

Against running in place

The speculative thought of Marina Vishmidt

Zoe Sutherland

... an angry, loving detachment from what keeps us running in place.¹

Up until the end, Marina brought things to life. She was an animist, of sorts. She treated objects with the serious playfulness of a small child, our Zoom chats and collaborative work sessions punctuated with the animation of ornaments and stuffed toys. Nothing was allowed to stay inert; nothing was sealed off. Her desire for more collective ways of being – evidenced by her countless friendships, camaraderies and collaborations – was unwavering. She was social glue and social animator, mobilising the ever-expanding web of people who gravitated towards her into creative and intellectual projects. To be in dialogue with Marina felt like conversing with, or participating in the assemblage of, a world. An academic by pay cheque – and by all accounts, an inspiring and challenging teacher – she reviled the individualism and competitiveness rewarded by the field, refusing to overidentify with, or claim ownership over, ideas, creative projects or texts. For Marina, process was everything and collaboration was key, so long as they were adequately antagonistic in just the right ways.

Most evidently, Marina animated concepts and methodological frameworks. Highly suspicious of ‘theoretical closures and inflations of all kinds’,² she had a commitment to negative dialectical thinking and a sensitivity to the resonances between disciplinary approaches, always striving to substantiate these at the systematic level. Secure in her intellectual and political sensibilities, she was open to pursuing diverse lines of thought. As Kerstin Stakemeier so beautifully captured, Marina had ‘an acute and unrelenting dedication to dropping nothing that had ever emerged as a product of revolutionary sense(s)’,³ and through this, things took shape. A difficult thinker to keep up with, Marina’s commitment to staying with dialectical complexity was not a stylistic

matter, but a means of resisting the reification of political horizons through easy affirmations or abstract negations. For Marina, reading, writing – and political organising – should ‘shatter and reconstitute’ us.⁴ Influenced greatly by Adorno, but always seeking to move beyond the self-imposed limitations of his critique, Marina’s more promiscuous method brought together a diverse constellation of discourses – philosophy, materialist feminism, political economy, radical ecology, contemporary art and poetry, critical black studies and finance, to name a few – to produce an ever-moving object of analysis. Negative dialectical thinking, immanent as it is to its object, was, for Marina, a form of play at its most political. It was a way of preventing a ‘running in place’, and a means of remaking the subject, but also the world, through the ‘exhilaration of negation of a violent and necrotic social stasis.’⁵

Marina’s theoretical project is not easily summarised, not least because it is unfinished. She was an immensely prolific writer, whose work exists largely as an abundance of – mostly commissioned – essays, articles or talks, with only two monographs.⁶ Generally opposed to fixed definitions, her arguments resist encapsulation into an overly neat or abstract formula. But if Marina’s writings provide a set of prompts and provocations for others to take forwards, it is as much in her approach to critique, as in the specific details of her analysis.

Marina had been exploring the relation between art, labour, capital, and reproduction, from at least the early 2000s, most notably in *Mute*. But the 2008 global financial crisis and its resulting anti-austerity struggles, alongside related theoretical developments of the time, impacted her thinking in several ways. I first met Marina at a series of weekly meetings in London – the ‘Social Crisis Social’ – in which an ever-increasing group of us tried to grapple with the implications of the crisis and

its fallout. We became friends, soon to live around the corner from each other in Hackney. The resurgence of interest in materialist feminism after 2008 inspired the formation of the London-based Feminist Reading Group in 2012, of which we were both participants. Marina was enticed by the debates within communism theory in the early 2010's – most notably those between *Theorie Communiste*, Maya Andrea Gonzalez and *Endnotes* – which strengthened a 'negative' turn in left feminist discourse by conceptualising gender as a 'social form' to be abolished.⁷ As Danny Hayward explains, the proliferation of riots, general strikes, port blockades and occupations of public squares in the post-crisis years led Marina to come up against the limits of her post-autonomist orientation towards the 'generalisation' of reproductive struggles into state institutions, an echo of the 'social factory'.⁸ It also revitalised debates around logistics, capitalist infrastructure and technology, all of which shaped her thinking. Drawn to the 'negativity' of these theories, Marina became sceptical of what she saw as a latent automaticity at work within their thinking, a faith that revolution would result from some grand rupture. Debates around the validity of theories of 'subsumption', culminating in a 2014 workshop in Bilbao, 'What is to Be Done Under Real Subsumption', provided a framework through which Marina began engaging critically with the abstract conclusions of much theory of the time. It is possible to detect a more politically situated, strategic turn in Marina's thinking, following this workshop, fuelled by a desire to push past the seemingly inherent aporias in much revolutionary thought, and to avoid a form of thinking that 'weaves ontological spells against the urgency of specific tasks of transformation.'⁹ The subsequent conceptual and theoretical approaches Marina developed aimed to establish a materialist praxis of determinate negation.

Speculation

As Hayward notes, Marina's attraction to counter-intuitive and negatively recursive thinking would lead her towards a theory of capital as a system that defines itself through exceptions; a Marxism thought from the perspective of its limits or outsides.¹⁰ In 2022, Marina claimed that if there was anything systematic about her work, it was the pursuit of 'a non-functionalist and non-

ontological' – rather a dialectical – understanding of the 'constitutive exception' to the operation of the rule under capital.¹¹ The categories of 'art' and 'unwaged reproductive labour' recur and rebound throughout her work as key exceptions. In her 2018 monograph *Speculation as a Mode of Production: Forms of Value Subjectivity in Art and Capital*, Marina developed the concept of 'speculation' as a revision of Adorno's claims about the autonomy of art. Under conditions of contemporary capital – with its financialised logics, and precarious forms of labour – art can no longer be considered absolutely other to labour, with a 'capitalist modernity-directed divine impotence (autonomy) as the source of its critical force.'¹² Instead, a parallel can be discerned between contemporary capital and contemporary art, as they constitute 'the poles of a society structured around speculation, reflected in social practices ranging from systems of welfare provision to the constitution of the self and the image of work.'¹³ In an inversion of Adorno's problematic, Marina traced the 'speculative form of labour' within both art and finance. Drawing upon Steven Shaviro's work on 'open' and 'closed' speculation, she argues that financial speculation, typically considered 'open' in the sense that it creates wealth and markets, can also be seen as 'closed'. As self-valorising, it produces nothing but more of itself, positing 'no horizon besides an indefinite replication of the future as present, thus predicated on enclosing the future as temporality and resource.'¹⁴ The open-endedness of financial speculation ultimately 'stabilises' itself on other levels of the system geared to generate profit. At the same time, the 'open' speculative potential of art – 'proposing new worlds' and 'renewing perception' – is imbricated in the 'closed' speculation of the financial market, and the 'disciplinary autonomy' that defines them as 'constitutively 'free' of real-world consequences.'¹⁵

Art both mediates and is mediated by speculative capital and its ability to be 'socially speculative' emerges in processes of 'dis-identification, exacerbation and singularization'.¹⁶ Speculation is thus not a concept denoting pure open-endedness in its orientation to the future, but contains a 'negativity' in that it is constituted by antagonism and contestation. Critical art practice must grapple with this entanglement if it is to avoid the reification resulting from the work's confinement within an aesthetic form, and must enable an 'immanent connection to unpredictable processes of 'determinate

social transformation'.¹⁷ Art cannot deepen its political commitment by trying to deny or escape its autonomous character, dissolving art into life or social practice, but only by reducing its claims to autonomy through the 'deconstruction of those mechanisms that establish and maintain "the artistic" as different from other social practices.'¹⁸ As Anthony Iles puts it, to deepen its immanent critique, art must work through 'negating by making unbearably present the contradictory ground of its apparent autonomy.'¹⁹ It is in this sense that speculation is, for Marina, the 'negative dialectics of artistic autonomy.'²⁰



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Social reproduction and gender

Marina mobilised this dialectically negative approach within her feminist thinking, as a means of avoiding political horizons that become reified into positions of simple affirmations or abstract negations. These affirmative and negative tendencies often figure in her work as the 'politics of reproduction' on the one hand, and 'gender abolition' on the other. The politics of reproduction –

of which Silvia Federici is often the model – is driven by a latent workerist impulse to extend the 'myth of the revolutionary subject' in a feminist direction. It demands visibility and recognition for reproductive labour, defending it from its capitalist devaluation by claiming that it is necessary to value production after all. Its valorisation of the reproductive – sometimes invoking romanticised images of subsistence economies – implies and perpetuates the separability of reproduction from production, and gendered labour from its overall position in the reproduction of capital. Taking the concept of reproduction, which Marx was using at a high level of abstraction and generality, and mapping it onto a designated set of concrete tasks characterised by replacement and maintenance, Marina saw some strands of Marxist feminism as having lost sight of an analysis of the position of gendered labour from the standpoint of the social totality. Once dislocated, reproduction can be held up as the positive, salvageable half of the capitalist whole, rather than an aspect of the mode of production to be analysed from the standpoint of its elimination. But Marina's concern was as much practical as conceptual: grounding a politics in reproduction *per se*, in abstraction from any socially transformative process, can end up suppressing the need and desire for more radical change, privileging maintenance, continuity and survival: in current conditions, a form of crisis management. The politics of reproduction can end up with a position that moralises gendered labour, along with gender itself. In a similar way to some manifestations of the 'politics of care', this approach constructs reproductive labour, and gender, not as a 'concrete historical experience to be negated', but as a 'metaphysical principle to be affirmed'.²¹ Lacking attention to 'non-identity thinking', certain forms of feminist thought and politics unwittingly seal up any potential 'space of negation'.²²

In contrast to the affirmative impulse of the politics of reproduction, arguments for gender abolition – associated for Marina with communisation theory – understands gender to be a social form. As such, the political horizons that emerge out of organising around it are themselves 'form-determined by the real abstractions to be done away with'.²³ Due to the logical connection between gender and the capitalist form of value, a feminism based upon the affirmation of gender and gendered roles cannot be transformative. Instead, women must

eradicate the very ground upon which they stand and abolish themselves *as women*. Inspired by the *Endnotes* text 'The Logic of Gender', Marina was initially enticed by the theory of gender abolition, but came to think that *taken on its own* it was inadequately materialist. Following an exchange with Ray Brassier in the subsumption workshop, she named an inherent 'paradox of subjectivity' within the theory of self-abolition: the collective subject of abolition comes into being through the struggle that abolition entails, but has to eliminate its ground in the society the movement wants to change or overcome'.²⁴ This poses a logical problem: who is the subject that initiates and who comes out of the other side? But importantly, it also poses a practical one: how can a self that is defined negatively – constituted by the capital relation – find resources to negate that relation or struggle for something else? Avoiding the affirmative impulse of the politics of reproduction, the virtue of the theory of gender abolition for Marina is that it 'operates by way of determinate negation, setting its horizon within the immanence of struggle'. Instead of an abstract dismissal of certain elements of the present, its negative critique proceeds determinately from 'the structural role of gender within the reproduction of the system', paying attention to the shape that takes historically.²⁵ But while the analysis is a determinate one, without an adequate account of subjectivity and subjectivation, the imperative to 'abolish' remains abstract.²⁶

Marina identified a feedback loop between affirmation and negation in radical thought; the desire to affirm produces its opposite: the temptation to abolish. But 'neither can be materialist as long as what they really want to do is escape'.²⁷ The subject cannot be found through 'identity thinking' nor 'wished away' through theoretical ruptures; only overcome through a living, social praxis, which necessarily unfolds as 'painful contradiction'.²⁸ The capital relation might be the social horizon of the reproduction of identities, but this horizon is not totalising; it is contradictory and constitutively incomplete.²⁹ Thought may need to identify, as Adorno tells us, but identity thinking must turn against itself: it must dis-identify. Marina's dialectically negative praxis allows social locations to be 'politically and theoretically read as structural without thereby being read as functional or integral', and for difference to be construed as 'a nonreified social experience that has political significance

open to determination and inflection in situated emancipatory struggles'.³⁰ They appear as the products of relations of subjects and objects in transformative processes. In a 2018 dialogue with Hayward, Marina describes negativity as both 'vehicular' – a way of getting somewhere – and an 'impossible horizon'. If we cannot simply escape – if the only way out is through – then what is required is the 'interminable movement' of a rigorously materialist form of negative dialectical practice, one which doesn't 'polarise radical imagination from radical action.' Negativity must strive to link radical thought to its material conditions, 'keeping that horizon fractured and also introverted in such a way that there is never a guarantee of legitimacy'.³¹ This lay at the heart of Marina's formulation of 'infrastructural critique'.

Infrastructural critique

From the mid-2010s, inspired by multiple sources – 'transversally-minded art-activist practices' of the 1990s, theories of race and colonialism, and debates around logistics, technology and capitalist infrastructure – Marina developed an 'infrastructural critique' which will continue to influence art theory and practice, as well as debates around organisational strategy, for years to come. The 'infrastructural' is a multi-layered concept, which gathers complexity as it develops through her work and, like 'speculation', describes both a field of study and method of critique. As a field of study, 'infrastructure' is another way of conceptualising the material conditions required for an institution to exist and be reproduced; that which persists and makes possible, but also makes *impossible* certain forms of social life and subjectivity. Marina would increasingly come to draw upon work from the black radical tradition to theorise infrastructure as the material basis for violent processes of racialisation and extraction and to think through the necropolitical role of infrastructural coercion and neglect.³² As a committed anti-Zionist, the catastrophic destruction of infrastructure in Gaza, in addition to the direct slaughtering of Palestinians, would have stood out in her final years as a horrifying example of this. But for Marina, the concept of infrastructure is polyvalent. It refers to the objects, tools and equipment that are key to reproducing the capitalist social world and its institutions – bridges, tunnels, sewers, pipelines, telecommunication wires –

and to the labour and expertise they embody. While these material determinations set parameters for action, they are at the same time ‘crystallisations’ and ‘negative imprints’ of social forms, in the words of an *Endnotes* text she admired.³³ Marina also saw infrastructure as ‘the articulation of the historically specific social relations which persists over time’,³⁴ exploring how the speculative force of art – and political struggle – can clarify, open up and repurpose those infrastructures for other ends.

While Marina’s orientation to the ‘infrastructural’ developed over time, her starting point was a critical engagement with the ‘institutional critique’ of art, and it is from here that we can begin to unpick the political stakes of this concept. The shift from institutional to infrastructural critique, Marina tells us, is a shift from a standpoint that accepts the institution as a horizon, to one which understands it as ‘a historical and contingent nexus of material conditions amenable to re-

arrangement through struggle and different forms of inhabitation and dispersal.’³⁵ An example of institutional critique she uses is the now canonical site-specific work of Michael Asher. In an untitled work of 1973 at the Galleria Franco Toselli, Asher sandblasted the walls of an empty gallery space to reveal layers of rough material texture, peeling off the ‘white cube’ surface of the representational space and producing the effect of a derelict warehouse. In another untitled work at the Claire Copley Gallery (1974), he removed the partition in an otherwise empty gallery to reveal the small administrative office in the corner, in which an administrator was working. Asher sought to de-mystify art, Marina tells us, by disclosing its commodity character or intimacy with private or speculative capital, by way of foregrounding the enabling container of representation; the gallery or museum. While Marina remained compelled by the inherent reflexivity of institutional critique, she saw it as

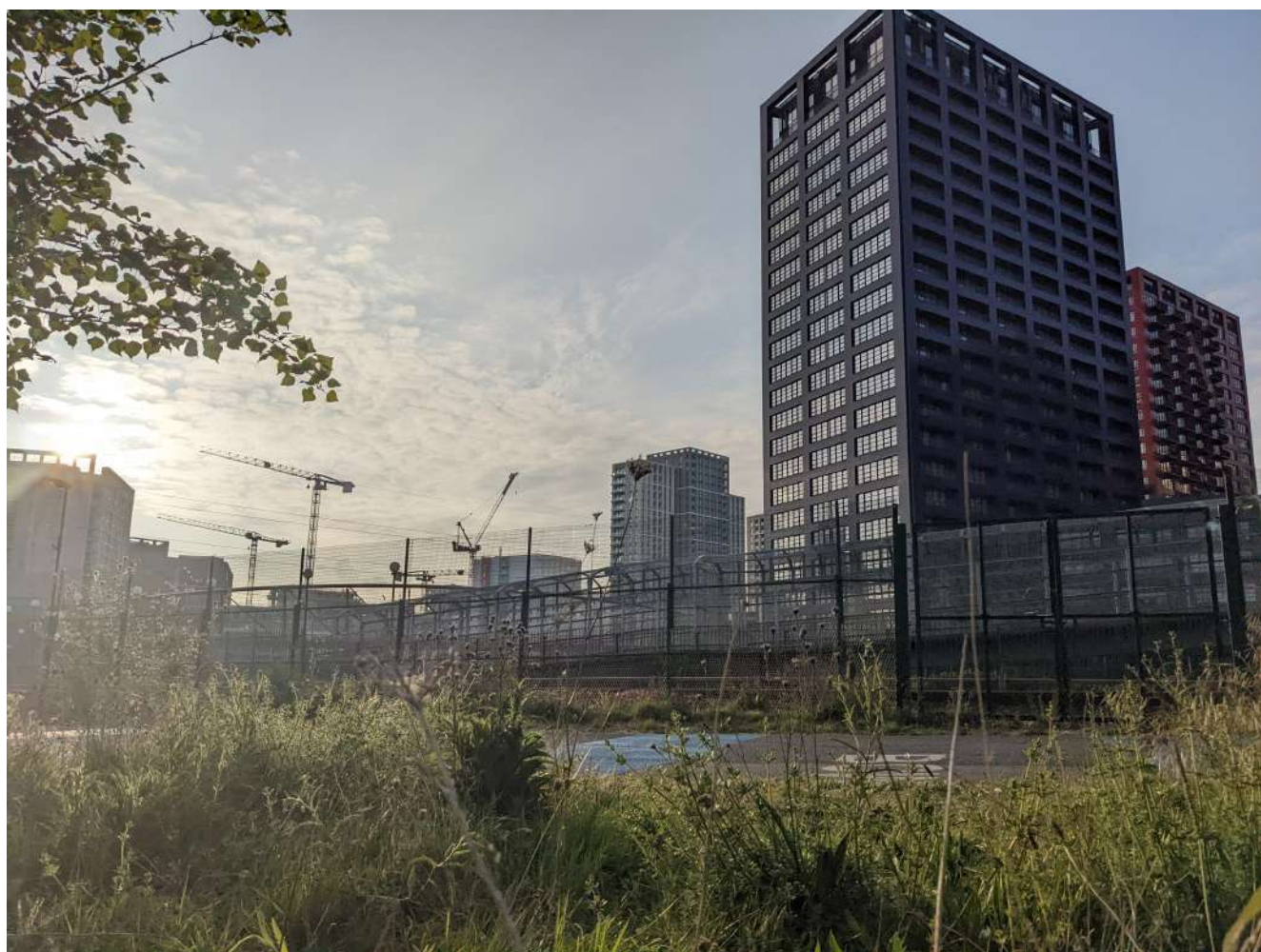


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a recuperation of social struggles of the 1970s back into the art institution, producing a form of reflexivity that is ultimately too comfortable and contemplative. Limited to acts of self-exposure, its immanent critique of the spaces of artistic exhibition and discourse rests at highlighting the ‘social and symbolic parameters’ of the institution via the physical fabric and material space. By confining itself to the representational space, it accepts and reproduces the ‘moralising premises’ that perpetuate it, preserving its frame as a condition of legitimacy. Without moving beyond this gesture of making visible – in this case, what is already known – the ‘horizon of disclosure’ *per se* is valorised and held up as normative for art: we are left with an art, and a form of critique, that can ‘point’ but not ‘grab’. When the ‘legitimate’ bounds of art’s critical potential become circumscribed in this way, artists are essentially left identifying with their target of critique, as well as their position within relations of production. Artists are brought together with the institution in a ‘half-hearted *tableau vivant* of autonomy’, inflating the ‘phantom power’ of autonomous art and allowing a flow of critical ‘capital’ back into the institution.³⁶ When art is reified as an exceptional space of freedom, its dependence upon massive and wide-ranging practices of extraction and social injustice is obfuscated and the ‘desire for the political in the field of art’ is captured and bent towards affirmation and repetition of these violent practices.³⁷ How might art move beyond this paradox in which, as Andrea Fraser puts it, the ‘institution of critique’ becomes co-extensive with the ‘institution of art’?³⁸ What are the conditions of possibility under which art and critique might actualise their grabbing potential? How to keep that horizon fractured and introverted?

Infrastructural critique, Marina tells us, would take an immanent view on the means of production or conditions of possibility of both the institution and its critique.³⁹ In an unusually biographical register during her 2022 Arnheim lecture at the Humboldt, Marina described how her work had always been in some way or another about ‘conditions of possibility’, detailing how participating in Riot Grrrl and DIY zine culture in the 1990s laid the ground for her thinking about art and politics by demonstrating how forms of organising were as important as any artistic product – the distinction being a ‘relatively contingent matter of practice’.⁴⁰ While

Kant established transcendental conditions for knowledge, tracing the ‘legitimate’ limits of reason – defining the possible, by demarcating the impossible – the idea accrues a more ‘concrete’ register in Marina’s work. *Material* ‘conditions of possibility’ include the ‘existence of a demarcated field of practice’ and practices that transpire within – and traverse in and out of – that field. They thus imply ‘conditions of legibility’ for practices, and a field’s composition ‘along the vectors of objective and subjective determination by race, class, gender and relation to the law.’⁴¹ Given Marina’s interest in Deleuze and Guattari whose ideas run through her texts, often implicitly, it also includes the formation of subjectivity through the social organisation and orientation of desire under capitalist value relations. To understand conditions of possibility as concrete, is to avoid pre-given abstractions – e.g. the ‘institutional’ – and reconstruct the object in all its complexity and contingency. Conditions of possibility are both prerequisites for knowledge, desire, hope or action, and the materially determinate products of it, meaning they are plastic and malleable.

Given the deep and multi-layered nature of these conditions, how can we conceptualise this malleability? Foucault’s inversion of the Kantian problematic asks: ‘in what is given to us as universal, necessary, obligatory, what place is occupied by whatever is singular, contingent, and the product of arbitrary constraints?’⁴² What appear as transcendental conditions can be revealed as historical and contingent – made possible by their own set of conditions – and, in doing so, the contingencies, exceptions or breakage points can be gleaned. Marina would appreciate this recursive softening of the boundary between ‘conditions’ and ‘production’, but wouldn’t stop at puncturing the illusion of the necessity of these limits. Instead, she wants to

forget about insides and outsides as Kantian ‘what it is possible for us to know, what is it possible for us to hope’ ... as limits or borders for us, and take them up as productive equipment afforded by the field of art both economically and ideologically.⁴³

Material conditions can be mobilised and weaponised against the ‘field’, ‘turning that border into a chalk drawing on the pavement around a defunct institution’ and, drawing on Fred Moten, ‘taking it as a space for our “plans”’.⁴⁴ Reflexivity thus gains a materialist register; from the reflexivity of the contemplative subject, to one



of the conditions being mobilised as the tools and objects of action.

To avoid the ‘comfort zone of reflexivity’ art must do more than point out further infrastructural layers of the institution. It must operate ‘transversally’ to its institutional grammar, across representational and material realms and registers with the aim of mobilising and repurposing them. Marina saw the work of Cameron Rowland, which explores how juridical, cultural and financial artefacts and infrastructures reveal continuing profiting from colonialism and slavery, as one example. In *Encumbrance* (2020) at the ICA, Rowland carried out a re-mortgaging of the mahogany fittings obtained by the royal building as part of colonial trade. In *Disgorgement* (2016) they established an insurance trust – The Reparations Purpose Trust – held in the name of Artist’s Space that bought shares in the Aetna insurance company. This company, that sold insurance to slaveowners, would pay out in the event of federal financial repayments for chattel slavery in the US. For Marina, Rowland’s art practices move beyond a simple critique of the institution as property to identify the wider apparatus of racialised capitalism as a

‘spectrum of real abstractions’ – value, property, race. At the same time, by mobilising them at the level of function, the work enacts a desire for reparation by introducing ‘friction’ into the ‘valorisation pathways of contemporary art’.⁴⁵ Rowland’s practices don’t just point to the art institution’s role in the continued reproduction of the colonial and capital relation. Rather, they deconstruct the material or infrastructural conditions of autonomous art by materialising its contradictory ground, inserting itself within ‘the gap between the institution’s gestural benevolence and material violence’.⁴⁶ Rowland’s works enact what Marina – in reference to Saidiya Hartmann – calls a ‘burdened materialism’.⁴⁷ They move between the speculative form and empirical realism by working on real-life infrastructure as ‘enabling constraints’ for inequality, profit and death.

While art cannot escape its autonomous character through dissolving itself into social or political practice, infrastructural critique can occur through labour struggles and social antagonisms that keep a ‘double focus’ within and beyond the institution. Marina was connected to the 2018 protests and picket against the

new campus art centre, the Goldsmith's Centre of Contemporary Art (GCCA), focusing on the labour conditions of the racialised migrant cleaners, who were outsourced to a private firm. She was also interested in the articulation of BDS, Fuck the Police, anti-displacement and Decolonize This Place militants at the Whitney, and their conjunction with the social antagonisms of museum and biennial staff. 'Transversal' art practices can give rise to 'speculative alliances' between diverse actors who are brought together not through some form of positive identification, but negatively – through recognition that the same forces are destroying their lives. Such art practices, Marina argues, tend to relate to the art institution as an exemplary but ultimately contingent space of capitalist reproduction, which protects against an overidentification with that institution's recuperative logics. Social and political movements that mobilise identity categories in order to stake out antagonism rather than to claim sameness – movements of non-identity – can thus 'deflect the reification of boundaries in practice' without completely dissolving the delimitation necessary for the identification of resources that might enable strategic thinking. By politicising rather than denying 'socially effective differences' and inscribing these through and within determinate social spaces, 'cuts' and 'breathing holes' can be made that reveal something about the material conditions for transformation. A shift to infrastructural critique represents a desire to mediate the closures and inflations, both theoretically and practically, 'focusing the link between the material and ideological conditions of the institution of art in a way that de-centres rather than affirms it.'⁴⁸

Marina was part of a growing group of global thinkers trying to rearticulate the continuing relevance of critical theory and critique. Whatever she was writing about, it was always, at the same time, an investigation into the material possibilities of critique, and a reflection upon the form that critique should take today. If, in its philosophical origins, critique is an analysis of 'conditions of possibility', then critique itself must have conditions of possibility – 'materially infrastructural', rather than epistemological – which can be examined through the same process.⁴⁹ Critical theory must always be prepared to turn its thinking upon itself, as Marina often did. Most notably, she acknowledged how her developing interest in critical Black studies had forced her to

rethink her earlier genealogy of capitalist and aesthetic forms, demonstrating that modernity and modern art couldn't be grasped adequately without foregrounding processes of dispossession and dehumanisation.⁵⁰ Her interest in critique was also an interest in the formation of subjectivities for emancipatory ends. She believed that an infrastructural mode of critique could work against the 'unconditional autonomy of the isolated European-identified Enlightenment subject', which has informed most debates in radical theory, and could instead help to reanimate a side-lined history of critique as 'a material practice of antagonism whose subject, if it has one, is dispersive, uncategorisable and collective.'⁵¹

In her final years, Marina refused to dwell upon her illness. She had no interest in reifying what she saw as the 'contingency of cells' into an identity, and rejected the claim that some deeper meaning for her life could be unearthed through grappling with her own mortality. There would be no overly simple reconciliation. Instead, she continued reading, writing and giving talks, animating bats, and clams, and hedgehogs.

Notes

1. This is taken from a quote in a text written for a 2017 film produced by Channels, a feminist artmaking collective in which Marina participated.
2. From Marina Vishmidt, 'Speculation to Infrastructure: Material and Method in the Politics of Contemporary Art', Arnheim Lecture at Humboldt, 2022.
3. Kerstin Stakemeier, 'Marina's Cue's', in *e-flux Notes* (May 2024).
4. Marina Vishmidt, 'Art, Value, Subjects, Reasons. Some Aspects of Speculation as Production' in Simon Baier and Markus Klammer, eds., *Aesthetics of Equivalence* (Berlin: August Verlag, 2023), 112.
5. Marina Vishmidt and Andreas Petrossiants, 'Spaces of Speculation: Movement Politics in the Infrastructure', and interview for *Historical Materialism* (2020), available at: <https://www.historicalmaterialism.org/spaces-of-speculation-movement-politics-in-the-infrastructure/>.
6. Marina Vishmidt, *Speculation as a Mode of Production: Forms of Value Subjectivity in Art and Capital* (Leiden: Brill, 2018); Kerstin Stakemeier and Marina Vishmidt, *Reproducing Autonomy: Work, Money, Crisis and Contemporary Art* (London: Mute Publishing, 2016). An anthology of Marina's writings on infrastructural critique is forthcoming as Marina Vishmidt, *Infrastructural Critique: between Reproduction and Abolition* (London: Verso, 2026).

7. See Roland Simon, 'Distinction de Genres, Programmitisme et Communisation' in *Théorie Communiste* (2010); Maya Andrea Gonzalez, 'Communization and the Abolition of Gender' in Benjamin Noys, ed., *Communization and its Discontents: Contestation, Critique and Contemporary Struggles* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2011); P. Valentine, 'The Gender Distinction in Communization Theory, *LIES* 1 (2012); Endnotes, 'The Logic of Gender', in *Endnotes 3: Gender, Race, Class and Other Misfortunes* (2013).
8. Danny Hayward, 'A Life Lived in Different Circumstances', forthcoming in *Variant* (2025).
9. Marina Vishmidt, from an unpublished interview with Thomas Watson conducted in 2023.
10. Hayward, 'A Life Lived'.
11. Marina Vishmidt, 'Externality and Necessity in Marxist and Ecological Concepts in Political Theory', delivered as an introduction at a workshop of the same name at York Political Theory Workshop, University of York, 2022.
12. Vishmidt, 'Spaces of Speculation'.
13. Vishmidt, 'Art, Value, Subjects, Reasons', 120.
14. Vishmidt, 'Spaces of Speculation'.
15. Ibid.
16. Vishmidt, 'Art, Value, Subjects, Reasons', 123.
17. Vishmidt, 'Spaces of Speculation'.
18. Stefan Germer, 'Haacke, Broodthaers, Beuys', *October* 45 (1989), 5. Thanks to Anthony Iles for pointing out Marina's enduring affection for this quote.
19. Anthony Iles, 'Plastic Givens: Speculation, Antagonism and Recursion in Unfinished Work with Marina Vishmidt, a talk given at Historical Materialism Conference, London, 2024.
20. Vishmidt, 'Spaces of Speculation'.
21. Marina Vishmidt, 'The Paradox of Self-Abolition: A Mapping Exercise', in *May 16* (2016), 32.
22. This form of critique appears in many of Marina's texts. See for example 'Known Nowheres', in Ines Doujak & Oliver Ressler, eds, *Utopian Impulse: Flares in the Dark-room* (London: Pluto Press, 2015); 'Two Reproductions in (Feminist) Art and Theory since the 1970s', in *Third Text* 31: 1 (2017).
23. Vishmidt, 'The Paradox of Self-Abolition', 27.
24. Ray Brassier, 'Wandering Abstraction', *Mute Magazine* (2014). While Marina agreed with Brassier's critique of the logical paradox of self-abolition, she rejected his emphasis upon cognition and reason as the ultimate driver of revolutionary overcoming.
25. Vishmidt and Hayward, 'Self-Dissolution', 8.
26. Vishmidt, 'The Paradox of Self-Abolition', 32.
27. Vishmidt, 'Known Nowheres' 125.
28. Vishmidt and Hayward, 'Self-Dissolution', 9.
29. Marina Vishmidt and Zoe Sutherland, '(Un)making Value: Reading Social Reproduction Through the Question of Totality', in Kevin Floyd, Jen Hedler Phillis and Sarika Chandra, eds, *Totality Inside Out: Rethinking Crisis and Conflict under Capital* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2022), 85.
30. Ibid.
31. Vishmidt and Hayward, 'Self-Dissolution', 35-36.
32. Marina draws upon the work of Ruth Wilson Gilmore and Zandi Sherman.
33. Endnotes, 'Error', in *Endnotes 5: The Passions and the Interests* (Glasgow: Bell & Bain, 2019).
34. Marina Vishmidt, 'Only as Self-Relating Negativity: Infrastructure and Critique', *Journal of Science and Technology of the Arts* 13:3 (2021), 15.
35. Vishmidt, 'Only as Self-Relating Negativity', 14.
36. Marina Vishmidt, 'Beneath the Atelier, the Desert: Critique, Institutional and Infrastructural', in Tom Holert and Maria Hlavajova, eds, *Marion von Osten: Once We Were Artists* (A BAK Critical Reader in Artists' Practice) (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2017), 219.
37. Vishmidt, 'Spaces of Speculation'.
38. Andrea Fraser, 'From the Critical Institutions to the Institution of Critique', *Artforum* 44:1 (September 2005).
39. Vishmidt, 'Only as Self-Relating Negativity', 14.
40. Vishmidt, 'From Speculation to Infrastructure'.
41. Ibid.
42. Michel Foucault, 'What is Enlightenment, *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 45.
43. Vishmidt, 'Spaces of Speculation'.
44. Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 2013).
45. Vishmidt, 'From Speculation to Infrastructure'.
46. Ibid.
47. Saidiya Hartman, 'The Burdened Individuality of Freedom', in *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).
48. Vishmidt, 'Beneath the Atelier', 227.
49. Vishmidt, 'From Speculation to Infrastructure'.
50. Marina acknowledges her indebtedness to Fred Moten, Denise Ferreira da Silva, Sylvia Wynter, Saidiya Hartman, Hannah Black, David Lloyd and Brenna Bhandar for this turn in her thinking.
51. Vishmidt, 'Only as Self-Relating Negativity', 22. While there isn't adequate space to develop this here, running through much of Marina's work is a critique of the 'ruse of rationality'. In her final years she became interested in the work of Sylvia Wynter and her idea that the human is a 'genre' defined by the overdetermined historical accident of white supremacist patriarchal capitalism. For Marina, the question of what constitutes reason is the very fulcrum of political antagonism.