



# Digital Infrastructures and Economy Masterclasses

## DIGITAL LIFE RESEARCH PROGRAM

**DATE**  
Tuesday 3 November 2015

**VENUE**  
EB3.17, Western Sydney University,  
Parramatta South Campus

**ORGANISERS**  
Ned Rossiter, Juan Francisco Salazar  
and Liam Magee

### PROGRAM

10.30–12.30pm	'Researching Knowledge Making Practices in Market Settings: From Creative Spaces to Digital Infrastructures' Tomás Ariztía
2–4pm	'Finance as a Place of Creation: Hacking Finance Capital with Parasitical Algorithms' Akseli Virtanen

### Tomás Ariztía, Universidad Diego Portales

#### 'Researching Knowledge Making Practices in Market Settings: From Creative Spaces to Digital Infrastructures'

This seminar focuses on discussing some methodological issues regarding doing fieldwork in knowledge spaces in markets. In particular, the seminar will present and discuss some of the strategies and devices I have used in order to deal with challenges that distributed knowledge practices and devices posit to an ethnographic approach. The first part of the seminar will consider a 30–40 minutes presentation of some of the research I have done on knowledge practices (with emphasis on my latter project on data mining/transactional data practices). This will be followed by an open discussion in terms of how to design, think and do fieldwork for researching knowledge in the digital age.

Tomás Ariztía is Associate Professor at the Department of Sociology at Diego Portales University, Chile. His research is concerned with Consumption Studies – particularly Social Studies of Marketing, Sustainable Consumption and energy – and Sociology of knowledge. He is particularly interested on how consumers are mobilized in marketing knowledge practices. He has conducted fieldwork in advertising agencies and marketing departments and is currently involved in a three year research project focused on comparing Big Data, Design Thinking and Market Research as different knowledge grammars through which social entities are enacted in markets. Recently he edited the book *Producindo lo social: usos de las ciencias sociales en el Chile reciente* (Ediciones UDP, 2012), which explored the connections between social sciences and the production of social worlds.

<http://www.icso.cl/investigadores/tomas-ariztia-larraín/>

### READING MATERIAL

Ariztía, T. (2013) 'Unpacking insight: How consumers are qualified by advertising agencies', *Journal of Consumer Culture* 15(2), 143–162.

Ariztía, T. (2015) 'Bringing the world into the creative studio: the "reference" as an advertising device', in Farias, I & Wilkies, A. (eds) (2015) *Studio Studies: Operations, Topologies and Displacements*, London and New York: Routledge.

### READING MATERIAL ON HOW TO RESEARCH KNOWLEDGE PRACTICES AND SPACES

Beaulieu, A. (2010) 'From co-location to co-presence: Shifts in the use of ethnography for the study of knowledge', *Social Studies of Science* 40, 543–470.



Farias, I. and Wilkie, A. (2015) 'Studio studies Notes for a research programme', in Farias, I & Wilkies, A. (eds) (2015) *Studio Studies: Operations, Topologies and Displacements*, London and New York: Routledge.

### **Akseli Virtanen, Robin Hood Minor Asset Management Cooperative 'Finance as a Place of Creation: Hacking Finance Capital with Parasitical Algorithms'**

Robin Hood Asset Management Cooperative is an experiment in the creation of new social and economic forms. It is an algorithmic hedge fund synthetically imitating the emerging conventions of the financial oligarchy at the U.S. stock market, assembled as a cooperative, and operating programs of common equity and protection of the common. In this workshop we try to open up some of the background thinking, some of the things we have learned, the dead ends we have met, and why it has become necessary for Robin Hood to now take on a new and more monstrous form – as a financial platform of the future. Finance is a place of creation. What new possibilities does appropriating and reengineering financial technologies together with the organizational possibilities of blockchain technology offer for today's workers, makers, co-creators, peers, crowds becoming new kind of economic operators?

Akseli Virtanen is a theorist of new political economy, born in Finland and currently based in Santa Cruz, California. He is a co-founder of Robin Hood Asset Management Cooperative, an activist hedge fund, currently in the process of taking on a new more monstrous form as a financial platform of the future. Akseli's recent books include *Arbitrary Power: A Contribution Towards a Critique of Biopolitical Economy* (n-1 Edições, forthcoming 2015).

<http://www.robinhoodcoop.org/>

### **READING MATERIAL**

#### **ROBIN HOOD ECONOMICS, POLITICS AND AESTHETICS IN THE BACKGROUND**

##### **Democratizing the Power of Finance. A discussion with Akseli Virtanen.**

A good summary of the first two years of Robin Hood, our starting points and aims, how does the Parasite algorithm work, what is minor asset management, how do we see the relationship between art and politics and economy, what is our ethics, what happened at Kassel Documenta(13), why do we think that Robin Hood is a monster. Probably all the questions we have been asked during the first two years in a concise form! (*45 min of your time*)

<http://www.futureartbase.org/2013/10/08/democratization-of-finance-a-discussion-about-robin-hood-with-akseli-virtanen/>

##### **Robin Hood is a New Concept by Akseli Virtanen**

A more hard core conceptualization of the problem to which Robin Hood corresponds. How is our subjectivity related to the financialization and precarization, what is semiotic inflation, why do we think that economy has become arbitrary power, and how is it possible to find a way out when there is no way out. (*45 min of your time*)

<http://www.futureartbase.org/2015/05/14/robin-hood-is-a-new-concept/>

##### **From Arbitrary Power to Morphogenesis by Franco Berardi and Akseli Virtanen**

Robin Hood is an experiment in the creation of new social and economic forms. Why is this important? What is the new form of power Robin Hood is dealing with? How does the financialized economic power function? How is it possible to control the uncontrollable? How is it possible to govern a system that is too complex to be governed? What is the relationship between our inability to know everything and economy? Many basic premises behind Robin Hood can be found here. (*30 min of your time*)

<http://www.futureartbase.org/2013/09/29/from-arbitrary-power-to-morphogenesis/>

##### **Exhaustion of Possible by Future Art Base**

A map of the territory where Robin Hood operates. (*5 min of your time*)

<http://www.futureartbase.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/FABmaP1.png>

**Power at the End of the Economy. A discussion between Brian Massumi, Maurizio Lazzarato, Peter Pal Pelbart and Akseli Virtanen** about the basic premises of Robin Hood: the end of economy as we used to know it and understanding its new nature, organization and relation to our subjectivity. The question of the future begins from understanding the relationship between the exhaustion of the possible at our disposal and how the production of value functions today. Economy is not anymore a matter of "economics", it captures and exploits something more profound: the process of singularization and production of new modes of subjectivation based

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on desire. In Robin Hood Stuttgart Office (June 2014) we were trying think this new situation: How does power work at the end of the economy? What are its means of capturing the future already today? How is machinic surplus value produced? How is singular becoming possible when the mechanisms of accumulation do not restrict themselves only to our actual actions in particular time and space but sink their teeth directly into the molecular, aleatory, the uncertain and indeterminate still in the process of becoming? The concepts developed here – like ontopower, arbitrary power, power signs, machinic enslavement, exhaustion of possible, impossible community – may sound excessive and even extravagant, but they are all mapping the territory on which we already walk. They are thinking very precisely about the nature and organization of “n”, the multitude, and how the power must turn in different ways towards “arbitrariness” and “pure power” (Akseli), or “priming” (Brian), “machinic” (Maurizio), “nihilism” (Peter) after all the “ones” are gone. In this wonderland nothing appears anymore the same. (*30 min of your time*)

<http://www.futureartbase.org/2014/10/07/power-at-the-end-of-the-economy-2/>

### NEXT STEPS OF ROBIN HOOD

#### Welcome to the Wild Side of Finance

A short discussion made after our Milan Office (May 2015) which introduces some of the next moves of Robin Hood: digitalization of the cooperative, why we are interested in blockchain, what is the Hood Note, what is Robin Hood doing in Milan Universal Expo, and what are the Robin Hood Projects in which we are about to start investing. (*30 min of your time*)

<http://www.futureartbase.org/2015/10/19/welcome-to-the-wild-side-of-finance-interview-with-akseli-virtanen/>

#### Financial Platforms of the Future

Program of our London Office (August 2015) where the next steps of Robin Hood were pre-launched, tested and developed. Gives a nice overview of the problematic with which we are working at the moment: is the fusion of blockchain technology and finance going to be just an integration of existing financial industry's business models and political consequences into blockchain – or is it going to be an invention which enables building of new social architecture of finance. (*10 min of your time*)

[http://events.robinhoodcoop.org/wp-content/uploads/london\\_office\\_itinerary.pdf](http://events.robinhoodcoop.org/wp-content/uploads/london_office_itinerary.pdf)

#### Equity, Options, Assemblage – Robin Hood 2.0

A Robin Hood “grey paper” which lays out the reasons and aims of Robin Hood 2.0. How do we intent to fuse financial and blockchain technologies. And why? What does it mean to produce more equity, more options and more assemblage for our operators, more efficiently, in more dimensions. (*60 min of your time*)

<http://www.futureartbase.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Robin-Hood.Grey-Paper-April-2015.pdf>

#### Robin Hood 1.0 is cool but 2.0 even cooler by Benjamin Lozano

An excellent summary of Robin Hood and how it is at the moment developing. (*20 min of your time*)

<http://speculativematerialism.com/2015/03/26/robin-hood-1-0/>

#### The Tale of Robin Hood Retold by Tiziana Terranova

Robin Hood is more poetics than business in any traditional sense. It is rethinking the relation between financialization and social cooperation. It is about subjectivity and its “becoming”. It has implications to understanding how imagination, or learning from things that have not happened yet, can be used to creating new social architectures. Robin Hood is a play in the future, and as a play, it requires the engagement of its members, or “operators”, for making it real. To assess it with rational financial logic is to undervalue its true meaning and potential strategic impact: It is an aesthetic rather than a calculation, and a minor rather than a major enticement to novel thinking and to the creation of new opportunities, even when they are precarious. (*10 min of your time*)

<http://rcpp.lensbased.net/post/117693164755/the-tale-of-robin-hood-retold>

### RECENT ARTICLES ABOUT ROBIN HOOD

Robin Hood – A Cooperative on the Trail of Money is Developing Financial Solutions of the Future (English translation) *Helsingin Sanomat* 17. August 2015

<http://blog.robinhoodcoop.org/2015/08/17/helsingin-sanomat-robin-hood-a-cooperative-on-the-trail-of-money/>

Robin Hood der Wall Street [Robin Hood of Wall Street]

*REVUE Magazine for the Next Society*

<http://www.futureartbase.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/revuerobinhood.pdf>

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Der Trittbrettfahrer [The Freeloader. Robin Hood hammers the financial world with its own methods]

Brand Eins – Wirtschaftsmagazin

<http://www.brandeins.de/archiv/2014/geld/>

**Robin Hood is a Parasite**

Institute for The Future, Palo Alto

<http://www.iftf.org/future-now/article-detail/robin-hood-parasite-algorithm/>

**21st Century Robin Hood Introduces Altruism to Investment Banking**

*Huffington Post*

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/student-reporter/21st-century-robin-hood-i\\_b\\_3639926.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/student-reporter/21st-century-robin-hood-i_b_3639926.html)