

Declaration of Dependence: Noah Simblist

1. That all artworks are dependent on currency—political, social, intellectual, or actual capital—and these forms of capital are directly tied to power.
2. That all artists, curators, and other cultural workers are dependent on systems including influence, production, and dissemination.
3. That the meanings found within artworks are dependent on language and other forms of shared social frameworks.
4. That dependency rejects the fiction of autonomy. Even though some have argued that autonomy from politics preserves the agency of the individual, this agency is most often a political privilege.
5. That dependency must still allow for the agency of the subject so that the individual is not subsumed by groupthink and the possibility for dissent is preserved.
6. That publics and counterpublics are interdependent.
7. That collaboration, participation, community, and other forms of commoning are necessary to produce both culture and politics.
8. That working together is still work and, as such, sometimes involves more labor than usually required to complete a task. Because it requires labor to resist the systems that support individualism.
9. That collaboration involves negotiating the space between individual subjectivities, producing a very particular kind of outcome that no individual alone could produce.
10. That working together includes both a collection of individual contributions and their attendant authorship as well as a collective authorship.
11. That working together is haunted by the specters of Marx, Marxism, Communism, Socialism, and the totalitarian state.
12. That working together is haunted by the machine of Fordist capitalism and its post-Fordist reincarnations—co-working spaces, Google docs, and flash mobs.
13. That collaboration is based on discourse, conversation, and the myriad of ways in which ideas are conveyed, listened to, negotiated, accepted, and performed.
14. That collaboration is a form of participation, a process of social engagement that often is echoed in the work that it produces.
15. That collaboration is a particular form of dependency that is freely chosen by a set of individuals and is not an extension of paternalism (non-governmental organizations) or hegemonic power (public or private).
16. That interdependence, as manifest in collaboration, has the potential to produce a commons and even a commonwealth.



Written for *Summer Sessions: Commonwealth*, organized by the Institute for Contemporary Art at VCU. The project is part of the ICA's contribution to *Commonwealth* (working title), a multi-year collaboration with Beta-Local (San Juan, Puerto Rico) and Philadelphia Contemporary (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania).