

# Theaster Gates

*Soul Manufacturing Corporation*

2011–ongoing

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Skilled potters train apprentices in a pottery studio in the exhibition space. **Theaster Gates** investigates skill, learning and craft as part of *Soul Manufacturing Corporation*. Clay is the material that enables this process to unfold: responsive and flexible, choreographed by body, hands and mind through a labour-intensive process.

Gates believes that galleries ‘should be an open space that questions modes of production, systems of power, and access to the imagination for everyone’. With a background in urban planning, ceramics and religious studies, he transforms spaces as a way of developing local economies and artistic education. His practice is a call for action - from the poetics of making and the intimacy of relationships, to the politics of the neighbourhood and the global art world.

Poet and performer **Zena Edwards** has been invited by Theaster Gates to give weekly readings on craft and labour as ‘gifts to the makers’.

# Pedro Reyes

## *Sanatorium*

### 2013

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**Pedro Reyes'** purpose-built *Sanatorium* comprises a suite of treatment rooms offering a variety of group and individual therapies. Throughout the day, a series of appointments are available to visitors. To fully experience the work, visitors must book in as a 'patient'.

Originally trained as an architect, Reyes is interested in using therapy as a methodology and material with which to make work. Combining the language and theory of psychology and analysis with that of other disciplines such as theatre, performance, fine art and philosophy, Reyes tests the theory of 'sociatry'. This science and art of healing society was first articulated in 1930 by Jacob Levi Moreno as a way of curing the ills associated with urban living, without a reliance on prescription drugs such as depression, loneliness, neurosis and other pathologies.

In *Sanatorium*, non-professional 'therapists' trained by the artist, deliver his placebo therapies. Reyes sees *Sanatorium* as a way of democratising therapy making it available to all.

# Wayward Plants

## *Improbable Botany*

### 2013

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Designers, artists and urban growers, London collective **Wayward Plants** create narrative environments. At the heart of their gardens, orchards and greenhouses are stories about plants, serving as catalyst for envisaging alternative approaches to agriculture, food production and consumption.

Wayward Plants has created *Improbable Botany*, a group of futuristic greenhouses that are imagined to be lunar chambers growing food, genetically engineered sheds and bicycle trees for a fictional colony, grown by farmers on the moon in correlation to lunar and earth cycles.

Wayward Plants explores the practise of growing and harvesting crops, taking inspiration from biodynamic farming. Together with children from Lauriston Primary School, Hackney, they compared the growth of seeds planted to the four moon phases. In a letter exchange with fictional moon farmers, they entered into a fantastic, inter-planetary dialogue about the future of our relationship with nature.

# Ostengruppe

## *The Spirit of Utopia*

2013

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Founded in 2001, **Ostengruppe** is a Moscow-based design laboratory who inspired by modern functionalist design, undertake projects as diverse as graphics, television, web-based media, video, interior design, and stage design. For *The Spirit of Utopia*, Ostengruppe has designed a series of twelve posters responding to the exhibition.

The group's activities are rooted in alternative culture, pre-revolutionary protest and radical attitude to visual language. Following traditions of 20th century graphic art, the designers refuse distinctions between any notion of 'high' or 'low' art. They focus their attention on the genre of the poster and transform traditions of street advertisement into a method of alternative visual culture.

# Yto Barrada

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**Yto Barrada's** selection of works for *The Spirit of Utopia* captures the breadth and complexity of her practice and the multiple platforms on which it operates from the art world to that of cinema.

Based in Tangier, Morocco, Barrada's work reflects the everyday life and times of the city. Using documentary as a formal approach to making work, Barrada simultaneously adopts a metaphoric handling of her imagery as she charts the social, political and economic changes taking place in this region, playfully reflecting the complex and uneasy relationship to the area's colonial past.

Asserting individual narratives within historic structures of colonial power, memory, history, education and unreliable narratives are all explored in Barrada's sculptural, film and poster works. Her work with the Cinémathèque de Tanger, where she is one of organisation's founding directors, is also evoked throughout the show with the project at Cinéma Rif, encouraging an appreciation and discussion around the rich history of Arab film.

# Peter Liversidge

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**Peter Liversidge's** work realises 'proposals' through creativity, compromise and collaboration. Looking at institutional decision-making and re-defining traditional notions of authorship, Liversidge's Proposals for this exhibition, take the form of a bookwork, several objects and an ongoing programme of activities.

*Proposal no. 14 - Free Signs* consists of American yard-signs, advertising freely available goods or discarded items for the taking. Liversidge collected each sign and replaced it with a hand-drawn replica, engaging puzzled owners in discussions about art and the ideas of its value.

*Proposal no. 26 - Free Posters* show the frontispiece of the original 1901 Whitechapel Gallery Spring exhibition catalogue. Screenprinted for this Exhibition by Foundation Course students at Leeds College of Art, the posters ask for a contribution to the public gallery space, while themselves being gifts to visitors of this exhibition.

# Superflex

## *The Financial Crisis*

2009, Video Installation, 12'25''

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In this video installation, **Superflex** place the individual in the center of the ongoing financial crisis. Directed by a professional hypnotist, the viewer encounters and is invited to adapt different emotional states.

The hypnotist guides us through hypothetical identities – from a dominant oligarch to an average employee – in order to confront ourselves as part of a fragile society.

Considering the economic meltdown as a psychological condition with profound effects on society, Superflex view hypnotism as a state of mind where the individual can be cathartically relieved from the fear imposed by the crisis. In a paradoxical suggestion, a reduced level of consciousness through hypnotism is posited as a means of taking action.

# Time/Bank

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**Time/Bank** operates as a platform for the trading of time and skills. Focusing on ideas drawn from alternative currencies, mutualism and Marxist theory, it is a mechanism of exchange, circumventing traditional financial transaction as a measure of value.

Time/Bank's 'hour notes' are the currency that allow individuals to request, offer or pay for services. The accumulated credit can be used, saved or transferred to another individual or group. Operating to date predominantly in the art world, the intention of Time/Bank is to create a parallel international micro-economy.

The project has developed from research into the history of time-banking, interrogating late Capitalism's systems and structures. Here Time/Bank present their archive, comprising images and articles relating to economics, alternative currencies and their own activities. Throughout the show, a series of speakers from academics to economists and activists will use this archive to suggest new modes of exchange and ways of operating.