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Community Arts and Social Change: Contingent Political Assemblages

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This paper argues that social movement theory could benefit from a Deleuzian supplement for understanding local activity carried out among grassroots organizations. Discussion of social movements often begins with or assumes characteristics of small-scale organization, a recognized authority or spokespersons within such organization, and preconceived ends embodying win-lose scenarios in struggles framed against the state or capital. Given this frequent starting point, grassroots organizations can lose their specificity in terms of agency and goals. When considered apart from a social movement, grassroots organizations may too often be assessed as weak or anemic, or rendered invisible. For example, the efforts of a local Food Not Bombs to provide free nourishing and delicious meals made by and for the poor and their allies may not be considered sufficiently effective a challenge to end poverty. Yet, such grassroots organizations may neither at all or consistently perceive nor assess themselves against criteria of an effective social movement on a larger scale. For example, goals to end poverty, discrimination, or global warming, while overarching, are often not those that grassroots organizations involved in resistance measure themselves against at the level of daily experience even though they may understand their work to be part of a larger collective effort on the scale of the regional, national, or global. Instead, the goals of local grassroots organizations are often to provide security such as basic necessities, responses to discrimination, a more secure locality, reduction in pollution and more sustainable sources of food and energy production, i.e., direct action, as well as community, a place where people can enjoy the company of others and feel good with a sense of belonging. To hold an expectation that grassroots organizations effect social change on the scale of overarching social justice goals would be largely unfair especially given their weakened capacities since the mid-1990s. Within the current context of neoliberalism,[1] the capacities within grassroots organizations to launch assaults against the state for greater entitlements and recognition of the marginalized have diminished. A significant challenge for grassroots organizations, then, has been how to continue a transformative project under changed conditions of increasing need and lack. Under these conditions, there has been a shift in thinking among those working in some grassroots organizations away from institutions and institutionalization to focus on bodies, individually and in concert, to discover what sustains people and advances their empowerment. This entails the inclusion of the space of the body and spaces between bodies, that is, an intimate development of subject-formation within spaces that support ongoing critical self-understanding of material being and within broader spaces where power is imposed from without. The idea is that fostering critical and reflexive subjectivities holds enormous potential whose ends hold unknown promise.

This paper puts forward a theory of contingent political assemblages to fill a gap I have begun to identify between social movements and grassroots organizations. I will use examples of community arts organizations in Toronto and Peterborough to illustrate social and political interventions that while having affinity with social movements are sufficiently distinct in terms of their relationship with the state and the scale and character of their goals. Contingent political assemblages involve (re)territorialization and deterritorialization of physical spaces and perceptions, specifically the development of critical reflexive subjectivities contingently poised as a mode of resistance and construction of a more critically capacious experience of inclusive citizenship. These political assemblages are contingent in the intensity of (re)territorialization and deterritorialization undertaken. The development of critical reflexive subjectivities is a fluid process that evolves depending upon the activity and participants. As such, community arts organizations do not have rigid social and political objectives or projects entailing resistance against a specific actor (e.g. state) consciously created and steered by the community arts organizations themselves. Instead, the doing of community arts is largely the end. While this may at first give the impression that the objective of community arts is to make "nice art," the values embedded within community arts practice make community arts projects more clearly social and political interventions, although of a different kind than those more recognizably social movement driven. Unlike social movements whose actions are often in direct resistance to an oppressive aspect of the state, community arts organizations are inspired by social justice goals premised upon the development of critical and self-reflexive subjectivities and the fullest participation possible on the part of citizens especially within their local physical spaces. The latter implies a process of subject-formation often neglected or under-theorized in social movement theory but can be supplemented by a theory of contingent political assemblages.

There are three sections to this paper. First, I will briefly review how social movements were conceived in the 1970s and 1980s up to the present. Then, I will introduce some examples of community arts endeavor to demonstrate the need for re-conceiving social and political interventions that embody resistance to disempowering social and political forces. Third, I will present how I conceive of contingent political assemblages to help advance political science's understanding of political resistance among grassroots organizations in a time when the discipline has acknowledged a waning of social movements.

How social movements were conceived in the 1970s-early 1990s

The concept of new social movements appeared in sociology and political science in the late 1970s early 1980s. New social movements were understood as the antecedents of social movements of the 1960s, especially the student movement and the U.S. civil rights movement (Carroll 1992, Brettschneider 2002, Phillips 2002). Feminism, environmentalism, and the labor movements were the referents for these new social movements (Carroll 1992, 1997, Kriesi et. al. 1997, Magnusson 1990). By the late 1990s, new social movements were no longer "new." Social movement theory flourished in the 1970s to the 1990s and academic interventions on social movements took on a different flavor between the United States (U.S.) and Canada. In the U.S. there was a focus on resource mobilization (McCarthy and Zald 1977) and political opportunity (Tarrow 1994). In Canada, academics interested in or committed to social justice saw the

possibility of a changed society in social movements. Much attention was paid to social movements by a range of Left academics from those critical of the liberal state (e.g. Jenson and Phillips 1996, Dobrowolsky 1998) to those more socialist-Marxist (e.g. Panitch and Swartz 2003). From a social democratic perspective, the relationship between the state and social movements was thought to secure and at least be in support of a more legitimate, if less than robust, liberal democracy, even while it was antagonistic. From a more socialist-Marxist perspective, the labor movement in particular was and should continue to be a significant source of resistance and most likely transformation of state and society relations (Harden 2003). Regardless of the specific relationship between new social movements and the state, new social movements were counter-hegemonic to a hegemonic state in which capital's interests were supported at the expense of ordinary citizens (Carroll 1992).

Some new social movements successfully pressed for and secured funding from the state during the decades of the 1970s and 1980s (Young 2000, Dobrowolsky 1998). Still, during the 1980s, a change in belief and understanding of liberal democracy began to occur aided by elite and capital interests who made a concerted effort to change public opinion away from what were then existing social and collective values to more intensely individualist ones that complemented capital interests (Carroll 2004). Voices of women, the poor, and workers became not the voices within a democracy, but special interests who were either unqualified to speak on the part of the general will or indeed would harm it (Dobrowolsky 1998, Jenson and Phillips 1996). With the increasing marginalization and silencing of these voices within recognized new social movements, there was a wide range of responses from within academia to their conspicuous absence from the public sphere. Informally, there were the following questions asked in the halls of academe: "Where have the social movements gone?" "What happened to them?" In part, they were hurt by cuts to funding with the implementation of neoliberal agendas (Jenson and Phillips 1996). Yet, Susan D. Phillips also shows that since the 1990s there has been a decline in interest in new social movements in political science and sociology (2004, 334). Perhaps the organizational attributes and activity these disciplines had been trained to look for were for the most part effectively undercut and thus largely fell outside the scope of study, traditionally construed.

At the same time, in the early 1990s, the organizational conceptualization of new social movements was found wanting by some sociologists who implied that the organizational understanding largely informed by resource mobilization theory and political opportunity theory were inadequate to an understanding of new social movement motivations. There were interventions on the nomadic quality of new social movements (Melucci 1989), how new social movements perceived themselves using ethnography (Carroll 1992), the distinction between macro-processes and micro-processes (Canel 1992), the role emotions played in new social movement activity (Goodwin and Polletta 2001), the carnivalesque dimensions of new social movements when they were not engaging in direct conflict with the state (Hetherington 1997), the role of art and culture jamming in new social movements versus very public protests (Adams 2002, Morris 2001, Eyerman and Moore 1998). Yet, what remains uninterrogated from this tweaking of social movement theory is a fundamental issue whether social movement theory adequately explains existing efforts of groups neither initially nor now accepted as new social movements. In particular, the activity of community arts organizations suggests a

need to update or advance social movement theory into an alternative discourse in order to make better sense of resistance undertaken within community arts. Community arts is a form of collaborative community-based public expression between artists and non-artists distinct from commercial, and traditional elite and juried art. Community arts includes a range of activity and organizations not previously identified as a social movement, but they are integral for social and political change often informed by social justice aspirations.

Current social movement theory predominantly casts social movements as marginalized collective actors whose goals are to pressure the state for changes in social and economic policy and educate and build support within the public toward their respective social justice goals. Discussion of social movements, either in whole or part, regardless of their institutional strength or influence and variety of activity, largely continues to assume a unified subject of agency, collective and collectively defined goals, hierarchical and institutionalized organization, and an oppositional position in relation to the state (Smith 1999, McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996, McCarthy and Zald 1977). Within the social sciences, social movements that tend to garner the most attention include the women's movement, labor movement, disability movement, queer movement, anti-poverty movement, and environmental movement.

Community arts has largely not been considered a social movement per se in social sciences literature. The reasons for this are several. Artists and cultural production are often viewed as instruments of social movements that can be effectively deployed to raise awareness of and express demands, or to support those within a movement in terms of wage labor (Adams 2002), or to provide a venue for members to congregate for good times through the ubiquitous benefit galas or concerts.[2] That is, cultural producers have not been viewed by social movements as political agents per se. Other reasons could be that community arts comprises and encourages multiple and intersecting identities, critical and self-reflexive subjects, it focuses on process not outcomes, and it does not position itself against the state as a unified subject with predetermined demands or goals. Community arts very often incorporates social justice goals, but in ways distinct from representative organizations of established social movements. Some social movements build or develop a recognizable platform through a series of meetings at the regional and national level. For example, the women's movement in Canada has had a representative voice in the National Action Committee on the Status of Women through annual general meetings of its members where goals and objectives are discussed and voted upon. As well, the women's movement has participated in international conferences such as the World Conferences on Women held in Mexico City, Copenhagen, Nairobi, and Beijing where platforms of action emerge among the participants that are taken back to their respective countries. There is not such a linear or hierarchical structure of decision-making within community arts in Ontario or Canada. Instead, community arts organizations I have begun to explore starting with Toronto and Peterborough are very much focused upon the physical and local space as well as residents of the communities where and with whom they wish to make an intervention. The decision-making occurs within each community arts organization and depends upon the networks they each develop.

Community arts does not directly resist the state. Indeed, community arts organizations work with three levels of government and major funders for the projects

they undertake. Community arts functions in some ways as an interest group in that it attempts to raise awareness of what it is and what it produces to a range of city, provincial, and federal officials and politicians through the presentation of art produced and building support for grant proposals. In Peterborough, community stewards have been presenting themselves as good citizens who do and can continue to raise the profile of the city as a rich arts and cultural community that goes hand in hand with desired economic development.[3] In Toronto, community arts organizations have been slowly developing networks with municipal politicians with a focus on specific improvements to a city space and positive experiences created by and for residents.

While community arts organizations often do not fit well with largely dominant conceptualizations of social movements, they are involved in social and political change, both explicitly and implicitly, contingent upon resources they have to work with, resources not in the stricter sense of resource mobilization perspectives, but resources in the sense of energies available to them. (needs further work)

If community arts is not squarely a social movement, might it be a part of the voluntary sector? The reason why I ask this question is that Phillips has remarked social movements are waning and voluntary organizations are on the rise (2004). Voluntary sector theory tends to see civil society organizations, including social movements, as organizations that work hand-in-hand with the state in areas of service delivery (horizontal governance), and for their structural characteristics and contribution in developing civic participation and social capital (Frumkin 2002, Putnam 2000). Discussion of the voluntary sector often implies a non-political role for voluntary organizations and non-oppositional position to the state (Phillips 2004).

Community arts may look more like a voluntary organization according to this definition of the voluntary sector. Community arts projects can integrate service delivery into their projects and in doing so foster civic participation and social capital. Certainly, community artists and stewards see themselves animating participation in local neighborhoods that in turn develops social networks and a sense of belonging and caring of local space and people. This sense of belonging and caring is very much the kind of social cohesion one would include in good citizenship. Community artists work with non-artists in ways that produce social cohesion through the process of the project as well the memory of the project within individuals who participate in the project and the larger public who come into contact with the project in some way shape or form. Other aspects of good citizenship facilitated in part by community arts is the development of community identity that links at least symbolically to national identity. While national identity is largely not explicit in community arts projects, it is never far away especially for newcomers involved in community arts who think of place as a new country by which they want to be accepted and integrate into. As well, they want to make their city, their country their own by incorporating their own expression into the various spaces made possible by community arts. Framed in these ways, community arts is an arm of the state especially for goals of culture, heritage, and citizenship. Pushing further this idea that community arts looks more like a voluntary organization, indeed it could be seen to advance the neoliberal state's goals. For example, funding has been made available for community arts for at-risk youth.

There is also a facet of community arts that feeds into the concept of cultural citizenship. Cultural citizenship aims at using culture as a means for citizenship, not an

ends. As a means, advocates of cultural citizenship (Murray (2005), Gregg (2005), Stanley 2006) focus on participation in a wide range of cultural activities and organizations to develop social and cultural capital, capacity building in terms of expression and social skills, encourage an openness to cultural diversity. Cultural citizenship advocates largely imply there is no telling what the outcomes of such participation may be in terms of what citizens may press from their federal, provincial and local governments. The aspects of what it may take to make demands are in theory developed through the gathering of minds and bodies through the collective endeavor of culture.

Still, I do not think community arts fits comfortably into a voluntary sector or cultural citizenship frameworks because of the very often social and political goals and dimensions of community arts projects. Three examples of such goals include the refusal of community artists to volunteer their labor, they focus on the process of art-making as an end, not a means, and community artists and stewards resist the role of community arts as a social service. I will speak briefly to each one of these examples. Community arts organizations in Toronto such as Art Starts and Y Arts on principle refuse to have artists do voluntary work. They refuse to be seen as volunteer organizations in aid of a government objective. They often exhibit resistance or position themselves against the mainstream economically, focus on empowerment of individuals in the development of their identity, the de-centering of western and elite cultural practices to be more representative of the communities they work with, and the process of collaboration and the possibilities of transformation that occur as a result. In contrast, voluntary sector and cultural citizenship, at least at the discursive levels, are embedded within the mainstream. Because of the mainstream perspective it assumes, the kind of cultural participation further assumed can often remain traditional, elite, and unquestioned. There is less discussion of social change, politics, or transformation.

Community artists and stewards in Toronto and Peterborough focus on the process of art-making as an end. Unlike, the view of a cultural citizenship approach, art is not a means for citizenship; art is an end through which there are social and political possibilities made possible through the process of art-making. When something is an end, it is difficult to convey its value to a person who does not have experience with the process. One community artist/steward described such difficulty:

> Community arts projects are hard to describe to people. You can say we painted a mural but that doesn't mean anything. That's nothing to do with actually what happens because a mural was painted or there's a theatre that put on this; it doesn't describe what really happens with people in the process. It doesn't really describe the quality of what the process is, the actual doing of it. The making of it, creating of it is really what community arts is about. It's in just doing it that huge thing happen. Sometimes what happens is not discussed because people just feel them or share them, but they don't share them with the […] Business Improvement Association or politicians. It's hard to write them in grants.[4]

Frequently, community arts stewards are fatigued or frustrated by this framing of community arts funding because the term "at risk" embodies undertones of potential

criminality among ethnic groups targeted as predictable offenders. Community arts becomes implicated on the soft policy side of the law and order agenda in that art provides the potential for preventing the development of criminals among youth. Instead, community artists and arts stewards see themselves as un-doing or deterritorializing the racialization of citizenship intertwined with class and gender among ethnic groups particularly in the city of Toronto.

Community arts stewards do not want governments to see community arts as a social service, a job-training program, or a counseling program.[5] Instead, community arts is a unique practice that is more organic and generative in dimension where place and people together create their own sense of identities and needs. They do not want community arts to be a substitute or band-aid to withdrawal or weakening of social services in communities. For example, thinking common to community artists was that community arts is a highly diverse practice in motion that needs to be capacious in understanding the diversity and needs of such a practice. One example of this need to be capacious is that community artists perceive themselves to be more multidisciplinary and accepting of a multidisciplinary art practice than traditional art disciplines. They have often felt they had to specialize in a discipline if they were to be a recognized artist in a gallery or commercial context but find it easier to be a multidisciplinary artist within a community arts setting. One community artist-steward commented, "I think artists are going to see themselves in all kinds of ways."[6] She continued that she sees community arts moving to a place that is flexible and can include entertainment, education, politics, and social change. "There isn't one road to social change," she noted, the implication being that many paths are needed.

Because community arts is distinct in the way it works with three levels of government characterized by performance as good citizen, its focus on resistance against the mainstream in terms of corporate cultural production, emphasis on a collaborative process without predetermined outcomes, the artist as paid worker versus volunteer, and development of self-reflexive and flexible subjectivity, I am led to think community arts is a new kind of social and political intervention that requires a different theoretical framework through which it can understand itself and be understood within the social sciences.

Political Assemblages

An adaptation of Deleuze and Guattari's theory and practice of assemblages I suggest helps explain the social and political interventions of community arts.[7] Deleuze and Guattari write on assemblages in *a thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia* (1987). Assemblages provide a supplement to agency and change distinct from social movement literature. Whereas social movement literature often focuses on organization, protest, and tactics, assemblages refer to intensities of energies, bodies, (re)territorialization and deterritorialization. Unlike the concept of a social movement, when speaking of an assemblage there is no coherent overarching organization with a need to represent itself as a discrete entity or speak through a hierarchy recognizable to an authority such as the state, law, police, or mass media. The activity of an assemblage need not always be explicitly in the name of social justice, although the activity often is in step with or the spirit of social justice. Within an assemblage, there is not a singular understanding of how activity should be orchestrated or conducted. Instead, there are intensities that form from bodies coming together and moving apart depending upon the

composition of the desire that creates those intensities at any specific time. The emphasis on composition of bodies or composable relationships also implies de-composition and de-composable relationships. This means that the duration, the process, or the result of such relationships will not be or do not have to be known at the outset, and that the relationships may eventually end, weaken, or transform. These kinds of details occur in the very composing and de-composing. In summary, assemblages are similar to improvisations; they describe in a word the dynamic and continual motion of bodies, their desires, and activity in reaction to one another.

How do assemblages relate to social justice? Deleuze and Guattari's thought embodies social justice, but it does not rigidly define social justice. To do so would be antithetical for them because social justice is a becoming imagined by bodies that desire a social, economic, and political life distinct from what currently exists. A Deleuzian approach to social justice requires letting go of a prior conception of a socio-economic and political order, its architecture, processes, and norms. A prior conception risks becoming a strict ordering, something of the opposite to its aspirations, especially in the hands of power that has authority over the many.[8] Instead, the concept of social justice must come and emanate from bodies themselves situated in their daily experience, struggles, imaginations, and relationship with one another. When this occurs, the possibility of social justice remains within the capacities of those who desire the difference that could be imagined distinct from the present instead of something externally imposed upon them. The becoming of this possibility potentially takes endless and multiple forms in terms of activity and productivity that depend upon the intensities of composable relationships that arise. Multiple forms of activity and productivity created by various intensities of composable relationships give rise to multiplicity. Just as intensities of composable relationships could proliferate spatially, so could multiplicities. Multiplicities can have connections with one another. They may intersect in terms of bodies, activity, or productivity, but they do not have to. Multiplicity is not a norm; instead, it is a ontology always in process of becoming influenced by the bodies and relationships in participation. Within the context of community arts, for example, projects often arise through a slow process of dialogue between community arts organizations and local residents. The goals of a community arts project are largely not known at the outset; they come into being as an understanding of residents, their needs, customs, and ways of communicating also come into being. It is a challenging process that community artists find frustrating and anxiety-inducing because there is little control over the development of a specific arts project compared to a project that is carried out by a single artist or like-minded group or collective of artists. Community arts projects in the city of Toronto very often involve cross-cultural education in the doing of the project and such learning requires time to develop trust among participants and sufficient momentum to make headway in a direction once agreed upon. One community artist-steward commented:

When we do our work people don't necessarily come to us. They don't have the time, they don't know if we want to really engage in a meaningful way in a community. We have to go to them and there has to be a respect for the fact that we are in their space and we have to be open to hearing what their issues and needs are because we have to come with a certain amount of respect and adaptability and openness to each community that we venture into. It involves being very, very flexible and

adaptive and knowing that when we go into a community we might have general ideas about how we want to proceed but without the community input and buy-in and interest, we have to basically adapt to what their needs are. So our 'shtick' is always very flexible and accommodating.[9]

This comment was made in reference to the community arts organization's locality comprising predominantly low-income newcomers to Canada who became aware of their needs through a community arts project involving children.

Multiplicity may occur when a further related project develops out of energies created from one prior. For example, women residents who came together to write a play of their experiences as newcomers to Toronto discovered their collective frustration over the conspicuous difficulty in boarding and disembarking children's strollers onto and off Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) buses. In the process of their coming together to write this play they also organized a letter campaign to the TTC in an attempt to alert the TTC of this issue and to seek improvement. This kind of activity is a "spin-off" from an arts project that is neither planned for nor expected. Such a spin-off can be thought of as a proliferation and multiplication of energies created by this group of people that also in turn de-composes; the TTC issue was not pursued beyond the initial campaign and it did not yield a significant change in the identified difficulty. While the campaign was not advanced and did not result in an improved situation, it would be an unfortunate judgment to consider this a failure exclusively according to its goal. Indeed, the very motivation and action in itself could be seen as a productive flow of energy that would have had benefits in terms of raising awareness, self-identifying as a group of persons with needs they felt legitimate. Such energy could be harnessed another time in another form.

A theory and practice of assemblages offers an understanding of activity that does not explicitly or consistently self-identify as a social justice gambit in terms of social justice fighting for, resisting against, or representing someone to someone else. Social movement literature often assumes there is an organization against which the social movement organization is fighting for something, usually an entitlement, resisting against an oppressive force, or representing itself to someone else. Yet, organizations not understood as part of a social movement exhibit agency distinct from an explicit opposition against the state. For example, the development of critical and self-reflexive subjectivity is a process of deterritorialization and (re)territorialization involving a wide diversity of bodies and intensities between them. One illustration of this process is as follows. Community artists from Y Arts working with city youth first observed stereotypical expectations on the part of some youth toward others in terms of gender and race. By the end of the art project, these community artists observed that stereotypes were set aside; as time passed, individuals were approached through dialogue mediated by the art project. I suggest this is an example of deterritorialization in the sense of stripping oneself of stereotypical perceptions and (re)territorialization in that an individual is approached by another through a process of dialogue, bodily interaction, and in the case of community arts, art-making that allows for a difference socially and politically in identity-formation.

Grassroots organizations or spontaneously created groups of people that form some kind of association with one another have been sometimes created to be different from the experience of having been part of a social movement as a counter-hegemonic

enterprise where the state figures as hegemonic actor. Such organizations and associations can be understood as assemblages because they comprise a desire to maintain an openness to composable relationships that would include the state. For example, one of the co-founders of Art Starts in Toronto left the women's and labor movements because she felt the protests, the barricades, the oppositional activity was "lacking in spirituality" and that it was "giving energy to the enemy."[10] She also realized for herself that change against a corporate agenda, the influence of advertising, and other oppressions involved a long complex process comprising mental, emotional and spiritual levels. The movements in which she had been involved she felt largely were not attending to this complexity; politics and resistance within the Left at the time were too narrowly defined. She was also of the view that pleasure was important for political change, especially resistance. Culture, the pleasure of culture, and the importance of culture produced by ordinary people as sources of freedom needed attention. For her, she felt a key question was as follows: "if pleasure comes from the things we buy, then how do we transform ourselves from passive consumers to cultural producers?"[11] Another concern was that the women's and labor movements at the time were leaving out people, or not addressing their specific needs, especially the needs of newcomers in Toronto city neighborhoods from the process of social change. Art Starts was conceived as a way of beginning a social and political intervention within a specific neighborhood. Art Starts founders consciously decided to locate in a storefront space along the main city of York street, Oakwood Avenue. They wanted to work in a busy flow of activity where residents of the neighborhood would feel curious or free to enter the community arts organization and the founders themselves could meet residents and begin to dialogue on projects that would be mutually beneficial through art.

　　　　…To be further developed.

Conclusion
　　　　In a changed context of neoliberalism, social movement theory does not adequately describe the activity of grassroots organizations of community arts. Community arts largely does not exhibit oppositional activity against the state or hegemonic force such as corporate capitalism in the form of protests. Community arts organizations do not exhibit the same kind of resource mobilization as new social movements particularly during the 1970s and 1990s. Among its activity, however, community arts does aim to empower individuals to think critically and reflectively in the art-making process in a way that also incorporates their daily experience. This opens up possibilities for individuals to reflect upon their needs in the public sphere, their self-naming, and perceptions of others. In meeting people within the neighborhoods where community arts organizations are located, community artists and stewards strive to work with non-artists to create projects of artistic expression that intertwine with social and political expression.
　　　　A theory of contingent political assemblages provides a way of understanding the activity of community arts as social and political interventions distinct from social movements, volunteer organizations, and cultural citizenship. Contingent political assemblages shed some light on the facilitation of critical subject-formation that community arts supports and the kind of collective endeavor that occurs through

community arts projects. What a theory of contingent political assemblages does not and will not provide is a strong normative framework for this activity.

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[1] Neoliberalism is a political ideology and program based on increasingly unfettered capitalist enterprise, low tax rates, deficit and debt reduction, and decreased social spending instantiated in western industrialized nation-states during the 1980s and 1990s. In Canada, the neoliberal period firmly took hold in the mid-1990s. See Jenson and Phillips 1996, Carroll 1992, 2004.

[2] Singer and songwriter, Nancy White, wrote a song entitled "Not another benefit" that expressed the frustration of artists performing for another's benefit when they themselves were poor.

[3] They are aware of the influence of Richard Florida's argument that a creative city becomes an economically prosperous city (2002).

[4] Interview with community arts steward, Y Arts, Toronto, ON.

[5] Interview with Zanaib Amadhay, Executive Director, Community Arts Ontario, Toronto ON, July 13, 2006.

[6] Ibid.

[7] For Deleuze and Guattari, theory and practice are inseparable.

[8] Deleuze and Guattari's metaphorical comparison between the tree and the rhizome is helpful here. Whereas the tree represents, for them, a hierarchical and rigid becoming whose growth becomes subsumed to the form of the tree, the rhizome's shape is not pre-determinable and does not take form according to a prior authority.

[8] Interview with Tamara Steinberg, Managing Director of Art Starts, Toronto, ON, July 14, 2006.

[9] Robin Pacific, Keynote Speaker, Community Arts Ontario Conference, Hamilton, ON, June 10, 2006.

[10] Ibid.

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