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## Seth Siegelaub and the Commerce of Thoughts

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*I am currently looking for ways to get some rather curious books to you that were sent to me from Holland. The commerce of thoughts is somewhat interrupted in France. It is even said that it is forbidden to send ideas from Lyon to Paris. The manufactures of the human mind are seized like forbidden fabrics.*

Voltaire, Letter to Jean-Baptiste-Jacques Élie de Beaumont,  
13 January 1765<sup>1</sup>

Seth Siegelaub's manifold activities – redefining the exhibition catalogue, running a publishing house, selling rare books, building libraries, compiling bibliographies, putting databases online – are closely linked to books and the rationale that underpins them. Similarly, his relationship to ideas passes through books, from which he acquires all his knowledge. At the beginning of the sixties, when he was in his early twenties, he discovered and explored, page by page, the art of the twentieth century in New York's public libraries, notably the open-shelf Donnell Library on 53rd Street, opposite MOMA.<sup>2</sup> His later work with conceptual artists derives directly from this experience and the acknowledgement of the importance of books in the perception and dissemination of art.<sup>3</sup>

In an interview published in 2004 as an appendix to Jonathan Monk's artist book *Cover Version*, Siegelaub evokes his thousands of books on the history of textiles:

[...] when I was actively working on the subject, I purchased one book per day, i.e. 365 books per year starting in the mid-1980s, and now the library is around 6,300 books from 1470 through 2002. You can work it out, it must almost be a book a day including Sundays and bank holidays. When I was young I must have thought that 'A book a day keeps the doctor away' instead of the proverbial 'apple a day'. But I must say I also really like buying books; most arrive by post and it is like getting a Christmas present everyday.<sup>4</sup>

Here, the logic of numbers meets the logic of collecting. But something to do with sharing transcends this slightly extravagant statistical survey. If Siegelaub receives books as 'presents', it is with the aim of putting them back into circulation: they constitute a research library, feed into a bibliography and a database, and serve to document a collection of ancient textiles. Researching, selecting, buying, annotating, citing, organising, translating, editing, amending,

printing, distributing, selling, stocktaking, locating, consulting, giving or even photocopying are essential stages. By facilitating readers' access to books through his publishing activity, Siegelau publicly promotes ideas. Following this hypothesis, his work, in all its continuity, appears like a vast and complex intellectual commerce that takes as its model the economy of books.<sup>5</sup>

### *Books*

After leaving the art world in 1972, Siegelau conducted two extensive bibliographic research projects, both of which organised according to the same economy: a research centre, a library, a bibliography and published books. In 1973, pursuing his interest in communication and ideology, he founded the International Mass Media Research Center (IMMRC), which comprised a library of 3,000 documents, a bibliography with 825 entries entitled *Marxism and the Mass Media. Towards a Basic Bibliography* that was published in various issues between 1972 and 1989<sup>6</sup>, and eleven published books. In 1986, based on his research on textiles, he launched the Center for Social Research on Old Textiles (CRSOT), which today encompasses a library of 7,250 books, a bibliography with 9,225 entries entitled *Bibliographica Textilia Historiae. Towards a General Bibliography on the History of Textiles Based on the Library and Archives of the Center for Social Research on Old Textiles* (published as a book<sup>7</sup> in 1997 and an online database in 2010), a facsimile reprint of a historic book on textiles<sup>8</sup>, and a collection of 650 textiles and headdresses. His latest project, an online dictionary started in 2000, is concerned with theories of time and causality in physics. An institutional framework brings together his various projects: the publishing house International General (IG), founded in 1970, and the Stichting Egress Foundation, founded in 2000 and based in Amsterdam. These two projects are entirely and exclusively run by Siegelau, and are 'without walls', existing only through their respective websites.<sup>9</sup> All these dazzling acronyms refer to the work of one man. For Siegelau, establishing himself as a research centre is a way of undermining the figure of the author and endorsing the role of a compiler or, more generally, an organiser – a mediating function he discussed as early as 1969 in an interview with artist Patricia Norvell: 'I'm [...] rather interested in the idea of creating, [...] of being a point through which a lot of information goes in and out of, in a way.'<sup>10</sup>

The first stage of this far-reaching enterprise consists of reuniting what has been dispersed. The *Bibliographica Textilia Historiae*, for instance, is a sum of knowledge. A modern classic, it takes the shape of a learned publication while also betraying the author's taste for books as objects, and his

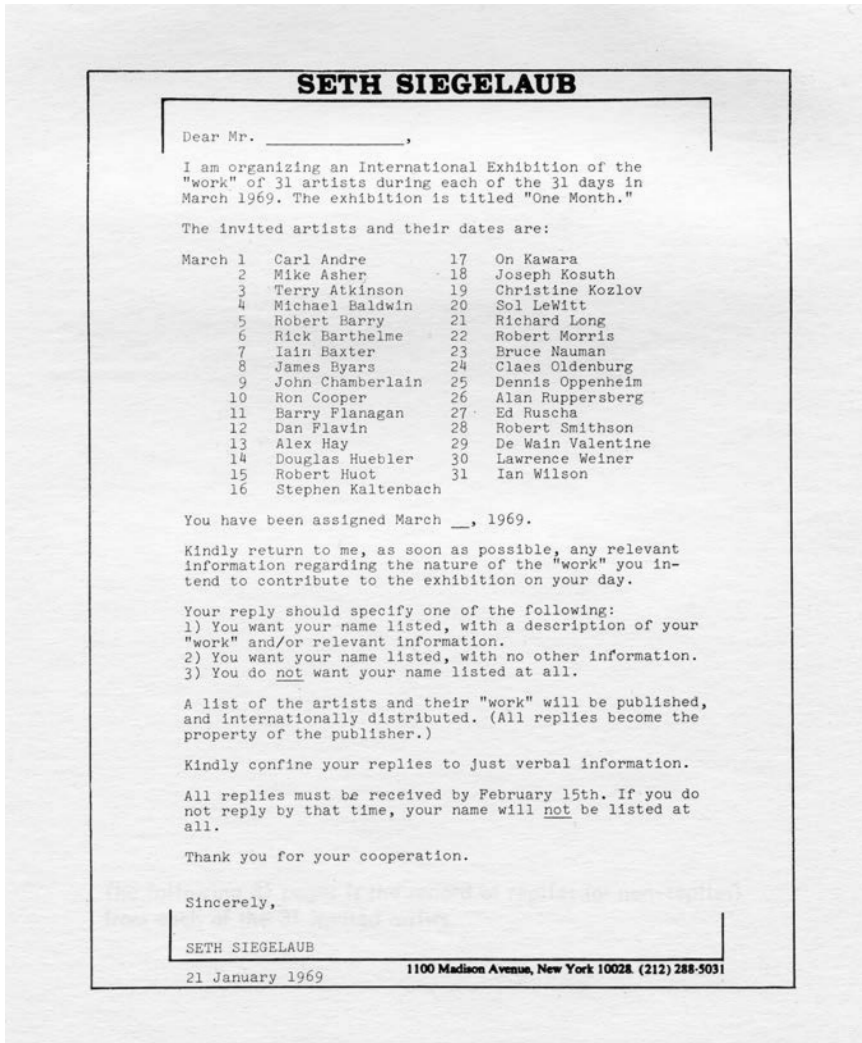
attention to layout and typography. The Latinised title asserts its erudition, before we find out that it makes no sense. Library methodologies make it possible to survey a virtually unlimited number of books, assess their contents and address a given subject critically. In the same way, the map is a possible representation of these networks as a geographic depiction of the production and dissemination of ideas, art and books. Maps are found on the cover of different books published by Siegelau: a map of the United States on Douglas Huebler's catalogue-exhibition in 1968, a world map on the catalogue-exhibition *July, August, September 1969/Juillet, Août, Septembre 1969/Juli, August, September 1969*, the outlines of the American continent forming the face of Donald Duck on Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart's essay *How to Read Donald Duck. Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic* in 1975, the outlines of Portugal and the African continent on two special issues of the bibliography *Marxism and the Mass Media* planned for publication in 1976, and the shores of the Mediterranean that can be made out in the traces of wear on a sixteenth-century velvet on the *Bibliographica Textilia Historiae*.<sup>11</sup> These images illustrate the condition of existence of bibliographical continents: while the map directs the knowledge, it gives only a fragmentary representation of the contents emerging on the surface of oceans yet to be explored. The research, then, tries to embrace something that is essentially open-ended and never ceases to grow. The inventory numbers are infinite; *et cætera* induces a sense of vertigo. Libraries and bibliographies as comprehensive, stable and definitive forms are impossible to attain.

As the volume of data increases, questions relating to the processes of organisation become crucial if access, research and consultation are to be guaranteed. The second stage in the economy of books therefore concerns the management of stock. Lists and bibliographies are two central systems of accumulation and classification in Siegelau's projects. More generally, this 'bookkeeping' aspect manifests itself in the neatly kept archives of his commerce – the collection of address books, letters, photographs, administrative documents, accounts, working notes, scale models of projects and various papers and lists.<sup>12</sup> It is not surprising that Siegelau, when talking about the role of textiles in history, mentions the inventories of the fourteenth-century businessman and great merchant draper Francesco di Marco Datini, who ensured that all his ledgers were preserved after his death.<sup>13</sup>

### *Lists*

From 1964 to 1971, following his growing awareness of the importance of context in art, Siegelau reconsiders the systems through which artworks

are disseminated by exploring the potentially infinite variations between exhibitions, books and art. The catalogue becomes the exhibition, and no longer refers to anything beyond itself. In the catalogues he *organises*, and in the exhibitions he *publishes*, the list becomes synonymous with the display of works. For instance, for the catalogue-exhibition *March 1969*, also known as *One Month*, he invites 31 artists to create one work each for the day of the month that has been assigned to them.



Based on the characteristics of books, the organising principle of this project combines two systems well known by readers: the nomenclature of names in alphabetical order and the numerical order of the Gregorian

calendar. In terms of accessibility, the list allows for simple consultation, easy reading and efficient presentation. Siegelaub's lists converge with a more general interest in forms and files evidenced in the formats used by many conceptual artists: Robert Morris's card files, Mel Bochner's ring binders, Ed Ruscha's photographic inventories, Robert Barry's lists, On Kawara's 'countdowns', and Art & Language's indexes. The works resulting from this approach are generally characterised by serial formats, while providing methodically classified information. Simultaneously a geographer, historiographer and bibliographer, Siegelaub keeps an inventory of inventories, and as such, his contribution to Conceptual Art should be seen in the light of his interest in taxonomy.

In the case of *March 1969*, all he needs to do is to follow his predefined protocol and, according to the list<sup>14</sup>, insert the artists' works into the pages of the catalogue, which takes the form of a calendar. In some instances, where the artist didn't reply or didn't want to take part, a page is left blank that signals the artist's presence by its materiality. These catalogue-exhibitions therefore record the bookkeeping operations related to the distribution of art. Putting art into books is to initiate a new form of dialogue with the artist, a new way of mediating the work, a new approach to commerce.

From one project to the next, the number of artists grows: 'My real interest in art is the artist, the social dimension of art marketing. [...] So in my personal story there is a very clear trajectory moving from the specific artists I was involved with to a much more general socio-political kind of concern, especially in the area of culture in general.'<sup>15</sup> In his last project, *The Context of Art/The Art of Context*, implemented in 1990 in collaboration with Marion and Roswitha Fricke, the table of contents lists the names of 115 artists – roughly the number of participants in a biennale.<sup>16</sup> The list seems to derive from a sociological field research: chosen because they have participated in at least one of five major exhibitions in 1969, the artists are asked to answer three questions on the time after the sixties. The arbitrariness of the alphabetical classification undermines any notion of hierarchy. It is left to readers to browse the publication and decide where to start.

Siegelaub also writes another kind of list, which is more of a mixed bag. In 1991, for instance, as part of a polemic with Benjamin Buchloh on the history of Conceptual Art<sup>17</sup>, he drafted a plethoric list that occupied an entire page of *October* magazine:

As one can see, I have not even begun to question Buchloh's subjective choice of specific facts and their ordering in time and space; this will

have to wait for a more thorough and serious study of ‘Conceptual Art’ and its relation to its historical moment. For our moment, I will limit myself to a random list of some actors ‘missing in action’ – dematerialized? – who contributed, in one way or another, to the formation of the art historical moment called, for lack of a better term, ‘Conceptual Art’: Carl Andre, John Baldessari, Robert Rauschenberg, Jack and Nell Wendler, Hollis Frampton, John Chamberlain, Ron Wolfson, Harald Szeemann, VHSI, Jean-Luc Godard, Edward Kienholz, Lucy Lippard, Jan Dibbets, Prague 1968, Eugene Goossen [sic], Art & Project, Dennis Oppenheim, ‘Art and Industry’, Gian Enzo Sperone, Christo, Wim Beeren, Richard Serra, Art Workers [sic] Coalition, Robert Smithson, Walter [sic] König, *Avalanche*, Vito Acconci, Germano Celant, Robert Irwin, Jennifer Licht, Lotta Continua, Stanley and Elyse Grinstein, Joseph Beuys, Ray Dirks, Yvonne Rainer, Prospect, Niele Toroni, Donald Burgoyne, ‘Process Art’, Woodstock, Giuseppe Panza, Peter [sic] Townsend, ‘Art of the Real’, Willoughby [sic] Sharp, Keith Arnatt, Michel Claura, Konrad Fischer, May ’68, Frederick Barthelme, Jack Burnham, Peter Downsborough, Barry Flanagan, Christine Kozlov, Pulsa, Hamish Fulton, Guerrilla Art Action Group, Stanley Broun, John Chandler, Enno Develing, N.E. Things Co., the Black Panthers, David Askevold, Hanne Darboven, Richard Long, Terry Fox, ‘Land art [sic]’, Billy Kluver, Johannes Cladders, Michael Asher, Gilbert & George, Piero Gilardi, Peter Hutchinson, Michael Harvey, Al Hansen, ‘Antiform’, Luis Camnitzer, Michael Heizer, David Lamelas, Allen [sic] Kaprow, Ger Van [sic] Elk, Stephen Kaltenbach, Artist’s [sic] Rights Movement, the Rosario Group, Bruce McLean, Mario Merz, Ursula Meyer, Walter de Maria, Barry Le Va, Roelof Louw, Adrian Piper, Gerry Schum, Les Levine, Franz Erhard Walther, The [sic] Bay of Pigs, Ian Wilson, Klaus Rinke, Keith Sonnier, William Wiley, Michael Snow, ‘Video Art’, William Wegman, John Gibson, Tony Shafrazi, James Lee Byars, Abbie Hoffman, Sigmar Polke, Herman Daled, the U.S. Servicemen’s Fund, Tommaso [sic] Trini, Eugenia Butler, Gene Beery, Lee Lozano, John Perrault, Marjorie Strider, Alan [sic] Ruppertsberg, John Latham, Gene Swenson, Kent State, the [sic] Beatles, and, lest we forget, the Vietnam War.<sup>18</sup>

Contrary to a genealogy or hit parade, this random enumeration of 121 items unsystematically juxtaposes the names of well-known artists from the time alongside other cultural agents. It breaks open the traditional notion of lists as an ordering or classifying device. While Siegelaub is often presented as the

‘impresario’ of four trendy artists – Robert Barry, Douglas Huebler, Joseph Kosuth and Lawrence Weiner – he uses this opportunity to include *the whole world*. In contrast with Buchloh’s ‘formalistic and idealistic’<sup>19</sup> analysis, he expresses his vision of Conceptual Art as ‘a real mess, a *pot-pourri*, a *foutoir*, [...] all in the same room, sharing a sort of *air du temps*, a certain *esprit*, a certain questioning, a sort of theme for the art-making process’.<sup>20</sup> Some conspicuous intruders – political events, bands, artistic movements – give this list the complexity that is indicative of a moment in history.

### *Bibliographies*

Siegelaub’s progressive interest in books led to him turning his attention to the bibliography as an instrument of knowledge and an applied method. Between 1970 and 1973, he began research on two projects, a left-wing newspaper and a news agency, which never took off. Exploration of this new field became the project, i.e. collecting books and ephemeral documents on communication and its relationships with ideology.

Throughout Siegelaub’s statements we find the leitmotifs of the ideal bibliographer: an inquisitive erudite, he works in isolation, stresses that he benefits from the research that others before him have undertaken, is obsessed with meticulousness – which absorbs him in a never-ending process of research aiming for the most comprehensive result possible – and apologises to his readers for his errors, asking that they help him fill the gaps. There are two sides to this activity: he applies rules in order to rigorously establish the identity of publications, and also has the capacity to unearth documents and relate them to each other. His bibliographical approach does not aim to be the science of the organisation of libraries, rather the study of the transmission of ideas through print as part of a social history of communication. In order to enhance and attempt the completion of the IMMRC’s bibliography, Siegelaub contacts the numerous international organisations working in this field. The research form, which he sends out, is indicative of his methods of investigation and the way in which he builds his networks, page for page:

[...] the nature of this research requires the continual exchange of material and information from many people from different countries, areas of work and specializations, if it is to reflect the past and the present reality of communications throughout the world. Principally, materials are received through exchanges, gifts, or loans to our library. But this is not always possible, and the [...] RESEARCH FORM has been developed to



facilitate the flow of bibliographic information. This form is a ‘master’ ‘original’, and can be reproduced as needed: one copy per bibliographic item. Once filled out, it provides us with the basic data needed to index and organize the information for use by other researchers.<sup>21</sup>

How, then, does he organise the ‘flow’ of the bibliographic commerce? By categorising the books according to specific fields<sup>22</sup> he reflects the ways in which they can be identified and their materiality understood. In addition to this inventory work recording the specifications and the physical state of the books, Siegelau has always tried to comment on their content<sup>23</sup>. In order to allow readers to navigate in this ocean of references, he has also produced, for each bibliography, a general taxonomy of themes besides the index of inventory numbers, authors or countries. Given the sheer quantity of books, Siegelau started to use computers and databases, which offered solutions for these indexing systems with their intricate ramifications.

Although the contemporary bibliographer inherits a general method of inventory and classification, the questions relative to his organisation are still present in the practice and manifest themselves in the introductions of the bibliographies. When speaking about the *Bibliographica Textilia Historiæ*, Siegelau points out:

Despite all these important reference works, to our knowledge, there is no single bibliographic reference source – whether published, unpublished, library file cards, or electronic database – which attempts to weave together on one bibliographic loom, so to speak, the entire ‘fabric’ of the literature of the history of textiles: the history of fibers and cloth, such as wool, cotton, linen, etc., as well as the history of fine, luxury, decorative textiles, such as silk; the fine art of weaving as an industry and object of trade; the technology of textiles as well as its aesthetic, ‘fine art’ aspects; ie, the social-economic-practical aspects along with the artistic, decorative and beautiful aspects, which is precisely the purpose of the Center for Social Research on Old Textiles and its *Bibliographica Textilia Historiæ*.<sup>24</sup>

If we take this remark seriously, we see that the bibliography and the loom are two systems that allow the concatenation of individual elements. Applied in one work after the other, page after page, the rules of bibliographic inventory, like the weaving of threads, constitute lists as long as a roll of cloth. In his book *The Domestication of the Savage Mind*, anthropologist Jack Goody looks at the notion of intellectual technology applied to writing and

proposes a definition of the list based on its graphic representation: ‘The list relies on discontinuity rather than continuity; it depends on physical placement, on location; it can be read in different directions, both sideways and downwards, up and down, as well as left and right; it has a clear-cut beginning and a precise end, that is, a boundary, an edge, like a piece of cloth.’<sup>25</sup>

It therefore appears that the problem of organisation is similar to the problem we find in weaving. This ancient and recurrent image for the *texture* of order is also found in two systems of classification: the list and the diagram. Ravius Textor (ca. 1480–1524) received his name because of his dexterity in ‘butting’ fragments, i.e. compiling and juxtaposing hundreds of quotations borrowed from ancient writers. Slowly, the logical organisation of texts became a new requirement: how to make the coherence of ideas emerge from the disorder of texts?<sup>26</sup> Humanist Pierre de la Ramée (1515–1572) speaks of dialectical operations as *textere historiam*, or ‘weaving history’: in order to classify separate elements in an index, he invented a system of diagrams which functioned by dichotomous divisions whereby each definition was split into two fundamental constituents, and so on.<sup>27</sup> Classifying and weaving means arranging, ordering and connecting by positioning an element and putting it into a relation with others so as to form an entity. This technical approach presents the act of thinking as work, a network of ideas, a configuration of warps and wefts of notional connections. The artisan, then, is the blueprint for this work.

‘*The manufactures of the human mind*’

What has captured Siegelauß’s attention in textiles besides their beauty is their central role in business: they interweave cultural and commercial contexts. In the *Bibliographica Textilia Historiæ*, the royal or governmental acts, statutes, laws and treaties on commerce inscribe the study of these objects in the flows of economic and political exchange. This aspect is what interested the bibliographer in Francisque-Michel’s *Recherches sur le commerce, la fabrication et l’usage des étoffes de soie, d’or et d’argent et autres tissus précieux en Occident, principalement en France, pendant le Moyen Âge* (1852/54), a book on the production, trade and use of textiles in medieval France, which he reedited in facsimile. The nineteenth century author collects and analyses the literary and narrative sources, as well as the inventories, ledgers, tariffs and regulations in order to estimate the value – both commercial and intrinsic – of textiles.

All his work meets and extends what Voltaire has termed ‘the manufactures of the human mind’ quoted at the beginning of this essay: to the

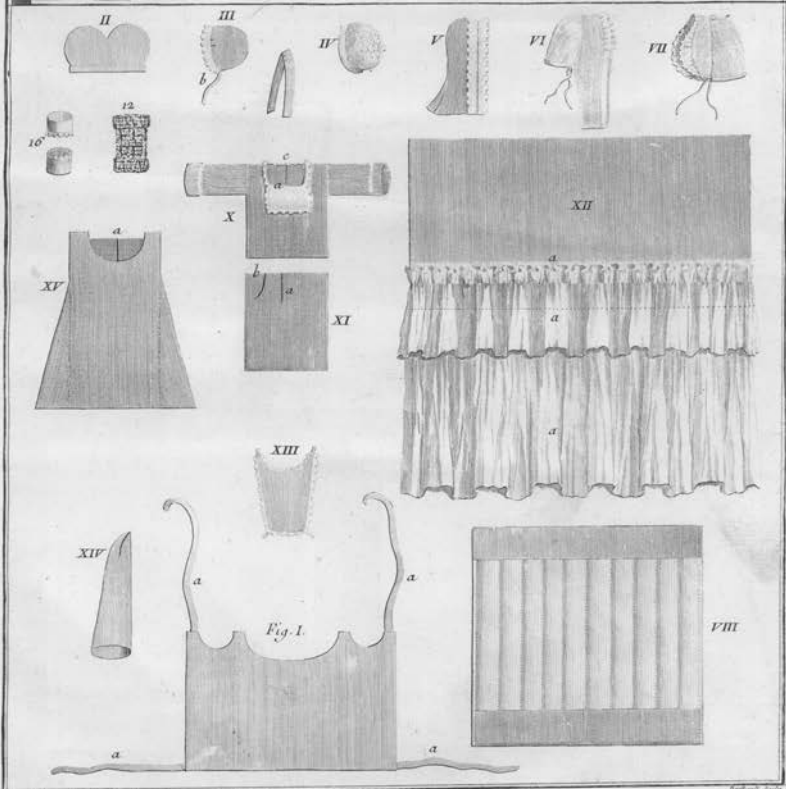
extent that the commerce of thoughts concerns the commerce of books and textiles alike. In the eighteenth century these two trades ran up against ideological censorship and laws governing imports, respectively, and in both areas, smuggling had become a major industry. Helping these works to be disseminated was equivalent to affirming the liberating qualities of exchange and trade against the absolutist institution, and to opening up the space of political thought. Tellingly, the Enlightenment stressed the necessity for open and universal access to books.

Thanks to his acute political awareness, Siegelaub has of course been attentive to the ideological conditions underpinning the presentation of art: the use of communication and the distribution of books. In relation to the challenges faced by Voltaire, he is running up against other barriers that impede the mobility of ideas: the freedom of political criticism. In ‘A Communication on Communication’, the preface to the first volume of *Communication and Class Struggle*, published in 1979, he notes:

[...] capitalism does what it can, systematically and organically, to minimize, marginalize, and deform the production and distribution, and thus consumption of left, critical and progressive theory in communication as elsewhere. [...] One reflection of the overall level of these antagonisms of our society, however, is precisely the degree of circulation of left and progressive theory and who, where, when, and on what level it is exchanged: by oral, written, printed and/or broadcast means. [...] One link in this circulation process, for example, is the bookstore, one of the primary means for the movement of published marxist, critical and progressive theory (in communication and elsewhere), of local, regional and international production.<sup>28</sup>

Book trading is undoubtedly a form of political militancy and is often seen as part of the intellectual origins of revolutions.<sup>29</sup> An editor, bookseller and librarian, Siegelaub always organises the distribution of books ‘in negotiation’ with the context. Books, although sometimes tucked away on shelves and in storage or burned in public rituals, are hard to ‘erase’ precisely because of their inherent mobility – the transition from the original, extended, revised, critical, erudite, illustrated, translated or bilingual edition to the posthumous reissue, paperback or coffee-table edition.

In 1969, the year Siegelaub organised nine catalogue-exhibitions, he mused on the fast, large-scale and simultaneous distribution of art through books: ‘People who have [art] galleries can show their object only in one place at a time. I am not limited. I can have my ideas in twenty different



Dessiné par De Garreau.

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places at once. Ideas are faster than tedious objects.’<sup>30</sup> Books appear to be the most adequate means to formulate a practice of exchange and a theory of economics. Conceptual works of art, on the other hand, are by no means as ‘dematerialised’ as is often claimed. Rather, they circulate in the form of paper, a traditional and fundamental material in the economy of books. By addressing the issue of the materiality of communication in its full complexity, the conceptual artists with whom Siegelauub worked undermine the traditional autonomy of the work of art and the rationale of the art market. In other words, the contention that the commerce of thoughts, by confronting artists with the materiality of the work, is akin to selling out becomes anachronistic if we admit that the conceptual work of art is essentially the sum of the interactions it prompts. Its circulation and dissemination is therefore a remarkable opening of the definitions of art.

These movements – bibliographic endeavour, distribution of art and sociability of the book – are commonly summed up by the beautiful word ‘commerce’. Above all, commerce is the exchange and the conversation by which objects and ideas are passed on from one person to another. The commerce of values, and its main vehicle – money – are merely particular forms of exchange. Touching upon the ambiguities of commerce, Siegelauub is sometimes assimilated with the archetypal figure of haggling – the carpet dealer. As a gallery owner, editor and librarian, he does indeed belong to this line of trade. But rather than seeing it a means to an end, he displaces and questions it through books and printed matter. In his essay *On the Commerce of Thinking*, philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy makes an enlightening remark on the role of libraries in the transactions of our intellectual life: ‘[...] the commerce of our thoughts, by means of which we are kept together, however loosely or badly that be, relies on the circulation of a currency whose incalculable unit is named “book”.’<sup>31</sup>

Siegelauub was once asked whether he left the art world without any regrets. A dealer who undermines trade as much as a bibliographer who undermines classification, he answered:

No, *je ne regrette rien*; it was an important part of my life. But it began to become too business-like and I never thought of it as a business; just something you believed in and fought for. Crazy concept, no?<sup>32</sup>

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*Translated from the French by Boris Kremer*

1. 'Je cherche actuellement les moyens de vous faire parvenir quelques livres assez curieux qu'on m'a envoyés de Hollande. Le commerce des pensées est un peu interrompu en France. On dit même qu'il n'est pas permis d'envoyer des idées de Lyon à Paris. On saisit les manufactures de l'esprit humain comme des étoffes défendues.' Voltaire, 'Lettre 866o. À Jean-Baptiste-Jacques Élie de Beaumont', in Theodore Besterman (ed.), *Voltaire. Correspondance VII. Janvier 1763–mars 1765*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1982), p. 1001.
2. Seth Siegelaub in conversation with the author, 19 October 2011, Amsterdam.
3. In 1969 he explains: 'For many years it has been well known that more people are aware of an artist's work through (1) the printed media or (2) conversation than by direct confrontation with the art itself. For painting and sculpture, where: the visual presence – color, scale, size, location – is important to the work, the photograph or verbalization of that work is a bastardization of the art. But when art concerns itself with things not germane to physical presence its intrinsic (communicative) value is not altered by its presentation in printed media.' Quoted in Charles Harrison, 'On Exhibitions and the World at Large. Seth Siegelaub in Conversation with Charles Harrison', *Studio International*, vol. 178, no. 917 (December 1969), p. 202.
4. Jonathan Monk, 'Conversation with Seth Siegelaub', in *Cover Version* (London: Book Works, 2004), p. 61.
5. It is interesting to note that Siegelaub's work as a producer of libraries and bibliographies has been the subject of few interviews and no analysis – particularly in light of the obvious links to his role in Conceptual Art in relation to methodology, distribution of ideas and political activism. The only monograph on Siegelaub was written by the US historian Alexander Alberro and focuses on the time between 1964 and 1971. Alexander Alberro, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2003).
6. International Mass Media Research Center (ed.), *Marxism and the Mass Media* (New York, Bagnolet: International General, 1972–1986).
7. Center for Social Research on Old Textiles and Seth Siegelaub (eds.), *Bibliographica Textilia Historie. Towards a General Bibliography on the History of Textiles Based on the Library and Archives of the Center for Social Research on Old Textiles* (New York: International General, 1997). [CSROT 5100].
8. Francisque-Michel, *Recherches sur le commerce, la fabrication et l'usage des étoffes de soie, d'or et d'argent et autres tissus précieux en Occident, principalement en France, pendant le Moyen Âge* (1852/54) (New York, Amsterdam: International General, 2001). [CSROT 5831].
9. <http://www.igeneral.org> and <http://egressfoundation.net>.
10. Patricia Norvell, 'Seth Siegelaub. April 17, 1969', in Alexander Alberro and Patricia Norvell (eds.), *Recording Conceptual Art. Early Interviews with Barry, Huebler, Kaltenbach, LeWitt, Morris, Oppenheim, Siegelaub, Smitson, Weiner by Patricia Norvell* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2001), p. 31.
11. Douglas Huebler (New York: Seth Siegelaub, 1968); Seth Siegelaub (ed.), *July, August, September 1969/ Juillet, Août, Septembre 1969/ Juli, August, September 1969* (New York: Seth Siegelaub, 1969); Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart, *How to Read Donald Duck. Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic* (New York: International General, 1975); preparatory documents for a special issue of *Marxism and the Mass Media* on Africa and the Middle East (Amsterdam: International Mass Media Research Center, International Institute for Social History, folder 78) and on Portugal (folder 88); Center for Social Research on Old Textiles and Seth Siegelaub (eds.), *op. cit.*
12. Siegelaub's main archives consist of the documents covering the years from 1962 to 1972, donated to MoMA in 2011, the IMMRC library, donated to and freely consultable at the International Institute for Social History (IISG) in Amsterdam, and the CSROT archives, owned by the Stichting Egress Foundation in Amsterdam.
13. Seth Siegelaub in conversation with the author, 20 October 2010, Amsterdam–Paris. In the *Bibliographica Textilia Historie*, he mentions Iris Origo's bestselling popular science book *The Merchant of Prato: Francesco di Marco Datini* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1957). [CSROT 984].
14. Note that the word 'listed' appears no less than four times in the letter he addresses to the artists.
15. Maria Eichhorn, 'Interview with Seth Siegelaub. 4 April 2005, Berlin', in Gerti Fietzek (ed.), *The Artist's Contract. Interviews with Carl Andre, Daniel Buren, Paula Cooper, Hans Haacke, Jenny Holzer, Adrian Piper, Robert Projansky, Robert Ryman, Seth Siegelaub, John Weber, Lawrence Weiner, Jackie Winsor* (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2009), p. 39–41.
16. The project *The Context of Art/ The Art of Context* was published, partially or integrally, in various formats. Marion Fricke, Roswitha Fricke and Seth Siegelaub (dir.), '69/96. Avant-gardes et fin de siècle. 75 artistes racontent leur parcours', *Artpress*, special issue no. 17 (1996); 'The Context of Art. The Art of Context', *Kunst & Museumjournaal*, vol. 7, no. 1/2/3 (1996); *The Context of Art. The Art of Context* (Trieste: Navado Press, 2004).
17. Benjamin Buchloh, 'De l'esthétique d'administration à la critique institutionnelle (aspects de l'art conceptuel, 1962–1969)', in *L'Art conceptuel, une perspective* (Paris: exh. cat., Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1990), republished in Benjamin Buchloh, 'Conceptual Art 1962–1969. From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions', *October*, no. 55 (Winter 1990), p. 105–53; Joseph Kosuth and Seth Siegelaub, 'Replies to Benjamin Buchloh on Conceptual Art', *October*, no. 57 (Summer 1991), p. 152–7; Benjamin Buchloh, 'Reply to Joseph Kosuth and Seth Siegelaub', *October*, no. 57 (Summer 1991), p. 158–61.
18. Joseph Kosuth and Seth Siegelaub, *op. cit.*, p. 157.
19. Joseph Kosuth and Seth Siegelaub, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

20. Sophie Richard, 'Conversation with Seth Siegelaub. Amsterdam 27 April 2005', in *Unconcealed. The International Network of Conceptual Artists 1967–77. Dealers, Exhibitions and Public Collections* (London: Ridinghouse, 2009), p. 467.
21. From a research form located at the Archives of the International Mass Media Research Center, International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam (folder 78).
22. For each book Siegelaub establishes the following fields: 'AUTHOR LAST NAME, First name. Title. Subtitle. Edition. Volumes. Place of Publication: Publisher, Date. [CSROT Number]. Volumes (with subtitles). "Series title" number. 1st edition or publication (if not the edition catalogued herein). Collation: Pages, Size (width × height; in cm). Our binding. Illustrations; Plates; Maps; Charts, Tables; etc. Special edition information. Annotation (What, Where and When; Illustrative matter). Other editions or directly related works. Author biographical information (first entry only). Our copy: specific characteristics of our copy, or if not our copy, the place and shelfmark of copy catalogued'. Seth Siegelaub, 'Notes Towards a Critical History of the Literature of Textiles', Center for Social Research on Old Textiles and Seth Siegelaub (eds.), p. 17.
23. Siegelaub regularly refers to the English historian and bibliographer Keppel Archibald Cameron Creswell (1879–1974), an expert on Islamic art, for his particular attention to annotations, which could sometimes extend over several pages. See the various volumes and editions of *A bibliography of the architecture, art and crafts of Islam*. [CSROT 1112, 1116, 2119].
24. Seth Siegelaub, 'Notes Towards a Critical History of the Literature of Textiles', *op. cit.*, p. 16.
25. Jack Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (Cambridge, London, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 81.
26. On the origins of bibliography, see Alfredo Serrai, *Storia della bibliografia. 1. Bibliografia e Cabala. Le enciclopedie rinascimentali 1* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1988) and *Storia della bibliografia. 11. Le enciclopedie rinascimentali 2. Bibliografi universali* (1992).
27. The author would like to thank Patricia Falguières for her precious historic guidance. See also Patricia Falguières, *Les Chambres des merveilles* (Paris: Bayard, 2003), p. 27–35.
28. Seth Siegelaub, 'A Communication on Communication', in Armand Mattelart and Seth Siegelaub (eds.), *Communication and Class Struggle. An Anthology in 2 Volumes. 1. Capitalism, Imperialism* (New York, Bagnolet: International General, 1979), p. 16.
29. It is remarkable to see that a revolution can engender a bibliographical project. Siegelaub visits Portugal in 1975, shortly after the Carnation Revolution, to collect material to be included in a special issue of *Marxism and the Mass Media* (never published).
30. Seth Siegelaub quoted by David Shirley, 'Impossible Art – What It Is', *Art in America*, vol. 57, no. 3 (May–June 1969), p. 39.
31. Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Commerce of Thinking. On Books and Bookstores*, translated from French by David Wills (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), p. 46.
32. Christophe Cherix, Phone interview with Seth Siegelaub. Geneva and Amsterdam. September 10, 1996', *3rd Artist Book International. Hotel Wassertum, Cologne, 15, 16, 17 November 1996* (Paris: Artist Book International, 1996), p. 19.