

**GIVING WHAT YOU DON'T HAVE: INTERVIEWS  
WITH SEAN DOCKRAY AND DMYTRI KLEINER**

Cornelia Sollfrank

Sean Dockray is an artist whose work expands the notion of artistic production from discrete artifacts towards the creation of open structures and unstable situations. Originally from the US, he has travelled and lived in different continents in the last few years, always continuing to work on his online projects. On the basis of his professional background in architecture – and a broad understanding of what architecture involves – Sean explores how form and content mutually influence each other. In the projects he initiates he provides a framework and basic rules that only come to life through the contributions of large numbers of people, and which often yield unpredictable social relationships and dynamics. Although the focus within *Giving What You Don't Have* is on the project [aaaaarg.org](http://aaaaarg.org), an open source platform for freely sharing books and texts, Sean's primary interest lies in the appropriation of systems and structures – such as gallery, library, or school – rather than simply content.

In this interview, Sean explains how [aaaaarg.org](http://aaaaarg.org) naturally evolved as a part of the self-organized educational project known as 'The Public School'. [Aaaaaarg.org](http://aaaaarg.org), while being a central tool for the creation and sharing of knowledge within Public School, also produces project-related communities around specific texts and books. Sean points out how centralized business interests in general have changed the whole life cycle of a book, including production, distribution and consumption, which all is now happening through Internet based platforms, and where [aaaaarg.org](http://aaaaarg.org) sits in relation to that development.

The interview is of great interest in the exploration of platform politics; offering insights into the development, operation and philosophy behind one of the most compelling examples of non-commercial and commons oriented platforms. The interview took

place in Berlin in January 2013 and Sean's commitment and his enthusiasm for his work and the values it embodies, comes through very clearly.



Cornelia Sollfrank in conversation with Sean Dockray, 2013

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Dmytri Kleiner is a Russian-Canadian artist and software developer working with the art collective Telekommunisten, based in Berlin. The largely conceptual works of the collective – such as *deadSwap* (2009), *Thimbl* (2010) and *R15N* (2012) and other ‘miscommunication technologies’ – investigate the political economy of the internet as well as the social relations embedded in communication technologies.

In this interview, Dmytri explains these art works and the theory behind the collective, as it is also elaborated in the *Telekommunist Manifesto* (2010). He derives his critique of intellectual property – and related to that of Free Culture and Creative Commons – from Marxist theory. It is based on a critique of the commodification of labour in general. Radical forms of anti-copyright have to be seen in this context. Based on Marx' distinction between producers' goods and consumer goods, Dmytri also expounds why the concept of copyleft, which has become a wide-spread and powerful licensing model for software, cannot work for cultural products; from there, he develops his critique of Creative Commons as a system that, based on what he calls ‘liberal criticism,’ first of all, serves capitalist interests instead of allowing to practice culture as a truly dialogical process. Consequently, Dmytri introduces an alternative license, which he calls ‘copy far-left’.

Dmytri's radical take offers a challenging theoretical framework from which to think through, and beyond, the enclosure of the digital commons by commercialised and proprietary networks, towards a more radical politics of platforms. Such a politics conceives labour not as a source of exploitation for capital, either directly or through the creative commons, but as directed towards what he calls 'venture communism'.



Cornelia Sollfrank in conversation with Dmytri Kleiner, 2013

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