Self Becoming / Becoming Recordings
69 Love Stories, Everyone is Here, Remake Unmake, Art as Instructions: from individual actions, to the world of actions, and human relations, the work of art as the work of living, living well, and becoming closer to living itself, that as Virginia Woolf says:

the whole world is a work of art; that we are parts of the work of art. Hamlet or a Beethoven quartet is the truth about this vast mass that we call the world. But there is no Shakespeare, there is no Beethoven; certainly and emphatically there is no God; we are the words; we are the music; we are the thing itself.

(Virginia Woolf, “A Sketch of the Past,” in Moments of Being)

Relational art or relational aesthetics is a mode or tendency in fine art practice originally observed and highlighted by French art critic Nicolas Bourriaud. Bourriaud defined the approach as “a set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space.”[1] The artist can be more accurately viewed as the “catalyst” in relational art, rather than being at the centre.[2]

Bourriaud explores this notion of relational aesthetics through examples of what he calls relational art. According to Bourriaud, relational art encompasses “a set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space.”[13]

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Relational_art)

69 Love Stories

I’ve always wanted to form on-the-go international collectives, being varied people together collectively, like a theatre or study group, like I had done with Art as Invention, or Art and Culture, or my films.

In the films I made always had a nucleus of an artistic group, a sort of collective and the software projects a distributed authoring environment. With 69 Love Stories I wanted to bring together both computational and cultural ideas of repetition and difference, instructions and inscriptions and ideas for distributed and collective authoring. I wanted to find ways to be others and get to know them through collaborative works.
Revolution of Everyday Life flowered from a desire to make a film called 69 Love Stories. The title was inspired by the 3-disc album 69 Love Songs by The Magnetic Fields, an extraordinarily beautiful group of recordings. You might say we made one love song, “Revolution,” and so the idea was to create a platform to carry on with the ideas of repetition and difference that informed Raymond Queneau’s Exercises in Style, by making 69 love stories that were the same but different. This would create a conversation about instructions, cultural programming, ideas of revolution, a new way to new think about recording and film as something global and conversation, as a dialogue.

I thought of two actions to film, two instructions. I was looking at Google Street View images, and there were in some of them, this feeling of coming upon something, a scene, a space, just after the fact, but you were not quite sure what happened.

It is as if we’ve come upon the site, the atmosphere, of an accident or better said, agitation, some confluence of weather, the landscape, a building, some human figures, hands in their head, or sitting on the side of the road, this very casual wreckage of something terribly banal, something spilled over emotionally and otherwise, a dispersed event, the human presence, strange and alien, yet all too ordinary and everyday, an agglomeration of things, not seen, not framed precisely, not even staged, but for a brief moment performed for the frame of an indifferent mechanical recording.

The other would be to upload the supermarket scene from “Revolution” where the two girls place number soup cans in the middle of a shopping aisle and ask people to walk on them. We would ask people to remake it all over the globe and then go make love and film themselves.

This action would be the first of 69 that we hoped to do over the next year and grow this site and involve you . . .

So not only are we launching a film—we are making a call to action.

We had statements familiar in many manifestos:

The 69lovestories group, is dedicated to the preservation of the legacy of love and freedom movements throughout history. We aspire to invest the experience of public space with wonder, to resurrect art history from the bowels of despair, and to impregnate the institutions of commercial supermarkets with the joy of man’s desiring.

Taking its cue from Raymond Queneau’s book Exercises in Style, a collection of 99 retellings of the the same story, The Magnetic Fields’ three-disc set 69 Love Songs, and Marc Lafia’s Permutations, 69 Love Stories is the retelling of the same 3 minute (or less) story in 69 locations in countries all over the world with 69 different sets of international actors and non actors made by 69 international artists as designed by instructions and variations on one simple story.
In the end this proved very difficult to do financially and logistically without institutional support. In fact, the scale of an artist’s work is so much about financial backing, either by collectors or institutions. Often times they are one and the same. At a certain point you must decide to work for that support on get on working the best you can with what you have.

69lovestories
an instruction set

Everyone is Here

Perhaps my greatest gift is just imagining, the very delusion of imaging, the very pleasure of it, itself an event of art, that while writing and thinking of projects like this one, that they are and will become real.

Everyone is Here will be a series of global gatherings to introduce and connect people through sociability, philosophic revelry, enjoyment, reflection and action. It involves both private and public actions, projects of collaborations and solitude, including on the go projects, critical and cross media research and investigations that are site specific to places, groups and individuals.
Everyone is Here
A Project of Collective Becoming
Philosophy Platform
Marc Lafia
Instructions for a new kind of being space
Welcome to the Project for Self Becoming - a series of global gatherings to introduce and connect people through sociability, philosophical reverie, enjoyment, reflection and action. This site is our ongoing archive, list of proposals and communications point for our projects.

The works coming from the group are a social experience happening both on a person-to-person level and in and through the communities and their specific cultures in which they are made, performed and recorded.
Welcome to 69lovestories.com. Here at this site we hope to create a platform for conversation around ideas of everyday revolution – a new way to think about recording and film as a global conversation, or dialogue. 69lovestories is the next project in a series of recordings/films by Marc Lafia the latest being Lafia's film, *Revolution of Everyday Life*. Over the next year we hope to initiate a series of actions: sometimes they will involve recordings, getting together in different parts of the world, doing workshops, etc...

We begin the 69lovestories project with two invitations – record the private or the public, as we explore the notion of being together as a social body vs. being alone. These two recordings, are the first of 69 that we hope to do over the next year as we grow this site and involve you...

We've also included a reference section in this site for you to check out more actions and ideas around everyday revolution, as well as the artists that inform 69lovestories. But we also welcome your suggestions and ideas. Please feel free to contribute your own recommendations by linking a book, interview, essay or artist bio to Suggested Reading. You can also make film recommendations or upload a video clip to Suggested Viewing. Please include a brief review/explanation of the content you post.

*We having nothing in common but the illusion of being together.*

-Raul Vannegem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*
Our project’s aim to re-evaluate the mental conditioning imposed on us by our technology and media. We want to produce new architectures of the social encounter, encounters no longer tethered by the familiar anchors of place: class, clique, place in the sexual hierarchy, or financial transaction.

How we look at our world and ourselves is shaped not just by ideas, but by the way we are habituated to perceive. Our projects call on you to imagine the future in terms of the repeated deconstruction and reconstruction of the “local” and the “subject,” and to actively discover the things that are “coming” and “forthcoming.

Seeing the seeing in and of ourselves, our culture, our technologies, our sciences, our very status of being and becoming catalyzes the project

**What it is?**

To do this we are creating a series of global gatherings to introduce and connect people through sociability, philosophic revelry, enjoyment, reflection and action. It involves both private and public actions, projects of collaborations and solitude, including happenings, dinners, parties, on-the-go projects, critical and cross media research and investigations that are site specific to places, groups and individuals.
Taking the experience of making films, online publishing, artist residencies, social media projects, emergent knowledge archives and teaching, and further them to create a platform to produce a new medium of encounter at the juncture of research and recordings.

The aim is to produce projects that bring its participants into a larger participation and awareness of context of the world. To create projects realized individually and collaboratively that give a relational sense of the all-at-once-ness of things.

The platform is a program to create and observe an emergent narrative in the distributed space of the personal and collective. To work at Self-transformation which involves self-destruction. Coming-to-be – passing-away. To be attuned to a beauty and value that lies precisely in its potential for unexpected flights, moments of self-reflection, and whimsy.

It is not about product not productivity. It is about being present to the particular and creating with the lightest touch a new kind of being space, a new kind of archive, a series of performative exercises to find the shape of ourselves in contact with varied realities.

The two (three) year project involves traveling to 15 countries, where a gatherings of 15 to 35 people get together for 3 days and through a series of exercises create a variety of mixed media works that in their aggregate create an index or portrait of a simultaneity of being in the world.

Part anthropology, performance art, documentary, happening, systems analysis, self-critique the idea is to heighten the sense of being public and private, individual and collective.

\[\text{it is a desire is to create a series of maps, equations} \]
\[\text{to visualize the mesh within our selves of overlapping systems,} \]
\[\text{for the project to map these on the go collectives as nodes in a global system} \]
\[\text{to take an index of our contemporary environment.} \]

The project is a mapping of the outer edges of the ourselves, psychically, emotionally, and geographically.

**Why a collective?**
The collective puts into practice the social, conversational and distributed aspect of the network.

Only by gathering together to know ourselves in each other, to be part of a larger inquiry which is to live concurrent to others, to be in a larger embrace of time, a politic of being, an island in the net can we see ourselves.

As much as we insist on our individualism we are a social body, networks of social bodies and systems. – As such …

**How does it work?**
The process sets out a way to inhabiting and producing time, new ways to record observe and invent.

Drawing on exercises, instructions, scripts, images, readings, an ongoing group investigate their “private lives,” “private moments,” “friends,” “families,” and others
It is a being that reflects the new modes of personal recording, personal revelation.

Let’s say we know Federico in Rome, we meet in Rome with his creative friends and others. We set about to do three creative projects in the course of four days. It is an event open to everyone, anyone that shows up. No applications, no reviews, no program, no show times.

Part workshop, part party, it is an accounting of things. We make a film, have a happening, a party and meet friends to discover each other’s agendas.

Over the course of traveling the world, the collective works of the events are put together in a film, online, in an exhibition.

What it is not.
It’s not an art biennial, an academic conference, a spiritual retreat, a WTO protest, the tour-de-France

Why we are doing it?
We want with each other to see our perception, to see the frameworks in which we see and apprehend the world.

We want to discover a new kind of being space, a new kind of archive, and shapes of ourselves in contact with varied realities.

We want to unfold our fictions and fact, our everyday with the invented, imagination and reality, our inner and outer selves, the stories that haunt us, the narratives in front of us.

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Participation
(select excerpts from research for the above projects reading participation through Lygia Clarke, Claire Bishop, Relational Aesthetics, Precariousness, Hal Foster, Giorgio Agamben, and Brian Holmes)
If we look at the proliferation of collaborative art practices today, it seems that many no longer have the oppositional and anti-authoritarian punch they had in the late 1960s and 1970s—when radical theatre, community arts and critical pedagogy emerged in opposition to dominant modes of social control. Today participation is used by business as a tool for improving efficiency and workforce morale; it is all pervasive in the mass-media in the form of reality television; and it is a privileged medium for government funding agencies seeking to create the impression of social inclusion. Collaborative practices need to take this knot of conventions on board if they are to have critical bite.

It would argue that the best socially collaborative art does not derive from a superegoic injunction to “love thy neighbor,” but from the position of “do not give up on your desire.” In other words, pursue your unconscious desire, as far as you can.

(http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2006/07/socially_engage.php)

So what are we looking for?

“Rethinking the conventions of participation, which are today somewhat orthodox.”
Looking for what's rotting:
The inner disgust, appetite
We have only to look at the new French extremity in cinema,
the new brutalism (Breillat, Noe, etc...)
Excess (Artaud, Grotowski, Beck, Bataille...)

It seems more pressing to invent possible relations with our neighbors in the present
than to bet on happier tomorrows.

(Nicolas Bourriaud, Relational Aesthetics, p. 45.)

This DIY, microtopian ethos is what Bourriaud perceives to be the
core political significance of relational aesthetics.

But moving beyond the ‘scenarios’ of relational aesthetics we
call for a participation that is performed for its rewards and
perhaps even more so its deceptions and delusions its hidden
agendas, its covert political subtexts.

Some argue this is not enough
As art
As critique
As being
As being engaged
As becoming
To really look and be with others

“In some way we come to exist in the moment of being addressed,” Judith Butler writes, “and something about our existence proves precarious when that address fails.” In “Precarious Life” (2004), her brief essay on Emmanuel Levinas, Butler explores the notion of “the face,” which the French philosopher poses as the very image of “the extreme precariousness of the other.” “To respond to the face, to understand its meaning,” Butler argues, “means to be awake to what is precarious in another life or, rather, the precariousness of life itself.”

(Hal Foster, “Towards a Grammar of Emergency,” http://arcade.stanford.edu/content/towards-grammar-emergency)

To do so, to gather reflect, commune, take action, invent being is to resist, and interrogate, the demands of digital culture.

This interest in the contingencies of a “relationship between”—rather than the object itself—is a hallmark of Gillick’s work and of his interest in collaborative practice as a whole. This idea of considering the work of art as a potential trigger for participation is hardly new—think of Happenings, Fluxus instructions, 1970s performance art, and Joseph Beuys’s declaration that “everyone is an artist.”

(Claire Bishop, “Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics”)
“Working online I oftentimes feel disconnected from my body, Half-engaged in a stream of weightless graphics and information, it’s easy to lose track of the screen’s physical parameters—and your own,” says Erin Shirreff, recounting the familiar experience of restlessly navigating virtual space.

Not participation but embodiment, being bodies, knowing being as such.

This entire experience into which art flows, the issue of liberty itself, of the expansion of the individual’s consciousness, of the return to myth, the rediscovery of rhythm, dance, the body, the senses, which finally are what we have as weapons of direct, perceptual, participatory knowledge... is revolutionary in the total sense of behavior... Helio Oiticica

In short, it installs a new relationship between the contemplation and the utilization of a work of art.

Eco regarded the work of art as a reflection of the conditions of our existence in a fragmented modern culture, while Bourriaud sees the work of art producing these conditions. The interactivity of relational art is therefore superior to optical contemplation of an object, which is assumed to be passive and disengaged, because the work of art is a “social form” capable of producing positive human relationships. As a consequence, the work is automatically political in implication and emancipatory in effect.

(Claire Bishop, “Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics”)
Exploitation, exclusion, cynicism, ruthless pleasure, co-optations, social transformations, subjectivizing forces, the art object, material precariousness, precarity, unfold a complex knot, excess, self becoming, to awake to the other, the other in me, ones own warm breadth – how do these come to meaning how do we come to be being?

The most striking projects that constitute the history of participatory art unseat all of the polarities on which this discourse is founded (individual/collective, author/spectator, active/passive, real life/art) but not with the goal of collapsing them. In so doing, they hold the artistic and social critiques in tension. Felix Guattari’s paradigm of transversality offers one such way of thinking through these artistic operations: he leaves art as a category in its place, but insists upon its constant flight into and across other disciplines, putting both art and the social into question, even while simultaneously reaffirming art as a universe of value. Jacques Rancière offers another: the aesthetic regime is constitutively contradictory, shuttling between autonomy and heteronomy (“the aesthetic experience is effective in as much as it is the experience of that and“12).

He argues that in art and education alike, there needs to be a mediating object—a spectacle that stands between the idea of the artist and the feeling and interpretation of the spectator: “This spectacle is a third thing, to which both parts can refer but which prevents any kind of ‘equal’ or ‘undistorted’ transmission. It is a mediation between them. [...] The same thing which links them must separate them.”13 In different ways, Rancière and Guattari offer alternative frameworks for thinking the artistic and the social simultaneously; for both, art and the social are not to be reconciled or collapsed, but sustained in continual tension.

(Claire Bishop, Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship)
Remake/Unmake

I have always been fascinated by the idea of remaking unmaking. *Remake/Unmake* brings together two generations of families across Shanghai, Paris, Istanbul, and New York City in conversation and performance around film to examine history, memory, art, revolution and society. Scenes from a uniquely identified film made in the host country are shared as a starting point for dialogue and re-enactment to create a multi-screen video installation that crosses cultures and generations.

5.
Offer people a chance to throw eggs at you.

6.
Rearrange the ordinary or everyday, dress up statues, go into a supermarket and arrange 100 cans or packages into a minimalist serial floor piece.
I became fascinated with the idea of narration, where it happens and how. I had for some time been thinking about rules-based art, algorithms; a database cinema which I had been using in varied projects. But I wanted to proceed with these ideas in an internalized way, procedurally, not literally. I wanted to engage these strategies as approaches to shape and perform narrative.

The work is an investigation of the possibilities of computational mise-en-scène.

The realized piece will be a three-screen video installation varying in different release with lengths from 12 to 17 minutes long. The piece concerns computation and storytelling. Computation is used to create iterative scenarios, excavating the interior of storytelling, presenting narrative as an iterative form itself, forever turning on authorial position, structure, context, memory and representation.

The content proper concerns a contemporary story, told from multiple perspective, about the translation of *The Book of the Thousand and One Nights*. These include stories of Sir Richard Burton’s translation of the original story, a contemporary graduate student’s investigation of those tales through film and readings, and enactments and real life stories and anecdotes by varied peoples of Bedford Stuyvesant (Bed-Stuy), Brooklyn. The work concerns fabulation, accretion, memory, translation, translocation; and it is used to explore computation both as a metaphor and as an engine that produces change, differentiation, autopoiesis.

Through the story materials and computational rules, sequences and chapters will be constituted this way, configured that way ushering forth a meta-discourse on story, on fabulation. Just as the original stories were kept alive in the Middle East, by professional storytellers, who would inflect them anew each time, performing them in coffee houses in Persia, Arabia and Egypt, perhaps computation will reveal new relations at odd angles, folding whose story it is here, and then there, forging new links and associations.