIRPLANE TICKETS TO PUERTO RICO OR COLOMBIA  
 MASSAGE  
 SEWING MACHINE  
 MOVIE TICKETS  
 TURNTABLE  
 MUSIC MIXER  
 ARTWORK  
 TATTOO  
 VHS AND DVD MOVIES  
 AIR HUMIDIFIER  
 A PLACE TO LIVE  
 CAR VACUUM  
 OVEN COOKWARE  
 LAMP  
 DR MARTEEN BOOTS  
 PAIR OF SNEAKERS  
 ASTRAL CHART  
 RECORDS  
 INFANT TOYS AND CLOTHES (10 MONTHS PLUS)  
 INTERNATIONAL TELEPHONE CARD

**DON'T BRING MONEY**  
**THIS REALLY WORKS!!!**

347 880 1997 c\_caycedo@hotmail.com  
 whitney.org/biennial2006/projects/day2day

**Flyer DAYTODAY for the Whitney Biennial.**  
**NYC, 2006.**

## ECOVILLAGE L.A. INTERVIEW WITH JOE LINTON

### *America Evergreen*

**America:** Tell us briefly the history of the Ecovillage who, when and why did it start.

**Joe:** People were meeting in the 1980's in this neighborhood (Koreatown), and we were going to build a fancy new ecovillage on a vacant space in Highland park, a little more suburban, but still L.A.. And then the L.A. riots hit, and there was actually a couple of strip malls were burnt down here, as part of that big insurrection of 1992. So they decided to work in this neighborhood because they felt it was more important to work in an existing community and not build new stuff, and use a lot of resources to build new stuff. There is also a lot of transit here. So, it started here (Bimini Place) in 1992. And then they purchased the first building, this one, in 96, and that one in 99. I moved in in 96, just as we were buying this building. Actually I lived across the street and moved into this one after they bought it.

**A:** So who is 'we bought it'?

**J:** Yeah, so it's a little complicated. There is a woman named Lois Arkin, who is the founder, and she started a non profit that's called the Cooperative Resources and Services Project, which goes by the acronym CRISP. They bought the building, they are currently the parent organization of the Ecovillage and we are working on transitioning. They are tired of being a landlord, which they are, so we formed a Limited Equity Housing Cooperative, and we are transitioning the buildings from CRISP, from this non-profit landlord, to the people who live in the buildings.

**A:** Where did the money come from?

**J:** It's a good question. For the Initial building we actually did it without any bank loans. Lois had done a lot of networking in the communities' movement, and environmental and housing movements in Los Angeles, and the building went into foreclosure. It was an economic slump time, it was for sale for a half million dollars. And she was able to borrow money all from friendly loans, without using a bank. From three thousand to, you know, twenty, thirty thousand from individuals and a couple of organizations, and purchased the building just on friendly loans. She calls it an Ecological Revolving Loan Fund. Actually all the original folks who loaned money had been paid back, based on the cash flow of this building alone. The rents and so. Since we fixed it up, it has a lot more income. It has 40 units. It was about half occupied and half trashed. You couldn't even move people in without a lot of work.

**A:** Can you talk about the dynamics of the Ecovillage. How can someone move in and 'climb up' through the units?

**J:** The room selection is actually the only place where, officially, seniority is really a criterion. Although like many groups, having been here a long time you kind of know the rules and get things in ways that new people don't always know. There are unofficial dynamics also. So, if somebody is interested in living here, they come and take a tour and they out a questionnaire. We have a three-phase process that lasts about six months usually. A fast one. It would take at least six months to move in here. Initially it's on their initiative to get to know us; and then when we accept them into the process, then it's on our initiative to talk to them. We always want to make sure that they are not coming into something that they don't know what it is, that we are not accepting someone that



we don't know. So it's sort of both from each hand getting to know each other. And then we actually make a decision of the full. The intentional community folks meet, and the person answers questions, and then they leave the room and we decide if we are comfortable in meeting them. There is an interested phase; there is a candidate phase, and then a provisional phase. So once we let them in, that's a provisional is for six months. Nobody is ever got in provisionally and not become full members. So that's the big step, allowing somebody to move in. While someone is a candidate we assign someone to them, so somebody in the community becomes their sort of main contact person, and we make dinners and events, and we encourage them to take part in stuff that we are doing, but we'll also host even specific events for Ecovillagers to get to know people. So, as far as working your way up, in theory we are not supposed to be very hierarchical, but in practice I think there is kind of informal rules and culture that people learn as they spend time living here, they learn how to get more garden space, and stuff like that. We actually talk about a practice called Multiple Centers of Initiatives, where we try not be too hierarchical, we want to allow people to initiate things without going to the whole group and stuff, but in practice it's not always the case. Some people feel that we get bogged down; we meet every Monday night for an hour and a half. Things like room assignment. There are formal processes for a number of things. Room assignments are one of the biggest

ones, and formally accepting somebody into the community is another. Many people have come and kind of become discouraged, and then left, and then people who've hanged around kind of know the rules and come to terms with the conflicts. I mean like, Lois who's the Founder and I, don't get along that well, but I know sort of what I can do and forget about it, which is like gardening and art. So I'll get involved in projects that I want to get involved in, and I'll sort of stay away from stuff where I have to work tightly with Lois and stuff (laughs).



### ***Ecovillage buildings and front garden.***

**A:** So, Would you define the LA Eco-Village as a commune, or what do you draw out as a commune concept, what's the difference you have with a commune concept?

**J:** I wouldn't call the Eco-Village a commune, there's a whole spectrum of...we call them "Intentional communities" ...and there are income sharing communities, where you turn in all your money when you walk in and you become...and your finances are mingled...we don't do any of that. We are a little more like co-housing, where everybody has their own space and,

so it's easy for me to just, you know, stay home and watch a video or do my art or something and not interact with people, or to come out and interact too. I think it has the pluses that people know each other and you're interacting with your neighbors and when you need ... a drill or something, you can borrow one from your neighbor, something like that. Most communities in the intentional community movement, have more sort of glue connecting each other, they have more shared meals, they have a lot them are and stuff so they have a business, a farm or other... manufacturing or something and so people are involved in both living at the place, and working at the place. We have a lot of shared meals formally and some informally, but everybody kind of, has their own space and in the city we're all involved in different things and so. I think we're a little less cohesive than what a commune might have.

**A:** And what is the ecological sustainability drive, what's the role of this place in the community?

**J:** It is in our sort of core values and it's what we want people to come here and get involved in, things that we do that are, you know attempts to sort of model sustainability are gardening, working on our system like this, this building has solar panels at the top, we do passive and active water harvesting stuff, rain water, we have grey water system from washing machines uh...let's see what else, and then a lot of transportation. A lot of people don't have cars, we actually have a discount on your rent each month if you don't have a car and we have a whole room for storage of bicycles which people fix their bikes in and stuff like that. There's a cooperative called "The Food Lobby". Ultimately they want to do a store front that would be a coop, they get a shipment from farmers each Sunday and distribute it to folks who've

paid in for shares and then they have a bulk room now where they get stuff like rice and whatnot, stuff that keeps well and people can purchase in bulk commodity, organic stuff and as much locally-sourced as possible.

**A:** So since the beginning the eco-sustainability has been one of the core values and one of the basics of this community?

**J:** Yeah, absolutely.

**A:** Do you have families with children in the community?

**J:** We don't have a lot, right now there are two children out of about, between 30 or 35 people who've moved here to be part of it, and it's something we struggle with, that we would like to do better on. The main building has fairly small units and stuff, so a lot of families look at them and feel like they would have a hard time living there, and then this building has eight units, but it only has four of them so far. We've never kicked anybody out who was living here, so there are plenty of people living here. We've never had like a blank slate to start with (laughs) but I think also our process, given that it takes six months, and you have to participate a lot, and whatnot. I think it's more difficult for folks with kids to go through that and stuff; it's something we talk about and haven't done that well. We mostly get singles and couples in like their 20's and 30's, we're about half white, which is a lot whiter than our neighborhood but we're not, we're not monolithic you know.

**C:** So let's talk about statistics. How many units? How many people are living here? You already told me ages and stuff...

**J:** Yeah we have two buildings; we have 48 units of housing, 40 units and 8 units in each. One of our missions is affordable

housing and yet we're very much educated folks who aren't, not necessarily rich people, but with more means that a lot of the folks in our neighborhood. We have a lot of folks who work for non-profits, some teachers, some folks who install solar...

**A:** You have working class?

**J:** I mean we have more like working class by people who downshifted in their lives I think in a way. I mean we don't have a lot of huge income...actually we have a couple of lawyers but they both work for non-profits (laughs)... So they make decent money but not great money I think. I mean, not...in comparison to our neighborhood and the folks who are working as waiters and cooks and you know, sweatehops, yeah we're, we have more income than they do.

**A:** So, Can I ask how much do you pay for a unit?

**J:** Yeah it's really cheap right now. So I pay \$ 730 a month, which is probably half of what something like that would go for in this neighborhood today. And I get a \$25 dollar discount because I don't have a car, so I pay \$705 ultimately. This building with the smaller units uh...I think... we just adjusted the prices and I forget...they used to be \$450 was the cheapest, and I think it's now like \$465 or \$470 or something for a small unit, and then for a large unit it's just over \$500 it's like \$525 or \$530 or something.

**A:** So, this money is still paying the loans for the buildings?

**J:** The loans are mostly paid off; the loan is sort of a revolving thing. I don't know all the finances and it's something, as we're negotiating to transition the buildings, we are learning more. But it's a good question. I don't know if there's still

any loans outstanding...I think this building it's actually still being paid off from people who loaned us money, but I think that building is in the clear now after 14 years since we bought it, so...

**A:** Do you have to pay for water and electricity apart? Or the rent includes all this?

**J:** In this building it's a little different, this are larger units and more like individual houses, and that's more like an apartment building. So I pay separately for electricity and water and then this building that's part of the rent, cause there's not individual meters.

**A:** Can you talk about the actual...uh... fight, if you want to call it that way, that you are having with the idea of this parking lot that wants to be constructed across the street and if you have any other...uh...

**J:** Conflicts with the broader world? Or inside? (laughs)

**A:** Not inside, but if you're like standing for any other cause...

**J:** Well, something that's happening is that the school district is overcrowded, and has year round teaching in Los Angeles and they're attempting to build another facility so they can have summers off and teach all the kids. Just on a traditional calendar, so they're building additional classrooms, and this area is fairly dense and has a lot of children that need classrooms, and so and there's some in this struggle who question the schools need for additional classrooms anyways...but I think it's a real one myself. They had initially planned to site a large school and take out forty housing and all the complexes on this street. Some houses and apartments on the next street down, and we fought with them and said don't take out our housing

and we were able to come up with an alternative plan where they are building the same school. There's a primary center across the street, a kindergarten, first and second grade school, they're closing that school and kind of folding that into the new school, and as part of that they want to put a large parking lot at the corner right across the street from where we are talking. In some ways I'm glad that they changed the configuration school so they wouldn't take out on the housing in our neighborhood, so we're relieved about that. But we feel like this intersection is sort of a crossroad and a center in our neighborhood, and having just a big parking lot and a parking lot that would empty onto to our streets would be both, like the activity in the neighborhood and creating more traffic so, we've opposed that and are trying to get them to redesign the project. So there would be still a parking lot there, but the corner would have... there's a vacant lot currently at the corner, so that vacant lot would become a garden and that the access for cars for that parking lot would only be on first street, would be at the end of the block and not in the middle of our neighborhood. So as far as struggles do a lot of stuff that's illegal, like we keep chickens, that's against city codes, we've taken away parking and unpaid and do gardens in it, that's against city codes, we do grey water, where our washing machines feed our fruit trees, hum...that's against city code, so there's a number of things we've done that are kind of uh... not, not confrontational....

**A:** No, it's passive resistant.

**J:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, so...and there's a lot

of work that we do as individuals and even as friends and parts of movements to, to work, for issues like bicycling, and for the Los Angeles River and a lot of us are either employed or volunteering in various causes. I wouldn't quite call it conflict but, at times it is conflict, at times it's like advocacy, activism, so...



***Illegal rooster with recycling logos.***

**A:** Ok, two more questions. How do you relate and how do you integrate the community, the neighborhood, the street?

**J:** One of the things we try to do is to activate the street, and to build sort of outdoor living rooms, places for people to sit and interact, be more present in our community; gardens in the front yard and stuff, and so we have a lot of informal interaction with our neighbors. I don't think we talk about needing to do more and to involve. We have big events, like we had a street fair, were we closed it off and we had music and food and stuff, so when we've had big things, we've definitely worked with folks and there's a section of the street that we got closed, we worked with a bunch of neighbors who went



around door to door and talked to people and stuff. So there tend to be periods when we do a fair amount of outreach and talk to a lot of people. It's a little tricky 'cause there's a lot of Spanish speakers, monolingual Spanish speakers, there's a lot of monolingual Korean speakers and there's monolingual Bangladeshi speakers, and we have some folks who speak decent Spanish and a couple of people who speak Korean, and nobody speaks Bangladeshi. It takes a bit of organizing and planning ahead to reach out to folks. I think that we can do better, and I think that we need to affirm, we say in our values that we want to be diverse and we are, compared to most of the eco-villagers movement in the United States solidly white, you know, farm community, you know in Iowa and stuff like that or in rural America, we're fairly diverse. We are not as diverse as our neighborhood is but I think we do need to do better, to work more, to outreach more to folks in our neighborhood and involve them in. There's a group called "City Repair" that's from Portland that paints murals at the intersections and stuff that we're looking at doing it in September and we want to try to outreach and get people involved in both. Planning that and having a big festival and closing down the street that day. The more we do projects that we can plug folks into, I mean, they're not going to come to our boring meetings and stuff like that (laughs), but we could look at doing more projects that involve folks and, and reach out. I mean, I don't think we do it bad, and I don't think we do it well, I think it's kind of in the middle.

**A:** The last question is: what are the advantages of living in an eco-village? Why would you recommend people to live in or start an eco-village?

**J:** I think it's different things for different people. Something I've talked about is a lot of folks in the city, in Los Angeles at

least, they may know, they have friends like on the other side of the city and they don't know anybody who lives in their building and stuff like that (laughs). I think there's a certain level of interaction with ones neighbors that helps to, what can I say? I want to say, which is a big dumb word, but whatever...it takes the edge off of some of the unanimity of the city, the city can be a really faceless place and it's very worthwhile to be... this happens in older neighborhoods and this happens in certain buildings without being an eco-village. But it happens in an eco-village too, that people know their neighbors and people depend on their neighbors, and people support each other and interact with each other uh. The other thing is, that's kind of the village part, the eco part too is: as someone who wants to try to live in a way that's more ecological, having folks around who are doing that, who've figured it out, who are involved in organizations that are working on it, it makes it easier to plug into those circles and to live my life in a way that's more ecologically and in a way that's involved in work that's going on locally towards changing policies and justice. So it allows you to hook into those movements...

**A:** Tell me about the LETS?

**J:** There is a LETS system, local exchange trading system, LETS at eco-village...that's been kind of on a off, inactive (laughs). We had an intern set up a database of folks who wanted to be into it, wanted to work on it and they checked off a list of things that they would have to trade or to offer. Then people, people go into the database and you know, trade stuff with, folks who have things that they want. My understanding is that it's had some problems, people felt that the data base was too cumbersome, there's a lot more like informal trading with anyone...like with Federico, he sewed a jacket for me and I did

some artwork for him. There's a lot more informal trading that goes on outside of LETS. It's actually something talked about ecologically for the neighborhood: If you live in a place where you know your neighbors, you can borrow things, you can own things together, you can from borrowing a car, to borrowing a power tool, to...

**A:** Cause there is trust, no?

**J:** Yeah so it's easier to live. A lot of the United States we all buy our own thing and each neighbor buys their own lawn mower and stuff like that, consumerist and crazy. We could probably do that even better anyways if we worked on it but, but in an informal way there's a lot of that going on...

**A:** Sharing...

**J:** Yeah, sharing exactly, I mean it's just like being a neighbor so...

**A:** Does the LETS function between the eco-village inhabitants or does it extend to other people in the city?

**J:** I think they did try to recruit people in the city and I think a few people signed up and stuff like that but, I don't know if it worked that well...so (laughs). It ended up being too cumbersome, well in theory it facilitates three way trades. But you tend to be able to figure out like me and Federico kind of: "Oh I need this" but let's see if Lois or somebody has it. Some people are very visionary about things, like somebody will borrow somebody else's car... I have some conflicts and I'm critical of some of the things that are said ...but it's like somebody will borrow a car and then they'll say: "Oh we have a car co-op in formation" or whatever and it's like, no, it's not, it's just very informal or whatever...

**A:** Oh I see, I see...

**J:** So I'll tend to give a pretty like...

**A:** Raw...

**J:** Yeah, I think more honest and less like visionary, and others tend to give you a very visionary, so they'll talk about it as if it's in existence. The LETS is out there and I suspect that somebody uses it now and then but it's like...

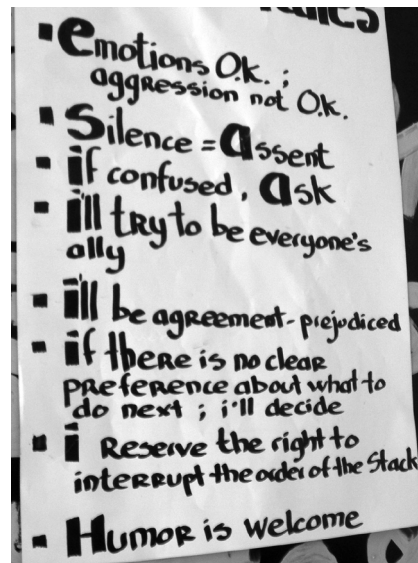
**A:** You are not involved in it.

**J:** Yeah I don't think it gets used that much, I mean I haven't heard much about it in six months... so.

**A:** Ok, thanks Joe

**J:** Ok let's go check on the cornbread.

**NOTES:** All images downloaded under the Creative Commons license from the London Permaculture's Flickr photostream. For more information about the Ecovillage LA please visit [www.laecovillage.org/](http://www.laecovillage.org/)



*Ground rules for meetings.*



***Street Vendor in L.A.  
Photo by Jennifer Renteria.***

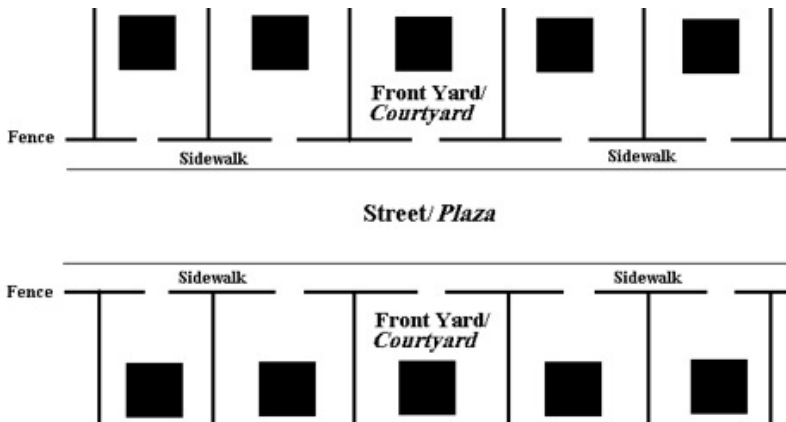
# LATINOS AND STREET VENDING

***James Rojas***

From the small pushcart vendors on Cesar Chavez in Los Angeles to the small shops on 14th Street in Manhattan there is an urban phenomena taking place in the American city. The cultural behavior patterns of America's growing Latino population is changing the urban landscape of the American city by the way urban space is being used and redefined in large parts of the city. My master's thesis at MIT examined the way Latinos are using the streets, sidewalks, front yards, and urban spaces in their communities, which helps in the creation of place.

As great numbers of Latino immigrants and native-born Mexican Americans citizens settle into the different parts of the U.S., they bring with them different use of urban space to an already existing built environment. Their homes, ciudades, pueblos, and ranchos in Latin America are structured differently both physically and socially than the American suburb. The cultural transition Latinos experience can be seen in the streets of Washington D.C. to Los Angeles.

Very few signs or landmarks will indicate Latino barrios, however one will know when they have arrived there because of the large number of people on the streets as compared to the lack of people on the streets in other parts of city. Street life is an integral part of the community fabric because they bring people together. Streets serve as plazas by creating a real sense of place in Latino neighborhoods.



Walking and using public transportation are an important means of transportation in Latino neighborhoods. The numerous small neighborhood mom and popshops that line commercial streets indicated that most customers walk to these stores. Latinos have the highest rider ship on Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority buses. While most Angelinos cannot locate their local bus stop is, in Latino L.A. bus stops are major nodes of activity with passengers and vendors.

Latinos engage in all types of activities on streets ranging from; residents conversing over fences, elderly sitting on porches, children playing on sidewalks and front yards, teenagers congregating on the sidewalk, men working on cars and street vendors selling food and sundries from front gate to front gate.

### ***Street Vendors – Mobile Commerce***

The streets of the US provide Latinos a space and opportunity for economic survival by allowing them to sell items and/or their labor. While most Americans only drive cars on streets, Latinos have ingeniously transformed auto-oriented streets to fit their economic needs strategically mapping out intersections and temporarily transforming vacant lots, old gas stations, sidewalks, and curbs. When the highway engineers were planning LA's famous freeways they did not anticipate people selling oranges from the on and off ramps. From men selling their labor to selling of extra clothing in front of ones home, Latinos blur the line between commercial and residential activities.

Vendors temporarily transform the urban landscape by adding a rhythmic activity to the street. Street vendors in Latino neighborhoods add an importance to the streets by bringing services to people. Their ephemeral nature bonds people and the place together. These uses enriched the urban landscape by adding more activity to the suburban neighborhoods.

### ***Props***

Moveable objects or props add a second layer of architect to the Latino landscape and help Latinos use urban space. These props range from objects to sit on, talk over, play with and hear. These props scale down the urban landscape to a pedestrian level. Moveable objects or props, such as tables and chairs, allow the Latino residents to use the outdoor space by giving them flexibility and freedom over their environment. Props can be moved between inside and the outside space, as well as allow for personalization in public space. Like furniture in a room, props in the street connect the user to the open urban space. Props also help Latinos transform auto oriented streets to a pedestrian level.

### ***Cultural Expression Through Graphics***

Very few spaces and walls are left untouched in Latino communities. From graffiti, store signs and murals, blank wall space becomes a cultural expression for the residents. The use of paint helps Latinos to inexpensively claim ownership of space or express themselves. The use of graphics adds a strong visual element to the urban form. Buildings are kinetic because of the flamboyant words and graphics used. Many building areas cover from top to bottom with graphics. Murals can be political, religious or used for business advertisement. Many neighborhoods display public murals are both political and religious in nature. One of the unique urban advantages about murals is that they liven up a space. No where is this more apparent than the side streets from commercial streets where shop keepers have murals painted to advertise and keep the graffiti from being noticed.

The murals are painted on the large expansive, blank walls on the side of the buildings that faces the residential street. An interesting urban dynamic takes place

because the commercial activity is wrapped around the building onto the residential side streets. The residential streets are lived up and are connected with the residential streets. These corners area are important to the resident of Latino Los Angeles where many vendors congregate.

### ***Fences: A Social Catalyst***

Fences are a fixed prop. In many front yards across America one can find fences. Most people will build fences for security, exclusion, seclusion etc. and Latinos build fences for these same reasons. Fences create easily defendable spaces and illustrate a simple, straightforward approach to procession: "This is my space." However it's the way Latinos use fences that becomes interesting.

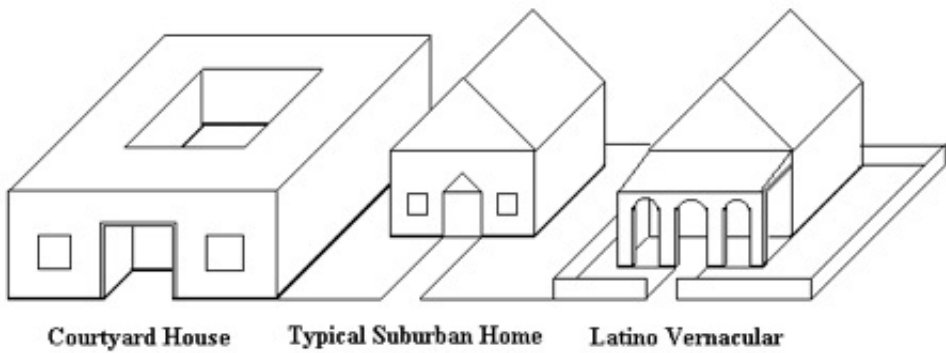
Waist-high fences are ubiquitous throughout the residential landscape of Latino America. The fences function as place to keep things out or in, provide a place hang wet laundry, sell items or just chat with a neighbor. Fences are a useful threshold between the household and public domain and bring residents together. Boundaries bring people together and the fences in Latino neighborhoods define boundaries between public and private space. However here the fences break down the social and physical barriers by creating a place where people can congregate. The middle class suburban neighborhood people rarely congregate in the front yard. This visible expanse of land acts as a psychological barrier that separates the private space of the home from the public space of the street. Collectively the enclosed front yards create a different urban landscape and transform the neighborhood.

Enclosed front yards help transform the street into a plaza. This new plaza is not the typical plaza we see in Latin American or Europe with strong defining street walls but has an unconventional form. Nevertheless the streets in Latino LA have all the social activity of a plaza. Residents and pedestrians can participate in the social dialog on the street from the comfort and security of their enclosed front yard. Fences clearly delineate their property between neighbors, which allows them to personalize their front yard without physically interfering with each other.

### ***La Yarda: A Personal Expression***

Nowhere else in urban landscape of the American City is the Latino use of space so illuminated and celebrated than in the front yard. Typical middle class front yard is an impersonal space in which no one sits there, no personal objects are left lying while the front yards are personal vignettes of the owner's life. Depending on the practical needs of the owners, the use and design of the front yard vary from elaborate courtyard gardens reminiscent of Mexico, a place for children, to working places. Middle class Americans put their daily habits in the backyard. Latinos bring the party, workspace and conversation to the front yard creating activity in the public space.

The front yard in middle class suburbs has become a space dedicated to showing that we are good citizens, and responsible members of the community. The Latino front yard is not measured by the cosmetics of the lawn but rather your participation in streets activities.



The Latino front yards reflect the Latino cultural values applied to American suburb form.

### ***Housecapas: Latino Vernacular***

Non-Latinos built the homes where Latinos now reside, but these homes have evolved into a vernacular form as residents make changes to suit their needs. Every change, no matter how small, has meaning and purpose. Bringing the sofa out to the front porch, stuccoing over the clap board, painting the house vivid colors or placing a statue of the Virgin in the front yard, all reflect the struggles, triumphs, and everyday habits of working class Latinos.

A bastard of two architectural vocabularies, Latino homes and barrios create a new language that uses syntax from both Latin American and the US urban forms.

The front porch becomes one of the main focal points of the house. In most American homes today the use and importance of the front porch has declined for various reasons. However in Latino America the front porch has gained a new importance with residents enlarging and expanding them for their heavy use. Residents sit on the porch to escape summer heat or just be outside with family, friends and neighbors. The driveway and front yard can serve as a party or work space.

Unlike the typical middle class suburban house that pulls itself away from the street, the Latino household extends graciously to the street. Each house communicates with the street and others through the use of fences and props.

### ***Conclusion***

Latinos and more recent immigrants are transforming urban space all across America. Street vendors carrying their wares, pushing carts or setting up temporary tables and tarps, vivid colors, murals and business signs, clusters of people socializing on street corners and over front yard fences, and the furniture and props that make these front yards into personal statements all contribute to the vivid, unique landscape of the city.

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**TIME BANKING  
INTERVIEW WITH  
ECHO PARK TIME BANK:  
LISA GERSTEIN,  
KINDRED GOTTLIEB,  
AUTUMN ROONEY AND  
HOWARD SETH COHEN  
by CANDELA CURRENSI**

**Candela Currensi (C):** How did you know about the Time Banks (TB)? Who of you got together initially to start the Echo Park Time Bank (EPTB)?

**Autumn Rooney (A):** Lisa had heard about Time Banking on a story on MPR-The World with Sherri Hatton. It was story about the TB in Barcelona, Spain. In Barcelona they have around 50.000 members, it's a huge thriving TB that is run by the government. She was so inspired and blown away by the story that she went home and started to research it. But found everything was in Spanish and there wasn't much information available that wasn't in Spanish. So she got discouraged and gave up. But then on my birthday in 08 we went out for drinks with my friend Jaime, and the subject came up. And Jaime had just taken a permaculture class, and they had been discussing alternative currency. We started talking about the possibility of a TB working in Los Angeles. We debated about it until 3 in the morning! I was against it, like: No way! That requires more trust that people in LA have. Back at home I looked up TB USA in the Internet, and saw that there was a start up kit for \$50 dollars. You can try the software for 6 months. And I just bought it right then and there, because it certainly seemed feasible, because there was an organization behind it. So I called Lisa the next morning and said: We have a TB! We need the people. She was shocked, really shocked.

**Lisa Gerstein (L):** We didn't expect it to be more than just our friends, maybe 20 people, that's what we started with. One night I was talking to a girl at a party up here in these apartments. I didn't know she worked for the LA Times and I was so excited about the TB that I kept blabbing away. And she said: Oh! Can I write an article about it? And next thing we know we had about 100 applications of people we didn't know! So we threw together an application process, and a steering committee and try to legitimize ourselves really quick. It's been non-stop ever since.

**Kindred Gottlieb (K):** And then the economy crashed.

**A:** Then the economy crashed, and we got more applications. We were the only one in Southern California at that time.

**L:** I have to say that a lot of TB that are affiliated with our organization, were started by existing non-profits to extend help to their memberships. We sort of started on a whim, kind of backwards. We got the start up kit, we got our friends, and then we put things into place, like a mission statement and by-laws and other things we didn't know. We really didn't know in the beginning what we were doing. To have a member led TB is pretty rare.

**A:** That's more than 20 people. I've heard of 15 and that's when TB USA recommends you become a non-profit, or hook up with an existing non-profit so you have some of the infrastructure to help manage.

**C:** So that's the point where you are? You are affiliating with CRISP. How did you get in touch with CRISP and Lois?

**L:** I actually knew Lois already from the Ecovillage, and she helped us initially because they have a LETS system. When we started doing this, we didn't know what we

were doing, so we started to look around for people who did know what they were doing. We took her out for breakfast and she gave us a lot of help initially. We have been talking to her ever since. Autumn went to her and was telling her about our troubles trying to get an umbrella, and Lois said: Oh! Why doesn't my organization umbrella you? We just haven't thought of it. We have been sorting out the details ever since.

**C:** What's the difference between the TB and the LETS systems?

**A:** The main difference is that in Time Baking one hour equals one time dollar, so there is no negotiating of the price. In the LETS system you can say, if I give you a haircut that's about three credits, they call it. They also have a different kind of software.

**K:** They also have an international website, where literally anybody can go, pay their dues on and join the LETS system. And then you can tap into anybody else worldwide who is part of the LETS. While this is much community oriented. It tends to be small grouping of people who do TB. Within a region.

**A:** The LETS in the Ecovillage was only for people in that region. **L:** The main difference appears to be the valuation of time, which in Time Baking is pretty strict. One hour equals one time dollar, no matter what the service it is.

**Echo Park TB with  
Edgar Kahn.  
Photo by: Zach Lipp**

**C:** You can never negotiate that? For example say: I think this hour of service is worth two time dollars.

**Howard Seth Cohen / Howie (H):** No, because that goes against the ethos of the TB, which is that every member's time is as valuable as everyone else's. And takes away the idea that because of whatever schooling I have had, and the skills that I have gained, all the sudden my time is worth more. So what I really like about Time Banking is that it rips of all of that back down and it becomes an exchange between You and I, where we are valuing each other's resources, our time, as equal. Regardless of what kind of socio-economic background we come from, the education we have and the service we are offering.

**L:** And we are also valuing what Edgar Cahn calls the core economy, which is services that often don't even get acknowledged or paid for at all. And it's basically saying that those services are as valuable as any other services. That the core economy means to be valued at least as much as the white collar cash economy. You know, legal services and..



**K:** Brain surgery..

**A:** Brain surgeon and a single mom same value. (LAUGHS!!)

**L:** It's hard for people to break that down.

**K:** I noticed it's hard to let go from that 'how can I make more' mentality. When I first read about the system I thought: Great. I'll just teach a class and I'll have like 20 people, and then I'll get 20 time dollars for one hour. Awesome. But it actually doesn't work that way. If 20 people come that money will go into the TB, and you get your one Time Dollar for the one-hour you worked. And it's so easy to start thinking about how to get more, because we are so programmed that way.

**C:** Can we talk about barter as a taxable activity Vs. the Time Banking.

**L:** Sure, as far as I Understand it -which is not completely- the idea of the tax-exempt status behind the Time Banking is that time itself is not taxable. And since you are paying time forward, and you are donating it, that's considered a charitable donation. And because all the time is of equal value there is no comparison, since everything is a wash there's no way to tax it. Whereas with barter and something like the LETS system the valuations are different, there is a way to tax that, and because you are trading services which you would be getting money for, they're taxable. So it's literally a semantic thing, the semantic thing being the word barter is not tax-exempt, but the term time-dollar is. But it's also a conceptual thing, because the idea is that all you are trading is time.

**C:** Which part of the neighborhood has been involved in the TB? What kind of people is participating right now?

**A:** Primarily women.

**H:** And men who like women!

**L:** It's interesting 'cause I feel it changing this month. For some reason there is suddenly a big influx of men applying, Did you notice that?

**A:** Yes it's great!

**K:** Maybe it's unemployment.

**L:** I don't know, it's interesting. But yeah, we find a lot of women are attracted to it.

**A:** It's been a lot of word of mouth. We haven't outreached specifically, or target certain people. It's friends of friends of friends, our demographics.

**H:** And it seems a lot need driven. Like all the sudden I have a need to be filled, so I am going to look to the TB to fill that need. For instance me, I have plenty of time to give so I get involved because this is a time of my life where I have an opportunity to be of service.

**K:** I want to point out that it's also a lot of people who tend to be newer members of the community. As opposed to the older members that already have a network, you know, they have their family living next door. But it's the people from outside of LA who move here and don't have a community.

**H:** It serves two purposes. One, filling up real needs in an economic way, but also it's a way of building networks within the community and allowing neighbors to get in touch with each other.

**L:** And since it's a lot of word of mouth, it's been primarily people of a certain age. And that's something that it would be great if we could diversify.

**C:** So you do have an interest in diversifying it towards the future?

**L:** Well, it would be really nice if..

**A:** It reflected the neighborhood more...

**L:** Not only that, but reflected the social needs of the culture more. There are teenagers in the neighborhood, there are old people, actually we can't seem to find them, but...they are here! It's hard to target. We have to work on how to make the idea appealing to those people. We have a friend, Tim Carpenter, who runs an artist colony for elder people in Burbank, and they are next to a school for kids that have been kicked out of other schools. And because they are right next door to each other they've been able to create all these programs. Initially both populations were way apart, and now it's really working. It's working because they have these two populations side by side and they can interact.

**A:** But they have been trying to get them to integrate for years, and just suddenly they are: OH! Ok you are safe.

**L:** So we both need to find the population and convince them. We had a couple of older people come to potlucks. Anne Marie is the one that I am thinking of that has connections to communities of older people. And they are: Oh! What you're doing is wonderful, but no-no-no we are over here.

**C:** Because there is this element of trust that is crucial.

**K:** How do you bridge it? Right now too, it's such an online system, that to break into an older community and sometimes in other communities, you need to have somebody that can be an online partner.

**L:** And increasingly we feel the need of a liaison person that can be an ambassador that multiple populations can hear. Like with the youth court, this program in DC, the DC youth courts. The courts refer them and they get to trial each other for nonviolent offences. The people that set up the youth court, they have people that the kids relate to, that are dealing with the kids. I feel that if go into and old age home, I am not quite old enough to make a case for it. It has to be somebody they can relate too.

**C:** How do the volunteers like Lisa and Autumn, that are making this happen get retribution for their time, do you get Time dollars for your work?

**A:** Ten time dollars a month. But that's just a fraction of the actual time we put into it. Until my landlady actually accepts time dollars, I can really spend that much.

**L:** People give us a hard time about that, because we are not taking enough...

**K:** Most people think that we should have at least one paid administer.

**A:** And most TB do have that paid person.

**L:** Which gets back to the fact that most TB originate with non-profits that have funding.

**C:** You don't have that resource to pay anyone right now.

**L:** No.

**A:** We collect membership dues from everybody to pay for the software subscription, 'cause they charge 500 dollars a year. We charge everybody sliding scale 10 to 20 dollars a year. We don't have to loose money.

**L:** My friend Karen who started the Austin Time Exchange was an unpaid coordinator for over 5 years. She just appealed to the Steering committee retroactively to get 10 dollars back because she is getting her house built... and they gave her like a thousand time dollars to get her house built!

**A:** We make the time dollars, there is no limited supply like the way the cash economy is. Nobody loses if you take it out of the bank. That's why you are like: Uh, do I really need that much? There is no fear factor surrounding supply.

**C:** How many members do you have right now? **A:** A hundred and fifteen.

**L:** It will be a hundred and twenty by the end of the month.

**C:** And how many applications do you have per month.

**A:** About five people a month, we accept everybody.

**L / A:** Pretty much.

**A:** If they follow through the application. If we get incomplete applications it doesn't pass.

**L:** I would say everybody that has applied and hasn't gotten in it's because they dropped off at some point. We are not really about rejecting people because they are not qualified. We are not qualified!

**A:** One of the core principals is that every-

body is an asset, so you can't be discriminating with that philosophy in mind.

**L:** And it's interesting because for lots of people their first reaction, and this is including people that are really skilled, the first thing they say is: OH! I don't know what I would do! I don't have any skills. That's a really common thing, and it's so interesting because most of the things people need, almost anybody could do. Pet sitting, buying groceries...

**C:** Do you have any professional people involved, offering professional services?

**H:** I've gotten law assistance.

**L:** Yeah, we have a great lawyer. And because we are heavy on women, and heavy on artists, and we are in Echo Park, we have a lot of organic partners, and seamstresses...

**K:** I had my wedding dress too, for ten time dollars.



***Kindred and Carrie.***  
***Photo by Autumn Rooney***

**L:** We have photographers, we have makeup artists, we have hair stylists, we have organic gardeners, a lot of different stuff now... We don't have a plumber, but we do have an electrician..

**A:** We need more construction people, we need people for moving furniture and moving heavy things. The five guys we have are exhausted!

**K:** We need more men!



**L:** Its true! it's really kind of comical, there is a list of 5 brawny guys. And people call asking if I know a brawny guy, and I am like, hi Richard, do you want to help someone move... again? So we need to even up.

**C:** Do you think shops like this one, and like the coffee shop next door could be involved?

**L:** Yes we already have, there is a few organizations that are involved..

**A:** The echo park film center. We pay them time dollars to use their space for our potlucks. And then Echo Curio on Sunset is going to let us use their space for classes, Kindred is going to teach Spanish.

**L:** We haven't started having people accept time dollars as currency, but there are people that do in other TB. Dane County does that, Austin does that, and hopefully we can do that.

**C:** Is TB covering your basic necessities right now, or do you think it can get to that point, after a while?

**A:** Time dollars are not designed to do that; they work in conjunction with the cash economy.

**L:** It's complementary; it's not really supposed to cover them, although it's conceivable that it could.

**K:** It certainly saves money. I don't see any reason why we couldn't expand it to more functional stuff, except for rent. Everything comes down to rent. I mean, you can't accept Time dollars for your store because rent is so hard right now, everyone is scraping by. That's the hard part. I think that's why stores might be resistant to accepting time dollars, although they can try those time dollars for labor.

**L:** Well like in the film (EF Schumacher and the Reinvention of the Local Economy), in the Berkshires it really can make incredibly good sense for business people. But it has to be within the context, and there has to be a credit union involved, and there has to be ...

**A:** A relation to a real bank..

**L:** And again, there has to be a liaison person between the cash economy and the complimentary economy. There has to be an agreement that they can work together. And often these organizations are really resistant. We are trying to find a credit union. We finally have an umbrella and we are all excited. So now we are trying to find a credit union, and credit unions are like North Eastern Policemen Credit Union, Lithuanian People over 32 and under 42 Credit Union...It's really, really..

**K:** Specific

**L:** Specific! It's a little bunch of people. So we have really been challenged, and then we finally found a credit union and they said: Yes we are setting up, we don't have organizational accounts yet, but we are setting one up. And then they called us and said: Just kidding we don't have the form yet. But we will. When? Don't know! But you can set up a personal account.

**C:** Why don't you do one?

**L:** Realistically there is no reason why we couldn't have a credit union. It's just a matter of..

**A:** How do you do that?

**L:** Well right, it's not the most logical thing for us to do next. But you know, there is a credit union for Lutheran Children under the age of 5! Why couldn't we have a TB credit union. I have never seen

more specificity and the possibilities are endless if you really jump in there.

**C:** You were telling me that people from other communities in LA were referred to you to ask how to start their own TB?

**A:** Five have sprung up since we started!

**C:** Can you name them?

**A:** Royal TB in South Pasadena-Highland Park, west LA TB on the west side, there's going to be one in Beverly Hills, Temple of Emmanuel. There is one in Idlewhiles, Idle-Hours it's called. Then someone is starting LA county TB, which is kind of weird, because we already have all those. And that's the stem which we are merging with.

**L:** And then the valley.

**A:** San Fernando Valley, San Diego.

**K:** And then there's the one that ...started in Owen

**L:** Right, Owen's valley. So there is nine.

**C:** Would you be able to change time dollars with them?

**L:** Yes, it's just that our software hasn't figured that out, which is silly, because TB all over the place could use each other.

**A:** But that does exist in other areas, so it's not an impossible...

**K:** But didn't Dane county use our same software?

**L:** Dane county uses a software, but only for Dane county. If we had all started it together we could have done that. But Dane sprung from Dade County TB that is 13,000 people now. All sprung from the

same people. It's a different thing. Instead of little pockets starting up elsewhere, it's like, if Howie moved to Beverly Hills, but he was part of our TB, and he sort of started a branch in BH.

**K:** Except for the fact that we didn't do that because we didn't want to do that. Because all these people approached us initially wanting to join the TB at some level..

**L:** No! Most of them are very...like the temple of Emmanuel people are like: we are starting it for Temple of Emmanuel. They all wanted to start their own.

**K:** Because we had applications from all over the city and we are Oh! Sorry you have to start your own.

**L:** Oh we still get them, but we are very flexible..

**C:** So you do have people that live in other neighborhoods?

**L:** If somebody applies to us and we say, there is one in your area, and they say, we desperately want to be in your TB we don't usually turn them away, do we?

**K:** I thought we did? I thought we were pretty strict!

**A:** Well in the early days yes 'cause we didn't want to grow too fast, and we were nervous about how quickly it was growing, we couldn't handle it. But know if somebody says they want to start their own, we let them try and see to let them see how it works. And learn from our model. We want more people so we can refer these people from other neighborhoods to their local TB. So the more they spring up, the more resources that your neighborhood has.

**L:** I think you're right, I think that in a way that would have been a more organic thing. It just that LA isn't like Madison, it's so spread out. The communities are so different and disparate.

**K:** Its true, except the people commute all the way across the city, regularly. So even though it's such a big city, people treat it like one city. They really do commute back and forth.

**A:** The issue is if we open it up to all of LA, we are really going to need staff, to handle that.

**L:** That was our initial concern and terror was what happens if that happens. We don't have any infrastructure for it. And the truth is we might not for a little while. They don't suggest that you grow quickly, anyway.

**C:** So what kind of support you have been giving to those new TB?

**L:** Autumn and I have met with most of them. They come to workshops, they call us an email us.

**C:** Tell me more about the monthly Potluck.

**L:** They are just a way for our membership to get to know each other not online.

**H:** It's a lot easier to want to throw trust onto someone when you had a face to face. Regardless of how long you've known each other, rather than just seeing a list of things that they're offering and being like: Yeah, but...I don't know. And it has been a really nice community that has being able to head to the potluck once a month. To see some of the newer people that have come in, sass them out, see other people. And then sometimes when you are doing work for someone, I maybe

helping my friend Carrie out by sticking her diabetic cat with insulin. But I'm doing it when she's not home. So this is my opportunity to say hello Carrie, Its nice to see you, how are you doing? Because I am just seeing her cats when I am helping around.

**K:** Also it directly follows the new membership workshops, that way the new members get to mingle wit the older members. They come to the workshop and they usually stay for the potluck. It's also a way to get people a little bit involved with each other.

**C:** The workshop is before the application, of after they get accepted?

**L:** It doesn't really matter. Sometimes people come to the workshop because they hear about it, and then they apply. Sometimes vice versa.

**C:** Do you want to tell me some stories about the TB?

**H:** There's something that's great. When you have your group of friends, asking a friend to help you move or drive you to the airport is two of these cardinal sins. You don't ask your friends to do that, because it's a horrible thing and why would you want to trade your friend capital on that. But with the TB it's almost the opposite. It's all these people who are saying; we are entering into this social contract to be available for these horrendous things. We all agree to do this, and we are not asking for special treatment, we just want Time Dollars in exchange for the time we give. So, it does two things. One, it gives you this corps of friends, or society of people to ask this favors. And, second if they are not your friends, by engaging in this activity with them they become your friends. Or they become trusted members of the community, and that's friends forever. And

that's a need, a notch that is being filled and met that I've never seen attacked in any other way.

**L:** And paradoxically, the task, the horrendous task becomes fun, or can be. Which is amazing. I have to say we just went to this incredible conference on Time Banking in Wisconsin, and over and over and over again there were all these people that have started really successful TB and they all said make it fun. Don't say: we are having Steering committee at my house, say we are having pizza at my house and then kick in the Steering committee agenda. It's easy when you are organizing to lose your sense of fun. It's true that when you are just doing favors, people think about it differently. They think: I don't want to bother this person. But when all is evened out at the end it's easier.

**A:** Because you are not doing favors, you get something back, something you need or want. So you feel more willing to ask for help. That's one of the biggest problems. We have more offers than requests. And it's hard for people to ask. The whole economy stops if there is no back and forth. That's one of our biggest

obstacles, convincing people that it's ok to ask. The first question in the workshops is: Have you ever got people who take advantage of the system, or just take take take? And we have the opposite people, nobody takes, they are too nice! That's one of the inspiring things, it's proving that people is generous, and not what the cash economy makes us think: greed and selfish.

**L:** One challenge that is interesting is that people in this culture are so frightened of going into debt. And they have such a debt base mentality that it is hard for them to accept it. It's difficult for some to stop thinking in terms of owing. That it's an abundant economy that it doesn't have to be paid back this minute. That it's fluid.

**K:** That would be a beautiful thing. If the TB can help the people to break that tendency to think, I owe you. Instead of I don't owe you anything because it's a joy to give. I don't know whether we can achieve that or not. A lot of my friends are East German, and I once helped one to do a lot of dishes because she was kind of depressed. And she was so grateful afterwards. And I said, don't worry about it; you helped me out last month. She got

so mad and indignant, she said: Das is kapitalismus! How dare you help me because I helped you last month. That's not why you help somebody. You help a friend because you help a friend. That's so engrained: you did something for me, so



***Some of the  
brawny guys  
at the Big Sunday  
in Watts.  
Image courtesy  
Echo Park TB.***

I owe you one. TB may allow you to break this between people, because the fact that it's a larger system. On the other hand, my husband hasn't joined the TB because he feels it's creating that system in things that might not, otherwise, make you think you owe something.

**L:** On the one hand there is the joy of giving, and on the other hand the recent Time Banking initially was created to make people that were receiving services feel accountable for the services they receive. Because when people give one way, often the people that are getting are like: Why is this person giving me stuff?

**A:** They might think it's pathetic.

**L:** Time dollars were invented for people who couldn't afford to pay for services be able to do something for somebody, and feel like they were paying. Because then it's a two way street and a reciprocal exchange. So it is a paradox in a way, because the charitable donation thing often doesn't work for the givee. They end up feeling like they don't have anything to give back.

**K:** Or the giver, like as our lawyer told us, when his program got into trouble, all these people that received legal services over the years, didn't show up to fight for the program. They didn't value it because they received the services for free.

**C:** I don't know if it's a paradox. With the TB, though you have a Time Dollar unit, you still have to negotiate a time, a place, a service. And the potential exists that you may do a transaction or exchange with that person again. Whereas when you're paying, you may not see that person again in your life. So it is a one-day situation, but that does have implications towards the future. I love that. It does affect your connection with someone, your time and

your future somehow...and with the community. I also feel that through the TB the transaction is not straight with the person, but the TB is like a bouncing entity where time dollars are accumulated, and that can absorb the bad feelings as well as the good ones. It's this big filter of feelings.

**A:** The relationships is more important than the cash economy exchange, and that's why it's important for us to keep it small. If we get too big it's harder to have those intimate relationships

**L:** It's hard enough to build trust in this community, it's challenging.

**C:** How big do you want to grow? What's the limit right now?

**A:** We have thought about 250, it's a sweet number. And once you get above that, it starts to get anonymous.

**L:** The Portland Hour Exchange has 850, and they have been around for a really long time. They have a really well funded infrastructure and they have worked at it. They were the first to say, like, don't grow faster than you can handle. Frankly, if we had what they had going on which took 13 years to put together, I would say we could be 850 because that would be a different thing and maybe we will grow to that and maybe we won't.

**A:** Dane county is twelve hundred people but we heard from some of the members that were there that it was kind of chaotic for the management to handle. The way they do it is to have one software and they have a concept called kitchen cabinets, and then the neighborhood has their own steering committee and their own pot-lucks, but they are all under one software. It is more complicated too, because when we were staying with this member, she told us it's weird when you go in the sys-



tem and you see people placed in all these different neighborhoods, and then you have to find the person in your neighborhood who can do this certain thing.

**L:** Dane county is a good example of a TB that grew very quickly and they sort of started adjusting to their growth and they are having growing pains, cause of things like that. People are a little mystified because it is a neighborhood concept and if you have a bunch of different neighborhoods involved, it's confusing.

**H:** I can't pet sit or take pet care for people I can't walk to, so that's even within our small agreed upon area that the Echo Park TB is. I am saying about one fifth of that area I'll cover. So imagine what's the point of putting that up, if I am not in a countywide database; its great for the three people who can actually find me.

**L:** And then if you are in Beverly Hills and you go into pet sitting, Howie comes up, so its a lot of sorting that you have to do if its done that way. The women that we stayed with was a little disenchanted with that aspect of it and definitely made me think about that. Oh wow, that would be really challenging... we have a ton of zip codes and if we are merging with LETS, which was supposed to be in our zip codes initially, we would be more like the east side, not just Echo Park anymore!

**H:** Sounds better! The Echo Park. EPTB.

**L:** Oh yes. We are not going to be the Non Echo Park TB ...

**A:** Formerly known as...

**L:** And I think it's really good for all this different people to start up their own TB and do it in different ways.

**C:** Have you had enraged customers?

**H:** I had an issue with Kindred...

**K:** Yes we had and issue (LAUGHS)

**A:** *Thank you* for bringing that up!

**H:** It's difficult because you want to be able to use the TB, but at the same time if it's something important to you it's like, can I use the TB for this or do I need to go back to using the cash economy?

**K:** After the experience that we had, I took every single offering off the TB, and literally ended only serving in the steering committee. And the reason I did that is because I have a fulltime job and a two year old. I basically came to the conclusion at some point that I can do nothing additional to those two things. This is a miraculous thing that I am sitting here right now, because I simply don't have time in my life for anything besides my two year old and my full time job.

**L:** Except that weirdly, you have been very effective in the steering committee.

**K:** For some reason that was something that I was able to do. I took every offering off because like for Howie, I was going to do a lighting design for him it would have been easy as pie. I have access to all this equipment, I have been doing lighting design for 13 years, it would have been really easy for me to do his show. We made an appointment and I stood him up twice because it was my one-day off and I was so exhausted I couldn't get out of bed. I stayed with my baby and shut my phone off, and didn't realize that was the day I was supposed to meet Howie! And after that happened I realized that I was not being realistic about my own time and then I took every other offer off.

**L:** But then again, that is part of, you

learn, not only how to manage your time, but what you are capable of; and also what Howie just said, what your expectations are. We did have somebody recently that wanted some serious work done at a house and we don't have that many people that can do that. I suppose that the one person that could, was really overwhelmed and that's not a situation that the TB is going to meet, you know what I mean. That is why it's a complimentary currency, like if you need somebody to build a wall, either there is or isn't going to be that person in the TB. You can't depend on it for everything.

**K:** I remember when I was making the wedding dress, we originally had agreed on that it would take around ten hours to weave the wedding dress, and half way through that time the woman who was doing it, got this ridiculously big full time job in Hollywood and was working 12 hour days, and then had to do the dress in the middle of the night. It got closer and close, I didn't get the dress back until the night before the wedding, it was that close. She got so swamped, that literally her family was visiting her from out of town, and finally I wrote a check for her for half the money and said to her, I am going to pay you half with real dollars, just because I knew that the money would compensate her staying up late and all that stuff. So sometimes you have to make these adjustments, I did it without consulting her, I just sent her the check.

**L:** We had another incident, where early on somebody was supposed to take care somebody's pet. And they didn't negotiate the time upfront. Each one summed up different hours, and it was a difference between 12 hours and 3 hours. We realized that you have to stress to negotiate the hours upfront. Carrie does a lot of alterations for me, and I just tell her that i

don't care how much time it takes. But if you really want to be clear, you have to do that upfront.

**H:** Any ongoing exchange that I've had, I've started with: we assume this is going to take this much time. Let's do it two times and then let's talk again and see what it really was. So we talk, we agree on general parameters, and then we fine-tune it.

**L:** It does encourage good communication. Non-violent communication. You can avoid a lot of pitfalls by saying, this is what I think, what do you think, and coming to an agreement.

**A:** In LA that doesn't happen very often.

**C:** You can't flake in the TB.

**L:** Well you can, but you have to be accountable.

**H:** At least everyone has had a bad experience. And you feel bad about it, but you learn and get it over with.

**L:** If you get through it you realize it's not the apocalypse, and we don't have to sue each other, like everybody does in Los Angeles!

**NOTES:** This interview took place at Lisa's vintage store FLOUNCE, on Echo Park Boulevard.

For more information about the Echo Park Time Bank please visit

**[www.echoparktimebank.com/](http://www.echoparktimebank.com/)**

## ALWAYS BECOMING

*text and images by Jennifer Renteria*

Opened in the mid 20th century, the Startlite Swapmeet once operated as a drive-in theatre that housed up to 860 vehicles. Located approximately 20 minutes east of downtown Los Angeles, the otherwise empty theatre lot simultaneously began operating as a daytime outdoor swapmeet shortly after its opening. Over time, the swapmeet proved to be more successful than the space's cinematic use; despite the eventual demise of the theatre in the mid 1990s, the swapmeet continues to thrive in the shadow of the Art Moderne-like marquee that once marked the theatre's main entrance.



On any given weekend day -- rain or shine -- vendors begin arriving at approximately the break of dawn. Vehicles are unloaded by mid-morning, stands set-up in time to welcome early customers. My own family has participated in the ritual of erecting a stand for the last twenty-some years. Our bicycle business -- purchased from another dedicated bicycle vendor -- began as a hobby, but eventually became the base of our income as my parents' employment status changed. The entire family, as well as the day laborers, teens, and occasional uncle, we have employed over the years, have worked the stand, engaging in the swapmeet's demands alongside the approximately other 200 hundred regular vendors. Our days at the swapmeet are filled with drawings of bicycle parts made by non-English or Spanish speaking Asian customers on torn scraps of paper and machista Latinos not entirely enthused by the idea of having a young girl tighten their bicycle's screws.

In recent years, what once was a family activity, has become my older brother's concern as my parents have left the business' future in his hands. He showed an early interest in the business when he began selling alongside my father at the age of 11 in the mid '80s. For whatever reason, I am told, he always seemed more than enthused to stay up late into the night, assembling bicycles, his dedication eclipsing my sister's and my lack of entrepreneurial inclinations. I was approximately two then, my sister eight. Perhaps our introduction to the business at such a young age made us less understanding of its purpose and potential, limiting our perspectives to its physical demands and its denying us of

Saturday morning cartoons – at least that is how I like to justify my early dislike for the place. I shamefully admit that more than once I shed a tear or two, as I would be dragged out of my bed, begging to stay home because this was “America where there are child labor laws!” To say the least, my ruthless ranting would soon find its end and my demands would not be met. Nearly every Saturday, and, in my case, occasional Sunday, was spent at the swapmeet until I entered high school and joined nearly everything I could partly in an attempt to have a legitimate enough excuse for not going to the swapmeet “as it would compromise my studies and extracurriculars’ performance level.” Talk about motivation – work for more work. Wise parenting, indeed.

Although I thought my time at the swapmeet was over when I left Los Angeles to attend college on the East Coast more than half a decade ago (freedom, at last!), in the recent years I have been back in the neighborhood, my brother has managed to sucker me back into the swapmeet’s web. Only now, instead of spending the first few hours of the day grudgingly emptying boxes and hanging tires and rims, I grudgingly drive a cargo van back and forth to the swapmeet, full of tricycles bursting into familiar recorded holiday jingles at every turn. Appearing seventeen, and oddly positioned in the driver’s seat of a ‘working man’s’ vehicle, my ponytail swings as I make my way up the very streets that brought me closer to the once ‘dreaded swapmeet.’ For the most part, it may seem, my enthusiasm level has not changed – work is work and family is family. Yet, in the wake of maturity (perhaps), I have managed to better understand my parents’ initial appreciation for the swapmeet and my brother’s continued dedication to its operation and future.



As I walk through its rows and rows of stands these days, many engaging me with their questions, asking how my mother is and commenting on my pubescent growth (despite years of living in my twenties), I am in awe with the solid sense of community that exists despite the seeming ephemeral

nature of the whole operation. As is the case, despite its thriving weekends, by Sunday evening and straight into the end of the week, after the trash and bottle collectors have stocked their supplies, this loud, eclectic place, where raw capitalism settles the score, becomes a desolate, concrete landscape where runaway plastic bags, caught on fences, rustle in the wind. Always becoming, it follows a constant cycle of rowdy occupation and silent emptiness; once again, it is what it was last week and, come the following weekend, the swapmeet will appear and disappear, much like a game of peek-a-boo.

This consistency within a seeming transient existence – as marked by the immediateness of the transactions, the exchanges, the relationships, the potential for growth, the ability to mobilize and move ahead into new spaces, relatively easily reshaping one’s business as one goes – is perhaps part of the reason why spaces like the swapmeet thrive as they do and have long appealed to folks like my family and the many others who shape them. As well, to be able to go from drive-in theatre, to swapmeet, to vibrant community all in one space and in such little time is both exciting and inspiring to witness and live.

One wonders whether this kind of exchange can work as the foundational model for how potentially lost spaces can become thriving economic urban centers. Can a place as seemingly ephemeral as the swapmeet, or any other similar entity, provide the type of subsistence needed to stay afloat? Can this model become, or is this model, a legitimate way to retain a repertoire amongst vendors, customers, and a community?



While a more conventional way of doing business has its place, it seems that this kind of exchange can and should be considered a viable way of doing business. It embodies an opportunity to tap into one’s own entrepreneurial spirit without having to commit much initial time or money. In comparison to a brick and mortar business, it comfortably teeters between a hobby and a small business, allowing someone to slip in and out of its demands without much difficulty. In that, the risk is lessened, more readily allowing for an exchange of ideas and resources.

These observations are based on my increasing appreciation for the seeming happenstance innovation that comes into play as a part of the swapmeet’s and similar institutions’ inhabitation of potentially lost urban spaces, their vast emptiness seeming to be their greatest asset. Enriched by its openness, flexible to the demands of hand, wind, and machista, the swapmeet’s small intimate setting lends itself to being a kind of welcoming introduction to the entrepreneurial world – an introduction to be considered as current economic models reshape themselves and urban spaces lose their original meanings as a part of the aftermath.



## CAROLINA GIVES

SPANISH CONVERSATION SESSIONS  
PRODUCTION ASSISTANCE  
FILM AN EVENT  
BABYSITTING  
COOK A MEAL  
GROCERIES SHOPPING  
TRANSPORT PERSONS TO THE AIRPORT, DOCTOR  
BEACH, ETC.  
TRANSPORT COMMODITIES (PICK UP AND DELIVERY)  
FOLLOW SOMEONE  
ANSWER EMAILS  
VIDEO EDITING  
HAIRCUT  
ARTIST BOOK (MARC EMERY ALMANAC 2009)  
SHANTY SOUNDS CD (2003)  
A DRAWING  
SWIMMING LESSONS  
TELL YOU A SECRET  
WHATEVER PERSONAL BELONGINGS I HAVE WITH ME  
DISCUSS CONTEMPORARY ART  
TRY AND EXPLAIN COLOMBIA'S POLITICAL SITUATION  
REGGAETON MP3S  
TAKE PETS FOR A WALK  
KISS  
PAY A VISIT  
PAINT A ROOM OR A FENCE  
GIVE ADVICE FROM MY POINT OF VIEW  
TYPING  
AUDIO TRANSCRIPTION  
POSE FOR AN ARTWORK  
SING A SONG  
TIPS ABOUT PUERTO RICO  
IMAGE SCANNING AND DATA ARCHIVING  
COMPANY  
LECTURE ABOUT MY ART PRACTICE  
FLYER AND POSTER DESIGN  
ENGLISH TO SPANISH TRANSLATIONS

## YOU GIVE

SNORKELING PARTNER  
MEAL  
TATTOO  
MASSAGE  
MOVIE, CONCERT OR THEATER TICKETS  
WINE  
BOOKS  
INTERNATIONAL TELEPHONE CARD  
USED LAPTOP  
DIGITAL CAMERA  
SNEAKERS  
A PLACE TO LIVE  
CITY TOUR  
INVITE TO A PARTY  
ARTWORK  
WEB PAGE DESIGN  
DOCUMENT PERFORMANCE ON AUGUST 1ST  
DIGITAL AUDIO RECORDER  
JEANS  
TIPS ABOUT LA  
FRENCH LESSONS  
MUSIC  
TAKE ME SOMEWHERE BEAUTIFUL  
FRESH FRUIT  
MP3 PLAYER  
WRITE AN ARTICLE ON MY WORK  
SURF LESSONS  
TRY AND EXPLAIN CALIFORNIA'S ECONOMICAL SITUATION  
BICYCLE  
LOCAL PRODUCE

DON'T BRING MONEY  
THIS REALLY WORKS!!!



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**www.g727.org**

**DAYTODAY IN L.A. flyer.  
Los Angeles, 2009.**

## DAYTODAY IN L.A. BLOG

***Carolina Caycedo***

***Friday July 3rd, 2009***

Went sailing by invitation of Michael Escher, in exchanging of being help crew in the 29 footer sailboat. We were Captain Paul, Michael, Jim, Ana and me. It was the first time I met them in my life. We departed from Marina del Rey, sailed north to Santa Monica, back south pass LAX, back to SM, then to Skull Buoy and back to the Marina. Amazing way of starting my mental map of the city, by looking at it from sea and traveling its complete distance on a boat.

***Saturday July 4th, 2009 (Independence Day)***

Independence Day. Got hold of a 79 chevy van in Norwalk. Previous owners were Don Luis and Elvis. Don Luis used it to pick up discarded objects and home appliances at the 'yarda' or dumpster, to the repair them and sell that at the Santa Fe swap meet. Don Jose is a recycler who re-inserts unwanted things into the city's commodity flow. He also has a talent, check out the selfportrait when he was a young men on the lower right corner of the picture. I later went to a BBQ at Butchys and Fay's home in Chinatown. Closed used laptop for haircut deal with Butchys. I still have to schedule the haircut.



***Elvis, Don Luis and me.***

### ***Sunday July 5th, 2009***

Pilar helped me rip of the old carpet from the van (which still needs a name! any suggestions?) At night Adrian Rivas, Pilar Tompkins and me met Sandra de La Loza, they gave me a wonderful and instructive Mural tour around East LA. We visited Ramona Projects where some murals date back to the 70's! Ended in Little Tokyo talking about recent major urban changes in Los Angeles and Bogota.

### ***Monday July 6th, 2009***

Went to Fashion District with Cayetano, and picked up some Nigerian fabric and pompon trim for the van.

Went to Chuy's electrical shop in East Los, has been there since the 60's. Jesus Navarro (Junior) and crew fixed the van lights and put a power inverter in exchange for nothing! pure generosity, thanks Chuy!.

### ***Tuesday July 7th, 2009***

Michael Jackson Memorial. Thousands of products were manufactured in less than a week, and street vendors flooded the Staples bowl, and the streets of LA, selling all sorts of memorabilia. I met Tano at USC, and he helped me install the wooden floor of the van, in exchange for a platano lasagna that I still have to cook for him.

Met Jennifer Renteria at the gallery, and she told me the story of how her family has a bike and bike part booth at the swap meet. She accepted my request to write it down for the upcoming publication. Also spoke with James Rojas, co-founder of g727 about informal economies and East Los Angeles.

Met James who gave me a slide show on street vending phenomena in LA.

Later at night went dancing to the Silver Platter, Resident DJs Nguzunguzu. The place is covered by american flags, and filled up with the most non-conventional americans.



***Cayetano Ferrer  
'Tano' working on  
La Cholota's floor.***

### ***Wednesday July 8th, 2009***

Took Dani and Asma (Nguzunguzu) to the airport. In exchange for them letting me stay at their wonderful place in Chinatown. I also have to move their car to avoid ticketing and feed the kittens. Butchy and Fay are my neighbours.

Later went with Pilar to the Hollywood bowl to see Poncho Sanchez, Eddie Palmieri and Sergio Mendes. Met Reina (La Santa Perversa) who gave me some stickers. Libranos de malos Amores, amen.

Enjoyed Private Korean karaoke booth with the 'someday we'll be singers' crew!

### ***Thursday July 9th, 2009***

Met Elana Mann, who took me to see her latest curatorial project 'Performing Economies' at Fellows of Contemporary Art. Elana accepted to be part of the publication also, in exchange of one of my Shanty Sounds CD's.

Worked with Adrian the rest of the day, pimping the van with the help of Ivan and the back alley boys.

Later I parked the van in front of Federal Art Projects, where the MIXtape II opening was taking place. With the van doors open and music flowing, lots of people stopped by. I met some interesting people and had a few conversations inside the van, was given stickers, I received tips about LA, and overall had a blast. I am still wondering if Juan Capistran's ice piece was flavored....hmmm

### ***Friday July 10th, 2009***

Met Sandra de La Loza for lunch at the Farmlab. On Friday's free lunch is served while a lecture takes place. We heard Deborah Kane from Ecotrust talk about the upcoming Foodhub Online resource, a network of networks that connects sellers and buyers in the US west.

I then met Tait Hawes, a designer for Vans, at his lovely little house in La Mirada Street. I asked him to paint something on the van, he decided on a shark which he still is working on. I met Izzy the Goodle (golden+poodle), and shared briefly with Christina, Tait's wife. Tait is still considering what to ask for in return of the sharrrrk.

Bill Kelley Jr. and his fiancée, picked me up at Tait and Christine's and we met Magali Arriola, Mario Garcia-Torres and little Tina at Paru Indian Restaurant. It was my first time meeting all of them, and we had a nice meal talking about possible exchanges to come. Came back from Hollywood via Sunset Boulevard, can it get any more Los Angeles, oh yeah I am sure it can.

### ***Saturday July 11th, 2009***

Picked up Eduardo Consuegra, whom I know since my student days in Bogota. Haven't seen him for ages!!! We had brunch picnic at Griffith Park and talked about everything and everyone!!! I bet a lot of ear itching was going on.

3 to 6 Workshop at g727 with Metro Planner James Rojas and la CiclAvia. Ciclavia wants to implement a bike friendly LA, following Bogota's example where every Sunday major routes become car-less, and only pedestrians and bikers can step on the asphalt.

At night we went biking with Fay and Butchy to the Smell, to the Upset the Rhythm Showcase. Met Ana Iwataki there, and checked out how underage folks have fun in LA. Biking at night through downtown LA gives you another dimension of the city, as my friend Rayo Chaves said once : Las calles son mas largas de noche que de dia...

### ***Sunday July 12th, 2009***

Finally gave Butchy Fuego a haircut under the cool shade of the trees in his patio. He and Fay were happy with it. I got a used titanium macbook in return. Needs refurbishment, but it came with case and accessories.

Went strolling on my own around Chinatown and El Pueblo. Got hold of some exotic Chinese sweets: Hibiscus, tamarind, sweet peanuts, and lotus seeds.

Potluck dinner with the folks at Ecovillage, by kind invitation of Aldonia from CiclaVia who lives there. I contributed the Chinese sweets. La Ecovillage started in 1993. An amazing group of people make ecovillage possible. Amongst them Lois Arkin from Cooperative Resources and Services Project, the artist and activist Joe Linton, Aurisha and Somer from telematique, and Bobby and Aldonia from CiclaVia. I exchanged image scanning for a drawing with Joe Linton. Will be back at the ecovillage soon to interview him about the process and dynamics of this beautiful and special place. In return he will document the Great Barter Day on August 1st at g727.

### ***Monday July 13th, 2009***

Met Edith Abeyta at her home in Echo Park. Her husband Bob greeted me with a delicious home brewed Irish Stout. Edith cooked home made pizza topped with vegetables from Bob's garden.

We then hit the road in my van towards San Pedro, where we started an artist studio visit tour at Jocelyn Foye's studio. We talked about performance documentation and its implications and had some wine. After Edith and me went down to the ocean front below the cliffs and chilled out for a bit. After we visit several artists at Angels Gate: Ian, Beth, MJ and John, who cooked Bufallo burgers for all of us! Marshall Astor joined us later.

We ended the tour at Sheryl's studio. We headed back to echo park around 10 pm! Edith was grateful because she got to see a bunch of people It was my van's longest trip so far, and she was a good girl taking us around without complaint

### ***Tuesday July 14th, 2009***

Visited Vincent Ramos at his studio in Lawndale. It is full with books, materials, vinyl records, objects and all kind of eye catching gadgets. We talked about our practices and parenthood. Vincent contacted me to trade drawings, and as I arrived with none, I draw something for him on the spot. In return I chose a pencil portrait he made of Mickey Dolenz. By the way Adrian framed that piece.

Later I parked the van on front of the Verdugo bar, where the Mas Exitos night was taking place. Everything flowed in a special manner that night. I finally met Darin, whom I was trying to meet and had failed a couple of times already. Adrian, Jennifer and Ana was there also. One of the DJ's, Aemon (aka Aeon Flux in my mind) hooked me up with a spot right in front of the entrance. Doorman Eddie was amused by having such a distinguished



company. The van was 'un éxito' and loads of people stepped in that night, including members of Ozo-matli! We would be outside for a while hanging in the van, then we would go in to dance to the rhythm of cumbias (mas exitos is great, only vinyls!!!). Then we would step out again, take fresh air and chill out in the van.



***Vincent Ramos in his studio.***

### ***Wednesday July 15th***

I met Bettina Hubby and her dog, Belmer, in her hollywood studio. Bettina is a versatile artist who does amazing clothes and accessories from recycled garments, she constructs installations and realizes participatory projects. We traded a black blouse for a drawing i made in the spot. She has a pretty funky art collection, exclusively obtained by exchanging her fashion creations with artists. She also gave me a huge bunch of wood hangers. Matt, whom I met at mas exitos the night before, invited me to dinner in exchange of company and a conversation. We had a wonderful, specially prepared for us, meal cooked by his roommate Alberto at a Restaurant in Pasadena called Madeleine's. We then went to his place where he played some of his own compositions in the piano and hanged out in the porch looking at the mountains.

Matt came up with a name for the van: **LA CHOLOTA. (Big chola).**

### ***Thursday July 16th***

I met LACMA curator Rita Gonzalez, we exchanged books. I gave her the Marc Emery Almanac, and chose The art of Transition by Masiello in return. I then met Bill Kelley and we had a conversation about daytoday, we also agreed on exchanging transcription services for text writing.

In the evening I had dinner at Jessica Rath and Joe's home in Echo Park. I met beautiful 2 year old Emma, and we became friends instantly. The fed me pasta a la bolognesa, made with organic beef from Jessica's dad farm. I return I washed the plates and pots from the dinner, and we ended the evening having prosecco in the backyard.

### ***Friday July 17th - FIRST DROP OFF DAY***

Was at the gallery all day working on the installation of objects. Asma had gave me a bunch of used clothes, and Bettina's hangers proved useful for displaying the clothes for barter. Tait came over to finish the shark and paint LA CHOLOTA i the van's back doors. Also Autum from the Echo Park Time Banks came and we could discuss about their ex



***Autumn, Kristin,  
a friend and me  
inside La Cholota.***

perience with barter and community networking. Kristin also visited, and a few people cam in to leave objects for the big barter day. That evening I cooked platano lasagna for Tano, this in return for his help in La Cholota's floor installation. Butchy joined us, and we enjoyed the Dodgers fireworks for dessert.

### ***Saturday July 18th - SECOND DROP OFF DAY***

More people came in to leave stuff for the big barter day and for trading on the spot. I gave Luis a Marc Emery Almanac in return for a ride to the airport. Ari brought an organic italian squash from his garden, in exchange for seeds I am to bring from Puerto Rico. Emily Mast sent me a bread she had just baked at her own show in Chinatown. Amongst the objects brought in is a massage chair, nail polish, a 1979 playboy issue, a wooden sign that reads You Are The Sun and jelly candle. At six we attended Camilo and Neri's opening at Steve Turner. After a few coronas I took of with Sandra de la Loza to a potlach party hosted by Anita Marie. Edith and Bob was there, and I met Hector/Vlad who is hosting an anarchist talk next weekend. It was a very good party, I walked out with 3 pairs of earrings, after dancing cumbia, salsa and flamenco the whole night long.

### ***Sunday July 19th***

I still don't know how I made it, but in the morning I met Elana Mann, Vera and Coleen to join the LA Stairs walk in Silverlake. The walk people were running late, so we decided to do our own. It was a good two hour walking, looking for hidden public stairways in silverlake, pretty amazing architecture and views of the reservoir. It was pretty empowering to spend the morning with these young, smart and goodhearted woman. I love being a female. In the evening I hooked up with Artemio /who was passing by LA/ and friends. We ended up chillaxing in Alberto's building pool. He took us up to the roof to enjoy a spectacular view of the city. We all desired the red knickerbocker light sign. ahhh. Got back at around 2 am to pack my stuff as my days at Dani and Asma's place were over, and preparing for going to PR for a couple of days.

### ***Monday July 20th***

Luis picked me up at 5.30 in the morning and took me to the airport to catch my flight back home.

### ***Tuesday July 21st - Wednesday July 22nd***

Was in Puerto Rico with my daughter UNA.

### ***Thursday July 23rd***

Came back to Los Angeles. Jessica Rath picked me up, and I babysat little Emma for an hour and a half while Jessica and Joe went to El Chavo, a mexican joint near their house. I braided Emma's hair and she was simply wonderful and mellow. My tiniest friend in LA so far. After that met Adrian and Pilar at the Betalevel in Chinatown. We then went to EastsideLuv, their local bar, where we saw Cava's performance, she sings amazing rancheras, ska, cumbia and salsa. I also met Ruben Guevara and we talked intensively for a while, before going back home.

### ***Friday July 24th***

Went to JIM'S to breakfast sunrise burrito with Pilar and Adrian. Picked up the van and headed to the gallery. Met for lunch with Bill Kelley and he interviewed me for Latinart.com. I am to do the transcription in return of him writing a text about my work when I need it in the future. We signed an little contract stating the barter.

That night I met with Kristin from [www.kristinlist.com](http://www.kristinlist.com), at her place in Los Feliz. It was a pleasant coincidence to come back to this part of the city, precisely to the same road where Elana lives. Can you believe that I parked La Cholota at the same exact spot under the ....tree, where I had parked a few days ago when I met Elana? At Kristin's I discovered her photography, we chatted about past loves and then went for a walk down Hillhurst al the way to Carpaccio's. We had wood oven pizza and salad, and we decided the best way to improve her spanish conversation was to watch latinamerican and spanish movies with subtitles, so I recomendada a few.

### ***Saturday July 25th***

I arrived very on time at 9 am at Christine and Tait's crib in hollywood. We took Sunset Boulevard towards Malibu, and finally I had peek into the other city, the star city, the opulent neighborhood of Beverly Hills. No commentaries, except that luxury is a crime. Malibu was sparkling with a beautiful swell

***Tait with shark.***



and surfers could be seen by the hundreds in and out of the water. We stopped at SurfRider, where Tait surfed, while Christine and me hanged out in some private beach until the tide washed us out. We were to practice some spanish with Tait, but the only word we commented on was 'estacionamiento'. It is a big issue here in LA anyway. We then stopped at Malibu's seafood spt to have some fried and grilled fish. You can recognize the joint because it has a sunbathing lobster with dark shades.

That night Bob and Edith hosted a beer tasting party at their garden in Echo Park. Bob home brews include mexican ale, english pale ale, irish stout \*yummy\* and apple cider. I was drained by the earlier sun and just couldn't connect with the crowd, Hector and Ani form the potlach party were there, but i was so tired, I retired early. But before going to bed Adrian, Pilar and me stopped briefly at Conchita and Fernando's Casa de Sousa en Olvera street. La Santa Cecilia was playing, and it was a wonderful musica to discover. Casa de Sousa is a cosy, familiar and traditional spot that serves the most amazing vegan food, has been there for over 60 years, and it is facing and fighting shameful eviction. Why? because Siquieros happened to do a mural right on top of them, in the same building decades ago, and know, the hammer wants to restore it and build an observation platform. For this, all merchants in the building have to go for the sake of art. Most probably also because the Placita Olvera is golden real estate, and rents right know are not that high...In any case to read more about it check <http://laeastside.com/2009/07/casa-de-sousa-getting-evicted/> and support Casa de Sousa to keep it being a hub for community gathering and activism.

### ***Sunday 26th July***

Met with Adam Katz at helped him transport some furniture around town. In return he gave me a new wetsuit, peach wine from his yard tree and a copy of the book he edited:

Tattered Fragments of the map. He suggested the idea of opening a Public School in Puerto Rico, after I told him that this will probably be the last time I do Daytoday within an art context, and that I was looking forward to get back home and work in my own community, without any art or aesthetic implications, just mere social practice, real life, common sense.

I then headed to Los Feliz to meet newborn Luca and his mom Adriana, who was looking amazingly well after 4 days of giving birth. I love to see strong, loving, beautiful and caring women, feeling proud and empowered by motherhood. Luca is a cutie and I felt lucky to see how he learned the pacifier ways in my presence.



***Adam loading La Cholota.***

***Paolo from the Echo  
Park Film Center  
showing the  
Film Mobile's  
customized interior.***



After that I headed to Koreatown to set foot in the Ecovillage. I met with Joe Linton whom I interviewed about the history and present dynamics of the Ecovillage. We also traded once again: A copy of his 'down by the los angeles river guide book' for my 'Marc emery almanac'. I didn't stay at the potluck that evening, because I went to yet another one, a dessert one to be more specific, hosted by the Echo Park Time Banks and the Filmmobile. At the silverlake resevoir the Echo Park Film Center was presenting an outdoor screening of 2009 documentary "Coming Home: E.F. Schumacher and the Reinvention of the Local Economy" by Chris Bedford. Mr. bedford happens to be Kristin's father, one of the first persons who contacted me once I arrived in LA. Autum and Lisa for Time Banks were there, as well as Ari whom I met at the Gallery before. The people from the fimmobile had crossed my path at the farmlab a few weeks ago, and Sandra de la Loza also passed by. Finally Adonia and Bobby form ciclavia and ecovillage dropped by, alerted by me a few hours ago.

This was a special night for me, not only because the film is amazing and much in the line of what my everyday concerns are and what I am doing here in LA, but also because some people I met during the last 3 weeks were there. I understood that what I have been doing in this city so far is weaving together a tapestry of experiences and persons. And I don't mean weaving a new tapestry all together, but more like weaving a new color, a new thread into an already rich and multiple layered fabric of community networks, non profit organizations, conscious individuals, creative collectives, anarchist city dwellers and revolutionary thinkers, that share. Yes that's it, that simply share. What do they share?, well first of all the public space of Los Angeles, second, their time and resources, and finally but not less important ideals and ideas and actions on how to relate to others and inhabit the city in a way that allows less dependency on the system.

### ***Monday July 27th***

I spent the day at the gallery working on inviting people for the weekend events. Jessica and little Emma came by to retrieve there objects, as they cannot make it on saturday. Jessica had brought in a print she made of an Ikebana arrangement, and two hematite necklaces she made. In return she took a wooden whistle for Emma, a Shanty Sounds





***Jessica and Emma with objects.***

CD and the lyrics of a colombian lullaby 'Arepitas de maiz tostado, para papa que esta acostado'. After chinese lunch with Adrian, I sent surprise packet to RatCat, whom had contacted me from San Francisco, for barter. But as it proved impossible for us to meet, we decided on doing surprise swap packets over postal mail. Her's should arrive today or tomorrow.

Later we headed to 18th street in Santa Monica to see how Pilar's curated show is coming through. The opening is on saturday. I met Ashley Hunt who was working on his fabulous collective flow chart on immigration and economics. Hugo Hoping was also there illuminating his mmmm, installation, or probably just illuminating us with his presence, and Sandra was also installing. After that we had jerk caribbean food nearby, and then Pilar and I strolled for a bit through the Santa Monica promenade, looking for the newest flash art magazine. I cant seem to find it anywhere!!!!

## ***Tuesday July 28th***

I went to the gallery and worked on the installation, and slideshows to be presented at the end of the week. Around 12 m I headed towards Slanguage, Mario Ybarra and Karla Diaz's studio in Wilmington. First thing I noticed was the alligator chicharrón head. After Mario finished dealing with some Moca curators, we (Mario, Karla, and 3 more of slanguage team, including the young artist in residence) jumped in La Cholota and headed towards Red West, a local pizza joint that has been there forever. Mario told me he grew up in that same neighborhood, and that slanguage studio space was initially shared also by Juan Capistran. In actuality, Slanguage works as a community and cultural hub for youth, where they have access to screen and printing facilities, as well as a physical space to sell their creations. Once at Red West I had to compete for best salad making against an Ybarra team member. I didn't win (the other salad was HUGE), but my salad was yummy as well as the chorizo and Hawaiian pizza. Trade done: Pay a visit in exchange for lunch, thanks.



Back at Slanguage Mario took me next door where the Dock Union have their printing press. We then sat for a bit and talked about Latino and Latinoamerican art communities/structures and how could we connect both of these entities, as we felt they are still kind of oblivious to each other. We came up with a think tank hosted somewhere south in the US, where both Latino and Latinoamerican artists, and some finger picked curators, would come together for 3 or 4 days and discuss strategies for Autonomy and Trust. I tried to sell La Cholota to Slanguage, sin éxito. Buh.

After that I headed to Echo Park and met Eduardo Consuegra at El Compadre, the house of the flaming margaritas, at sunset b. I didn't have a flaming margarita, but I did have the best michelada in LA. After a few micheladas I went back home (home is Adrian and Pilar's in Boyle H.) After chilling and having a bite, I headed towards Silver Platter, yes once more, for wildness night. Nguzunguzu was back in town, hosts were all excited filling the joint with balloons and ribbons for a bday party. Mr. Chang met me there and after a couple of dances we went to Verdugo Bar to Mas Exitos night. There we met the Mas Exitos crew, as well as people from Dublab. A few more dances, and then to a mysterious location to meet Eugenia Paz, a paisa Visceral Realist with whom I had agreed to barter. She gave me a drawing, a beautiful one, and also introduced me to Roberto Bolaño. Merci.

### ***Wednesday July 29th***

I met with Autumn, Lisa, Kindred and Howie from the Echo Park Time Banks, at Flounce Vintage, Lisa's store FLOUNCE in Echo Park Boulevard. I interviewed them, asking for the origins a year and a half ago of the EPTB. It was interesting how they explained how Time Bank doesn't pretend to replace the monetary system, but more complement it and at the same time reinforce a sense of community. They were very honest by telling the misshapens, and difficulties they have gone through. I wish them best of lucks and strength They are a great inspiration for our own Time Bank endeavor in Puerto Rico.

After that straight to the gallery, to work on the installation and set up for Friday and Saturday. Rat Cat's surprise packet arrived from San Francisco. I opened to find a jar full of granola. A bigger surprise came when I opened the jar to nibble on the granola, and touched a sort of plastic thing. I started pulling it out to find a double vacuum sealed fat 5 inch twig of fine herb. Made my day! After working hard with Papi in making the place great for the weekend, I went to Tano's studio at USC to trade some of that fine herb for him lending his projector for the weekend. Went back home and had a good long night sleep.

### ***Mario Ybarra escorting the Slanguage team into La Cholota.***



### ***Thursday July 30th***

Met with York at Café Tropical, had coffee and guava cheese pastry over conversation about a more human and personal way of law practice. PATRIA O MUERTE compañero. Also talked about Angel Rama's Ciudad Letrada and how the Visceral Realists practice relates to the power of written discourse and the building of credibility through words. I believe York, whatever you say or write I believe...

After that, more gallery tune up with Papi. Jessica Rath and little Emma came to pick up, choosing a wooden whistle for Emma, and we hanged out for a bit, while Emma made nice drawings.

Around 2 pm Matrix @ Berkeley Curator Elizabeth Thomas paid a visit, and brought in a selection of Matrix brochures for the barter tables. She commented on her intentions of opening the interstice between exhibitions at Matrix as a space for works in progress and experimentation/not necessarily objectual or finished art practices. Liz also brought news from Ted Purves.

Later I visited Mr. Chang's studio. I had the luck to view all of Eugenia Paz's work before its tragic disappearance, and other Visceral Realists pieces. I was taught guerrilla methods for inserting new contents in existing media. I received a dedicated 'The Romantic Dogs' book that made me feel beautifully special, as I hadn't felt in quite a while. I gave some of that fine herb in return. And we headed for some maniac shrimp rolls and beer for lightweights. I do regret not accepting Mr. Chang's of getting absolutely drunk that night. Mr. Chang was kind enough to escort me home, and when I was starting to feel lonely after he left, Papi texted Eastside Luv, which proved to be the perfect antidote. I did end absolutely intoxicated that night anyway, as Adrian and Pilar hosted the entire bar at an after party at their place. I met David, who owns the most amazing set of eyes in LA, and we danced to cumbia, reggaeton, salsa and disco until 5 am. Even the cops came!!! But Pilar managed to talk them away with her wonderful ways.

### ***Friday July 31st - DROP OFF DAY.***

Difficulties to get up after all that meneo. However we managed with Adrian to go buy the drinks and arrive at the gallery in time to open for drop off day. People started to walk in



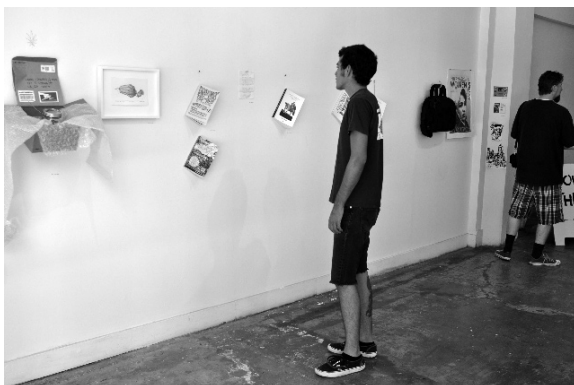
***James, Adrian and friends at the bartering section of the exhibition. g727, Los Angeles.***

at 1 pm. Fernando and Conchita from Casa de Sousa helped us with the food, deliciosos tamales, ensaladita and chips and salsa. And extra delicious home made chocolate treats. Asma and Dani from Nguzunguzu were in charge of the beats. Hats, rollerskates, services, clothes, art pieces, organic produce, books and more were brought in by generous Angelinos willing to trade with fellow citizens. Highlight of the day Patsi Valdez came, and stayed for the community talk. A nice ingredient was Gifford's presence during the whole day. He is a working class historian from San Francisco who came for the Anarchist Conference, and was directed to the gallery by Vlad.

Community talk started at 6.45 with a small but avid audience of around 20. Good questions came after my presentation, my favorite: How would you describe LA? Full of creativity and with a considerable amount of autonomous initiatives. After Q & A we all stepped out to visit La Choluta and hang around her.

Back home I was almost falling in the claws of exhaustion when Tano called me. He talked me into going to a cumbia party at Torrance, so he picked me up and we got there to find a full Doris' house, with an amazing crowd dancing to the cumbia of Buyepongo, a Colombian-mexican LA band leaded by Bardo. David was there, Ignacio and Hugo Hopping were also there and we left the place at 3 am!!!

***David checking out some  
of the objects I obtained  
through barter.***



### ***Saturday August 1st - BIG BARTER DAY.***

After amazing breakfast with homemade salsa by Pilar, sausage tacos by Adrian and fresh orange juice by the lady at the gas station, we headed for the gallery to host the Big Barter day. Lots of people came to retrieve something, and in general it was a success. Patsi Valdez returned to gift me with a Walking Mural clock. I retrieved olive green gloves, and a woodblock Japanese print. Thanks to all those who participated and traded/helped/hosted/cared for me during my stance en la ciudad de nuestra señora de Los Angeles. You make me feel hope.

At 4.30 we jumped in La Choluta and headed towards 18th Street Arts Center in Santa Monica, where PostAmerican L.A. exhibition curated by Pilar Tompkins was opening during Artnight. Pilar included my Mexicamericana flag in the show. At 18th st, La Choluta was reserved prime position at the parking lot right at the entrance and in front of the stage where conga master Francisco Aguabella was performing. La Choluta became a chill out space where people could sit down and chill, talk, exchange, have a Tecate (we were the

only ones with Tecate that night) and watch the performance. I also met gallerist Steve Turner and his wife Victoria, we lounged and talked for quite a bit inside La Cholota. After everything was over at 18th Street we headed to Tropico de Nopal, where Hugo Hopping showed me his dancing moves, very good by the way, and we all had a delightful end of the project celebration, dancing the night away to Mentiritas mixes.



***Mexicamericana flag at  
18th Street.  
LA, 2009.***

### ***Sunday August 2nd***

Early wake up call by York. He picked me up and we went to the Pasadena swimming complex (built for the 1984 olympics). It is a beautiful place, roofless pools thriving with people young and old. We swam for a good 45 minutes, oh I was missing that underwater sensation, and then chilled in the hot Jacuzzi for a while. It was very relaxing and somehow sad at the same time, my days in LA were arriving to an end. Back home I had a phone conversation with Vlad who invited me to the 2nd day of the Anarchist Conference. But I didn't find the strength to go. The last days I had been surrounded with people, and sometimes one needs to be lonely and silent.

Later I accompanied Pilar and Adrian to take their marriage paperwork to the Mission church, where I got hold of a Virgen de Regla stamp and some marriage prayer stamps for the happy couple. We then stopped by at the Municipal Gallery at Barnsdall where I met Edith Abeyta and Michael to discuss my intervention in the show they are curating for next

January: Actions, Conversations, and Intersections.

After that, Adrian dropped Pilar and me at a Korean spa, where we got pampered and scrubbed and massaged as the goddesses we are. After 2 and a half hours of total disconnection, we took Adrian back home, to then return to Ktown to pamper our bellies with delicious Korean BBQ. Oh I slept amazingly well that night.

### ***Monday August 3rd***

Pilar and I woke up early, picked up Delain at Union Station, and the Sandra de la Loza at her place, and we hit the road. Destination: TIJUANA.

On our way to TJ we stopped at the San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art, where we met Fatima and Lucia Sanroman, and of course visited the exhibitions. It was nice to view work by Colombian artist Maria Fernanda Cardoso. I had never had a chance to see her vertical gardens until now.

After Pilar and Delain checked in at their hotel in San Diego, we headed towards the border, parked, and crossed by foot. The sudden change of panorama is incredible. I never thought the contrast would be so obvious and blatant. After Sandra and me checked in our hotel, we headed for a quick snack and a margarita.

We then walked to the CECUT, which was the reason for our visit to TJ. My friend Fran Illich that works at the literature department there invited me to host a book barter and give a talk about DAYTODAY. Once at the CECUT we hooked up with Fran and his girlfriend Jennifer Sternad, a once LA dweller that has found a niche in Latin America, specially Buenos Aires and now TJ.

I took a look at El Agora where the book barter was going to take place, and then we checked the books Fran had been saving for the book barter for a month since his invitation. A lot of editions from the CECUT itself, and many interesting historical and poetry books that were part of the disappeared reading room.

After that the girls and me went dinning, and Fran and Jen joined us later. When dinner was over Pilar and Delain returned to the US, and Fran, Jen, Sandra and me went driving around. Tijuana looks like Cali, Colombia to me, a city that has seen better days. We ended at the red light district, in a quiet bar called nelsons, after a shot of Tequila we went back to the hotel and had a good night rest.



***Trueque de libros en el  
Ágora del Cecut en Tijuana.***



## ***Tuesday August 4th***

I was early at the CECUT where boxes of books were awaiting to be bartered. I arranged them nicely at the multiple wooden platforms of the Agora, and to my surprise, a good number people started to walk in for book bartering. The girls picked me up for lunch, we wanted to go to playitas but the taxi driver told us traffic was going to be impossible due to road repairs, so instead he took us to a seafood place in town. It was a good choice. The food was absolutely delicious and fresh. At the end of our meal the waiters gave us a tasting of their special Vibora tequila, yep, tequila spiced with rattle snakes. They assured us it would make us immune against cancer, so I didn't take any chances and swallowed my vibora tequila shot, which was amazingly good. I felt the power of the rattlesnake entering each drop of my blood. They nice waiters also gave as a red rose to each of us before we left. Snakes and roses from Tijuana.

Back at the Cecut the book barter was on fire, people had been bringing in considerable amounts of books, and each person started to display them in their own little niche, so several little 'puesticos' of books sprouted at the Agora. Participants kept asking when would be next book barter. Hopefully the Cecut follows up with Fran's initiative and transforms the book barter into a periodical event. The talk had a good audience who were interested enough in making some questions and acute commentaries about the possibilities of communal land owning. After the talk we went straight back to Los Angeles. Crossing the border was a 30 minutes thing; apparently tourism has decreased an 80%.

On my way back to LA, David texted me and we agreed to hang out at wildness night. Back home Reina was waiting for me with a dedicated and signed book of her poetry: Santa Perversa and other erotic poems. While I got ready for wildness, Reina delighted us by reading some of the poems. I gave her the Yemaya stamp I had picked at the Mission Church. David picked me up and I met Asma, Dani, Tano and Sayre at the silver platter. During these 5 weeks in LA I broke a dance hunger that had been punishing me for the last 5 years! After a good dance sesh, I said goodbye to my dear friends. That was my last night in LA.

## ***Wednesday August 5th***

David kindly took me to the airport. I flew back home to my daughter in Puerto Rico.



***Víboras en el Tequila.***

***Photo by Sandra de la Loza.***

**LIST OF LOS ANGELES ARTISTS / COLLECTIVES / SPACES  
THAT CREATE INVOLVING  
EXCHANGE / PARTICIPATION / COLLABORATION.**

Journal of Aesthetics and Protest Editorial Collective - Marc Herbst,  
Robby Herbst and Christina Ulke

Vincent Ramos

Ashley Hunt and Taisha Paggett

John Burtle and John Barlog

CamLab - Anna Mayer and Jemima Wyman

Dorit Cypis and Foreign Exchanges

Adam Overton and artSpa

Sea and Space Explorations and Lara Bank

Liz Glynn

Machine Project and Mark Allen

Sandra de la Loza

Suzanne Lacy and the Otis Public Practice Program

Fallen Fruit

Ari Kletzky and Islands of LA

Karen Atkinson and Gyst Ink.

workspace

Art 2102

Slanguage - Mario Ybarra Jr. and Karla Diaz

Artists for Social Justice

Evelyn Serrano

Institute for Figuring and Christine and Margaret Wertheim

Bill Kelly Jr.

Cubo

Elana Mann

Michael Parker

Anna Huff

Imprenta - Wu Ingrid Tsang, Michelle Dizon, Nicolau Vergeiro,  
and Camilo Ontiveros

Bulbo

Los Angeles Urban Rangers and Sara Daleiden

Andrea Bowers

Edith Abeyta

Miranda July

Edgar Arceneaux and the Watts Housing Project

Center for Land Use Interpretation

Center for Political Graphics

Big City Forum and Leonardo Bravo

FarmLab

Fritz Haeg

The Mountain School

The Public School with Telic Arts Exchange

Materials and Applications

Linda Pollock

Outpost for Contemporary Art and Julie Deamer

Finishing School

Echo Park Travel Mart

Jocelyn Foye

Bia Gayotto

Marshall Astor

Linda Samuels

Erik Knutzen and Homegrown Evolution

Good Magazine

Sumi Ink Club - Sarah Anderson and Luke Fischbeck

Jeff Cain

Knife and Fork

Ojo

Pocho Research Society

Trading Post - Daniel Pineda

Film Mobile - Echo Park Film Center

g727 and the Map & Model Shop

Betalevel

**NOTES:** *Compiled with the kind help of Elana Mann and Sandra de la Loza.  
Every person and group listed can be found through any Internet searcher.*



***La Niña with  
objects.  
Nort Adams, 2006.***

## EXISTING OUTSIDE THE ART ECONOMY: CAROLINA CAYCEDO'S DAYTODAY PROJECT.

***Pablo Leon de la Barra***

*"This kind of pimping of the creative force is what has been transforming the planet into a gigantic marketplace, expanding at an exponential rate, either by including its inhabitants as hyperactive zombies or by excluding them as human trash. In fact, those two opposing poles are interdependent fruits of the same logic; all our destinies unfold between them. This is the world that the imagination creates in the present. As one might expect, the politics of subjectivation and of the relation to the other that predominates in this scenario is extremely impoverished."*

*Suely Rolnik, 'The Geopolitics of Pimping', 2006 (1)*

In her text, 'The Geopolitics of Pimping', psychoanalyst and cultural critic Suely Rolnik presents the current scenario in which artistic practices have been subjugated by neoliberal forces. How can art practices exist in this scenario and not be subjected to its loss of autonomy and its conversion into mere commodities? How can one escape the forced destiny of being either a 'hyperactive zombie' or 'human trash'?

For the last ten years, and as part of her artistic practice, Carolina Caycedo has been exploring the social and aesthetic possibilities to be developed through the art of exchange. Taking advantage of the facilities and resources offered by art institutions, Caycedo has created a parallel economy that questions the mechanisms of capitalism by generating platforms for non-monetary exchanges.

Caycedo's interest in informal economies and the strategies of barter began in Bogotá, Colombia in 1997 where, when still an art student, she formed art collective *Cambalache*

***El Museo de La Calle.  
Plaza San Victorino.  
Bogotá, 1999.***







***Empuja que yo tiro!***  
***El Veloz.***  
***Bogotá, 2000.***

together with Adriana García, Raimond Chaves and Federico Guzmán (2). In 1998 Cambalache set the *Museo de la Calle* in the Plaza de San Victorino within the deprived neighbourhood of *El Cartucho* in the centre of Bogotá. *El Cartucho*, which now has been demolished, was a neighbourhood where the disposable members (3) of society lived and traded through an informal micro-economy. Using a small hand pulled cart which they called *El Veloz* the members of *Cambalache* toured *El Cartucho* bartering objects with the people of the neighbourhood. The cart accumulated objects that became a cartography of the life and trade of *El Cartucho*. In further reincarnations the *Museo*

*de la Calle* appeared in real museums (4), continuing the trade with the visitors of the art institutions. *Cambalache* promoted cultural recycling and unlimited exchange of goods and ideas through non economic transactions: "We always thought that our activity should be about giving or constructing something; not tourism but exchange; exchanging is a direct way of approaching people in the street, an ephemeral contact where we propose a quick exercise of rethinking our values in a non monetary transaction." (5) Other projects done by *Cambalache* included a hair-cutting cart *A Toda Mecha*, which offered hair-cutting services, and DJing projects and pirate CDs which were part of a musical exchange. While there exists a fine line of abuse within projects which work with 'the other', specially 'the marginalized' where the artist can be accused of 'slumming' (6), *Cambalache* interacted with the inhabitants of the other in an equal basis, and learned from them their survival techniques. "We always perceived its inhabitants as our equals, and as forming a sort of subculture... The *ñeros* taught us a lot about recycling, bartering and surviving, and the creative redefinition of objects and situations: *el rebusque*." (7)

In 2002, and now working by herself, Caycedo was invited by the Secession in Vienna to do a public project that would give the institution more public visibility. It was then that Caycedo installed for the first time the *daytoday* project. Tired of doing useless jobs to survive and support herself and her art projects, Caycedo decided to integrate her art, her life, and her practice in one. Instead of the previous projects, which were limited to the exchange of objects, Caycedo expanded the project to offer her own everyday life talents as services in exchange for other services. Having a van provided by the institution as her only surplus, Caycedo would survive without money while driving, helping people move their things, cook, cut hair, give massages, and draw portraits in exchange for food, knowing the city and friendship.

***A Toda Mecha.  
Bogotá, 1999.***

Since then Caycedo has periodically re-installed *daytoday* in different cities where she has been invited to realize art projects: in 2006 within the Whitney Biennale in New York, at the Contemporary Artist Center in North Adams, Massachusetts, in the exhibition 'Doubtful Strait' in Teoretica in San Jose, Costa Rica and in 2009 at g727 in Los Angeles.

In most of the projects Caycedo has used a van as a vehicle and interface for exchange. Three vans have been used in different *daytoday* projects. In Vienna, it was a classic 1964 Ford van, which was rented. In New York it was a Dodge Ram 1989 that was baptized as *La Niña*, and in Los Angeles a Chevrolet Chevy Van 1979 van which was named *La Cholota*. Both *La Niña* and *La Cholota* have been customized by Caycedo and her new friends during the process. The vehicles becoming an extension of herself, a personal space where she can host the different kind of exchanges. In her words "vans are like the mobile HQ of *daytoday*, like an extension of a living room, it's like a flying carpet" (8). *La Niña* from NY also became a gallery in itself, containing all kinds of drawings, sculptures, textiles, books and videos, which were submitted to the artist and displayed within the van without discrimination. At the moment *La Niña* is trapped in the Free Associated State of Puerto Rico, waiting for the import tax to be cleared! Meanwhile, *La Cholota* is in Los Angeles and is for sale the proceeds of its sale, hopefully, will pay for this book you are reading now.



Ironically, the final apparition of the *daytoday* project, takes place in and during the London Frieze Art Fair (9). Invited by Filipa Oliveira and Miguel Amado to participate in their booth as part of the Frieze Foundation projects, Caycedo will present *daytoday* for the last time as part of their project called "Impossible Exchange". Last year, even with a turbulent economy the fair reported sales that exceeded expectations "Nicholas Logsdail, owner of Lisson Gallery, confirmed this positive outlook: Interest and buying has remained strong for artists of quality and historical importance. Notably an Anish Kapoor sold for close to a million pounds to the chairman of the board of trustees of a major American museum. We have made good sales of major works running into the millions at both the fair and at our current Julian Opie show where all the animations have sold out." (10) Reported sales for the first two years of the fair, 2003 and 2004, were 20 million pounds and 23 million pounds.

In retrospective, more than the exchange of services, what will remain of the *daytoday* project is the memories of the personal experiences and exchanges developed between

Caycedo and the users of the service: the lived experience and the effect they had in each of the participants personal and political life.

Going back to Rolnik's statement in the first paragraph of this text, it's this human interactions the one that resist capitalist consumption. It is this experience that the consumer of commodities and experiences will not be able to buy. It is this live element that was a fundamental part of the work developed during the 1960s in Brazil by Helio Oiticica and Ligia Clark and which for them was as a way to escape the fetishisation of the art object and which opened their work into new dimensions. Although their art proposal's were different than Caycedo's and developed under a different context and conditions, it's this same life-experience which permits Caycedo's work to transcend the market operation that has co-opted a great part of the art world and transformed the artists in artisans and decorators of their patrons.

### **Postscripts:**

"But do not forget that there are elements here that this bourgeois voracity will never be able to consume: the direct life-experience (*vivencia*) element, which goes beyond the problem of the image." Helio Oiticica, 1968 (11)

"In the very moment when he digests the object, the artist is digested by the society that has already found a title and a bureaucratic occupation for him: he will be the future engineer of entertainment, an activity that has no effect whatsoever on the equilibrium of social structures. The only way for the artist to escape co-optation is to succeed in unleashing a general creativity, without any psychological or social limits. This creativity will be expressed in lived experience." Ligia Clark, 1969 (12)

### **FOOTNOTES:**

(1) Text available in <http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/1106/rolnik/en/>

(2) For further detail of Cambalache's work see also: Rodríguez, María Inés (2003). 'De Rolling Por Bogotá: Entrevista Con El Colectivo Cambalache' in Rodríguez, María Inés (2003). *¿Las Ilusiones Perdidas? Panorama Del Arte Contemporaneo Colombiano*. V Bienal del Caribe, Santo Domingo.

(3) In Colombia the very poor urban poor are called *desechables*, meaning disposables making allusion to non necessary or easily replaced humans.

(4) El Museo de la Calle was exhibited in 'Worthless-Invaluable' curated by Carlos Basualdo in Ljubljana, 2000; Museo de la Universidad Nacional, Bogotá, Colombia, 2000; 'PROO' MM Proyectos in San Juan Puerto Rico, 2000; 'Da Adversidade Vivemos', curated by Carlos Basualdo, Musee D'Art Moderne De La Ville De Paris, Paris, 2001; Istanbul Biennial, 2001; Kunsthalle in Bern, Switzerland, 2002; Biennial of Young Art in Torino, Italy, 2002; 'Etnografía: Modo de Empleo' at the Museo de Bellas Artes in Caracas, Venezuela, curated by Julieta Gonzalez in 2002; 'Shadow Cabinets' at the Fredericianum Kunsthalle in Kassel,

Germany, curated by Ted Purves, 2003; Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo de Sevilla, España, 2004, amongst others.

(5) <http://www.museodelacalle.blogspot.com/>

(6) 'Slumming' was the term given to the activity developed by artists and bohemians in 1880s Victorian London who went to London's East End slums in order to engage with 'the other', ironically "the slums of London ironically functioned as sites of personal liberation and self-realization for several generations of educated men and women." See Koven, Seth, (2006). *Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London*, Princeton University Press, p. 5.

(7) Carolina Caycedo in conversation with Michèle Faguet, text for the exhibition 'Locomotion', Blow de la Barra, London, 2006, unpublished.

(8) Skype conversation with the artist, September 2009

(9) The Frieze Foundation projects represent a kind of guilt laundering on part of the fair, but ironically they are also some of the most interesting and critical art projects presented in London, in a context where non commercial galleries in many cases act as franchises of the commercial ones.

(10) [http://www.friezeartfair.com/press/print/frieze\\_art\\_fair\\_2008\\_sales\\_exceed\\_expectations](http://www.friezeartfair.com/press/print/frieze_art_fair_2008_sales_exceed_expectations)

(11) Oiticica, Helio (1968), *Tropicalia*, March, 4, 1968 (pg 134) in Brett, Guy; David, Catherine and Dercon, Chris (Curators) (1992), in Hélio Oiticica, Centro De Arte Hélio Oiticica/Witte De With, Rio De Janeiro/Rotterdam

(12) Clark, Lygia (1969), *O corpo é a casa* in Manuel J.Borja Villed and Nuria Enguita Mayo, eds., *Lygia Clark, exhib. cat.*, Fondació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, 1997. Bilingual editions: Spanish/English and French/Portuguese.

**Ana, Jennifer,  
Hugo, and  
Ozomatli friends.  
LA, 2009**

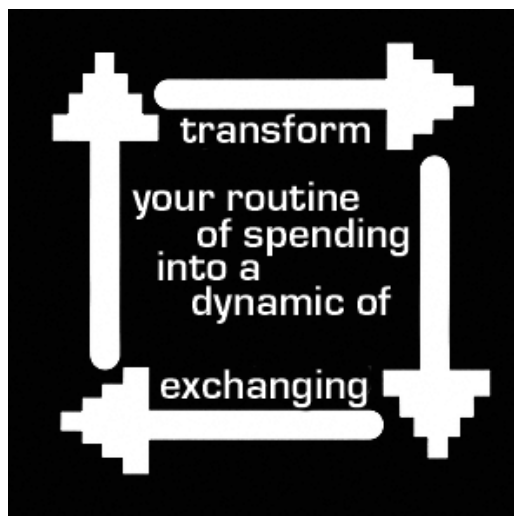




**RESISTE!** Carolina Caycedo. Parangolé Flag.  
San Juan, 2009  
Photo by Carlos Amoraes.

## I COULD DO WITH A LITTLE MORE CHAOS MYSELF

**CAROLINA CAYCEDO**



Millions of people live without money or with very little all around the world, some of them willingly and consciously like Heidemarie Schwermer ([www.free.de/gibundnimm/](http://www.free.de/gibundnimm/)), a 60-year-old German woman who stopped using money in 1996. She told me her life is a game where she is the principal player and where she arranges and re-arranges the rules according to her desires and needs. She is not an ascetic, because she has everything she wants, she describes herself as an open-minded woman with a huge creativity and lots of friends. When I asked her if she was free, she said "I feel totally free".

Others seem to not have any chance of a proper life at all, the last issue of "desde abajo", an independent Colombian newspaper ([www.desde-abajo.org](http://www.desde-abajo.org)), states that 29 millions of Colombians live in poverty, and 7 millions of them in the extreme misery, that is in the streets and without any kind of income. And while in this world the gap between the rich and the poor gets bigger, in developed countries like the UK, the government does everything that is in its hand to abolish the notion of the working class, and replace it for that of the middle class. Pay attention, if the working class disappears, so will the need for protesting towards better standards, syndicates will become obsolete, and everyone will be happy thinking they have gone one step up the social ladder.

Recently publications all over the world have reviewed widely the way how Argentines have switched to a bartering economy by using an alternative currency called "credit" or "arbolitos" in response to the lack of pesos and to the economical and political crisis of last year, but the truth is that the first NODO or exchange club of the Red Global de Trueque or Global Net of Exchange (<http://trueque.org.ar>), started the 1st of may of 1995 in Bernal, Buenos Aires, with around 20 persons. There are exchange clubs and systems all over the world, most of them have developed in the last decade: in Mexico and the States (the



< Ithaca hours >( [www.ithacahours.org](http://www.ithacahours.org)) and similar) , Canada (< LETSystems > ([www.gmlets.u-net.com](http://www.gmlets.u-net.com)) by Michael Linton) and Europe (England, Scotland, Norway, Finland, Belgium and France <SELS>(<http://asso.francenet.fr/sel/>, [www.sel.org.uk/](http://www.sel.org.uk/) ).

So when I decide to live 3 weeks without money in Vienna, I know I am not a pioneer, not even a promoter because I am not trying to start an exchange club or develop an alternative economy theory, but I do approach it as an experiment, with the city as a research platform where to test my own limits and communication skills and those of whoever I encounter in Vienna. I do think of it as a creative project that will help me find a solution to my everyday basic necessities, because I am fed up of working and I do not believe in the separation of time into work time and leisure time – ABAJO EL TRABAJO-, and have now decided to shift my entire life slowly towards this direction. I do want to think about it as a way of des-obedience and escaping control by being in constant movement and



## SECESSION DAYTODAY MAY 2002

[www.day-today.org](http://www.day-today.org) 0664 5811808

### CAROLINA GIVES

spanish lessons  
salsa dance classes  
hair cutting  
cook a meal  
clean house  
make a portrait  
film a party or event  
go to the bank and pay bills  
bring the newspaper in the morning  
give advice from my point of view  
tell my secrets  
explain how to use the world wide web  
type a document  
pose for an artwork  
kiss  
paint room, etc  
explain Colombia's political  
talk about art  
sing a song  
baby/children sitting  
read a book loudly  
grocery shopping  
take pets for a walk  
tell my life  
transport persons  
transport commodities  
escort to a dinner, party, etc..  
tips about london and colombia  
pay a visit  
personal belongings i have with me  
swimming classes  
take photos  
music cd by BALA

### YOU GIVE

food (cooked or raw)  
a place to cook  
cofee  
take a shower  
wash clothes  
use the toilet  
wash clothes  
english-german dictionary  
local-international telephone calls  
mini dv cassetes  
power source to charge batteries  
lend sound system  
music  
wine  
soap  
web access  
invite to party  
stamps for european postcards  
company

Transform your routine of spending into a dynamic of exchanging!  
From the 16th of may until the 2nd of June I will live through exchanges in Vienna, you can help me in this non-monetary experience by exchanging with me the items, products or services you find in the lists above. **DON'T BRING MONEY, THIS REALLY WORKS!**

**I GIVE-YOU GIVE  
I NEED-YOU NEED**  
Carolina C

reinventing my everyday according to what I find in my way. I do feel it as an anarchic, chaotic, artistic, poetic, utopist, autonomous and freedom gesture. Let me remind you what Hakim Bey says about the Temporary Autonomous Zones "...the TAZ is a way of revolting without attacking the State directly, a guerrilla operation that liberates an area (of time, of space, of imagination) and dissolves itself to re-configure again in another place/another time before the State can squash it..."

In order to position myself towards others, to position my self in a totally strange and new city and to satisfy my curiosity about what kind of relationship you can and may develop with a stranger in Vienna when there is no money involved, I got hold of an old van, wrote I NEED YOU NEED I GIVE YOU GIVE on its sides, and used it as my mobile and small headquarters, my little piece of privacy that was not anymore as soon as I hit the road. I also made public through the Internet and through flyers I disseminated through out the city two different lists, one with what I needed, and the other with what I was willing to do or give in exchange. I was also provided with a contact mobile phone.

In short... I put myself, what I know and what I do in offer and I got ready to negotiate, deal, make transactions, exchange, barter.

*JS: "...Buying and selling is the most natural human institution: there's nothing wrong with that...Buying and selling is the most interesting thing in the world. It should be aesthetic and everything else. But capitalism is a perversion of this. Nothing is more wonderful than a market place. It gives people something to do...and it can be creative. Wonderful things come from commerce...but not from capitalism...capitalism is terribly inefficient. The insane duplication, the insane waste, and the young only know what's put in front of them...But then by experience, things are happening to you and you find out that this doesn't work. I mean this is not productive..."*

*SL: "it produces waste"*

Jack Smith, interview by Sylvere Lotringer. "Uncle Fishhook and the Sacred Baby Poo of Art". Hatred of Capitalism. Ed. By Kraus/Lotringer. Semiotext(e). Los Angeles, 2001.

There are 23 districts in Vienna. The city has a closed ringed structure, the center is contained by a ring, and this by another, and so on, the latter ring is a green one, conformed mainly by vineyards, the prater and the green zone of the Lobau, that contains the city itself and stops any illegal or/and messy construction or urban growth. This ringed structure has been, since the Turk invasion (maybe before), and continues to be a strong control mechanism; it really directs your movements within the urban space. Some of the inner rings are unidirectional for example, which complicates traffic. The central districts are also under this parking law, making it extremely difficult and expensive to park in office hours, so basically I was always on the move. After a few days I felt comfortable driving, cycling and walking around Vienna, I already knew where I was standing. Somehow I blended in, cause people approached me in the street and talked to me in Austrian German!

Every person I knew through daytoday showed me a new city. Each of them lives Vienna in a different way, under a different purpose and ideal. I learned things about and within the city that some local Viennese don't even know. The project also spread by word of mouth, so I found myself contacting friends of someone I already exchanged with, people redirecting me to colleagues and so on. I saved so much time jumping social formalities with strangers! This way of direct communication allowed me to find out quicker what did I

have in common with the other, if any thing at all. Not by coincidence this situation attracts generous and good-hearted persons who already swap on an everyday life basis. Different to other initiatives i have developed in the public space before, i did not enter in contact with so many people daily, but the encounters where longer, stronger, intrusive, and so different from one another, some of them stopped being mere encounters and shifted towards proper relationships that are still developing.

I was taken into private places, rooms and situations by strangers which where not anymore. I would say that daytoday is a public project that moves in an intimate sphere, it is public in a subtle way, almost invisible, because it is open to everybody's participation, but it is not very visible, not eye-catching; it is soft, like a postcard. The idea of exposing and opening myself without no-one or very few noticing it excites me a lot.

My plan was to sleep in the van, but this I did only for three nights. Trust was the first ingredient in this experiment and this brought many lovely surprises like people giving me the keys of their houses so I could use it as I pleased. I went to the movies in a squatter house, I slept in the open air near a lake, picnicked in parks, I went to the most posh and cool discos and to the most seedy parties, I ate in restaurants, and at home, cooked, checked internet, showered, obtained a bicycle, washed my clothes, smoked, drank, heard conferences, discovered macrobiotic food, entered exhibitions, got new music, new clothes, collaborated in an interactive electronic concert, among others without paying an euro. In return I gave Spanish conversations, swimming lessons, drew portraits, gave massages, kissed, sang songs, danced salsa, told my secrets, gave my CD compilation, took people to different places, transported goods, gave company, cooked, cleaned, chatted away, among others.

At some point I was drilling holes and catching glimpses of a person's privacy: the proposal of exchange, of a personal exchange, was the starting point of my intrusion, though I never forced my way in because I was also being observed and in an extremely vulnerable position. The construction of the experience rested equally on both parts, or on all of the parts if in a group, and I would say no one was in a more powerful position than other.

I guess I did push the events by offering in exchange such common and everyday life things or situations. If I had offered any service in a professional level, I imagine the whole contact would have been more formal, but the triviality of the lists permitted a wider range of approaches to the concept of barter, exchange and swap. Interaction between the others and myself was done in many levels not only in a I give-you return basis. In many occasions the rules of the barter (1X1) blurred, and the concept of sharing sprouted soon as the second ingredient to this wild mix. I mean, how to know when a swap takes place, if it takes place at all, in the middle of a conversation? How to apply the same values for bartering with so many different people and in so diverse circumstances? The value under which negotiation took place we (me and the other) had to construct during our time together and reconstruct every time we met, if we did so. Eventually with the people I met more than once this proved to be energy consuming so we just shared what we had without worrying who was taking more or less.

As I said before I never forced my way in, because people slowly opened themselves, their home and/or a part of their routine to me. Hakim Bey points out: *"The Individual vs. The Group - the Me vs. the Other, a false dichotomy spread through the control mechanisms and, over all, through language... The Me and The Other complement and complete each*

*other. There is no Absolute Category, no Ego, no Society –just a complex and chaotic weft of relationships- and the "strange attractor", the proper attraction...Out of this turbulence sprouts values, values that are based on abundance instead of scarcity, on gifts instead of commodities, and on the mutual synergetic improvement of the individual and the group; values that in all ways are different to the ethic and morality of civilization, because they have to do with life instead of death. Freedom is a psychokinetic ability, not an abstract name. It is a process, not a "state"- not a movement nor a way of government... The penetration of everyday life by the marvelous – the creation of "situations"- belongs to the "corporal material principle", and to imagination, an to the live weaving of the present."*

The idea of sharing is not a difficult one to grab, and I believe that once you understand it the more you want to share, because it is beautiful, satisfying, ecological, friendly, revolutionary and generous. What is so incredible about using something you do not have to pay for, but that doesn't belong to you? The principle of sharing is also a political, social, economical and artistic statement, because you can replace the dependence upon authority with it.

# **TRANSFORM YOUR ROUTINE OF BUYING AND SPENDING INTO A DYNAMYC OF EXCHANGING AND SHARING.**

**CAROLINA CAYCEDO, VIENNA 2002.**



**NOTE:** Text, images and flyer were originally published in the DAYTODAY Secession catalog, Vienna-2002.





*Traded wetsuit and home made  
peach hooch inside La Cholota  
LA, 2009.*

## REALMS

### ***Ted Purves***

Sept. 1 2009: *"I will close the daytoday project, after 7 years of swapping within and out the art realm, I have decided to stick to the non-artistic realm. Not that I think these kind of interventions are not relevant in the art context, but I want to concentrate my efforts in starting an effective time-bank/swapping network here in Puerto Rico, after seven years of experience I feel I can jump from hosting a personal barter network, to hosting a communal one. I have been living here for the past 5 years and we are already a steady group interested in making this happen. Well it is already happening...."*

Carolina wrote this to me a few days ago. The first thing I am struck by in this email is the clarity of her decision; after all, for many of us who have been centering in our practices within the context of the art world, it is not a small decision to "leave it".

The other thing which struck me was perhaps more personal. Seven years... it is hard to believe that this much time has past, not just in a personal, "I am getting older" sort of way, but in the larger sense. A great deal has changed in the overarching contexts by which projects such as hers are enacted, and the meanings they might have.

Seven years ago, Carolina had recently finished with her art studies in Colombia, and was beginning to venture into what was then "the "wild west", a new frontier of art practice that skirted between the production of relational art, and a newly emerging notion of socially-engaged aesthetics.

Seven years ago, I was one year into writing a book that I would later title: *What We Want is Free: Generosity and Exchange in Recent Art*. I remember hearing about her project when it began, back in Vienna, with Carolina bartering massages, typing services and Spanish lessons for food, drink and clothing.

I had been tipped off by a mutual friend that Carolina, and the related activities of her collaborative group, *Collectivo Cambalache*, were exactly the sort of practice-based experiments in public space that I was interested in. I made contact with her through the website, and offered to trade her some pillows by mail. By the time we actually connected in person, 6 months later, she no longer needed the pillows. Instead, we were able swap a few ideas, and I gathered enough basic information about "daytoday" to include it in the book.

In writing about the daytoday project, I stated that "the project, which is ongoing and will continue indefinitely after the gallery show ends, acts as a lens and laboratory for the explorations of different economies which can exist on an interpersonal scale." The context that the book provided was, of course, very much centered on the world of art and its contemporary practice. As such, the economies that Carolina's "laboratory" experimented upon were very much intertwined with the sorts of economies that are "normally" encountered within the world of art and galleries, where works are bought and sold. If there are gifts or trades, they come in the form of donations and tax-breaks. To have an artist burrowed within a gallery, trading rather than selling, seemed to function as an experiment about alternative ideas of creative production, of what artists can do with their time, and what galleries can gain by supporting different modes of practice.





***Van and van interior.  
Daytoday, Vienna 2002.***

Seven years later, it is clear that the scope of Carolina's project is much larger in both scale and ambition. Her decision to move the project entirely to "the non-artistic realm" confirms this and I suspect that it was never her ambition to create a lasting space in art history wherein social barter experiments could become standard forms of art practice. Her decision to work as an artist over the last decade was more determined by a clear sense of the freedom it would grant her, the freedom to make things happen in the world, things that she wanted to see for real.

Indeed, the same thing could be said for the projects made by many of the artists I wrote about at the time (and many others beyond). These artists were, by and large, not working with such forms of social practice simply to consolidate new stylistic approaches or to advance formal arguments. They worked in the space of artistic practice as it offered a wide field for experimentation, one that also values symbolic thinking, errant creation and sidereal vision. As artists, it naturally followed that such projects that they created could function as works of art, but within the social and public spaces where they were situated, this was not their most important character-

istic. By offering real exchanges around a specific, localized community, they became larger acts.

When I first was writing about these sorts of projects, I didn't realize how much they sit on an edge- existing both as works in a world of art and acts in a world of acts. The world of art is largely circumscribed, announced over the internet, moved from gallery to museum to art fair to biennial, and all of this display and movement is channelled through CV's and magazines. The world of acts is another realm altogether, one that can never be quantified with any certainty, never charted beyond the specific instances of our encounters with it.

Seven years on, Carolina has made the decision to move into this world of acts all together. The freedom to experiment, and to make models and sketch possibilities, has given itself over to a more specific task, a real-time, communal barter network. I hope that it will permeate the lives of its participants at such a level that permits them to live in another realm of exchange, one as unlike the world we have been given.

Seven years on, it is easier to see that many of these artists' experiments with alternative economies, gifts and interventions into capital relations, were actually tied into a much larger history. It is one that the whole world has been living through since the end of the cold war, when one form of economic relations "won", and about the new (and old) forms of social economies that would rise up as alternatives, to challenge its grip on our future. It might be difficult to leave this realm for another one, but we can see it on clear days.

**Ted Purves, September 2009,  
Oakland, CA.**



***La Niña's interior before customizing.  
NYC, 2006.***



***La Cholota.  
Los Angeles, 2009.***



***La Niña.  
New York, 2006.***

## SEVEN YEARS OF CHAOS.

**CAROLINA CAYCEDO**

*"At this moment the question remains; the struggle continues. What do artists want – a Lotto-like chance at making a fortune in a restricted market, with unbridled opportunities for a few winners, or a broad network of support for a larger number of artists working with limited to modest means?"*

*Thomas Lawson (1)*

The beginning and the ending of my project Daytoday have been marked by two major economic crises. From the end of 2001 through the beginning of 2002, Argentina suffered from the culmination of the country's financial decadence that started in 1998. Suddenly there was no cash flow. Argentines had to resort to all kinds of imaginative strategies to make their "day to day" possible. A strong national barter network (based on local and community nodes) sprouted. This showed the rest of the world that grassroots collaborative efforts can generate autonomous solutions that benefit and dignify an entire population. Around 12,000,000 Argentines were part of 6,000 barter nodes by the end of 2002!

During 2008 and through 2009, the entire globe has felt the worst economic recession in decades. The president of Argentina, Cristina Fernandez, called the recession the "Jazz Effect", named for its origins in the burst of the United States' subprime lending bubble. Communities worldwide that have been practicing alternative economy strategies (local currencies, time banking, free markets, community owned housing and trading networks) attain significance within this crisis. However the majority of humanity still depends on a market model that doesn't give a penny for individuals.

Who was most affected by these crises? Middle and lower class -- count me in, please. We are all still coping with the effects of the present collapse. Artists and art laborers who are not market savvy (like me) are juggling with the cuts of resources. I believe a lot of us see opportunities in the mishap of the economy: opportunities for reevaluating needs, discourses, methodologies, strategies and alternatives.

It is in this context, and after a five week intervention in Los Angeles last July, that I have decided to put an end to the Daytoday project. I believe that, probably more than ever, the art realm needs projects like these that intertwine economic, political, social and aesthetics' aspects. Art is a cultural sphere from which marginal strategies for inhabiting this world can be discussed and even attempted. But as an artist, one has to be aware of the limits of a proposal and the dangers of formulaic intervention. In his essay, "Vernissage", Hakim Bey puts it like this: "To heal, one first destroys – and political art which fails to destroy the target of its laughter ends by strengthening the very forces it sought to attack." I'll put it like this: Daytoday was like a soda pop that I shook and shook for the last seven years. Every time I shook it, some of the bubbles would pour out of the art context bottle onto the social strata of a determined city, affecting different individuals as well as my own life course. Well, the soda pop art container is empty now and all the bubbles have been split. No use in shaking an empty bottle, is there?

This doesn't mean that barter is over for me. Oh no. Barter is part of me, and the swap boat has enabled a rich and satisfying navigation through early adulthood. But it was in Los Angeles that I was inspired by the strong network of communities, non-profits, collectives, activists, artists and individuals working in support of autonomy and sustainability. I understood that my swapping efforts could shift from a person-to-person exchange that was coming from and inserted in an artistic framework toward a communal exchange that may help build up and tighten community bonds in my own locality.

I recently found out that here in Puerto Rico, other individuals with similar concerns have been organizing. Two years ago, several people started the Red de Trueque Borinquen (Borinquen Barter Network). This network is mostly based on the Argentinean model of nodes, in which "prosumers" produce for themselves and for others -- without charging or receiving goods and services in exchange. A prosumer is an evolved form that synthesizes the producer-consumer division into a single person. I think all this is great for Puerto Rico, where rampant consuming is part of the colonial cause and effect. Boricuas in return, and without much political intent but instead as a means of survival, have a huge "under the table" economy, where cash is moved to and fro without state or federal taxation. I feel that in Puerto Rico a Time Bank community (2), together with the prosumer barter network, would be successful in complementing this "submerged" economy. So, after more than a decade of swapping, I am ready to help build up this sidewalk, or at least promote it before my drifting habits take me somewhere else.



**Red de Trueque Borikén Logo.**

## FROM OBJECT TO SUBJECT

Doris Lessing writes at the end of *The Marriages Between Zones Three, Four and Five*:

*"There was a lightness, a freshness, and an enquiry and a remaking and an inspiration where there had been only stagnation.*

*And closed frontiers.*

*For this is how we all see it now.*

*The movement is not all one way -- not by any means."*

During the last twelve years (3), I have been swapping and bartering objects, services and knowledge. This gesture of swapping and barter was born from a three-way liaison between social and public aesthetic practices, ideals of autonomy and an intuitive interest in alternative and gift economies. Both the Street Museum and Daytoday projects allowed me to visit and learn about different cities and to interact with the most incredible array of people. Places and individuals became layers of experience and knowledge that construe my swapping baggage. But my baggage is not only made out of what I gave and what I obtained. It is mostly heavy with the unique situations that we constructed together with other swapping enthusiasts. With some people, this "complementing" situation based on

trust would be a once in a lifetime, or even a once upon a time. But with others, it is the foundation for a longer interaction.

I consider all these people I exchanged with, and with whom relationships developed post our initial swap, allies in space and time. These relations to my allies perpetuate the intention of immediacy, and elongate the primal swap into a myriad of possibilities and realities. I like to compare it to the hxaro gift exchange, practiced by the !Kung people in southern Africa. This system is primarily about social relations and the goods themselves are of secondary importance.

***Adrian, Pilar and me  
the day we met.  
LA, 2009***



Basically hxaro is a delayed form of nonequivalent exchange: I give you something to-day, and you give me something in return much later, when you find an object that you know may please me. Once you exchange with someone you are bonded, and you pass the years together exchanging gifts. Any two people, regardless of age or sex, may do hxaro. Each item in the !Kung material culture may be put into hxaro, and you can pass on something that you received through hxaro to someone else. This way the most valued or useful goods are always in circulation, and potentially every one can enjoy them for a period of time at some point. The delayed aspect of the exchange is crucial to the !Kung. One person or another is always waiting to see what comes back.

What Daytoday basically proposes is that we rethink the way we value things and situations. How can we value something based upon a set of circumstances like memory, love or attraction, nutrition, ideology, personal preferences, spiritual significance amongst others, instead of valuing things for their monetary value, or the time we spent with them. It's this shift in the way we value things that I ultimately ask people to share with me. While I am very interested in understanding how others react to this proposition, I must confess that Daytoday was mostly about me. It was a continual personal testing site. How do I relate to strangers? How do I move in a new city? How do I feel about this or that situation or exchange? Do I want to take a position? Do my emotions affect my social skills? How am I going to engage with the public?

## **COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES**

In every city I devised different strategies that would allow interaction. The van was a constant in all the cities, as it allowed mobility and also provided an intimate space where I could host and receive people. It was my mobile living room, our magic carpet, and



my hideout when I was exhausted. The other constants would be the interactive website, where people could propose a barter, as well as flyers and posters around the city.

In Vienna, Daytoday was launched with an outdoor party in the back garden of the Secession building. A lot of passer-bys got news of the project because of the party. Mostly it worked by word of mouth. People who exchanged would refer me to friends and family and so the swapping kept rolling. Also, an online computer with direct access to the webpage was installed in the bookstore. This way I lived in Vienna for three weeks without using money.

In New York, a table with an online computer was installed in the lobby of the Whitney Museum. Visitors could access the webpage without paying (as museum visitors only need to pay for a ticket once they pass the lobby to go into the exhibition spaces). A vintage-looking red telephone was also installed beside the computer. This red phone was a direct line to my cell phone. There was no dialing disc and as soon as you lifted the handset, you would be calling me. I received an average of twenty calls a day. When the museum had free entrance, I was called around fifty times!!!! Beside the table was a small, colorful chalkboard inviting people to use the computer and the phone, with some examples of the possible barters. A lot of people missed the table, because of its location. I was lucky that it wasn't more visible. I can't imagine coping with a higher calling average!

In North Adams, Massachusetts, I merged with the Trading Post, a project by Daniel Pineda. There we crashed different outdoor spaces in the small town, like the public library and the MassMoca museum's parking lots. It was summer and we looked for areas with a lot of human traffic. We also hosted a barter space at the Contemporary Artists Center, where we were both in residence.

In San José, Costa Rica, I was interviewed on the radio as soon as I arrived. A lot of people heard the program, and contacted me afterwards. It was only a week, but it was very intense. At the end, I decided not to take any photos or document the barter in any way. There is no trace of the San José exchanges, except for the objects and memories I retain, and those retained by the inhabitants there.



***Amy unloading her stuff from La Niña. NYC, 2006. In return of transportation she gave me a camera, clothes, travelling cups and dishes and animal plastic toys for Una.***

In Berlin, I edited a video that was displayed in a window shop gallery called SOX 36. The video offered my home in Puerto Rico for a month in summer while I was away, in exchange for a used laptop, or HD video camera. This offer comes from a personal conviction that all private property should be available to anyone if empty but also from an intimate desire of having someone occupying my space and kind of stepping into my shoes. The trade never actually took place, however, people all over the globe inquiring about the possibility contacted me.

In Los Angeles, we didn't build a proper webpage, but instead took advantage of Internet social networks and blogs like Wordpress, Facebook and Twitter, creating pages that were interconnected and constantly updated. We also relied upon the rich email list of the gallery, and its huge network of regular visitors, fans, collaborators and friends. I was also reviewed on a couple of local blogs. With the van, I crashed some exhibition openings, and a popular cumbia night called "Mas Exitos".

Every single person I encountered in these diverse cities gave me their unique insight on the urban layout, architecture, private and social gathering spaces and codes of their territory. Daytoday became a strategy for learning about a city through the eyes of insiders. Routes, gardens, living rooms, swimming pools, parks, restaurants, murals, bars, plazas, monuments, ruins, theaters, stairwells ... places and things off the beaten path that I would have never visited or attempted if it weren't for these encounters.

## **FAQ**

Did I ever get in trouble? No, fortunately I am a woman. A woman with acute intuition, and since I grew up in the tough streets of Bogotenaz (4), I know how to dodge myself out of uncomfortable situations. And I did have to dodge out a couple of times, but I never really felt threatened.

Did I turn down barter proposals? Yes. At the beginning of the project, I would say yes to everything and get used a lot. But then I sharpened my negotiation abilities and would turn down proposals and people that didn't interest me.

The best barter I did? What I learned and obtained from different individuals through barter, or post-barter, is invaluable and illogical to compare or look for the best. However, I want to mention taking care of a two-year-old baby in New York. I enjoyed so much the trust deposited in me, as a stranger, by her parents. It was very special.

The weirdest barter I did? Follow someone for a week, in exchange for a couple of exquisite bottles of wine. The requester asked me to follow his brother's fiancé previous to their marriage. It was like penetrating this woman's privacy without her asking. I felt close to her, but she didn't know. After the years, I ask myself if they were just testing me. Was it all a setup?

How did barter work within an art institution? I used the institution as a key to open doors. It would be my credibility card. But seldom exchanges took place in the museum or gallery. We would meet in other public spaces or privately.



***I took care of Sinclair for a couple of hours and in return her mummy, Liesl, made a pair of pants for Una. NYC, 2006***

### **Continuation FAQ**

Do I have a bank account? Yes, and I own a debit MasterCard.

What have I achieved after seven years of chaos? The ability to trust, immense confidence in my own social skills, no fear of zero cash flow, a string of allies dotted around the globe, and, overall, hope.

Isabela, September 2009.

### **NOTES:**

(1) Lawson, Thomas. Attempting Community. Published in the catalog Cultural Economies: Histories from the Alternative Arts Movement., NYC. The Drawing Center, 1996.

(2) For more information about Time Banking, please refer to the Echo Park Time Bank interview in page 31.

(3) Though Daytoday started in 2002, my praxis of barter started collectively with Cam-balache Collective and the Street Museum in Bogota, back in 1997.

(4) Local slang for Bogotá: Bogo-tenacious.

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***Gifford, Asma, Carolina and Neri.  
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***Interior view of La Niña.  
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***Interior view of La Cholota with Thompson Guide.***

***LA, 2009.***

***Photo by Vincent Ramos.***



## NOTES