
Chapter Twelve

Transfer

...AS YOU
PAY FOR
MATERIALS.

PRACTICE
GROUP
COORDINATION
...

**DON'T
FORGET TO
ACKNOWLEDGE
SOMEONE
SPECIAL.**



Transfer: the exchange of resources for goods or labor.

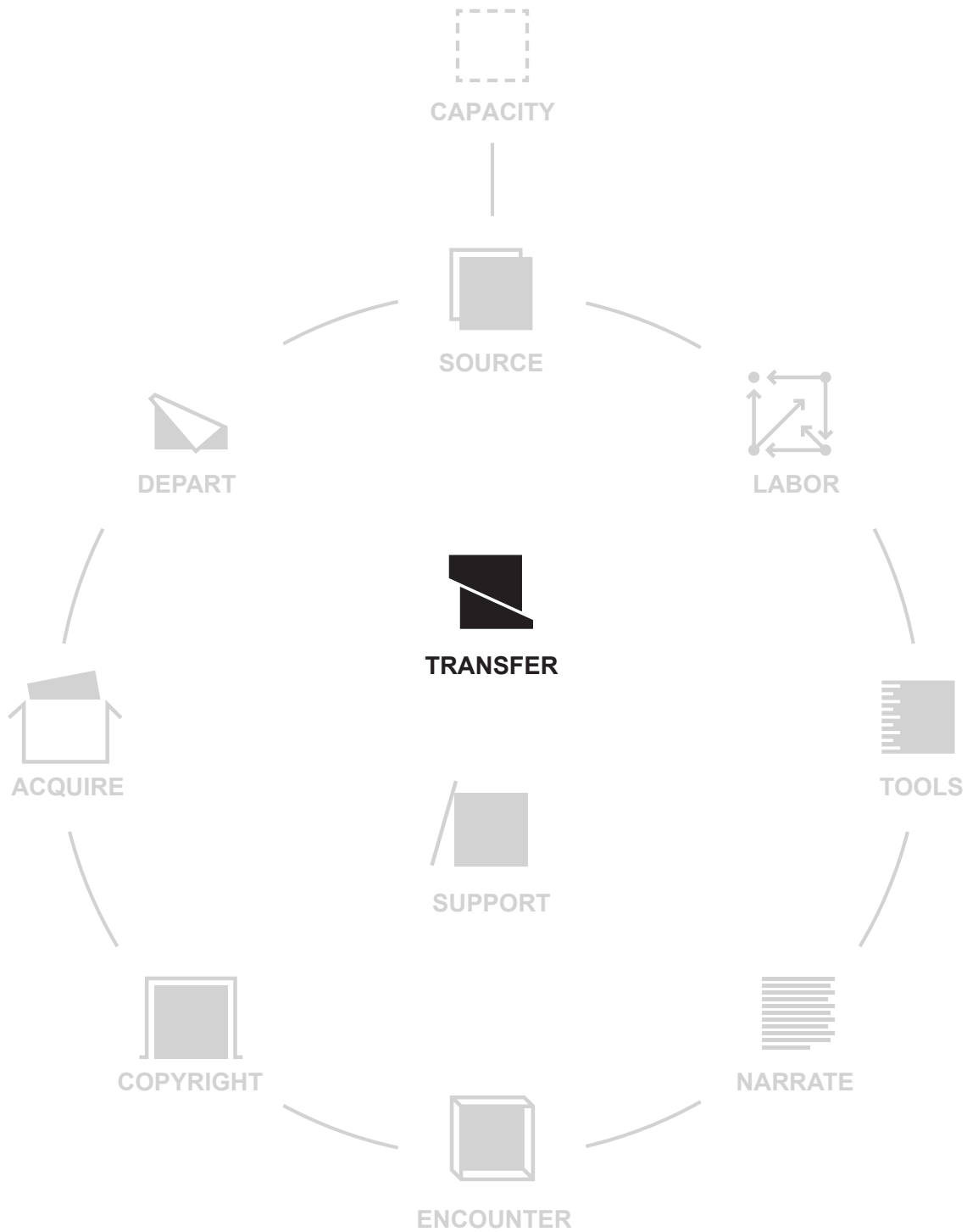
Types of transfer include: free, gift, mutual aid, borrowed, bartered, paid, stolen. For example, a photograph might be available for anyone to take for free, it might circulate between friends, or it could be traded for another project. It could be also be sold, or stolen.

Transfer is implicated in all of the other phases in the lifecycle. We place particular emphasis on the relationship between transfer and the phases we call labor and support.

What if transfer were integral to your project?

*

We suggest that the following section be shared with the group as best suits your context, either read aloud—in whole or in part—or assigned to be discussed in your space of learning. Before you begin to read, we invite you to ground yourself in the space: notice the air on your skin and your feet on the ground. What are your feelings and sensations at this moment? What are you bringing to this text? Take a moment to become aware of this. We invite you to notice what comes up for you, as you are reading this chapter. We will ask you to reflect upon this at the end of this chapter.






Introduction

The phase of the lifecycle of any project that we refer to as “transfer” considers the exchange of resources for goods or labor. This phase utilizes the following types of transfer:

- *Free*: Given or available without charge.
- *Gift*: Given willingly to someone without payment.
- *Mutual Aid*: Support or assistance given and reciprocated with regularity.
- *Borrowed*: Taken and used with the intention of returning it.
- *Bartered*: Exchanged (goods or labor) for other goods or labor without using money.
- *Paid*: Provided a sum of money in exchange for goods and labor.
- *Stolen*: Taken without permission or legal right and with no intention to return.

You likely use monetary and non-monetary transfers to get your projects done. When discussing transfer, we look at the specific exchanges you undertake for each project. *If you are interested in the ways that you might holistically support yourself, see Chapter 9: Support* .

Story

Danica Phelps is an artist whose project *Income Outcome* involved creating a system for making drawings that document all of her income and expenses. We conducted an interview with Phelps, who spoke about the origins of this system, which began in 1996 and continues to this day. Phelps said:

I often had very little money. I often had less than \$100. So when I finished graduate school I had no expectation at all that anyone would be looking at my work. I assumed that it would take a long time before anyone would even care about it at all, or that I would have the opportunity to show anyone. So [*Income Outcome*], actually started as a very personal project of keeping track of how much money I had so that I wouldn't run out as easily. I am not very good with money. So I started drawing everything that I spent money on and then putting it up on the wall, so that I could see it all. And that had a few advantages like trying not to run out of money and also experiencing what I spent money on more. So if I only had \$20, and I spent \$4 on a bowl of soup, then the drawing would become worth a lot more

[for me]. It was almost like I was generating something that had more value by drawing it.¹

In her artwork, Danica Phelps focuses on transfers that are paid, using a sum of money in exchange for goods and labor. Danica uses the capacity “express,” which we define as being “reliably able to create works that convey an idea, a feeling, or a personal meaning. I spend a lot of time identifying the sources that form my beliefs, and assess whether my sources are credible. I see myself in a state of continuous transformation, seeking to identify the root causes and historical conditions that form my beliefs and knowledge.”² Do you have visual systems for documenting paid transfers or other forms of transfer: free, gift, mutual aid, borrowed, bartered, or stolen?

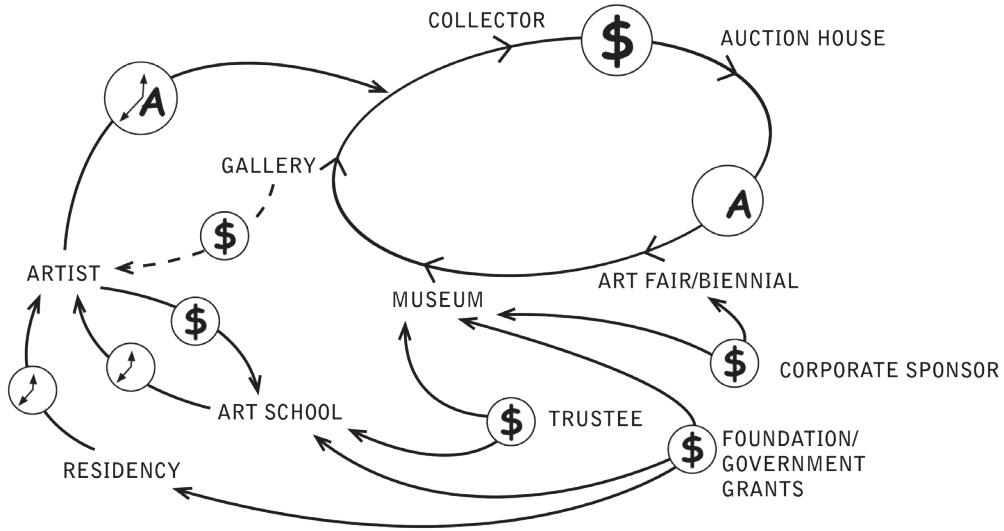
Discussion

Imagine that you receive an opportunity to make a new project for an independent space run by artists, near school. The space provides you with a stipend of \$200 for the entire project, a small gallery space, and one month to complete it. Think about how you will navigate all of the transfers that are required to complete your project.

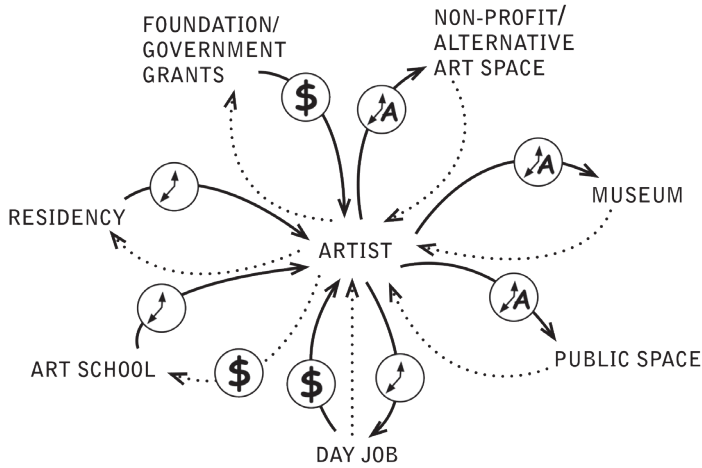
- How will you transfer your resources of time, money, and space?
- Will you get materials from a scrap yard, free store, or dumpster?
- Will you barter an hour of your time for an hour of one of your peer’s time when they help with install, or are you already engaged in an ongoing, informal transfer of mutual aid, where you help one another without keeping track?
- Will you ask local businesses to donate food, materials, or supplies for the project, as a gift toward the project?
- Will you pay someone at an hourly rate or give them a lump sum of money to help you install?
- Or will you put an advertisement out for unpaid interns, as many artists do?

In her drawings *The Business of Art*, the artist Lize Mogul visualizes all of the flows of resources that move between artists in both for-profit and non-profit art practices. Notice the flows of money and cultural value in *The Business of Art* and in *The Non-Profit Art Practice*. Notice the flows of time given to artists by residencies and the labor (or “art production” time) given by artists to art spaces and to day jobs in *The Non-Profit Art Practice*.

THE BUSINESS OF ART



NON-PROFIT ART PRACTICE



KEY	
	ART PRODUCTION
	ART COMMODITY
	TIME
	MONEY
	CULTURAL VALUE

LIZE MOGEL 2009

When talking about transfer, we ask you to consider both the privileges and inequities that provide and deny access to resources in the arts and beyond. *See Chapter 9 for more on support /■.⁷ It is also important to acknowledge the connections between transfer ■ and labor i□. See Chapter 13.⁷* In art contexts with immense capital accumulation,³ widespread networks of workers are engaged to produce projects, many of them art graduates and working artists who are (under)employed as interns.⁴

Consider an unpaid internship. If you are an unpaid intern, working for an artist, the transfer could be considered gifted, bartered, or stolen, depending on the agreement you make with them. The internship could be a gift, if you genuinely want to donate your labor to their project, because you believe in it and want to support them. The internship could be a barter if you ask the artist for a direct exchange of training, introductions to specific people, or access to equipment, materials, or space as an exchange in return for your labor. You might imagine that an internship will provide you with extra training or an arts education; if it does not, it is likely to be exploitative. The internship could be a stolen form of transfer if your labor is taken without compensation or credit, even though you are producing value for the artist. Even if you are paid for your labor, it is rare that you will receive compensation that directly correlates to the value that the artist receives. As The Carrot Workers' Collective in London writes in *Surviving Internships: A Counter Guide to Free Labour in the Arts*:

Many of us ... are very concerned by the growing phenomenon of unpaid or underpaid labour that is happening under the headings of internship schemes, volunteering, job placements and trainee positions.... We are concerned about this situation because rather than providing opportunities for young people, unpaid and often long term work experience is precisely one of the mechanisms for the erosion of decent working conditions (and therefore a decent life) for everyone.⁵

Can you imagine a scenario in which an internship might be possible for, and beneficial to, you? *See Chapter 6: How Are You in the World and How Is the World in You? for more.⁷*

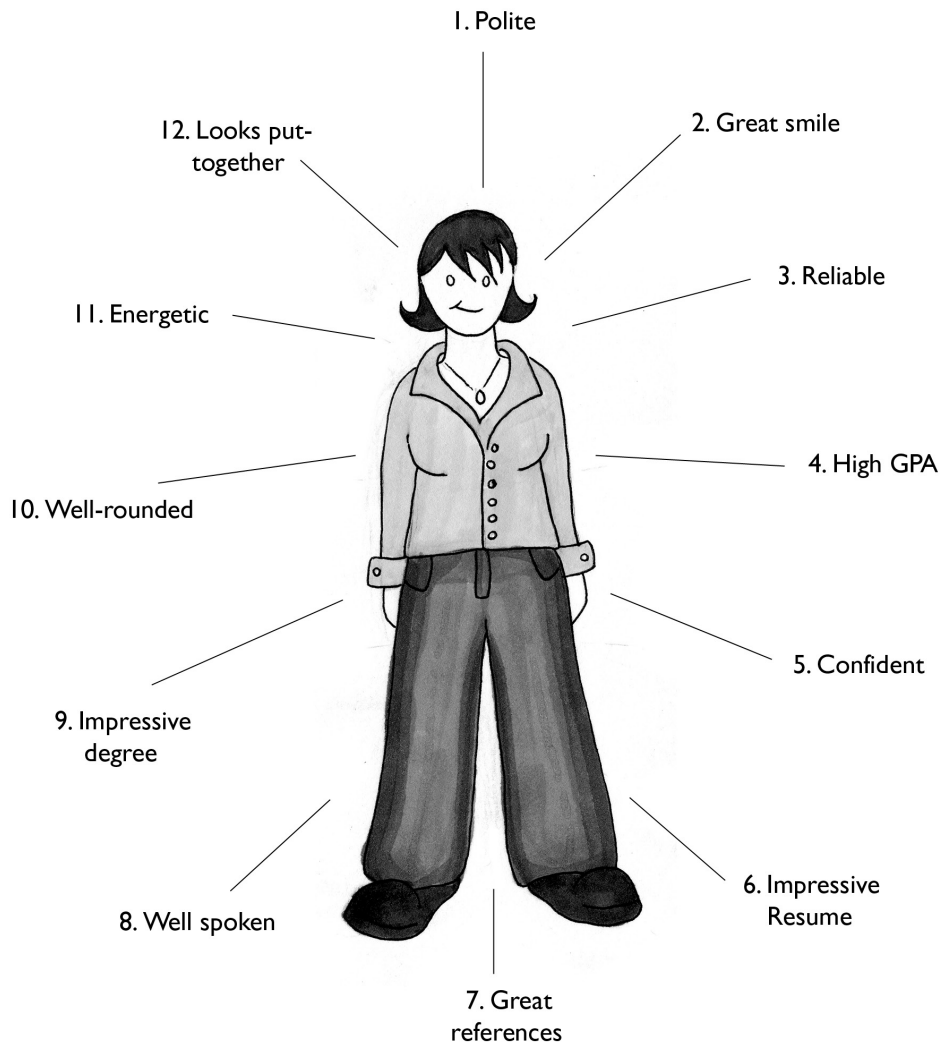
Who has access to an internship or a job in the arts? Resource Generation, a self-described “multiracial membership community of young people with wealth and/or class privilege committed to the equitable distribution of wealth, land, and power,”⁶ uses the following diagram to unpack ideas about internship candidates who are “polite” have a “great smile” and an “impressive resume.” They remind us that this is because these candidates were taught upper-class manners, had access to expen-

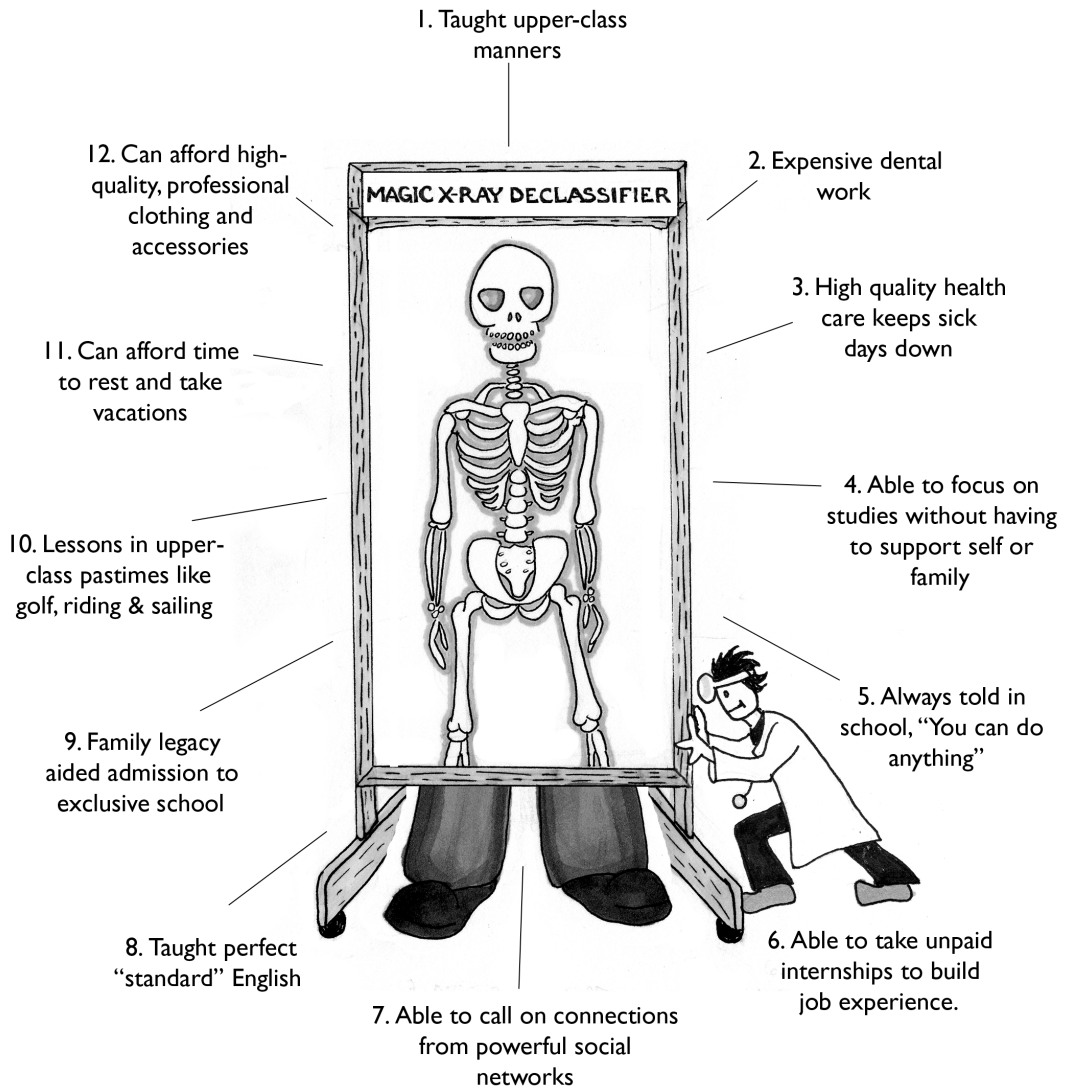
sive dental work, and were able to take an unpaid internship to build job experience.

In the dominant histories of aesthetics, art has been theorized as “anything that is not a job.”⁷ This characterization occurs in tandem with a view that it is a privilege for an artist to labor and that the promise of visibility itself—rather than payment—is an adequate form of compensation. This also contributes to another misconception about artists which is that they are “free” to work whenever they please, without concern for compensation or future sales.⁸ See *Chapter 13: Labor* for more.⁷ This is a rare privilege. The majority of artists rely on a “day job” as their main form of monetary support.⁹ With the current impact of student debt, job precarity, and rent burdens on arts graduates, more than one day job is often needed in order to survive, let alone provide the time and space to work on projects.¹⁰ See *Chapter 9: Support* for more.⁷

In social theories about art, the promise of recognition through self-expression is known as cultural capital. The term “cultural capital” was defined by the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu as “a person’s education (knowledge and intellectual skills) that provides advantage in achieving a higher social-status in society.”¹¹ While many artists fantasize about the transfer of cultural capital to financial capital in the form of higher wages and paid opportunities, cultural capital rarely creates significant financial remuneration. This is because the value of projects circulating in the marketplace is based on principles of scarcity; the fewer works of art there are the more valuable they become.¹² Arts organizations often claim to offer visibility rather than payment, exploiting artists by relying on their fantasy of accumulated cultural capital. Artists have been organizing to demand that arts organizations pay artists for the provision of content and for the production of new work for decades. From The Artist’s Union of the 1930s¹³ to the Art Workers’ Coalition of the 1960s,¹⁴ to Working Artists in the Greater Economy (W.A.G.E.)¹⁵ today, artists have come together to analyze their conditions and demonstrate their power to the arts institutions that would not exist without them. As the filmmaker Hollis Frampton pointed out in a letter to MoMA in 1973, in many scenarios, everyone is paid except for the artist:

I’ll put it to you as a problem in fairness. I have made, let us say, so and so many films. That means that so and so many thousands of feet of rawstock have been expended, for which I paid the manufacturer. The processing lab was paid, by me, to develop the stuff, after it was exposed in a camera for which I paid. The lens grinders got paid. Then I edited the footage, on rewinds and a splicer for which I paid, incorporating leader and glue for which I also paid. The





printing lab and the track lab were paid for their materials and services. You yourself, however meagerly, are being paid for trying to persuade me to show my work, to a paying public, for “love and honor.” If it comes off, the projectionist will get paid. The guard at the door will be paid. Somebody or other paid for the paper on which your letter to me was written, and for the postage to forward it. That means that I, in my singular person, by making this work, have already generated wealth for scores of people. Multiply that by as many other working artists as you can think of. Ask yourself whether my lab, for instance, would print my work for “love and honor,” if I asked them, and they took my question seriously, I should expect to have it explained to me, ever so gently, that human beings expect compensation for their work. The reason is simply that it enables them to continue doing what they do.¹⁶

All artists have to balance their well-deserved requests for payment with their desires to contribute their skills and gifts to spaces that are not dominated by market-values. While you might not be able to pay yourself or others to work with you on a project at this time, you do have control over your choices about how to give, barter, lend, or steal goods and services. When you are involved in non-monetary transfers, interpersonal relationships must be strengthened, as non-monetary transfers occur over time and often rely upon trust, honest dialogue, and goodwill to function. As you attempt to develop certain capacities, you may choose forms of transfer that connect you to people who you want to get to know more deeply. *See Chapter 5: Capacities* [□], and also the “Solidarity Economies” section in *Chapter 8: Understanding the Lifecycle from Multiple Perspectives* for more.⁷

Generally, monetary support for artists’ projects in the United States comes from artists’ project sales in for-profit galleries and/or from non-profit grants, residencies, or fellowships which are supported by individual philanthropists who receive a tax write-off. In many countries, demand for the arts is not based upon “the market” of buyers and sellers but, instead, art is seen as a public good.¹⁷ Internationally, many artists are given a stipend to create their work. In Denmark, Finland, Northern Ireland, Uzbekistan, and Australia, for example, artists can apply for and receive stipends to live and work as artists, regardless of the sale of their work. As the Danish Ministry of Culture stated, “artists should not receive support because they are poor, but because society needs their work.”¹⁸ In Mexico, “Mexican artists can pay their taxes with artwork.... Since 1957, the Mexican government has offered artists a deal—if they are able to sell five artworks in a year, they can offer the government artwork in lieu of tax payments.... [The government then] displays the art in museums and

government offices and loans them out for special exhibitions.”¹⁹ The National Endowment for the Arts in the United States spends 1/40th of what Germany does on arts per capita.²⁰ See *Chapter 9: Support* for more.²¹

In *Gauging the Grey Area*, a workshop created in 2014 by cultural workers Helena Keeffe del Pesco and Lauren van Haaften-Schick, participants were asked to talk about how they navigate opportunities offered to them by art spaces. After the workshop, *Art Practical* founder Patricia Maloney developed this list of questions that you might ask to get clarity.

To galleries:

- What would be your strategy for selling my work?
- Who among your existing clientele would be interested in my work?
- What fairs do you participate in?
- What fairs would you bring my work to?
- What online art consultancies do you use (Artsy, Artspace)?
- Which local art consultants do you work with?
- What production costs do you cover?
- Will the gallery take its percentage after my initial outlay for production has been covered?
- How much work do you sell on average for an artist from their first show?
- How much inventory do you keep?
- What is your advertising strategy? Budget?
- Can we get all this in writing?

To small nonprofit exhibition venues:

- What is my artist fee?
- What is my production budget?
- Can I suggest an existing work for inclusion?
- What is your average attendance for an exhibition/program/performance?
- What are your outreach strategies?
- How many exhibitions/programs/performances do you produce annually?
- What percentage of your budget is allocated for programming and exhibitions?
- What is your budget for this exhibition?
- What percentage of your budget is allocated for artist fees?
- What is the size of your staff?

- Can you estimate how many hours your staff will expend in producing this exhibition?
- How much overtime does your staff work?

To museums or kunsthalls:

- What is my artist fee?
- What is my production budget?
- What is my shipping budget?
- What is your estimated attendance for the exhibition/program/performance?
- What is the production budget for this exhibition?
- What is the advertising budget for this exhibition?
- What other departments (besides curatorial) will be involved with this exhibition?
- Can we set up a planning meeting with those departments?
- Will there be a catalogue or publication produced in conjunction with this project?
- How many copies will I receive?
- Will you distribute this publication to a list of individuals on my behalf?
- Will I get to work with the graphic designer on identity/branding?
- Will there be a members' reception? A donors' dinner?
- (If a commission for a collecting institution) What is the possibility that this work or one of my works will be acquired for the collection?

Quotations

Artists who make transfer visible often do so in order to start a dialogue about livelihood and to advocate for equitable payments, barter, mutual aid systems, and gifts.

“And while it is true that we have been confined to a role that serves capital, we have also been confined to a role in which we are expected to work against it. Art institutions expect us to question, and attempt to alter the aesthetic, political, material, social, and economic conditions from and within which we operate. Thus our exceptionality lies in our ability to work both inside and outside of capitalism at the same time, to draw from and work against. The problem is that we have been led to believe that we shouldn't get

paid to be in this position, that we don't have the right to be the exception to the rule." —W.A.G.E., 2015²¹

"Right now I am shipping six bags of green tea from Fujian province to MoMA in New York, via around five other institutions and private homes in China, UK and USA, which are acting as depots or transit points. Another pack of tea arrived from India to my flat in Bristol and then toured the Lake District before passing back through my flat & departing for Heathrow Airport, where it had touched down from India weeks before, to fly to New York in someone else's baggage. Both these shipments were actually super-efficient. The products got delivered to their exact destinations, they were enjoying not just frictionless but fruitful passage, hitchhiking on existing travel or at the most diverting their couriers a couple of blocks, so it's efficiency along completely different lines than streamlined or containerised cargo. The loops, which occur when an item passes through the same space twice can actually enhance the product's value in terms of its CV." —Kate Rich, 2013²²

"One of the hardest things about asking people to work *for* you rather than *with* you is that you have to take responsibility for the 'scope of work,' or the amount of labor that you are asking for. When you are working *with* people, in a collective, you can collectively decide to pay yourselves less by working beyond your budget, but when you are working alone, and asking someone to work *for* you, you have to be clear about the amount of work you are asking for, so that you can compensate the person you hire properly. When I hire people or barter with them, I make very clear agreements. I say exactly what I want them to do, by when, and for what amount of money (or exchange of time or labor, if it's a barter). I pay them well when I have a budget for the project, I barter my time for their time when I do not have a budget, and we all donate our time if it is for a project that is all-volunteer, as in most organizing and movement work. After we agree to a job or a barter, I do not change the agreement. I also never hire someone whose work I have not seen. For example, if they are a graphic designer, what have they designed in the past? I always assume that they can do something similar to what they have done before. I acknowledge their labor in public wall texts, some artists talks, and brochures. The best advice I got about this comes from Jen Abrams, a performing artist and co-founder of OurGoods.org, who told me to 'have no unenumerated expectations.' She asks me, 'Do you want it done, or do you want it done the way you would do it?'" —Caroline Woolard, 2018²³

“In 2016, the collective BFAMFAPhD was invited by two colleagues to present their work on a panel discussion about adjunct labor at the annual conference put on by the College Art Association (CAA), which was held that year in Washington, DC. The out-of-pocket expenses for two members of BFAMFAPhD would have been \$1,000 total—including a hotel room, travel, and food—all to speak on a panel on adjunct labor. We decided to make a video to represent us instead, and asked our colleagues to play it for us at the panel discussion. At the time we were a collective with an adjunct, a recent BFA graduate, and a full professor. We decided not to pay to participate in CAA. Instead, we chose to present our work in a form that could be repurposed and adapted for future contexts and to use our personal money for retreats and time together.” —Susan Jahoda, Emilio Martínez Poppe, and Caroline Woolard of BFAMFAPhD, 2016²⁴

Here are more artists, groups, and projects that come to mind when we think about transfer: The Architecture Lobby / Art Commons / Artists Equity / David Avalos / Blue Print / Carrot Workers Collective / Cornell Building Community / Creative Commons / The Fine Art Adoption Network / Andrea Franke / Felix Gonzalez-Torres / Louis Hock and Elizabeth Sisco / Alfredo Jaar / Justseeds / Ben Kinmont / Little Free Library / The Non-Participation Archive / Orchard Gallery / OurGoods / The Really Really Free Market / Pedro Reyes / Charlotte Posenenske / Trade School / Antonio Vega Macotela / W.A.G.E. / Caroline Woolard. What artists, groups, and projects come to mind for you?

Reflection

Which aspects of this chapter on transfer stood out to you? Take a moment to reflect upon, and write about, the following:

- Forms of transfer:
 - *Free*: Given or available without charge.
 - *Gift*: Given willingly to someone without payment.
 - *Mutual Aid*: Support or assistance given and reciprocated with regularity.
 - *Borrowed*: Taken and used with the intention of returning it.
 - *Bartered*: Exchanged (goods or labor) for other goods or labor without using money.
 - *Paid*: Provided a sum of money in exchange for goods and labor.

- *Stolen*: Taken without permission or legal right and with no intention to return.
1. Draw a diagram that mirrors Lize Mogul’s drawing to think through the flows that will be created with your project and the independent space run by artists in the example above.
 2. Can you imagine a scenario in which an internship might be possible for, and beneficial to, you? Make a list of scenarios in which you would gift, barter, or ask for payment for your labor. Include in your list the benefits and challenges of these options.
 3. * What feelings and sensations came up for you while you were reading this chapter? For example, did you feel surprise, frustration, or excitement? How did you hold these in your body? For example, did you sense these emotions in your shoulders, neck, and back while reading this chapter? *See the Social-Emotional Intelligence Project Reflection activity in Chapter 4: Teacher/Facilitator Guides.*⁷
 4. What would it mean to understand artmaking as a site of interdependence, both locally and globally, rather than as a site of individual use and exchange? Remember, art is a system of relationships. We understand from the long history of economically oriented critical theory that behind any object exists a system of extraction, of production, and of circulation whose very histories are hidden at the moment in which the object appears as free-standing, as individual, as a thing, often a commodity. For us, in this book, that “thing” is the art object.

1. Danica Phelps, interview by Susan Jahoda and Caroline Woolard, at the School of Visual Arts, New York, NY, June 2016.
2. Capacity adapted from Ellen Winner, Lois Hetland, Shirley Veenema, and Kimberly Sheridan, *Studio Thinking 2: The Real Benefits of Visual Arts Education* (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 2013). See also Harvard Project Zero, "How Do Artists Use The Studio Habits of Mind?" Artcore, 2015. <http://www.artcorelearning.org/studio-habits-of-mind/>; See *Chapter 5: Capacities for more*. The specific statement utilized in this chapter, "I spend a lot of time identifying the sources that form my beliefs, and assess whether my sources are credible. I see myself in a state of continuous transformation, seeking to identify the root causes and historical conditions that form my beliefs and knowledge," was added by the authors and is not included in "Studio Habits of Mind."
3. See Brian Whitener and Dan Nemser, "Circulation and the New University," *TOPIA Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies* 28 (Fall 2012): 165–170.
4. See Julian Boilen (Producer), Vicky Virgin (Data Analyst), and Caroline Woolard (Editor) (BFAMFAPhD), "School to Work," *Census Report*, US Census Bureau, American Community Survey Microdata 2009–2011, processed by BFAMFAPhD and IPUMS-USA, University of Minnesota, 2014, <http://censusreport.bfamfaphd.com>.
5. From description for The Carrot Workers Collective, *Surviving Internships: A Counter Guide to Free Labour in the Arts*, 2013, <https://carrotworkers.wordpress.com/counter-internship-guide/>.
6. Resource Generation, "Resource Generation," <https://resourcegeneration.org/>.
7. Leigh Claire La Berge, "Wages Against Artwork: The Social Practice of Decommodification," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, "Entrepreneurship," eds. Imre Szeman and Dan Harvey (2015): 575, https://www.academia.edu/15054268/_Wages_Against_Artwork_The_Social_Practice_of_Decommodification.
8. For more discussion on BFAMFAPhD, see BFAMFAPhD, "On the Cultural Value Debate," *Temporary Art Review*, April 13, 2015, <http://temporaryartreview.com/on-the-cultural-value-debate/>.
9. The "day job" is defined in the Urban Dictionary as "The talentless job you're currently working for just to make money, while in the process of following the career path you are working on and that you actually really want." Urban Dictionary, s.v. "day job," <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Day%20Job>.
10. BFAMFAPhD, "On the Cultural Value Debate."
11. Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in *Handbook of Theory of Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John Richardson, 46–58, (New York: Greenwood, 1986).
12. "I recall that Alan Bamberger and Daniel Grant—both highly respected writers within the world of art marketing—have suggested that scenarios like this exist. This destructive scenario forces one to think about why some artists choose to destroy their art," Brian Sherwin, "Would You Destroy Your Art?" *The Art Edge*, October 28, 2014, <http://theartedge.faso.com/blog/83175/would-you-destroy-your-art>.
13. Nicolas Lampert, "Organize! What the Artists' Union of the 1930s Can Teach Us Today," *Art Work*, October 25, 2009, <http://www.artandwork.us/2009/11/organize-what-the-artists-union-of-the-1930s-can-teach-us-today/>.
14. Lucy Lippard, "Art Workers Coalition, Not a History," *Studio International*, no. 180 (November 1970). Available, http://artsand-labor.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Lippard_AWC.pdf.
15. Working Artists and the Greater Economy (W.A.G.E.), "Fee Calculator," <https://wageforwork.com/fee-calculator>.
16. Hollis Frampton to Mr. Donald Richie, January 7, 1973, 2, republished on W.A.G.E., <https://wageforwork.com/files/0EP-jS1MYD6JkcD1J.pdf>.
17. See BFAMFAPhD, "On the Cultural Value Debate."
18. *Betænkning om Billedkunst (Report on Visual Arts)*, Danish Ministry of Culture, Denmark, 1998, quoted in Merja Heikkinen and the Arts Council of Finland, *The Nordic Model for Supporting Artists—Public Support for Artists in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden*, Research Reports of the Arts Council of Finland, no. 26, in cooperation with the Nordic Cultural Institute, 2003, 21, http://www.taik.fi/documents/10162/31519/tkt26_v5_%28EDM_14_1970_2666%29.pdf.
19. Jodie Gummow, "Culturally Impoverished: US NEA Spends 1/40th of What Germany Doles Out for Arts Per Capita," *AlterNet*, February 5, 2014, <http://www.alternet.org/culture/culturally-impoverished-us-nea-spends-140th-what-germany-doles-out-arts-capita>.
20. Ibid.
21. Silvia Federici, Shawn(ta) Smith-Cruz, Lise Soskolne and Melanie Gilligan, facilitated by Marina Vishmidt (W.A.G.E.), ("WE (Not I)," Roundtable at Artists Space, New York, NY, October 2015), <http://artistspace.org/programs/on-value>.
22. Kate Rich, in "What's New with Kate Rich and Feral Trade," interview by Silvia Mollichi and Matthew Fuller, ed. Bruce Sterling, *Wired*, July 28, 2013, <https://www.wired.com/2013/07/whats-new-with-kate-rich-and-feral-trade/>.
23. Caroline Woolard in conversation with Susan Jahoda, January 1, 2018.
24. Susan Jahoda, Emilio Martínez Poppe, and Caroline Woolard (BFAMFAPhD), "Pink collars or Pink Shackles." (College Art Association Conference, Washington, DC, February 3, 2016), <https://www.collegeart.org/pdf/conference/caa-program-2016.pdf>.