

## Occupy Derivatives!/ Politics “smallest p”

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As a diffuse force field of political actions (as opposed to a politics of party or unified movement), Occupy has trained our eyes on the problem of finance

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Where Kolbowski subjects capitalist realism’s luxury look to an infrared glare that illuminates complicities between wealthy sponsor and wealthy celebrity artist, William Powhida makes visible the art world’s grand sellout to Wall Street with charts, diagrams, and manifestos.

Even before OWS, Powhida was experimenting with political satire in ways that had him compared by critics to William Hogarth, Honoré Daumier, and the caricaturists of *Punch* and *Private Eye*. An installation in February 2008 at the Schroeder Romero gallery titled “The New York Enemy/Ally Project” was an electoral parody that arranged framed caricatures of power players on a scale of “equivocal” to “absolute” depending on how “voters” cast their ballots. In *Cosmology Number 1*, a mixed-media work from 2010, the heads of critics, curators, and collectors, arrayed on a wheel of fortune, were assigned a symbol (or hex sign) designating their status as “Saintly Benefactors,” “Rebels and Cynics,” “Dominators Diabolical,” “Destroyers Demonic.” Larry Gagosian, Jeff Koons, Jeffrey Deitch, Lisa Phillips, and Maurizio Cattelan faced off against the gallerist Elizabeth Dee (a “dealer angel”), Michael Waugh (an artist known for works focused on “The Wealth of Nations,” “The Accumulation of Capital,” and “The Inaugurals”), and the critic Ben Davis (dubbed a “World-class badass”). Davis’s “9.5 Theses on Art and Class” had gained particular notoriety: they charged art criticism with the task of critiquing the conditions “of middle-class creative labor

45. Silvia Kolbowski, “With What Should the Artist Be Satisfied?” in *The Artist as Public Intellectual*, ed. Stephan Schmidt-Wulffen (Vienna: Schlebrügge, 2008), p. 52. Originally presented as a slide projection during the symposium of the same name, sponsored by the Academy of Fine Arts and the Friends of the Secession, Vienna, October 16, 2004.

in a capitalist world"; discrediting art institutions that extract free labor from aspiring artists who challenge "art's current definition as a luxury good, or the primary concern of a specific professional sphere"; and militating for projects that surmount the paralyzing "critique of the art market paradigm."<sup>46</sup>

Powhida incorporated Davis's "Theses" into a show co-organized with Jennifer Dalton at the Winkelman Gallery (March 2010), posting them in the gallery vitrine. Their installation, *#class*, featured a classroom, chalkboard, and panels on topics like "Success," "Access," "The System Works," and "Bad Curating." It mined the double meaning of class as scene of instruction and socioeconomic category. It also provided a space for experimenting with attitudes and tactics that became prevalent during OWS, as with Mira Schor's lecture on failure and anonymity as political resources and the Fine Art Adoption Network's proposal of "care of the object in the place of ownership."<sup>47</sup>

Interviewed in *Idiom* about *#class*. Powhida had recourse to a statistical lan-