FLOWCHARTS

FLOWCHARTS AS META-MEDIUM FOR AN AESTHETICS OF SOCIAL COMPLEXITY. THIS SURVEY OF WORKS FEATURES PAOLO CIRIO'S CONCEPTS, MODELS, AND INTERVENTIONS WITHIN THE FLOWS OF THE GLOBAL INFORMATION ORDER

CIRIO

THIS MONOGRAPH FEATURES PAOLO CIRIO'S CONCEPTS, MODELS, AND INTERVENTIONS UTILIZING THE FLOWCHART AS ARTISTIC MEDIUM. CIRIO'S WORK CHALLENGES AND INVESTIGATES THE ECONOMICS, POLITICS, TECHNOLOGY, AND SEMIOTICS OF THE GLOBAL INFORMATION ORDER. THIS SURVEY FEATURES THE ARTIST'S USE OF FLOWCHARTS AS A VISUAL STRATEGY FOR SOPHISTICATED APPARATUSES, IDEAS, AND ACTIONS. CIRIO'S RESEARCH, INTERVENTIONISM, ACTIVISM, AND INTELLECTUAL ENGAGEMENT ARE PRESENTED IN INSTALLATIONS AND ARTIFACTS BOTH IN DIALOGUE WITH THE LEGACY OF CONCEPTUAL ART AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF CONTEMPORARY ART.

ARTWORKS

FOUNDATIONS; MEANING; SOCIALITY; DAILY PAYWALL; GLOBAL DIRECT; ART COMMODITIES; WORLD CURRENCY; LOOPHOLE FOR ALL; GIFT FINANCE - P2P GIFT CREDIT CARDS; HACKING MONOPOLISM TRILOGY; FACE TO FACEBOOK; AMAZON NOIR; GOOGLE WILL EAT ITSELF; OPEN SOCIETY STRUCTURES; AND EARLY SKETCHES.

Price may vary.

More information and material available at PaoloCirio.net

Systems of Systems

In this monograph I feature artworks spanning over a decade of cultural production and social engagement, addressing and challenging the complex systems of the information society.

While referring to systems and network aesthetics, I frame my own work in the legacy of conceptual art. Beyond the examination and exposure of existing systems, I create further systems inserted within the information flows of the networks forming society. My systems are social agents programmed with an agenda that acts as an agency of change and inspiration through varying forms of conceptualism and interventionism.

In this survey I selected artworks that utilize the flowchart as a common visual aesthetic, which I adopt to depict sophisticated apparatuses, concepts, and actions. These flowcharts give form to the process of creation and intervention with algorithms, economic models, political structures, and social experiments. Flowcharts become aesthetic objects, the images of operations within networks of technological, political, financial, or cultural systems.

In my art I see society as the raw material and ultimate subject of interest. I consider information systems and technology as a means rather than an end. Since society is increasingly influenced by network technology, I utilize the Internet for my artistic and social engagement. For me, society as a raw material for art results in working with the fields of law, finance, governance, and media, spanning from micro personal spheres to macro global orders. These fields are interconnected to each other in a network of systems in which the flow of information constantly renegotiates power among the nodes forming social complexity.

I discuss the politics, aesthetics, and philosophy of networks, data, and algorithms, yet these artworks inevitably dig into the very mechanics of financial vehicles, intellectual property, political science, privacy policies, semantic studies, and art itself. These are the subsystems I utilize through a range of strategies, including performance, hacking, documentary, institutional critique, utopia, social innovation, and appropriation. Consequently, the nature of the material, subjects, and tactics I implement makes these artworks actively engaged in discussing the opportunities and oppressions within contemporary society.

Either with simple provocations or recontextualization, or with sophisticated interventionist, participatory, or speculative models, my artworks have an agenda that I strategize when I program the flow of information, operations, and interactions between my targets, audiences, and myself. Information flows within and around society always have a degree of social and cultural impact; as such, my works often embody agency that extends from mere representation. They create and inspire change, reaction, and inquiry through proactive, subversive, and informative art. These artworks are social agents probing and interacting with the subject matters and their systems. I believe that the advancement in art through my work is the programmable reality I can insert into a particular network and the extensive reach such action can have today. Toward this end, I chart, create, and execute operational and functional systems meant to produce outcomes for social constructivism or critique. Society became my material while the flowcharts of conceptual models and algorithms became my medium.

With a lifelong pursuit of advancing modes of conceptual art, my work has been dedicated to exploring an aesthetics of social complexity, discussing and modelling the paradigms of the information order forming society and social knowledge.

The flowchart is the meta-medium for an aesthetics of social complexity.

The diagrammatic drawing becomes the essential visual form for seeing and engaging with the flow of information and operations in today's interconnected world.

In art, the flowchart is a dynamic image that can convey practice and theory for functions and meanings of concepts and actions. The language of the flowchart serves the artist to convey processes and connections of ideas and interventions within increasingly entangled networks of interrelated social structures. It gives form to the circulations, processes, and arrangements of social, technical, and intellectual flows involving works of art.

The picture of the flowchart sidesteps the visual conventions of figuration and abstraction; the flowchart is operational, informational, and conceptual. The satisfying visual aesthetic of the flowchart derives from the artist's ideas propelled in the geometric sketching of the flows of concepts, means, functions, and commands that the artist creates, elucidates, and researches. The flowchart is a conceptual image as well as an image itself with its own form. Visually, the flowchart circumnavigates the pictorial image, becoming the relevant iconographic imagery of the information age. As a genre of visual language, the flowchart enters into the rubric of artistic strategies and mediums, furthering the development of art-making.

Art as creation of input-output exchange; interconnected nodes, channeling and switching conditions, functions, rules, and interactions are outlined to reach a determined outcome. The flowchart is not a map, it does not illustrate a set space or field. Rather, it's the representation of the flow being processed, computed, and directed for the preposition, action, and method meant to produce specific goals.

The flowchart is power of creation, knowledge, and order of flows and systems that the artist can utilize. Drawing flowcharts is the manifestation of the artist's will to depict, invent, and remodel reality.

In a society of flows, the flowchart asserts itself as the visual device to organize, predict, and govern the world. Beyond technology, flowcharts model geopolitics and geoengineering, warfare and financial markets, jurisdictional arbitrage and global trade. The schematic, technical, and functional character of the flowchart is the quintessential portrayal of the bare, inexorable, and operative technocratic order encircling globalization.

Flows of money in networks of financial trading. Flows of goods in global logistics and manufacturing. Flows of intellectual property with trademarks and patents. Flows of people in transportation systems and across borders. Flows of news and content in interconnected media. Flows of cultures and semiotic signs. Flows of environments with urbanization and climate management. Flows of laws in arbitraged jurisdictions and decentralized platforms. Flows of political opinions and lobbying. Flows of citizen profiling in data brokerage. All these flows are interconnected in networks organized through flowcharts functioning as instruments of power.

Flowcharts become the language of the modern global information order. Either with an algorithm, economic model, political organogram, or semiotic study, the flowchart is the visual means for drawing the forms of complex flows within processes and systems of social reality. Charting flows becomes a necessary practice to critically engage with society, making the flowchart a pivotal medium for contemporary art.
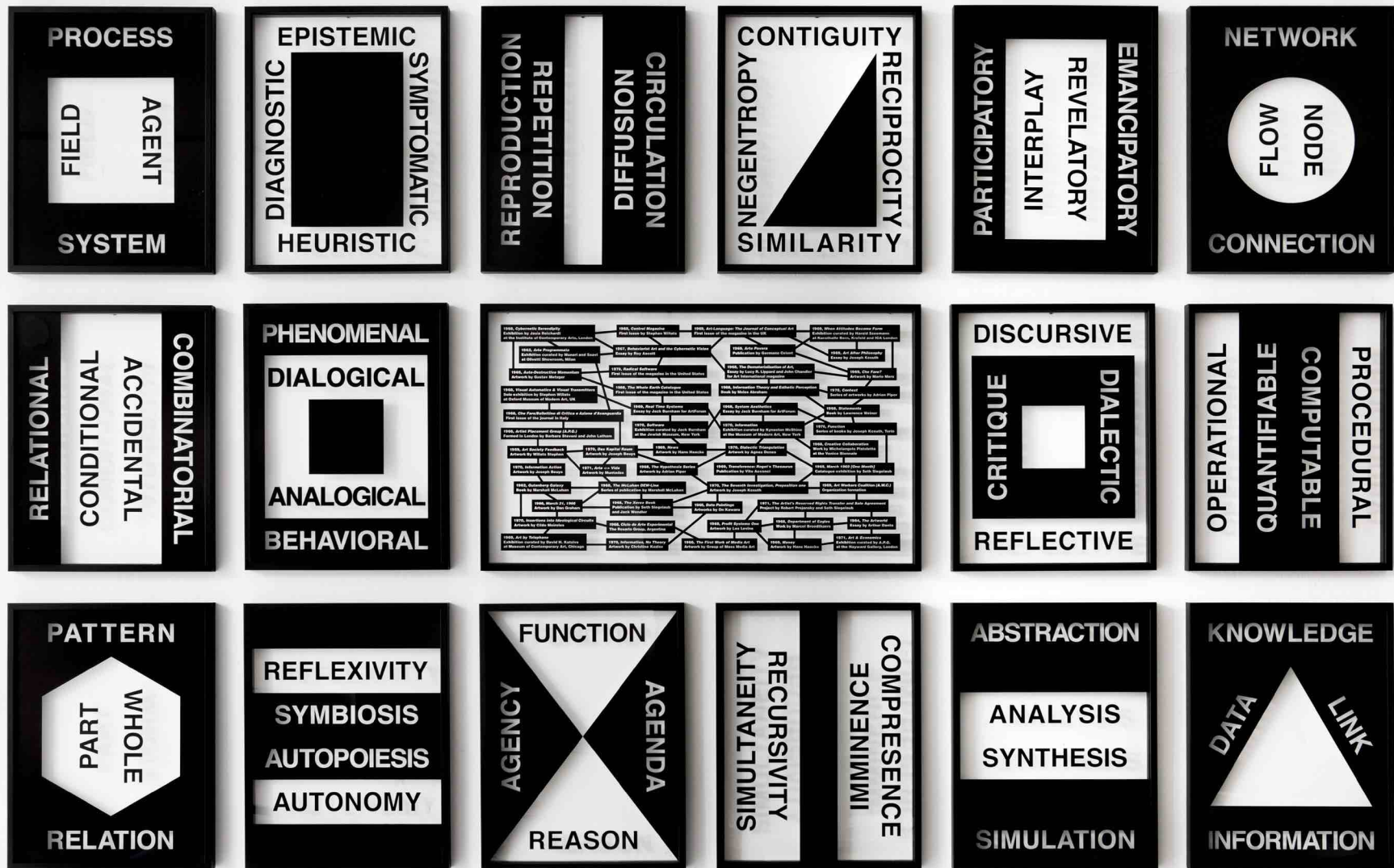
Foundations

Foundations

This work reflects on the aesthetics and history of conceptual art concerning social fields and social complexity.
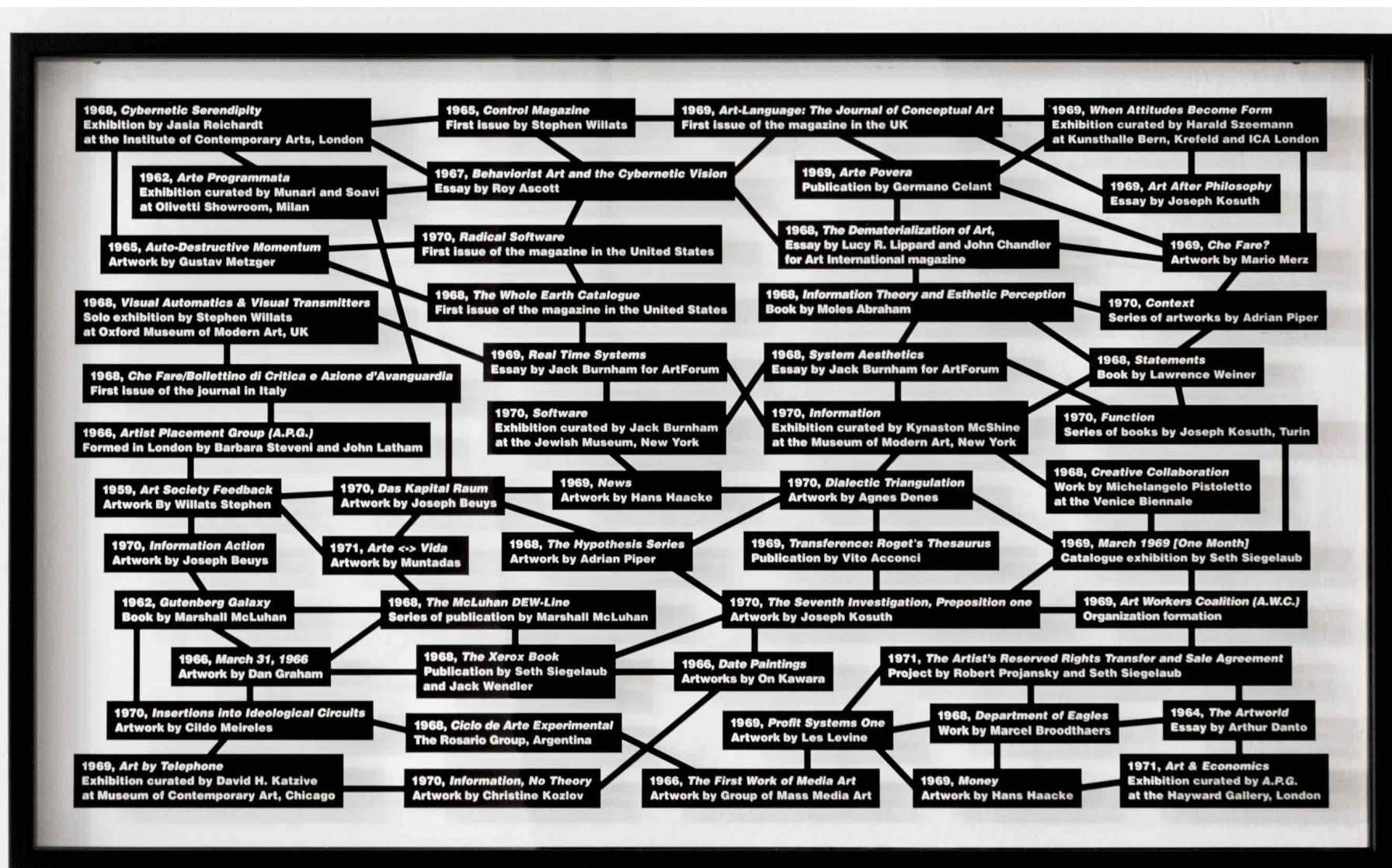
The artwork itself formulates an aesthetics identified by Cirio and takes the form of a visual essay articulated with abstract flowcharts. Informed by systems, cybernetics, and communication theories, *Foundations* aims to trace both the history and character of art that examines social fields as information structures, reckoning with today's complexity in the age of algorithms, big data, and the Internet. *Foundations* consists of a series of sixteen prints, creating a network of associations with paired words to delineate the aesthetic theorized by Cirio.

Foundations focuses on the ontologies of conceptual art examining social fields, rather than the solely making of images, forms, or gestures driven by ideas. It reflects on the genesis of the growing intersections among the domains of art, economics, politics, law, sociology, media, and technology. Centered around the fifty years since the defining of *Systems Aesthetics* in 1968, and the following exhibitions Information at MoMA and *Software* at the Jewish Museum in 1970, *Foundations* furthers this research with related moments from the mid-20th century.

The prints of abstract flowcharts with terms and geometrical shapes illustrate relations, taxonomies, and archetypes of aesthetic qualities, materials, and functions. One additional print charts a timeline of seminal conceptual art history, situating Cirio's research in a curated selection of historical artworks, publications, and exhibitions to complement his aesthetics theory. *Foundations* is also presented as a maze-like installation with large-scale prints on clear and mirror film. This sculptural installation evokes the sensation of being inside a network of aesthetic values.

PROCESS — FIELD — AGENT — SYSTEM

EPISTEMIC — DIAGNOSTIC — SYMPTOMATIC — HEURISTIC

REPRODUCTION — REPETITION — DIFFUSION — CIRCULATION

CONTIGUITY — NEGENTROPY — RECIPROCITY — SIMILARITY

PARTICIPATORY — INTERPLAY — REVELATORY — EMANCIPATORY

NETWORK — FLOW — NODE — CONNECTION

RELATIONAL — CONDITIONAL — ACCIDENTAL — COMBINATORIAL

PHENOMENAL — DIALOGICAL — ANALOGICAL — BEHAVIORAL

DISCURSIVE — CRITIQUE — DIALECTIC — REFLECTIVE

OPERATIONAL — QUANTIFIABLE — COMPUTABLE — PROCEDURAL

PATTERN — PART — WHOLE — RELATION

REFLEXIVITY — SYMBIOSIS — AUTOPOIESIS — AUTONOMY

FUNCTION — AGENCY — AGENDA — REASON

SIMULTANEITY — RECURSIVITY — IMMINENCE — COMPRESENCE

ABSTRACTION — ANALYSIS — SYNTHESIS — SIMULATION

KNOWLEDGE — DATA — LINK — INFORMATION

Foundations at Giorgio Persano Gallery, Turin - Italy, 2019

1968, *Cybernetic Serendipity*
Exhibition by Jasia Reichardt
at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London

1965, *Control Magazine*
First issue by Stephen Willats

1969, *Art-Language: The Journal of Conceptual Art*
First issue of the magazine in the UK

1969, *When Attitudes Become Form*
Exhibition curated by Harald Szeemann
at Kunsthalle Bern, Krefeld and ICA London

1962, *Arte Programmata*
Exhibition curated by Munari and Soavi
at Olivetti Showroom, Milan

1967, *Behaviorist Art and the Cybernetic Vision*
Essay by Roy Ascott

1969, *Arte Povera*
Publication by Germano Celant

1969, *Art After Philosophy*
Essay by Joseph Kosuth

1965, *Auto-Destructive Momentum*
Artwork by Gustav Metzger

1970, *Radical Software*
First issue of the magazine in the United States

1968, *The Dematerialization of Art,*
Essay by Lucy R. Lippard and John Chandler
for Art International magazine

1969, *Che Fare?*
Artwork by Mario Merz

1968, *Visual Automatics & Visual Transmitters*
Solo exhibition by Stephen Willats
at Oxford Museum of Modern Art, UK

1968, *The Whole Earth Catalogue*
First issue of the magazine in the United States

1968, *Information Theory and Esthetic Perception*
Book by Moles Abraham

1970, *Context*
Series of artworks by Adrian Piper

1968, *Che Fare/Bollettino di Critica e Azione d'Avanguardia*
First issue of the journal in Italy

1969, *Real Time Systems*
Essay by Jack Burnham for ArtForum

1968, *System Aesthetics*
Essay by Jack Burnham for ArtForum

1968, *Statements*
Book by Lawrence Weiner

1966, *Artist Placement Group (A.P.G.)*
Formed in London by Barbara Steveni and John Latham

1970, *Software*
Exhibition curated by Jack Burnham
at the Jewish Museum, New York

1970, *Information*
Exhibition curated by Kynaston McShine
at the Museum of Modern Art, New York

1970, *Function*
Series of books by Joseph Kosuth, Turin

1959, *Art Society Feedback*
Artwork By Willats Stephen

1970, *Das Kapital Raum*
Artwork by Joseph Beuys

1969, *News*
Artwork by Hans Haacke

1970, *Dialectic Triangulation*
Artwork by Agnes Denes

1968, *Creative Collaboration*
Work by Michelangelo Pistoletto
at the Venice Biennale

1970, *Information Action*
Artwork by Joseph Beuys

1971, *Arte <-> Vida*
Artwork by Muntadas

1968, *The Hypothesis Series*
Artwork by Adrian Piper

1969, *Transference: Roget's Thesaurus*
Publication by Vito Acconci

1969, *March 1969 [One Month]*
Catalogue exhibition by Seth Siegelaub

1962, *Gutenberg Galaxy*
Book by Marshall McLuhan

1968, *The McLuhan DEW-Line*
Series of publication by Marshall McLuhan

1970, *The Seventh Investigation, Preposition one*
Artwork by Joseph Kosuth

1969, *Art Workers Coalition (A.W.C.)*
Organization formation

1966, *March 31, 1966*
Artwork by Dan Graham

1968, *The Xerox Book*
Publication by Seth Siegelaub
and Jack Wendler

1966, *Date Paintings*
Artworks by On Kawara

1971, *The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement*
Project by Robert Projansky and Seth Siegelaub

1970, *Insertions into Ideological Circuits*
Artwork by Cildo Meireles

1968, *Ciclo de Arte Experimental*
The Rosario Group, Argentina

1969, *Profit Systems One*
Artwork by Les Levine

1968, *Department of Eagles*
Work by Marcel Broodthaers

1964, *The Artworld*
Essay by Arthur Danto

1969, *Art by Telephone*
Exhibition curated by David H. Katzive
at Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago

1970, *Information, No Theory*
Artwork by Christine Kozlov

1966, *The First Work of Media Art*
Artwork by Group of Mass Media Art

1969, *Money*
Artwork by Hans Haacke

1971, *Art & Economics*
Exhibition curated by A.P.G.
at the Hayward Gallery, London

Foundations at Giorgio Persano Gallery, Turin - Italy, 2019

Foundations at Giorgio Persano Gallery, Turin - Italy, 2019

Meaning

Meaning

This series of flowcharts outlines Cirio's theory of Internet semiotics about the formation of social meaning online.

The artwork *Meaning* consists of a series of three flowcharts drawn by Cirio to display his semiotic theory regarding the formation of meaning on the Internet. The artist's concept is expressed through the diagrammatic language, along with a written essay that explains the theory resembled in the visual artworks. Cirio's social semiotics introduces paradigms on how humans adapt to the conditions of the Internet. It encapsulates semiotics itself in a work of art about the production, reception, and alteration of the flow of information forming meaning within networks. The artwork delves into the cognitive, sociological, and psychological aspects of the modern construction of social meaning, exploring both an anthropology and a philosophy of the Internet.

This series integrates semiotics and communication theory for a work of art composed of flowcharts and a written essay. The artist's semiotic theory is translated into visual artworks with compositions of key terms written on mirror panels. The use of mirrors and the multidimensional elements of the physical artworks allow for an open-ended reading, compelling viewers into self-reflection on the significance of the Internet in their lives and society.

A limited-edition of the artwork *Meaning* is made of custom-made mirror slabs that are painted, cut, and engraved. The multilayered compositions create depth and optical movements. The three pieces can be shown as a triptych or as individual works titled *Context*, *Subjectivity*, and *Collectivity*.
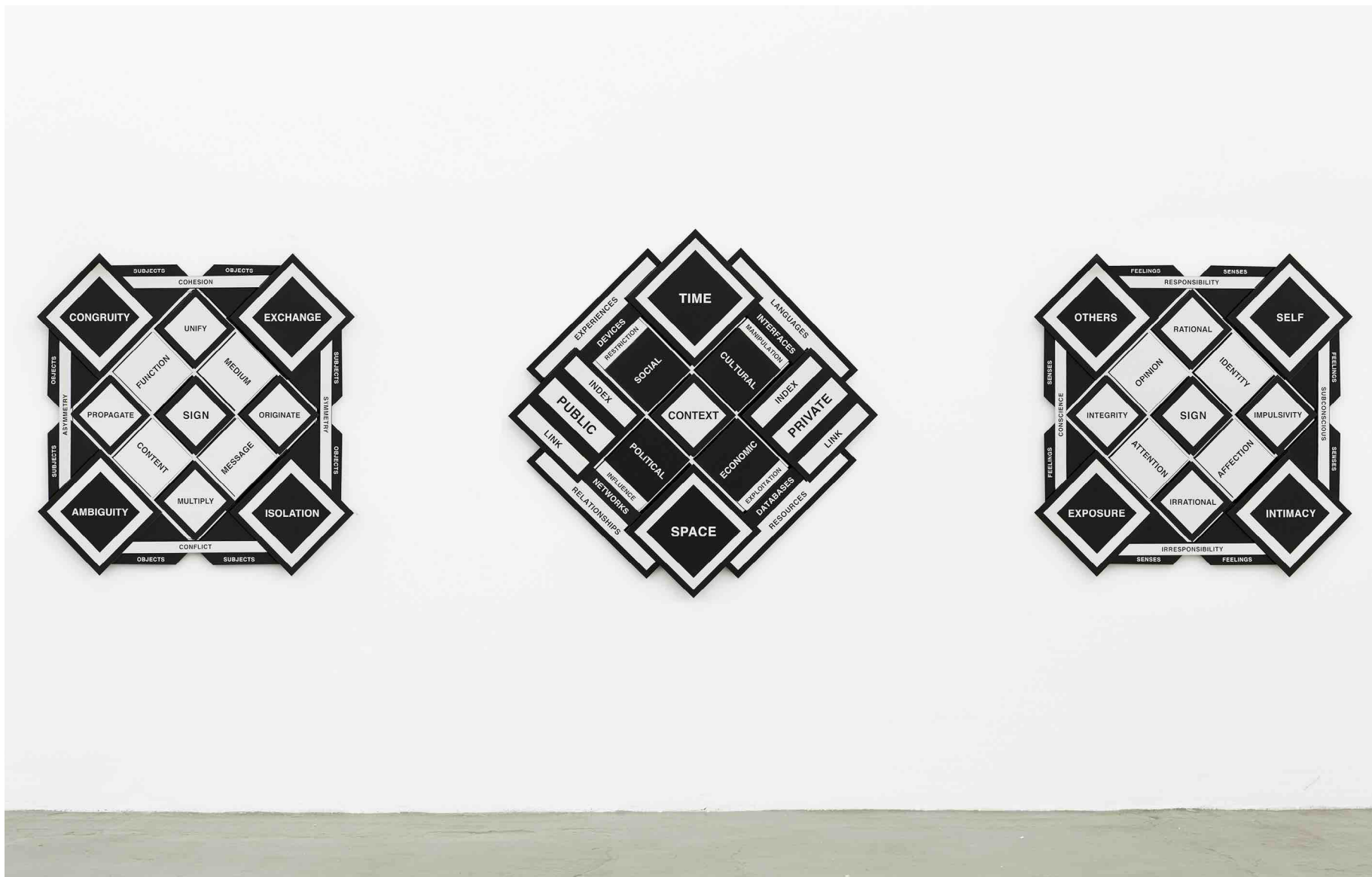
Meaning - Context, Subjectivity, and *Collectivity* at Giorgio Persano Gallery, Turin - Italy, 2019

Meaning - Context, Subjectivity, and *Collectivity* at Giorgio Persano Gallery, Turin - Italy, 2019
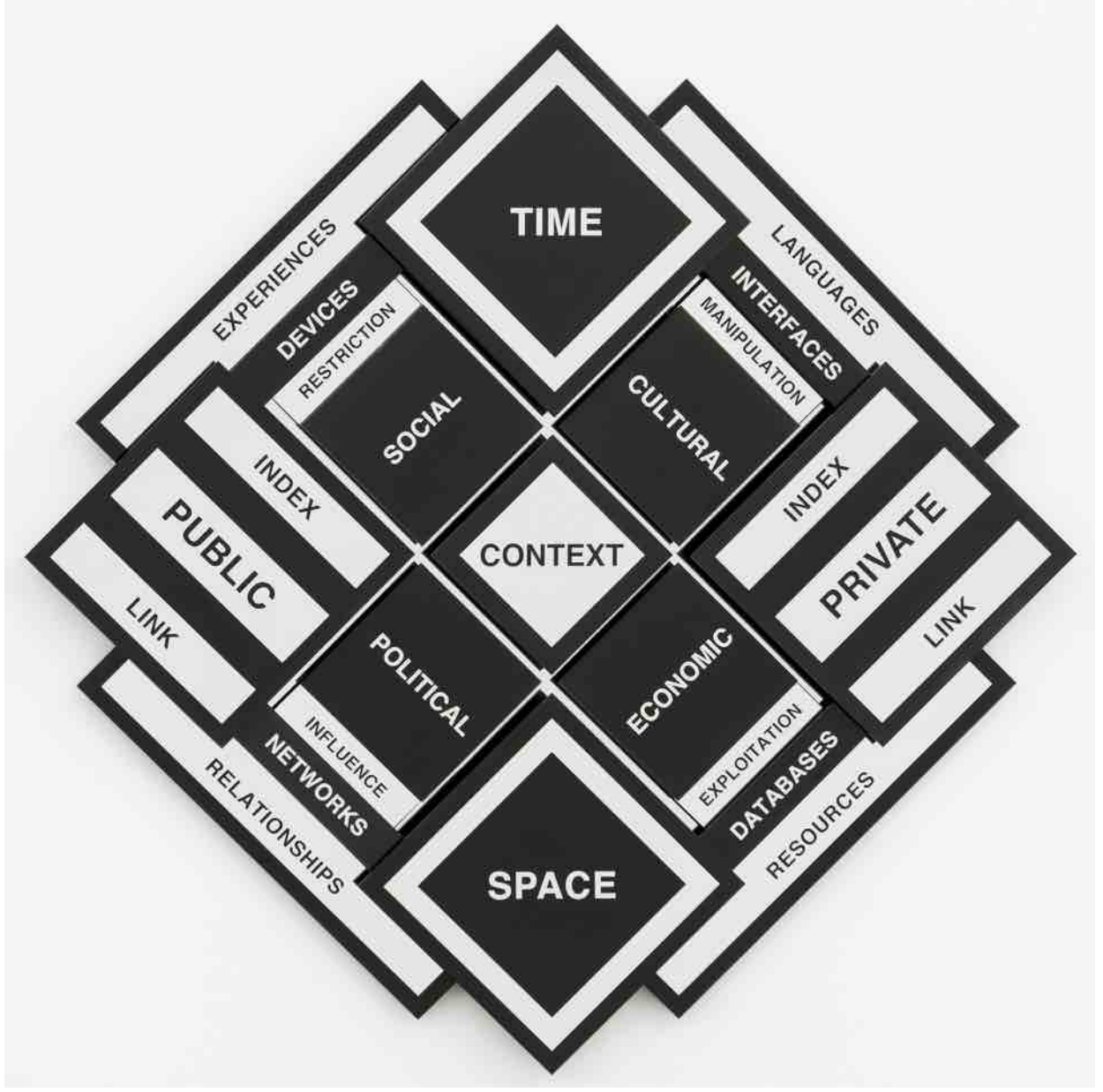
Meaning - Context, at Giorgio Persano Gallery, Turin - Italy, 2019
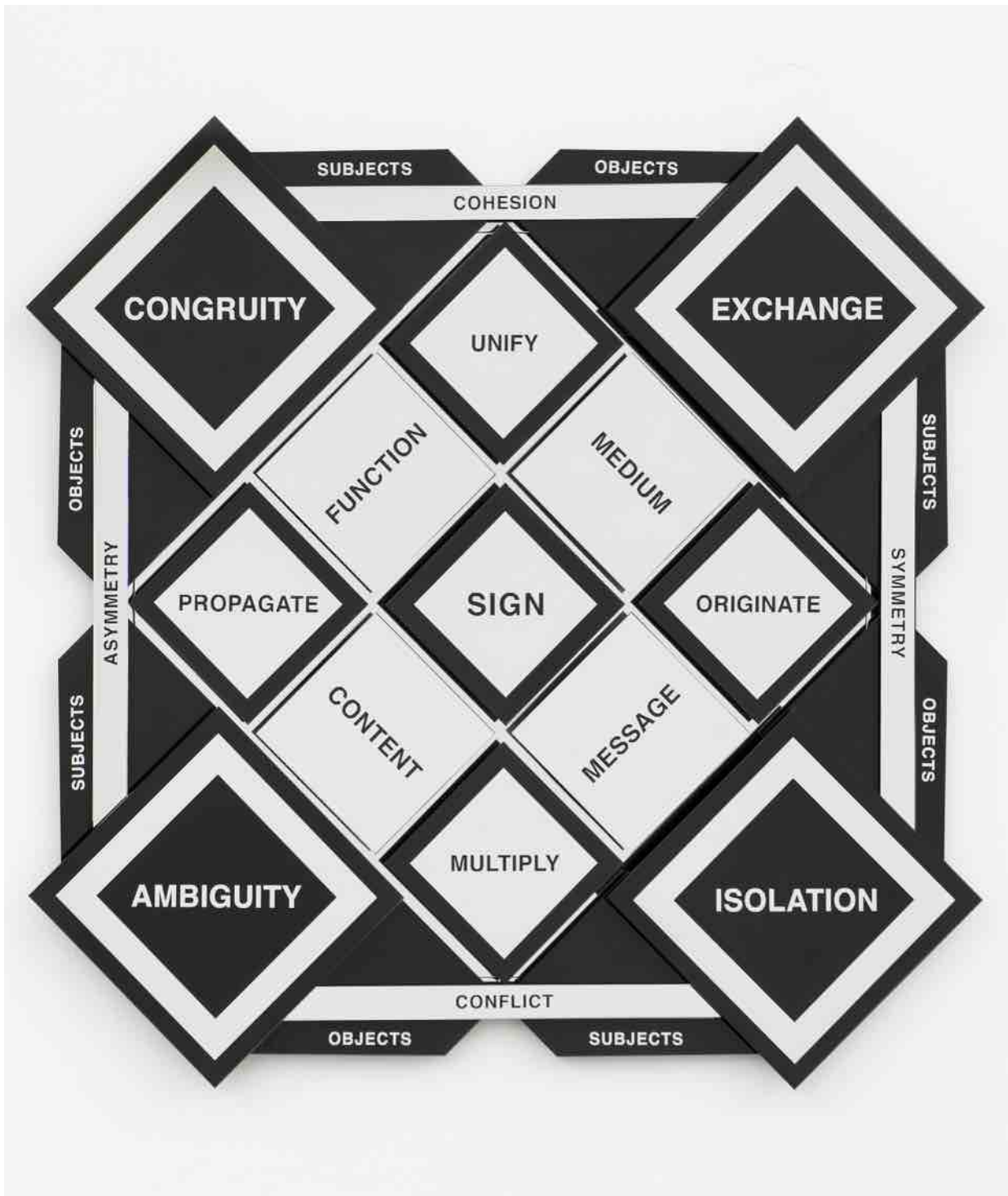
Meaning – Collectivity, at Giorgio Persano Gallery, Turin – Italy, 2019
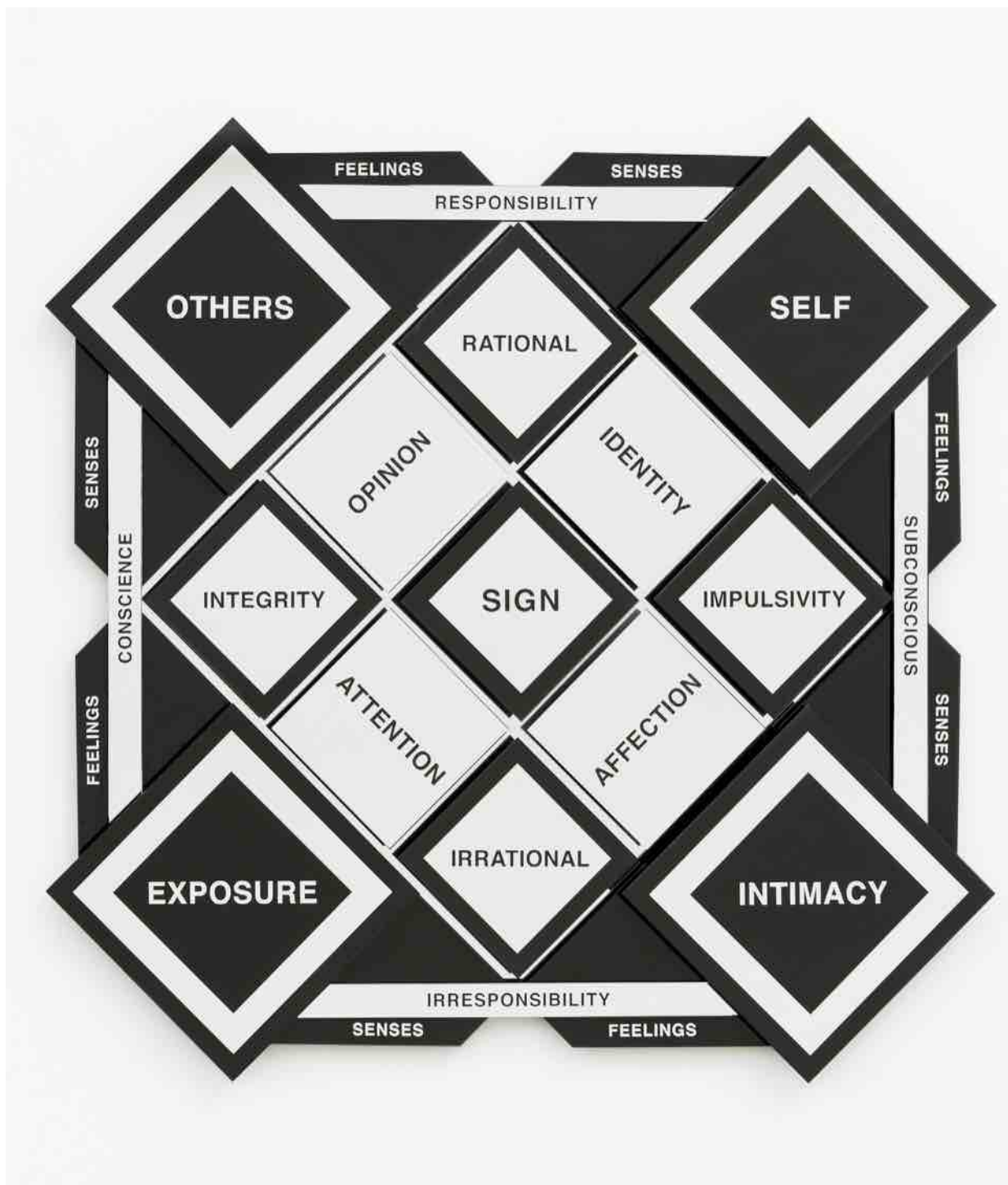
Meaning - Subjectivity, at Giorgio Persano Gallery, Turin - Italy, 2019

Sociality

2018

Sociality

This artwork documented over twenty-thousand patents of socially manipulative information technology.

In *Sociality*, Cirio collected and rated Internet inventions submitted to the U.S. patent office. Subsequently, he invited participants to share, flag, and ban the technologies designed to monitor and manipulate social behaviors. The patent images and data were obtained by Cirio through hacking the Google Patents search engine. Then he rated the patents and created thousands of compositions with images of flowcharts and titles of inventions, which were published on the project's website. The visual compositions on the website were printed in the form of posters and a coloring book for informing on devices that enable discrimination, polarization, addiction, deception, and surveillance. The concept of turning patents into vehicles for regulation aims to exploit intellectual property law as a tool for democratic oversight. This artwork engaged with debates concerning the regulation of Internet and artificial intelligence by involving technology centers, academics, and legislators.

This work integrates both the dystopia surrounding technology and the utopia of its democratic governance with flowcharts of patents taking the form of documentary and protest art. With this problematizing piece, Cirio exposed evidence of social manipulation and questioned the ethical, legal, and economic structures of such technological apparatuses.

In the exhibition, the public confronts large-scale compositions with hundreds of images of flowcharts that abstractly invoke the complexity and magnitude of such uncanny plans to program people.

Sociality, installation at MIT, Boston - U.S.A., 2018

Sociality, installation at the 1st Strasbourg Biennal, Strasbourg - France, 2018

Sociality, installation at Giorgio Persano Gallery, Turin - Italy, 2019

Sociality, public intervention at Harvard University, U.S.A., 2018

Sociality, public intervention at Stanford University, U.S.A., 2018

Daily Paywall

2014

This artwork appropriated over sixty-thousand news items from the *Wall Street Journal*, *Financial Times*, and *The Economist*.

In *Daily Paywall*, Cirio redistributed thousands of pay-per-view articles for free by hacking the paywall systems of the three major financial newspapers and proposed a new economic model for circulating news articles. Readers could earn one dollar for responding correctly to quizzes about the featured articles, journalists were invited to claim compensation for their writing, while donors could offer any amount to crowdfund the model. *DailyPaywall.com* has over 60,000 articles in total; Cirio selected fifteen topics, each featuring eight articles published in 1,000 print copies which were distributed as a free paper available in custom newsracks and bookshops throughout New York. Eventually, the site was shut down when the publisher Pearson PLC made claims on its own copyrighted material. A year after the legal threat, Pearson sold both *The Financial Times* and *The Economist*. As a result, Cirio republished *DailyPaywall.com* in its entirety.

In *Daily Paywall*, Cirio's radical action and participatory model elicited reflection on access to knowledge and the contemporary information economy. The work was staged by utilizing the distribution of information as a material to make works of art and to interrogate legal, linguistic, and socioeconomic structures.

In the installation, elements of the performance are assembled to document and recall its propositions. Printed copies of the *Daily Paywall* newspaper are available to the audience, while the flowchart print of the economic model stands as the core concept of the artist's intervention.

Daily Paywall, installation at HeK, House of Electronic Arts, Basel - Switzerland, 2017

Daily Paywall, installation at HeK, House of Electronic Arts, Basel - Switzerland, 2017

Daily Paywall, installation at Framer Framed, Amsterdam - Netherlands, 2017

World Currency

2014

This artwork outlines a global currency through the creative formulation of an equation and trading algorithm.

In *World Currency*, Cirio conceived a mathematical equation and an algorithmic trading flowchart for creating a complementary currency. These two components indicate how the value of the currency is calculated and how its liquidity is maintained stable. The artwork addresses the inherent instability of both digital and national currencies by examining algorithmic trading and the political economy of the currency exchange market. It aims to introduce instruments to mitigate exposure from financial speculations and geopolitical forces, pointing at the need for an independent global reserve currency that could potentially empower and unite the world population. With this work, Cirio addressed global economics and the volatility of digital currencies before they later became assimilated by financial institutions.

The creation of the financial instrument functions as a form of conceptual art with equations and algorithms, pushing the boundaries of artistic conventions. By addressing the potentials for financial fairness, the artwork applies studies in economics to the very means producing contemporary sociopolitical conditions.

In the installation, the conceptual artwork is displayed through a large print of the flowchart of the algorithm for the currency trading, as well as a framed print with the equation explaining the mathematical and algorithmic model.
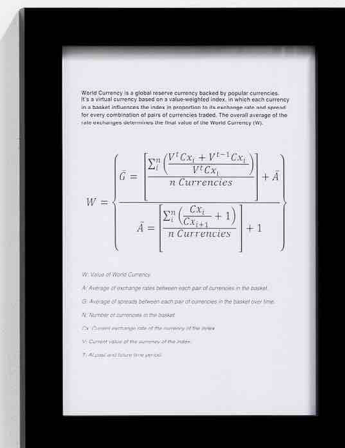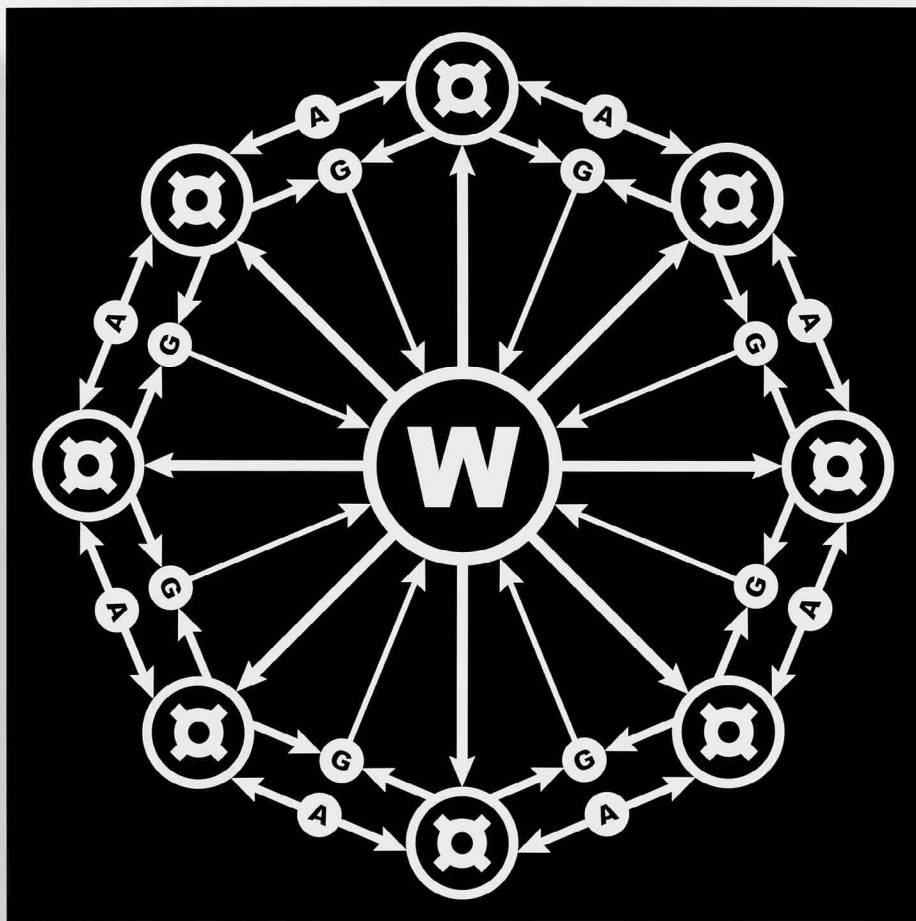
World Currency, installation at Giorgio Persano Gallery, Turin - Italy, 2019

World Currency, installation for Synthetisch Vernünftig at LEAP, Berlin, Germany, 2014
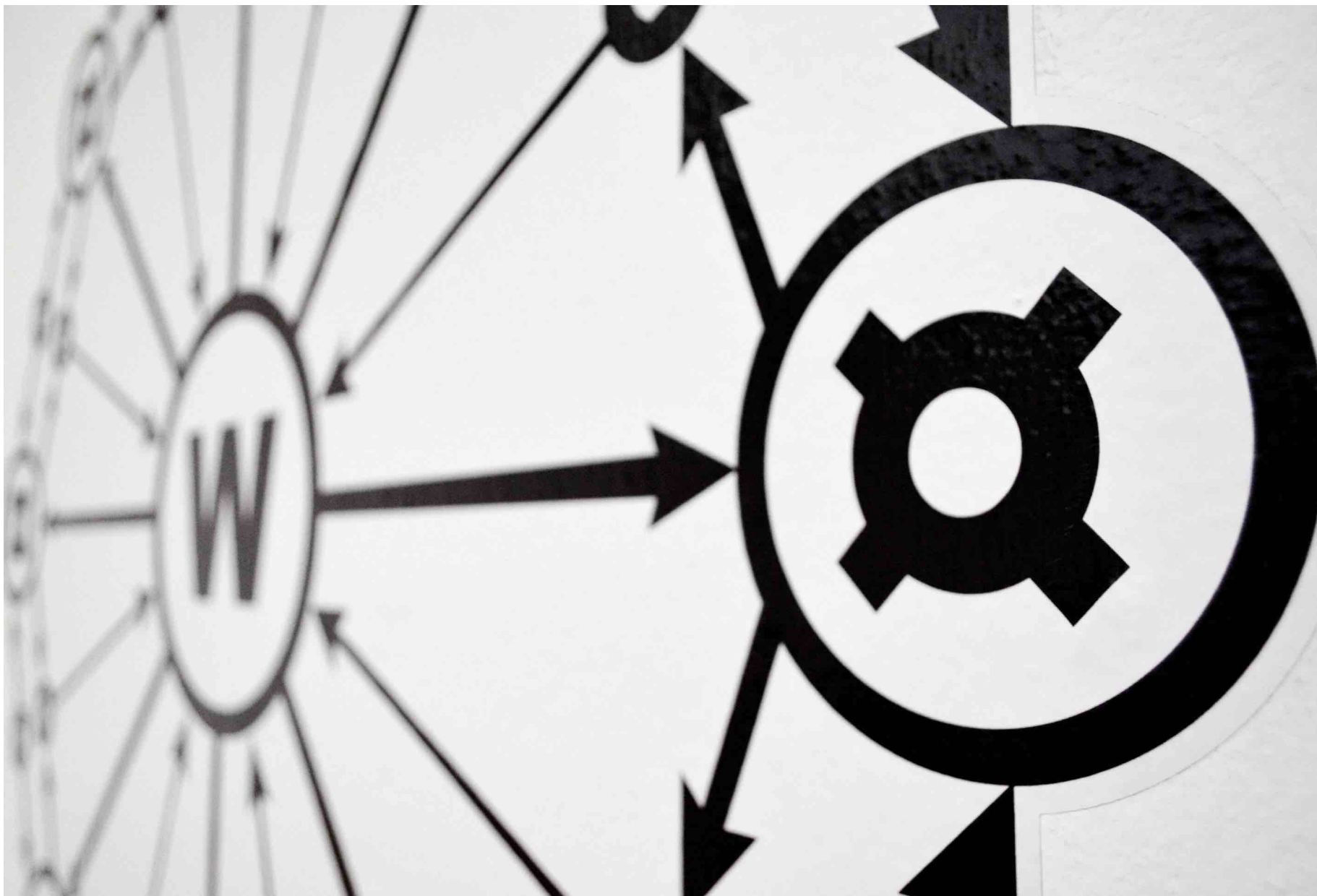
World Currency, installation for Search of Symmetry at HDLU, Zagreb - Croatia, 2014

2014

Global Direct

Global Direct

This artwork outlined the idea of a worldwide democracy as a utopia for the global information society.

In *Global Direct*, Cirio drew a series of fifteen flowcharts of imaginative protocols, procedures, and policies for outlining a global participatory democracy. These creative organograms were informed by research on social science and contemporary democracies which the artist assembled and presented as a documentary component of the project. The artist also promoted *Global Direct* as a potential political movement by producing appealing slogans, visuals, and videos with statements by prominent advocates of participatory politics. This work was in dialogue with the progressive political initiatives emerging in Europe in the aftermath of austerity economic plans, such as Iceland's crowdsourced constitution and the Podemos party in Spain.

Referring to the legacy of utopia in art, Cirio envisioned a political philosophy that models global democracy. The drawings of utopian political systems examined the opportunities offered by distributed network technology for participatory decision-making, transparent accountability, and civil awareness.

In the installation, large digital prints of the fifteen flowcharts are shown with video statements and several documents from Cirio's research on social science. Color posters with political slogans are posted throughout the exhibition space to refer to the project as a potential social movement.
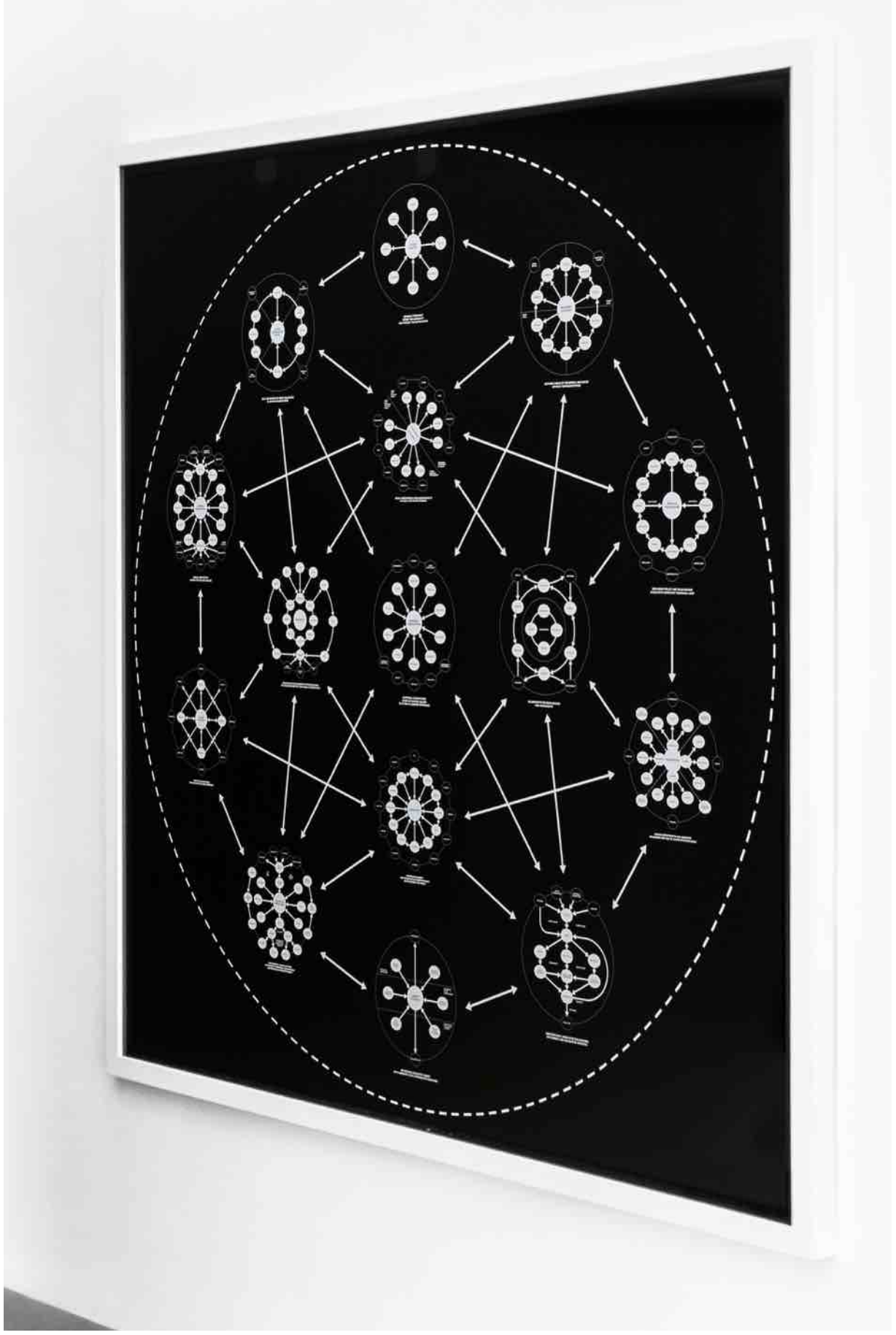
Global Direct, installation at Giorgio Persano Gallery, Turin - Italy, 2019

Global Direct, installation for Caratteri at Palazzo del Governatore, 2014, Parma - Italy

Global Direct, installation for Modes of Democracy at DOX Centre for Contemporary Art, Prague - Czech Republic, 2014

Global Direct, installation at Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver - Canada, 2015
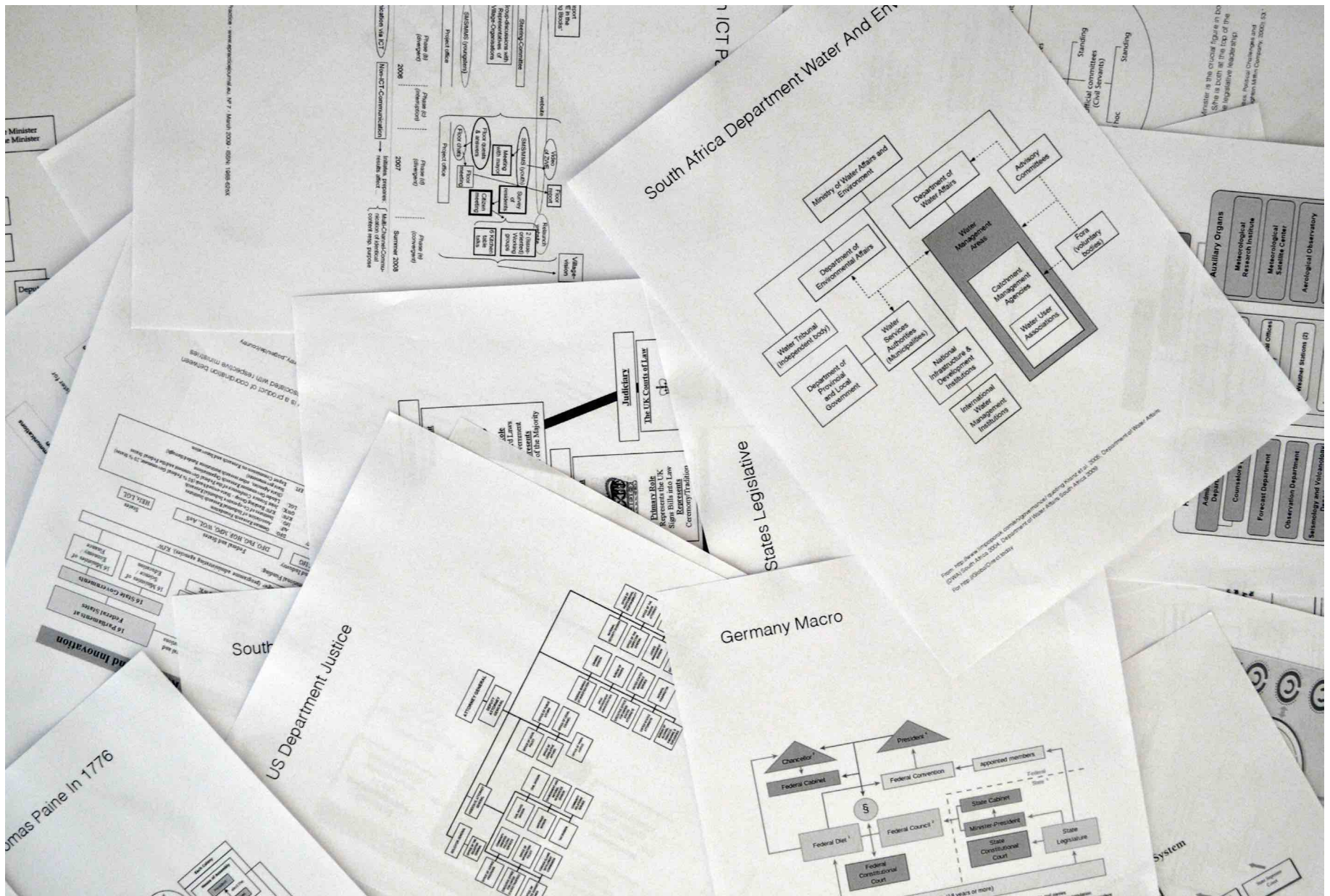
Global Direct, installation for Modes of Democracy at DOX Centre for Contemporary Art, Prague - Czech Republic, 2014

Art Commodities

Art Commodities

This artwork put forth a provocative business model for the art market through economic and social analyses.

Cirio's artwork *Art Commodities* consists of flowcharts and texts on a website that uses persuasive financial and economic language for envisioning a sustainable art market. It offers alternative modes for trading and collecting art in order to establish democratic aesthetic values and business opportunities. The flowcharts are models for the sustainable trade of artworks and the formation of aesthetic taste among artists, critics, collectors, and dealers. The artwork also introduced a protocoll called *Smart Art Market*, which proposes the establishment of a large series of unique art pieces sold for very low prices. This economic model is enabled by *Smart Digital Art Objects*, a format invented by Cirio to authenticate digital art via cryptography before blockchain technology in art trading had begun.

As a form of institutional critique, this work offers a critical examination on the financialization of contemporary art. It reflects on the significance of the art market and by doing so it questions how art can become the conceptualization of the validation and circulation of itself.

In the installation, digital prints of the flowcharts are framed and displayed together. The printed flowcharts refer to business models and market strategies, as well as diagrams illustrating the development of art aesthetics.
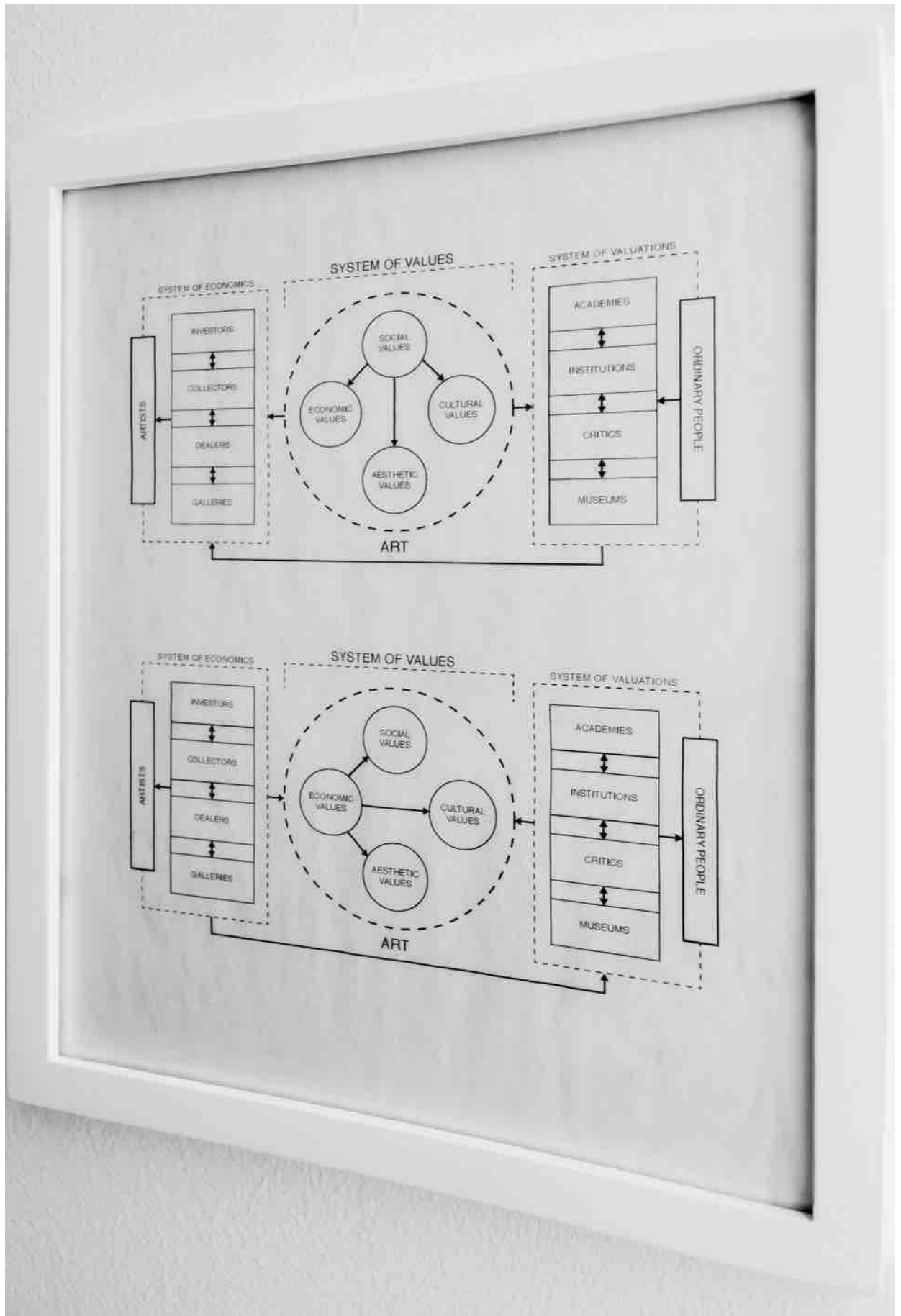
Art Commodities, installation at Mirror Project di Barriera, 2019, Turin - Italy
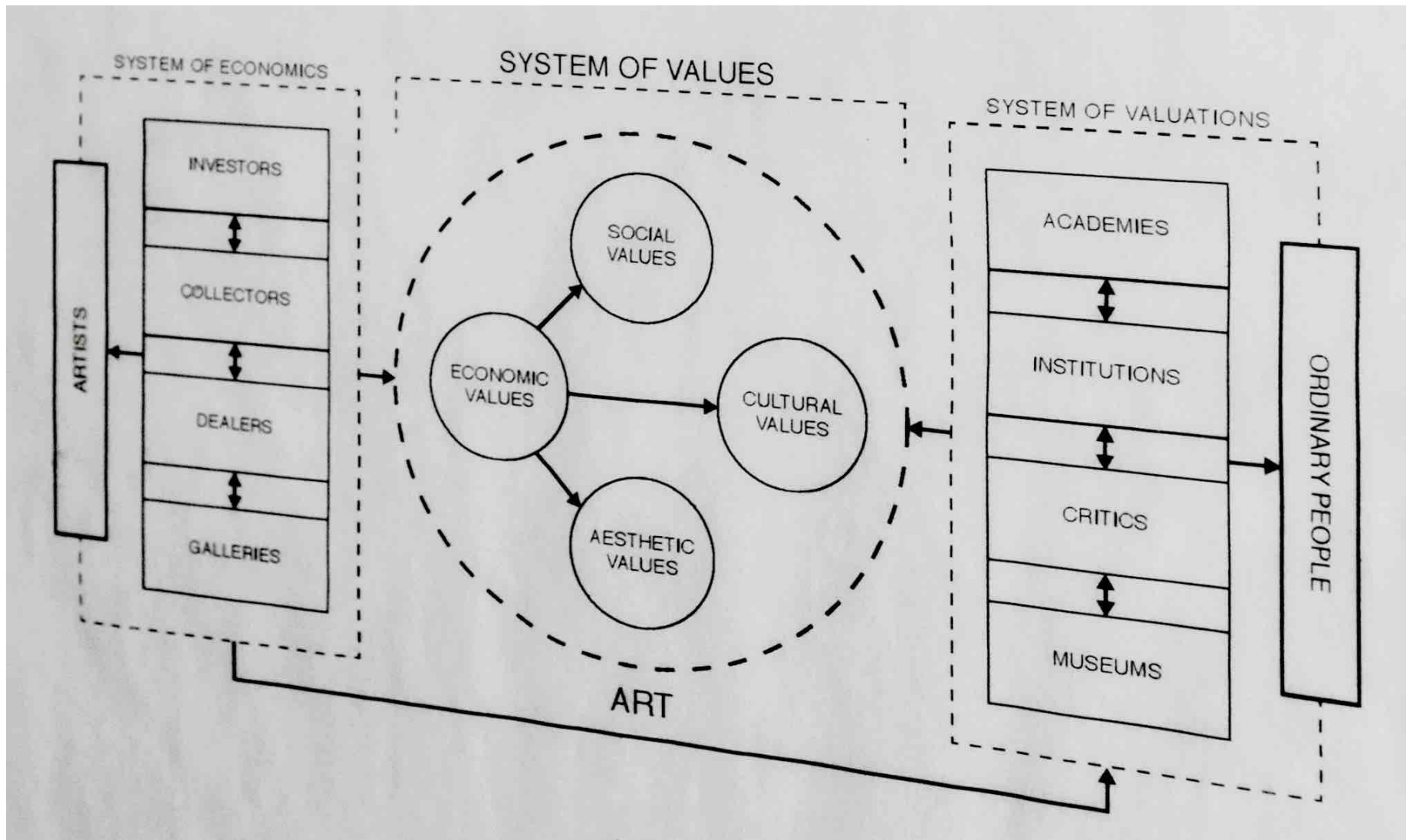
Art Commodities, installation at Mirror Project di Barriera, 2019, Turin - Italy
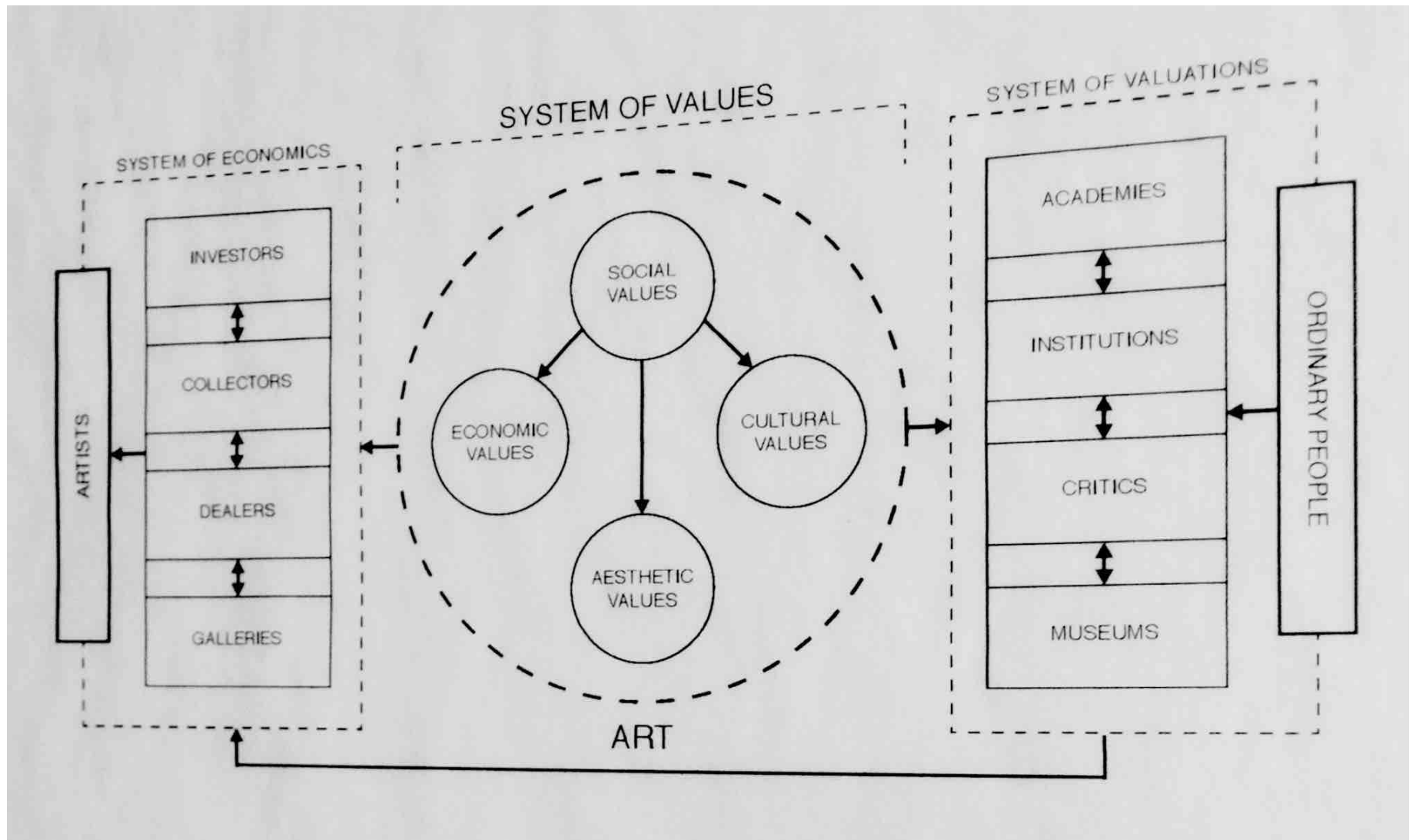
Art Commodities, installation at Mirror Project di Barriera, 2019, Turin - Italy

2013

Loophole for All

Loophole for All

This artwork unveiled over 200,000 Cayman Islands companies to unsettle global financial machinations.

In *Loophole for All*, Cirio hacked the Cayman Islands government registry to leak names of thousands of firms incorporated in the country. Undermining the idea of having a company "on paper" in financial offshore centers, the website *Loophole4All.com* promoted the low-cost sale of real identities of anonymous Cayman companies in an ironic effort to democratize offshore businesses. This corporate identity theft was enabled by forging Certificates of Incorporation issued with the artist's real name and signature. This performance generated international media attention as well as outcry from Cayman Islands' authorities, international banking and law firms, individual owners of real companies, and PayPal. As part of the conceptual work, Cirio set up his own company in the City of London and took advantage of other jurisdictions to shield personal liability and revenues. Furthermore, the artist interviewed experts and produced a video documentary investigating offshore centers and envisioning solutions to global economic inequality. This intervention foreshadowed financial data breaches such as The Panama and Paradise Papers, which in the following years reshaped global politics.

This interventionist and controversial artwork revolved around the concept of Cirio's legal scheme for the appropriation and exposure of financial secrecy. The provocative action and participatory model engaged the audience in a performance revealing and protesting the legal tax systems behind economic inequality.

In the offline art installation, the paper trail of the operation is displayed with prints of the counterfeited Certificates of Incorporation and the documents of the legal ploy utilized for the project which is illustrated by a single flowchart.

Loophole for All, installation at Ars Electronica, OK Zentrum, Linz - Austria, 2014 - 2013
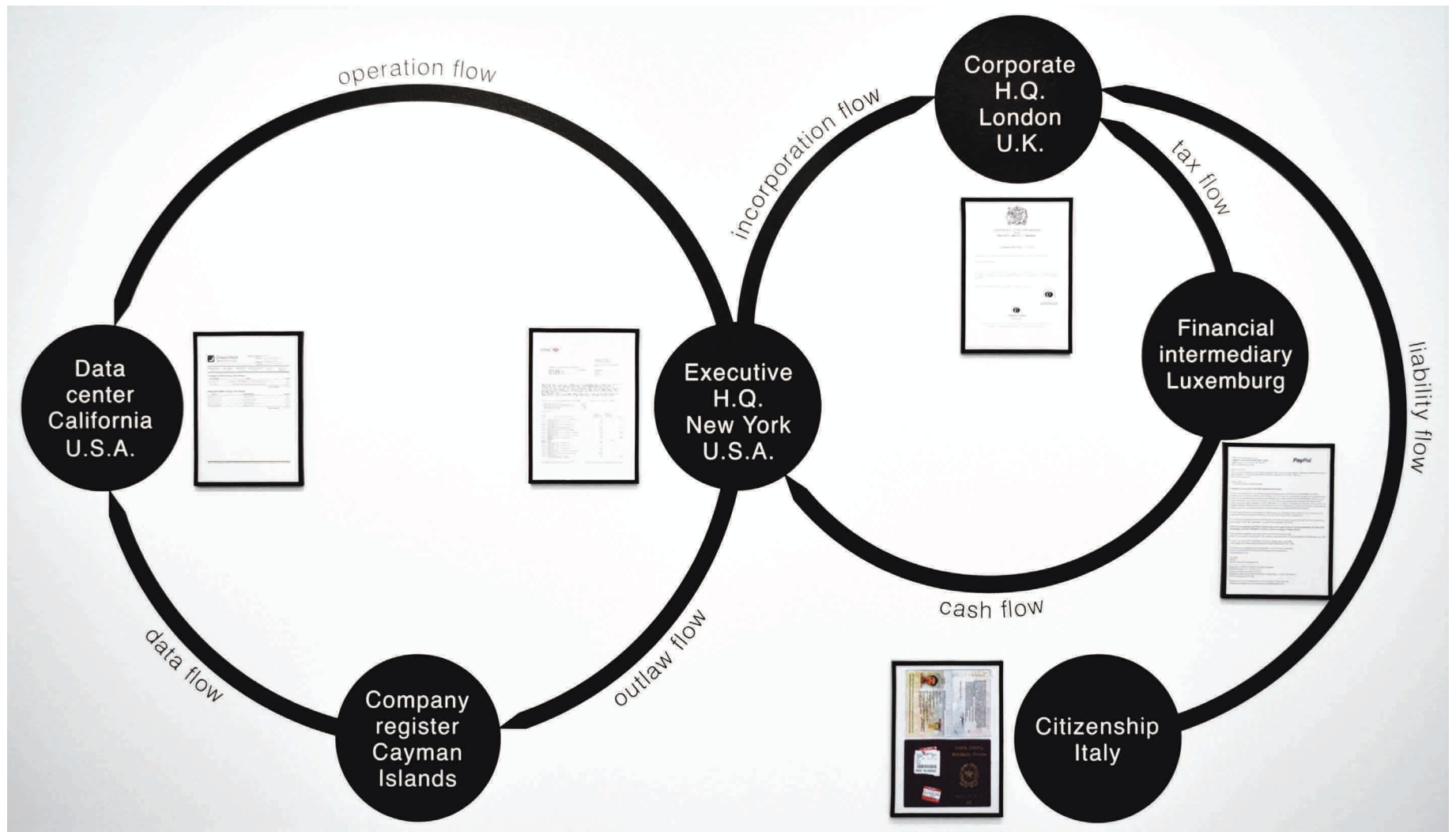
Loophole for All, installation at Ars Electronica, OK Zentrum, Linz - Austria, 2013

Loophole for All, installation at HeK, House of Electronic Arts, Basel - Switzerland, 2015

Loophole for All, installation at HeK, House of Electronic Arts, Basel - Switzerland, 2015

Loophole for All, installation at HeK, House of Electronic Arts, Basel - Switzerland, 2015

2010

P2P Gift Creit Card

Gift Finance

P2P Gift Credit Card - Gift Finance

This artwork is a utopian monetary policy counterfeiting virtual money by issuing illicit Visa credit cards.

In the work *P2P Gift Credit Cards*, Cirio hacked credit card technology to envision an alternative financial model based on a peer-to-peer social architecture. *Gift Finance* is a monetary policy invented by Cirio proposing the democratic creation of money for interest-free universal credit. The artist exploited credit card algorithms and standards to generate unique card numbers that were issued on the website *P2PGiftCredit.com*. Limited-edition physical plastic *P2P Gift Credit Cards* were made available by request and distributed worldwide via mail, art exhibitions, and public interventions across major cities in the UK. The distribution of counterfeit credit cards was used to protest and inform, highlighting the policies causing the financial downturn while the social movement Occupy was rising worldwide.

In this first work of Cirio's to use finance as a material for art, he questioned the notions of money, credit, and debit. By appropriating the marketing language of the credit card industry, the artwork involved its audience as cardholders, making them participants in Cirio's social and economic model.

The flowchart of the financial model and a framed credit card are displayed together in art exhibitions. Physical credit cards were distributed in the exhibitions to reproduce the artist's public interventions within the gallery setting.

P2P Gift Credit Cards, installation at Realityflowhacked, Ljubljana - Slovenia, 2011

P2P Gift Credit Cards, installation at Realityflowhacked, Ljubljana - Slovenia, 2011

P2P Gift Credit Cards, installation at The Visionary Trading Project. London - United Kingdom, 2011

2009

Open Society Structures

Open Society Structures

This triptych of flowcharts introduced algorithm thinking applied to social progress.

In *Open Society Structures*, Cirio drew three flowcharts including a taxonomy of cultural, economic, and political conceptions outlining the flow of principles for an ideal society. This conceptual framework explored the shaping of the three social structures of culture, politics, and economy, bringing together egalitarian values, collaborative perspectives, and edifying propositions. In this artwork the problem-solving attitude of the ethical hacker ethos was applied to social constructivism. These diagrams introduced the idea of organizing society like designing algorithms for operation systems and software. This work exemplified the artist's proactive and progressive outlook, laying the foundation for the body of work Cirio would later develop throughout his career.

Social theory, conceptual art, and unconventional visual strategies were integrated in this work. By analyzing social formations and ordering social principles, Cirio outlined economic, political, and cultural systems as a creative process which can contribute to the improvements of societal organization.

The artworks composing the *Open Society Structures* triptych are made with digital graphics screen printed on panels of plexiglass. The two mounted layers of glossy black and the clear plexiglass simulate blackboards with process thinking drawings.
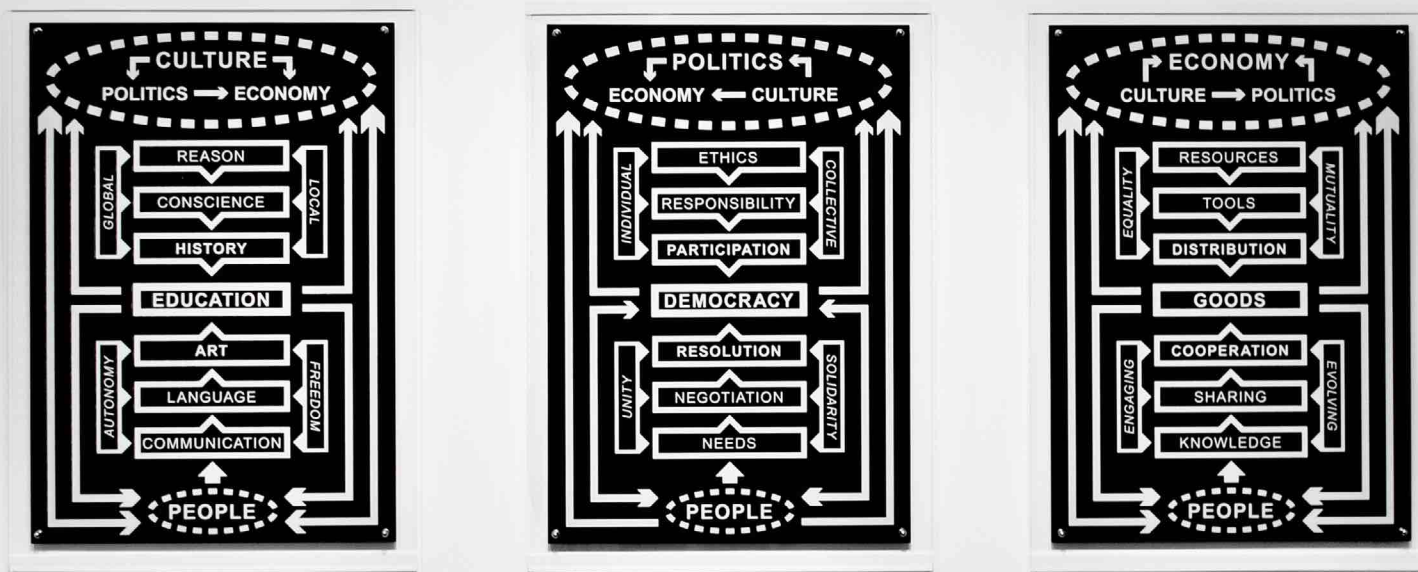
Open Society Structures, installation at 10th Cairo Prize, Palazzo della Permanente, Milan - Italy, 2009
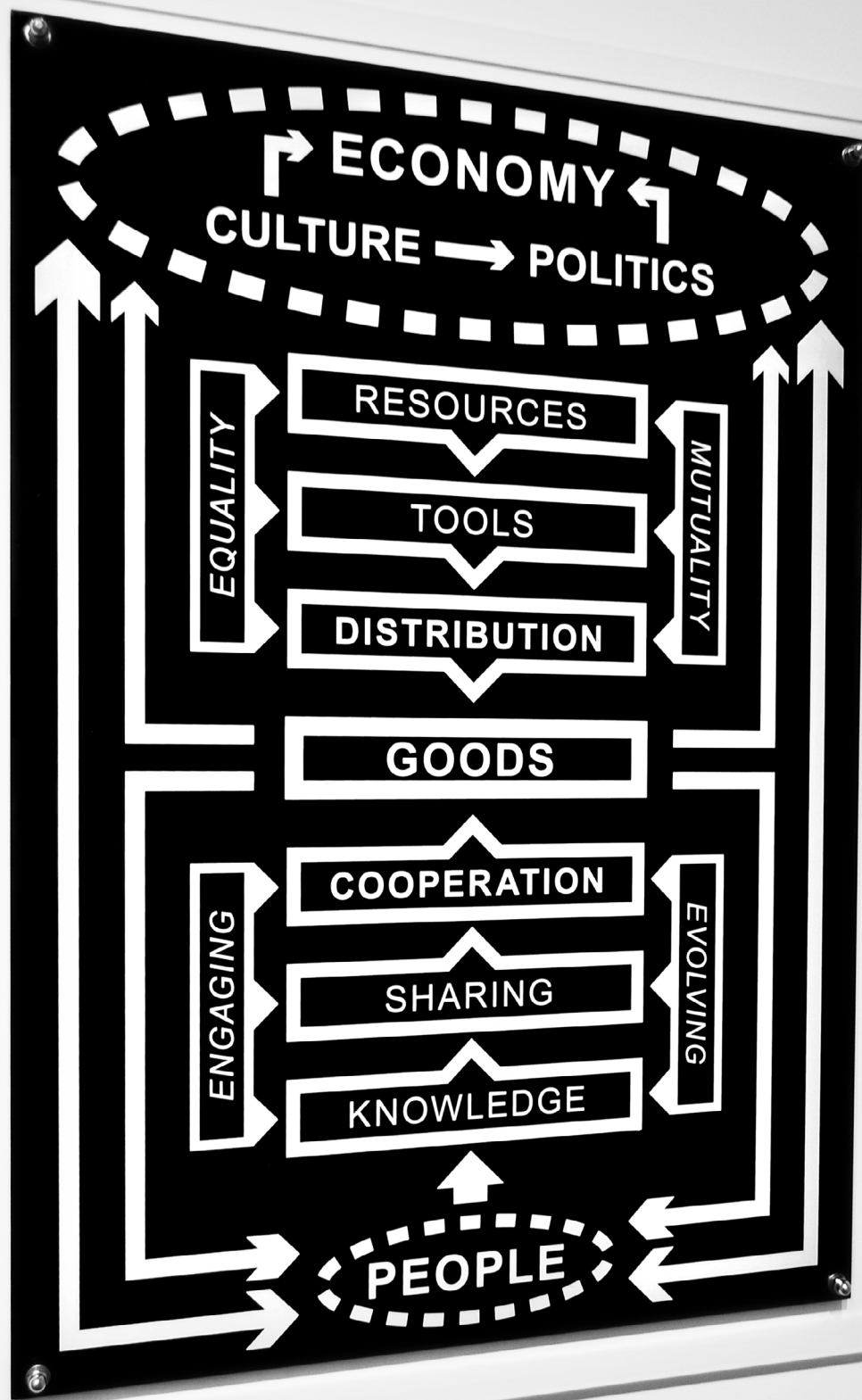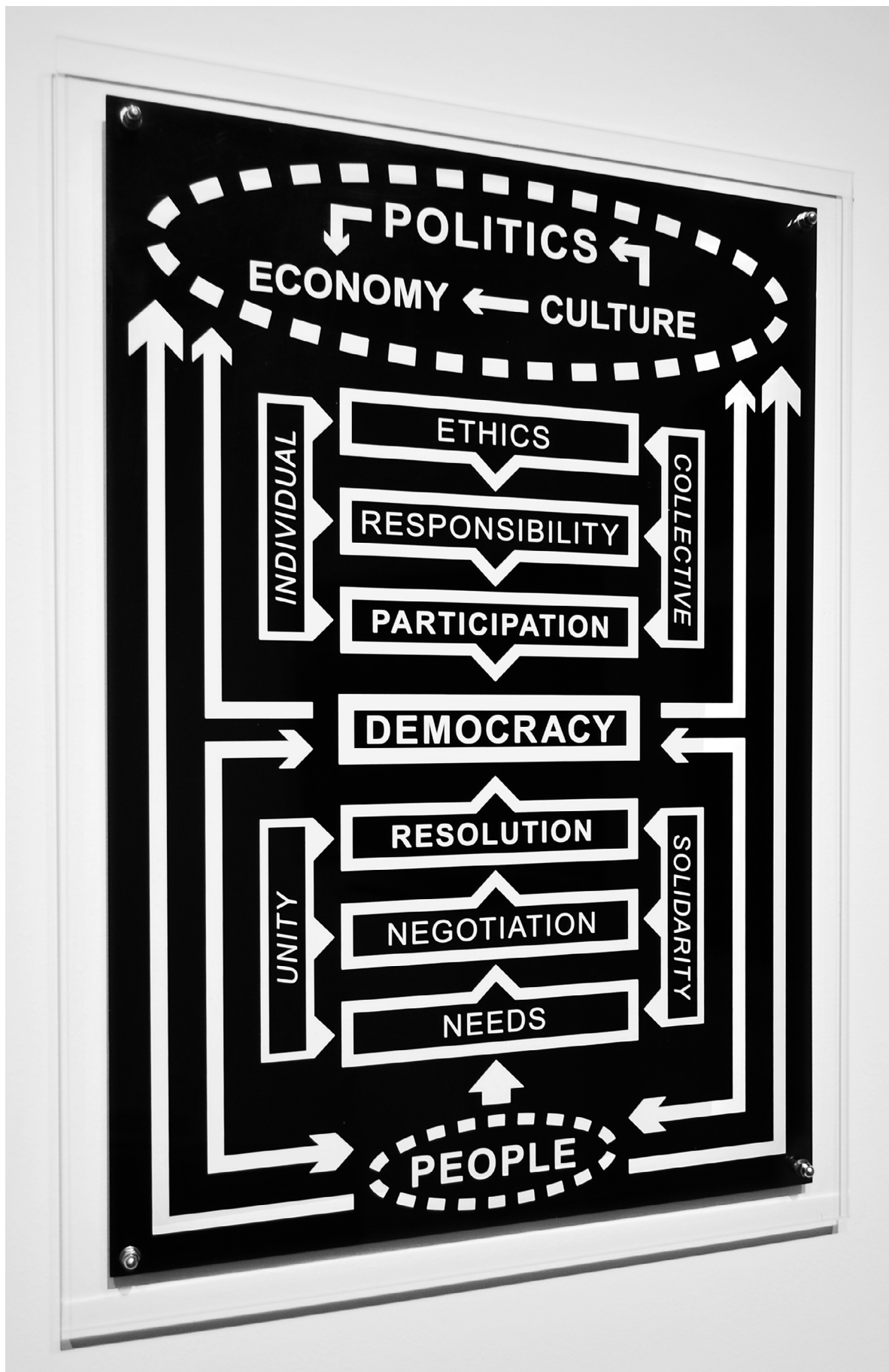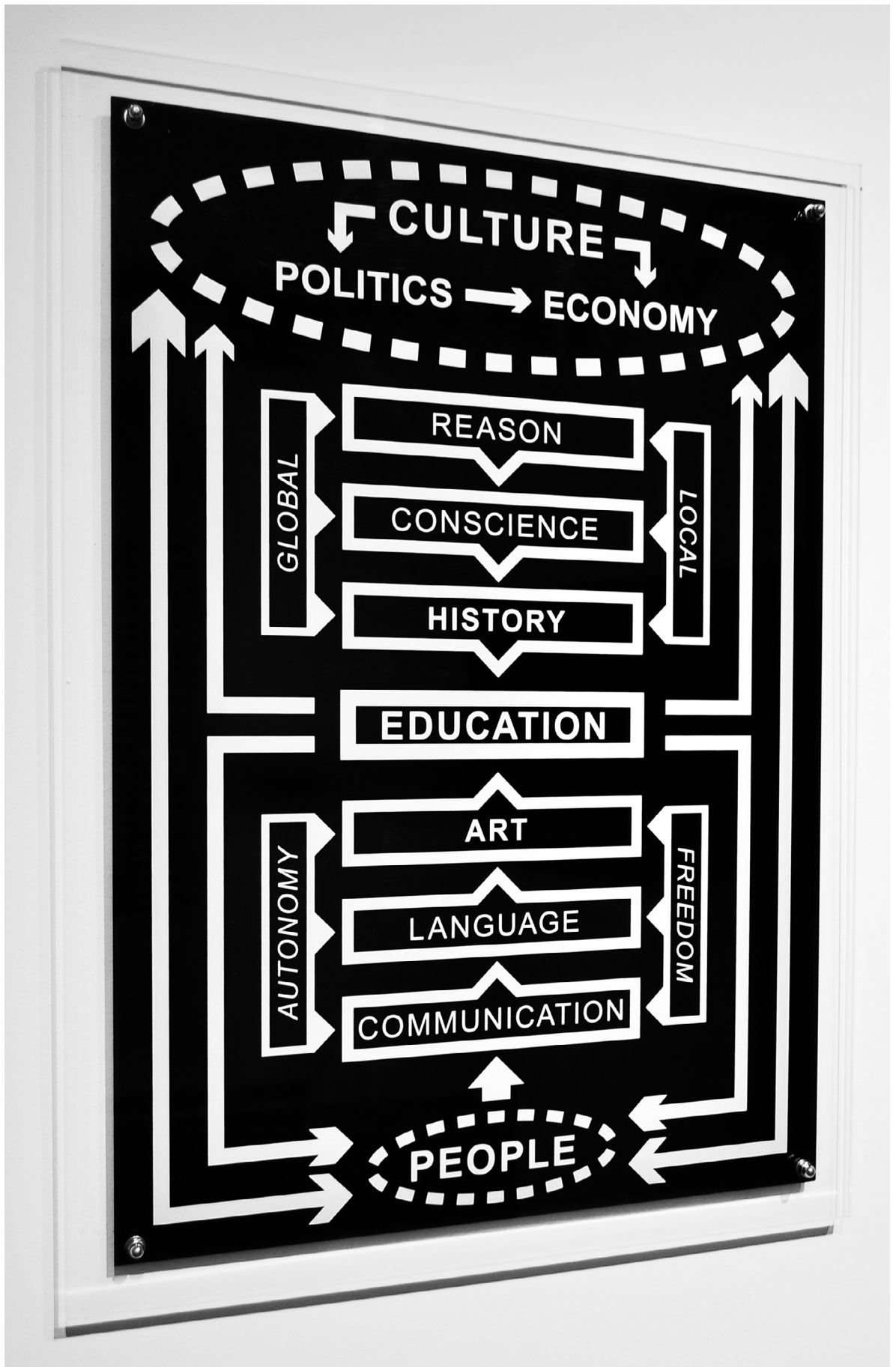
Open Society Structures, installation at 10th Cairo Prize, Palazzo della Permanente, Milan - Italy, 2009
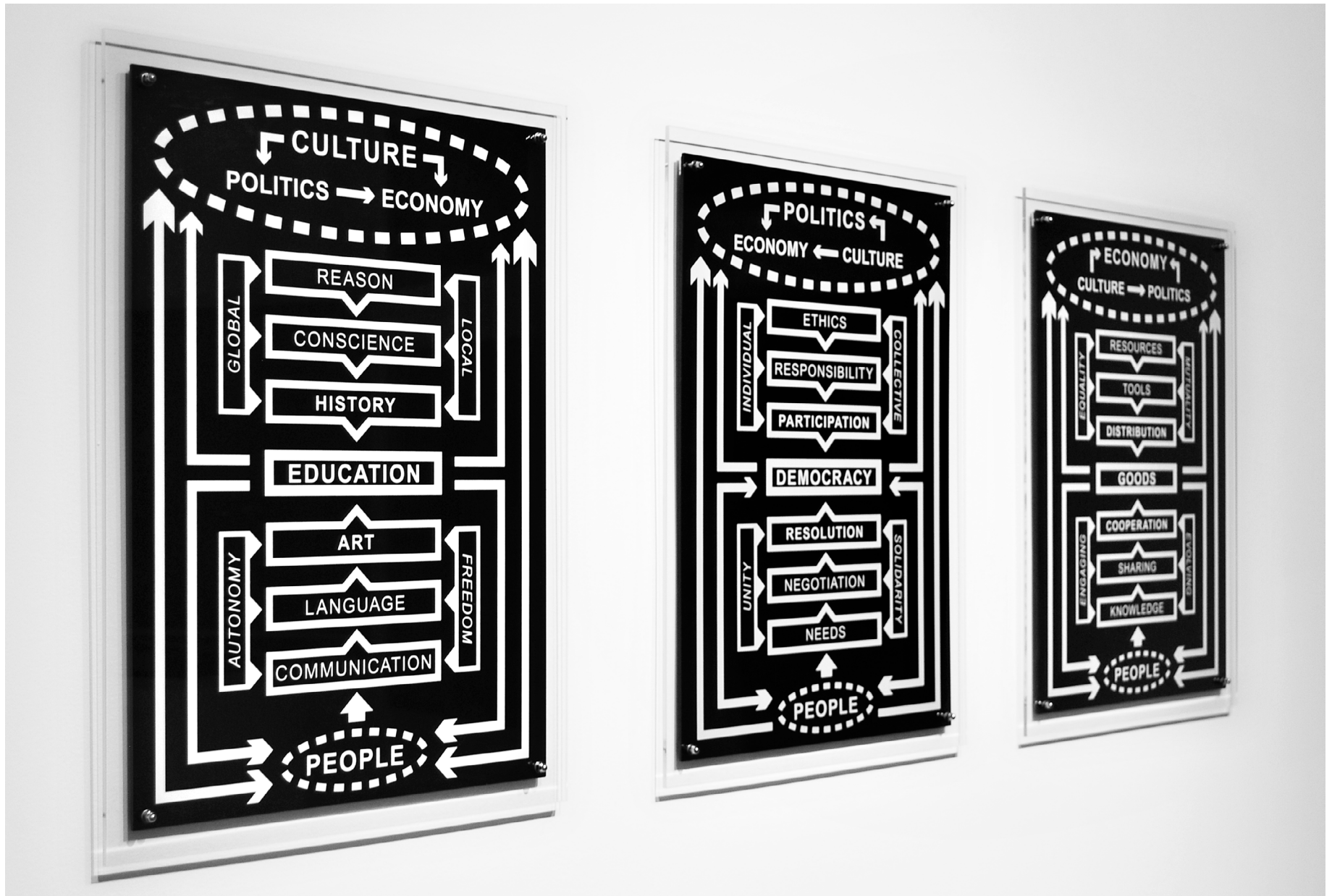
Open Society Structures, 10th Cairo Prize, installation at Palazzo della Permanente, Milan - Italy, 2009

2005 - 2011

Hacking

Monopolism Trilogy

Hacking Monopolism Trilogy

This trilogy of algorithms exploited the technical and economic vulnerabilities of three major Internet companies, Facebook, Amazon, and Google, reconfiguring the way they concentrate, misappropriate, and monetize large quantity of information and user interactions.

This trilogy utilized a common methodology through custom hacks programmed by Cirio, finding and exploiting security vulnerabilities within the Internet giants' business models. *The Hacking Monopolism Trilogy* includes the three artworks, *Face to Facebook*, *Amazon Noir*, and *Google Will Eat Itself*. These interventions aimed to unsettle their marketing and economic models, which were revealed in the appropriated material. User data from Facebook, books from Amazon, and Google's clicks were the material recontextualized through the concepts of the artworks. These performances were staged with interactions between the companies targeted, media outlets, and the general public. Each of these projects was developed during a time of expansion for the Internet giants and before several scandals broke in the following decade.

The materials, techniques, and subjects used in these works were groundbreaking for Internet art. The concepts in the trilogy challenged the economic implications of the Internet, such as invasive advertising, users data mining, and commercialization of intellectual goods. The sophisticated hacks in the technological systems of the Internet giants became a particular mode of creative practice.

The installation includes documentation of the reactions and interactions with various elements of the performances, along with legal documents received from the targeted companies. Flowcharts are displayed as central components, outlining the main processes and algorithms used to execute the concepts of the artworks.

Hacking Monopolism Trilogy, installations at Museum China Academy of Art, Hangzhou - China, 2016
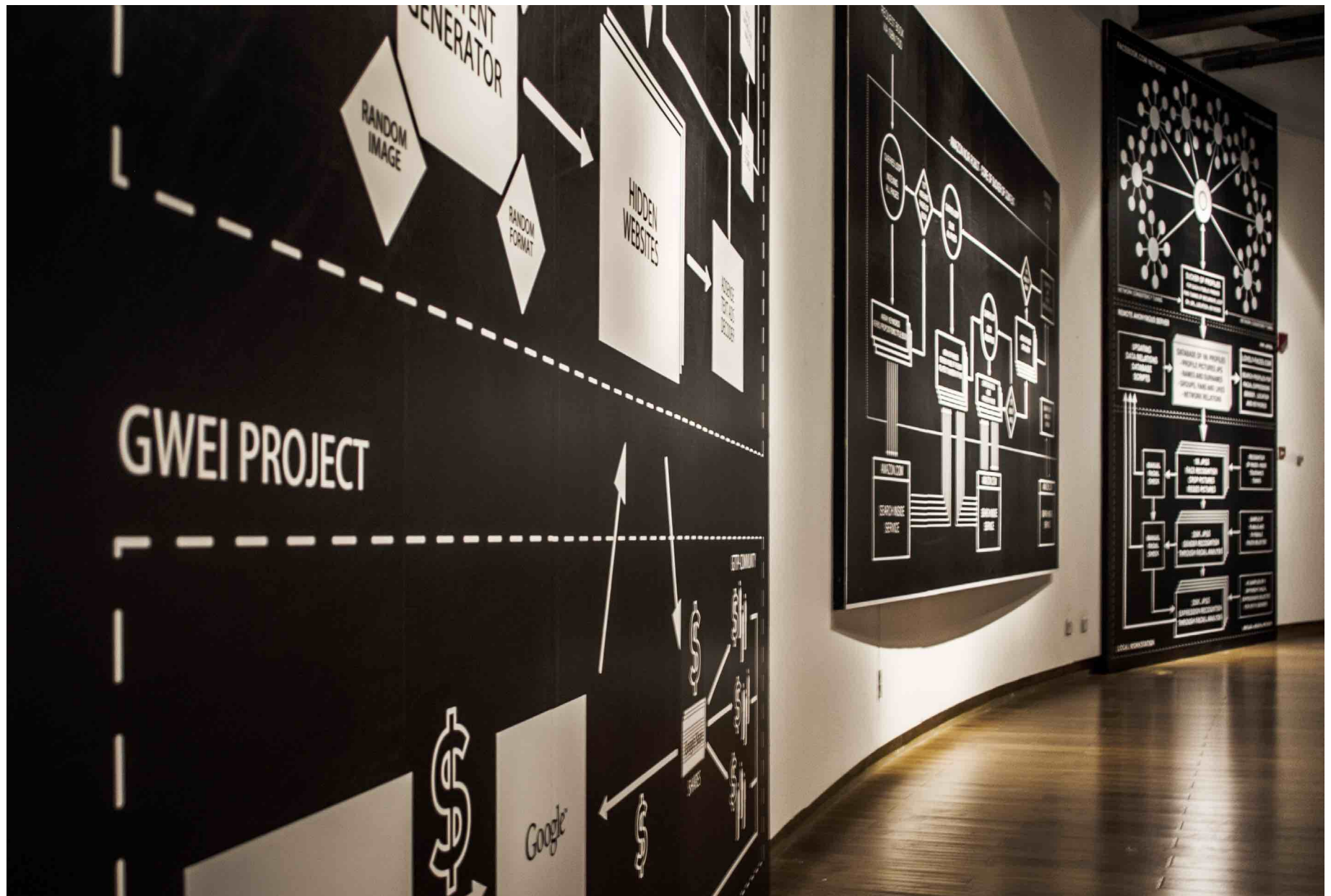
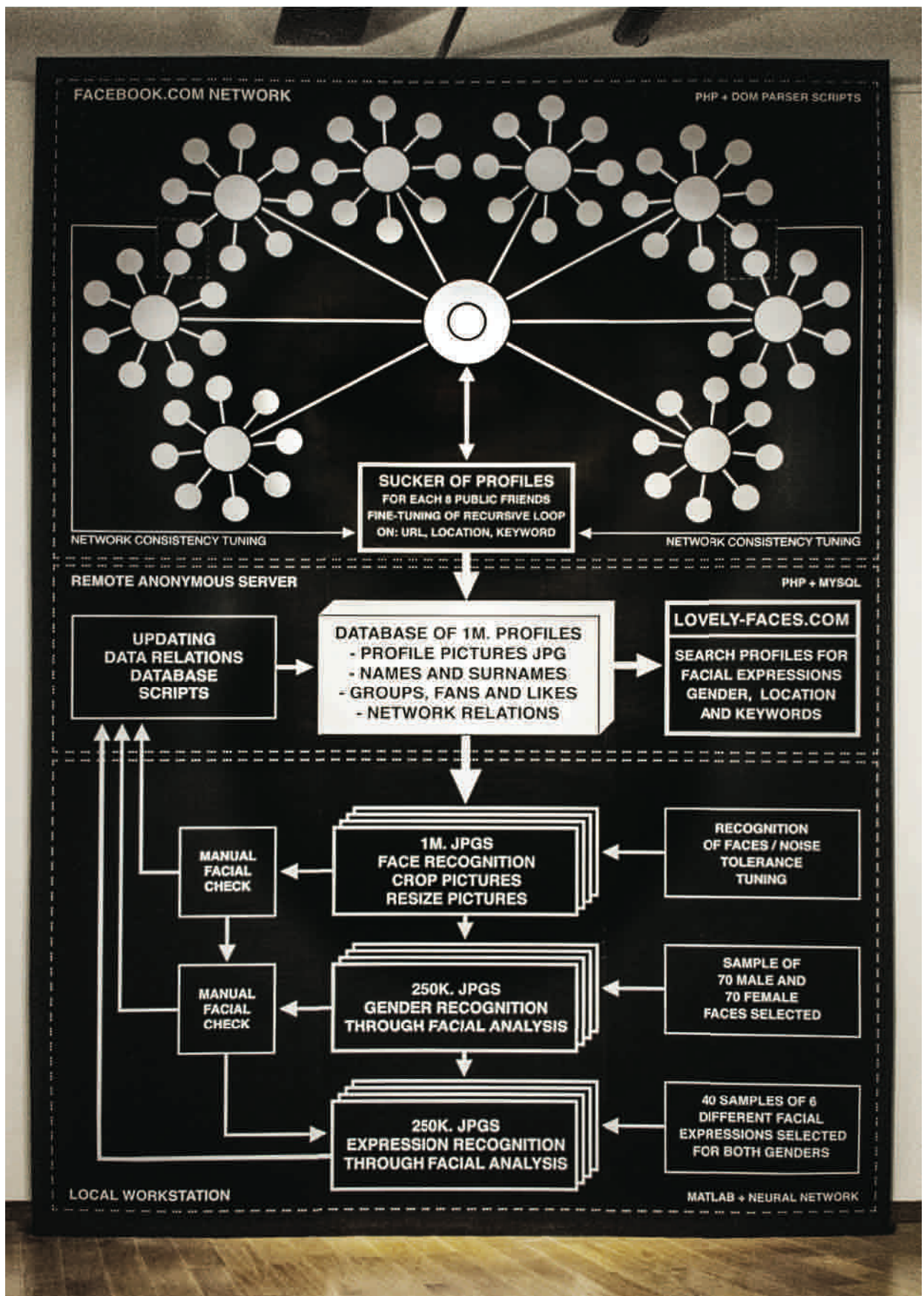*Hacking Monopolism Trilogy*, installations at Museum China Academy of Art, Hangzhou - China, 2016
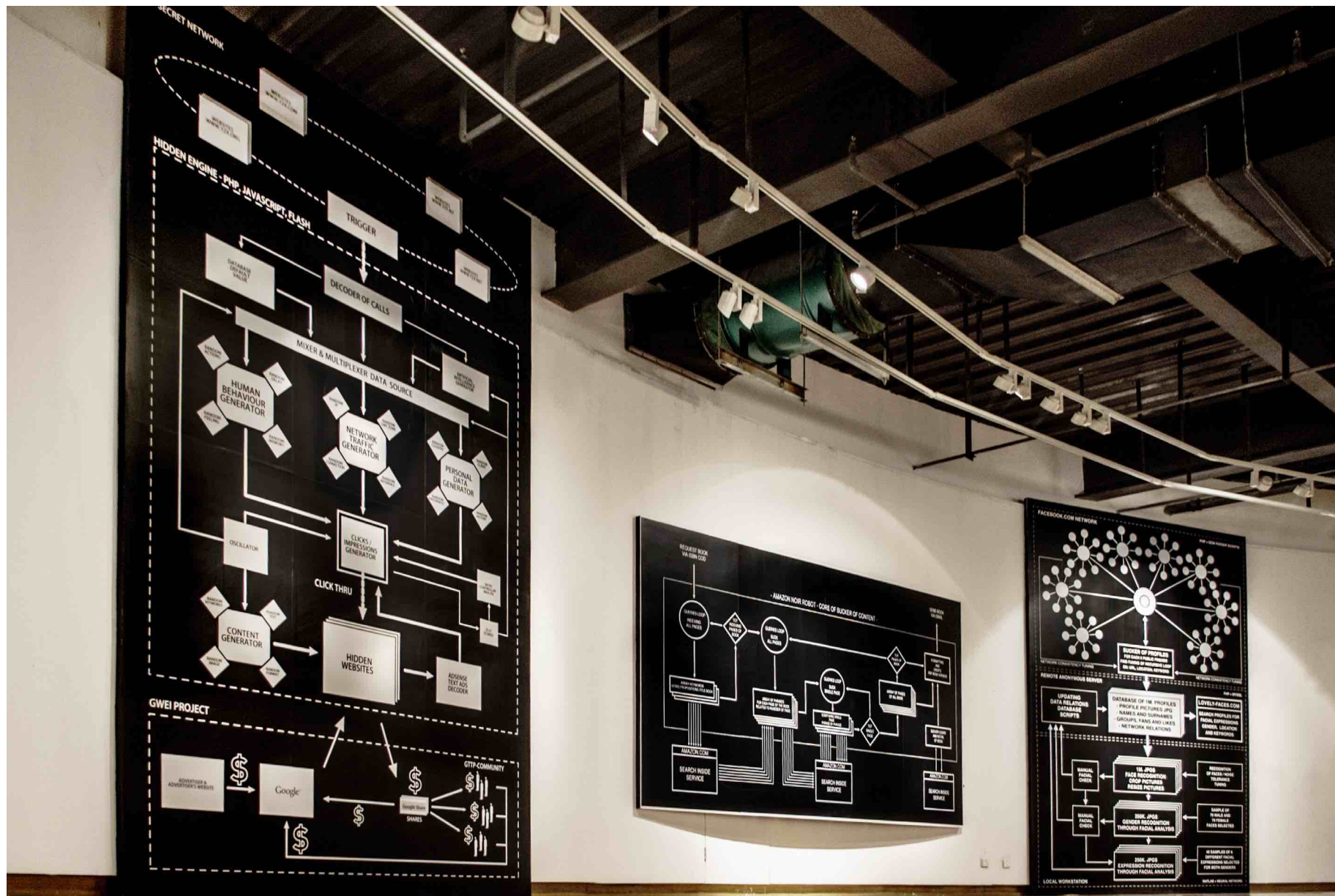
Hacking Monopolism Trilogy, installations at Museum China Academy of Art, Hangzhou - China, 2016

Face to Facebook

This artwork appropriated one million Facebook profiles and posted 250,000 of them on a custom-made dating website with profiles sorted by social temperament, which was estimated through artificial intelligence analyzing facial expressions. The dating website, *Lovely-Faces.com*, provided a stage for anybody to interact with Facebook users' personality traits such as smug, easy going, or sly. The project took place over five days of thrilling personal, media, and legal reactions, which became a global mass media performance. During the performance the artwork received over a thousand mentions in the international press, eleven legal threats, five death threats, and several letters from the lawyers of Facebook, which had to confront this artistic intervention made with its appropriated material and as a result of its security flaws. The project addressed surveillance, privacy, and the economy of social media monopolies as well as performing art interventions within global media.
Coauthor: Alessandro Ludovico.

Face to Facebook for *Hacking Monopolism Trilogy*, installation at Museum China Academy of Art, Hangzhou - China, 2016

Face to Facebook for *Hacking Monopolism Trilogy,* installation at Alhóndiga, Bilbao - Spain, 2013
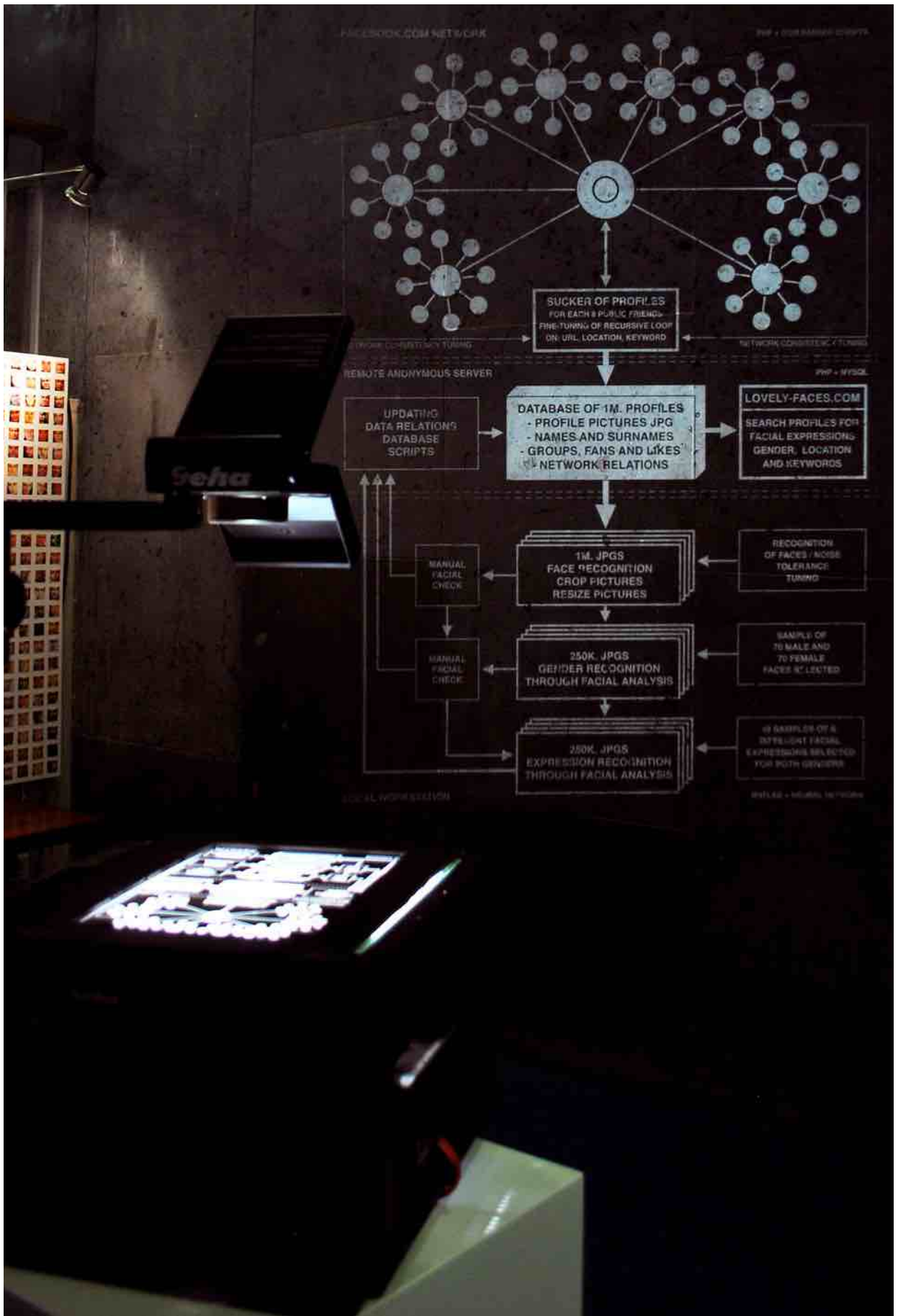
Face to Facebook for *Hacking Monopolism Trilogy*, installation at Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin – Germany, 2011

Amazon Noir

2006

This artwork eluded Amazon.com copyright protections through a sophisticated hack of the "Search Inside" service. Complete digital volumes of books were obtained and reassembled into .pdf format, then redistributed for free. The hacking took place in the time when traditional publishers were persuaded to digitize and hand their publications to Amazon.com. The project generated wide press coverage and press inquiries to Amazon, which in turn denied both the hacking and the vulnerability found in their system. This media performance was documented through various types of offline installations and with the appropriated books printed and assembled to match their originals. The artwork integrated the criminalization of piracy with free circulation and access to knowledge, hence addressing copyright and fair use laws within the disrupting digital economy and information monopolies.

Co-authors: Alessandro Ludovico and ubermorgen.
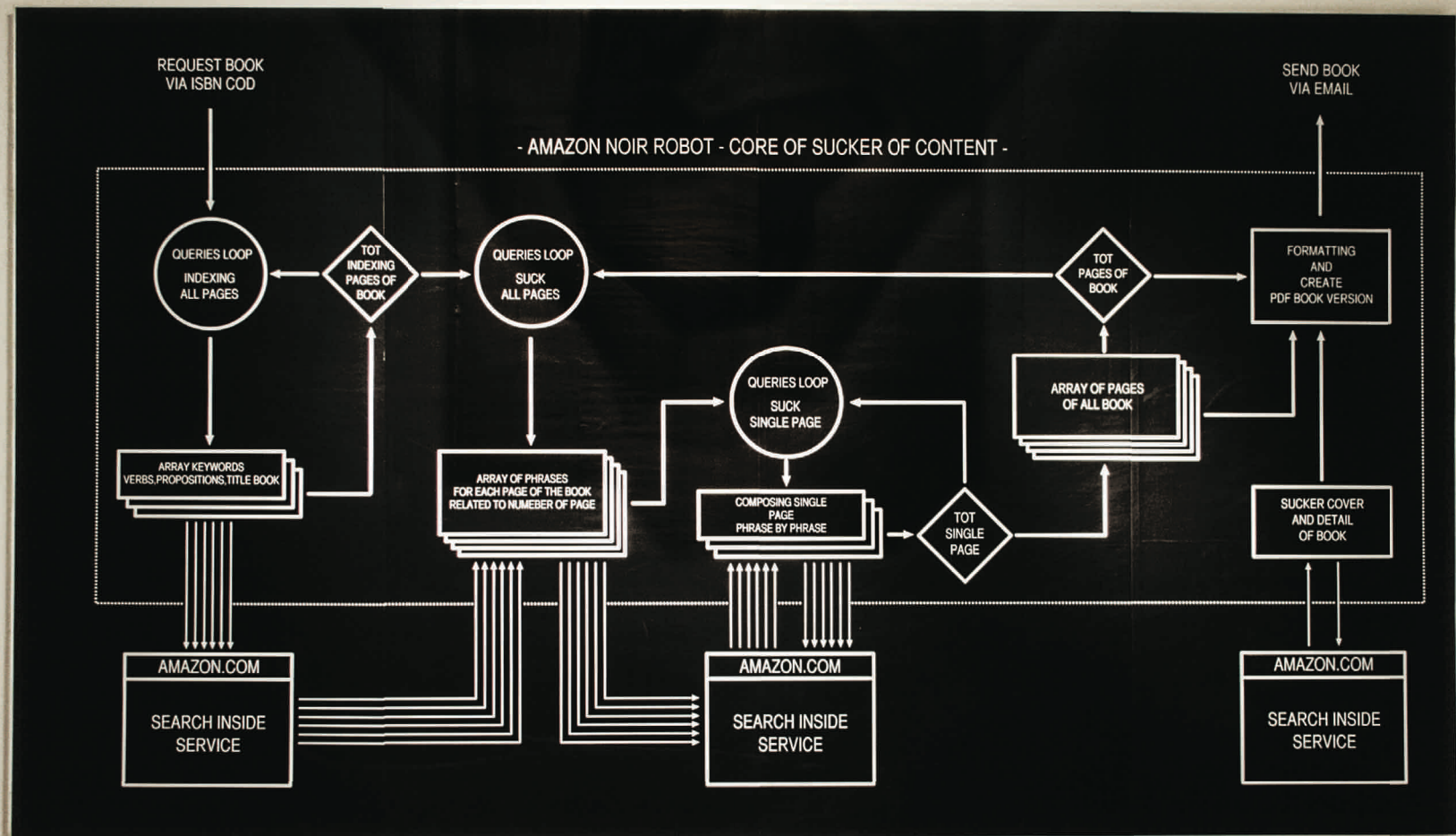
Amazon Noir for *Hacking Monopolism Trilogy,* installation at Museum China Academy of Art, Hangzhou - China, 2016
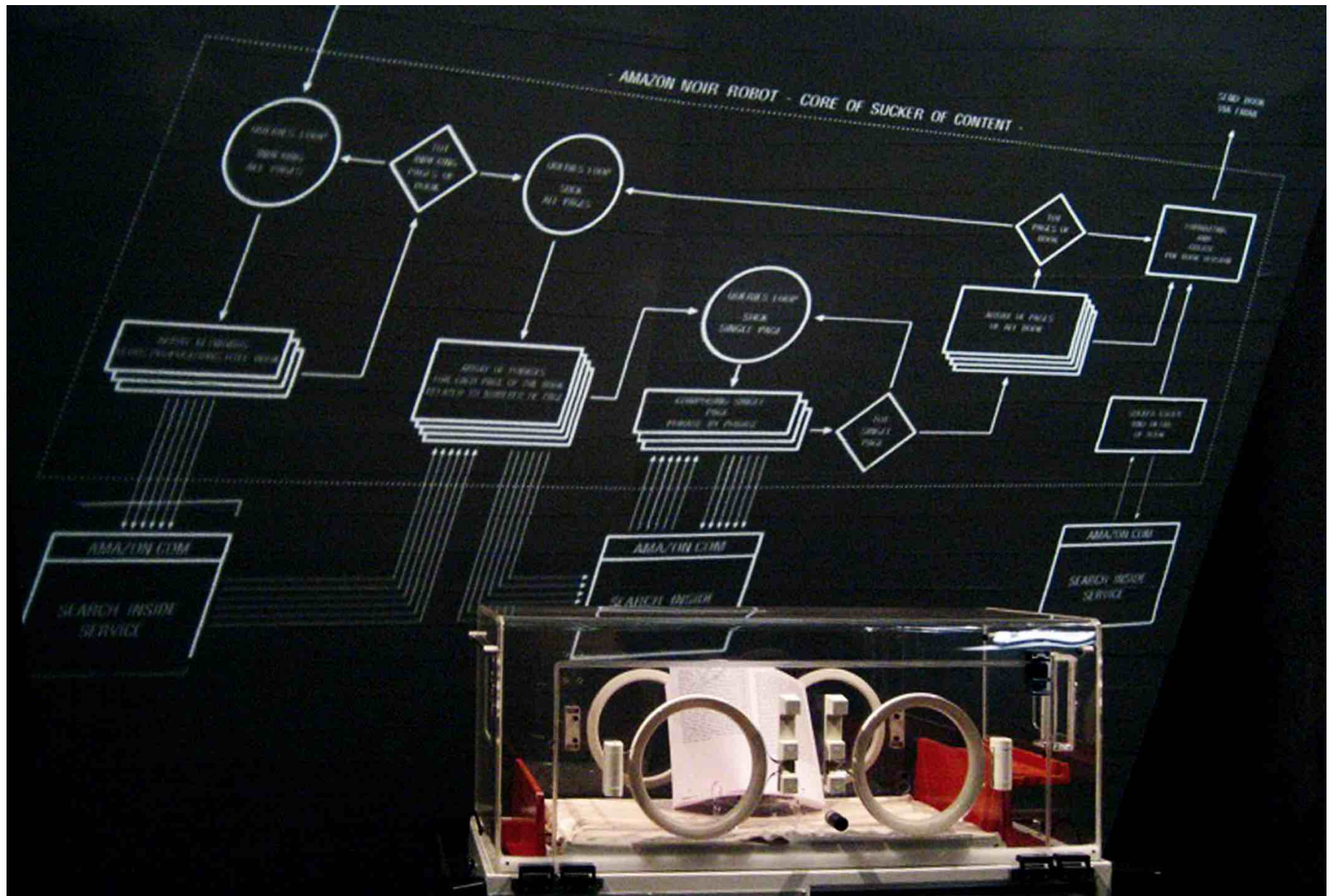
Amazon Noir for *Hacking Monopolism Trilogy,* installation at Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin - Germany, 2008

Amazon Noir for *Hacking Monopolism Trilogy*, installation at Accademia Albertina, Turin - Italy, 2006

Google Will Eat Itself

2005

This artwork generated revenue by hacking the Google "AdSense" initiative. Bots were created to automatically click on banners of web advertising placed on a network of hidden websites. The money from the scheme could be used to buy Google's shares and hand them over via GTTP Ltd., a firm set up for the artwork to distribute the shares to everyone and turn Google into a public company. Through establishing this circular model, the project addressed Google's monopoly of online information, internet advertising, and its large economy. In response, the German Google legal department sent a cease and desist letter threatening legal actions and requesting reimbursements for the money earned from the scheme. Co-authors: Alessandro Ludovico and ubermorgen.

Google Will Eat Itself for Hacking Monopolism Trilogy, installation at Museum China Academy of Art, Hangzhou - China, 2016

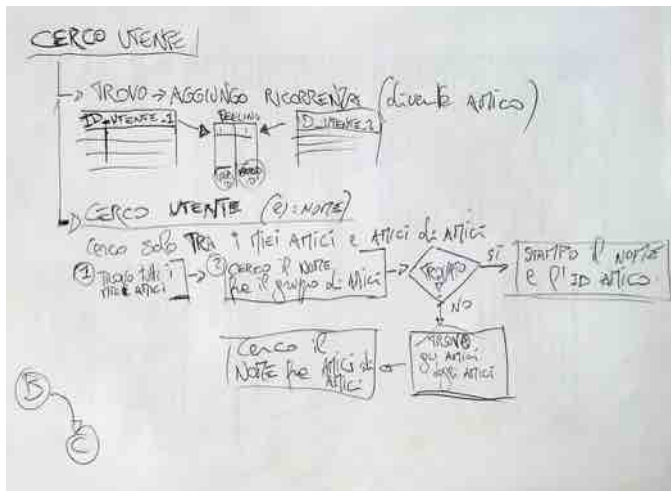*Google Will Eat Itself* for *Hacking Monopolism Trilogy,* installation at Museum China Academy of Art, Hangzhou - China, 2016

Google Will Eat Itself for *Hacking Monopolism Trilogy*, installation at PAN, Palazzo delle Arti, Naples - Italy, 2008

Sketches

2002-2004

Sketches of flowcharts by Cirio in 2004 for creating an early social media platform (Facebook was launched in 2006) for the collective art project The United Transnational Republics. Cirio collaborated with the German collective for connecting and organizing their community online.

Sketches of flowcharts by Cirio in 2002 for the interface of his platform to run participatory cyber-attacks as form of online protests. Part of the platform was eventually used by Cirio against NATO's website, an action then reported internationally by cyber security organizations.