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## Source Material Everywhere [[G.]Lit/ch RemiX]

### A Conversation with Mark Amerika

**Editors' Note:** Mark Amerika is a leading digital media artist, author, and educator. Named a "Time Magazine 100 Innovator," Amerika employs new media technology to create emerging forms of art that actively challenge and deliberately transgress established boundaries. He is the author of numerous books, including two avant-pop novels *The Kafka Chronicles* (Fiction Collective, 1993) and *Sexual Blood* (University of Alabama Press, 1995) and two monographs investigating the theory and practice of digital media art, *META/DATA: A Digital Poetics* (The MIT Press, 2007) and *Remixthebook* (University of Minnesota Press, 2011). He has written, produced, and exhibited a trilogy of award winning Internet art installations made up of the hypertext fiction *Grammatron* (1998), an mp3 concept album called *PHON:E:ME* (1999) and *FILMTEXT* (2002), which incorporated a Flash art website, an mp3 concept album, an experimental artist ebook, and a series of live audio-visual performances. Most recently he produced and created the film *Immobilite* (2010), an art-house feature shot entirely on a mobile phone camera. Amerika's digital artwork has been shown at museums around the world, including five major retrospectives, one each at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, the Media Arts Plaza in Tokyo, Ciberart Bilbao, FILE in São Paulo, and the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Athens. He has received art commissions from venues such as the Walker Art Center, the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, IBM, Sony PlayStation, and the Machida City

Museum of Graphic Arts in Tokyo. Amerika studied and completed his MFA at Brown University and is currently Professor of Art and Art History at the University of Colorado at Boulder. The following conversation began in São Paulo, Brazil in November of 2010 and developed after that initial meeting, quite appropriately, by way of the Internet.

**David Gunkel [DG]:** I'd like to begin our dialogue by referencing another dialogue, specifically Plato's *Timaeus*, which begins with Socrates counting: "One, two, three—but where, my dear Timaeus, is the fourth of our guests of yesterday, our host of today?" (Plato 1981, 17a). Here, at the beginning of this ancient dialogue, Socrates begins by asking about someone who is absent. In doing so, he makes what is absent present by explicitly marking a lack of presence. Something that was supposed to have been there is not, and this lack of presence is only able to be made present as such by remarking on the trace of its withdrawal. So let me begin by also acknowledging and asking about an absence about something that was to have been here but is not. What is absent is an essay that you had intended to contribute to this volume, something called "From Remixology." And it is absent because of some stipulations regarding republication and competing works—issues emanating from our current intellectual property laws and put into question by the very work that is now absent. It seems then that we are at a crucial cultural moment when the creative opportunities of digital media (remixing, mashup, collage, cut-and-paste, etc.) directly oppose and challenge the legal structures of copyright and intellectual property that prohibit and even demonize things like republication, derivation, and plagiarism. What is an artist to do?

**Mark Amerika [MA]:** Here's the thing: I am not "I" and so there can be no definitive or proper version of me or my thoughts that can, in the end, be owned. If there is no definitive or proper version of me then I think it's safe to assume that there cannot be a definitive or proper version of what it is I am writing becoming remixing at any given moment. The writing "I" is always pseudo-autobiographical: a remix-in-process continually cohering into what Whitehead (1978, 279) would call "an aesthetic fact," although he was referring quite explicitly to "an intense experience" as an aesthetic fact. This resonates with my theory of remix because it's only by becoming an aesthetic fact that I can *experience concrescence* although it's not as if this concrescence can be captured as a still image owned by *the vectoralist class* [to borrow a term from Ken Wark's *The Hacker Manifesto*], rather, it's a simultaneous and continuous fusion of the actual sensory data I am

sampling from and manipulating as part of my remix practice [and here I am mashing up Piet Mondrian and Allen Ginsberg though it just as easily could have been Stan Brakhage and Robert Creeley or Kathy Acker and Count Lautréamont].

The aesthetic fact of the matter is that you [not you in particular, David, but the quantifiable other i.e. the all-consuming Singularity trying to lock down a version of "me" as myself, even though I too, like Whitman, am multitudes] cannot own my thoughts. No one can own my thoughts. They are just part of what, in my latest performance writing and publication project, *remixthebook* (2011), I refer to as the Source Material Everywhere (SME). Sure, there are going to be those who try to nail down a version of whatever traces I happen to be leaving behind and call it their property. But what they are really "owning" is a malleable version of an excerpt from my ongoing formation. Ron Sukenick (2000, 19) once wrote that "form is your footprints in the sand when you look back." With my own approach to self-appropriation, what Ray Federman terms *pla(y)giarism*, and the unconscious remixing of the actual sensory data I am sampling from and manipulating as part of my research practice, I feel comfortable doing whatever I want with the Source Material Everywhere.

This SME (SaME old SaME old, but forever cohering into new configurations, live performance or COMPOSITION BY FIELD that virtually "make it new" while perpetually perishing) is what the artist-medium continually samples from when spontaneously remixing and distributing their personae into the networked space of flows. Lately, I have been marking my presence in the form of what is sometimes called *glitch aesthetics*, or more specifically for this version we're composing here, [G.]Lit/ch aesthetics. As a remixologist who trades in a multitude of media forms, everything from experimental novels to large-scale hypertexts to net.art to live VJ performance to directing feature-length "foreign films" as well as writing long, improvised tracts detailing my love affair with theory [starting with Derrida, yes?, and does that not put everything I do within a certain circa and back again?], I am happy to use whatever *feels w-r-i-t-e*—whether it be Plato or Playdough. *The important thing is to annihilate the important thing* [stole that one too - no need to cite - just Google it - and do with it what you will]. This is *what it means to be avant-garde* [title of excellent book of transcribed, extemporaneous talk performances by David Antin] as we move-remix [i.e. proprioceptively perform in auto-affect mode] through these *in and out states of presence* that facilitate the discovery of our formal tendencies. I think of these formal tendencies as revealing our *aesthetic residuals*. These residuals are exemplary fictions, form

formally forming itself out of the Source Material Everywhere. In digital cultures, becoming this form is a processual body-brain-apparatus achievement. This SME is intuitively sampled and manipulated by the artist, the artist that Duchamp gave the attributes of a *medium*, a medium that would turn away from self-analysis while embodying the Next Version of Creativity Coming.

Of course, I have already written most of what we are doing in this dialogue already, in "From Remixology," although there is no longer a "Remixology" for this to *come* from since it has since been altered into something new again, something now titled *remixthebook*. The *other* essay, the one that we will not publish because it can't be owned, is just another version of it. And that's actually fine with me because it means we get to do our own cover version here in the [G.]Lit/ch RemiX [and by going [G.]Lit/ch we can situate in a history of errors or, even better, accidental discoveries, and leave it open to further revision which means this version can never really be owned either although it may look like that on paper]. What's funny is that by turning to remix, some might actually call into question whether I am being derivative. Derivative of myself. But "myself" who? As I was saying earlier, I am not "I" and so there can be no definitive or proper version of me. If there is no definitive or proper version of me then I think it's safe to assume that there cannot be a definitive or proper version of what it is I am writing becoming remixing at any given moment. Which brings us back to you. Persona as shareware?

**DG:** I'm glad you bring up the question of pronouns (as I deploy in my reply to you the very pronouns that are in question). Because it is always a matter of identifying the source and destination...the "I" who originates what is said/written/expressed and the "you" who is to receive what is sent. This remains remarkably the same (perhaps it is more of the SaME old thing) from the ancient formulations of Aristotelian rhetoric to Shannon and Weaver's *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*. It is always a matter of senders and receivers connected by media through which messages pass. But this formulation, as normal and as natural as it may seem, is a metaphysical artifice and one that has had quite a history. And once again it is Socrates, that clever bastard who Plato could never quite put to work for his own purposes, who already toyed with an alternative. It is in the *Apology* (Plato 1982), the dialogue where Socrates is called to give an account of himself (a matter of pronouns) and what he does, that he deflects his response and responsibility elsewhere. "It is not I," he says, "who have said and did all these things, but a god working through me." Fast-forward to Roland Barthes (1978), who begins "The Death of the

Author" by sampling that clever hook from Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (without providing "proper" reference, I should point out): "What does it matter who is speaking? someone said. What does it matter who is speaking?" What "I" hear/read in the reply from "you" is an echo of this maneuver: "It is not I who write and produce this material as some original Kantian genius. I (if it is even possible to retain and reuse such subjectivizing pronouns) am only a nodal point in a network of information that is already in circulation and that uses and speaks through me. I am the medium of the remix and not its source. Think of the artist as a medium." Dialectical inversion, at least, if not full-blown deconstruction.

**MA:** Yes, that's it. If we transcode the spirit of the letter in Socrates for the 20th century artist, what we get is Duchamp's medium-specific entity [the not-I] creatively processing the Source Material Everywhere [Remixology's conceptual God that the artist-medium devotes himself to as part of a trance ritual transfigured in time]. Duchamp suggested that the artist as medium triggered *the creative act vis-a-vis pure intuition*. Vito Acconci, on the other hand, once contextualized the artist as an open medium or instrument. He does not see the need to get bogged down in a specific medium per se, like oil painting, or clay, or photography. For him, the artist does not need to specialize in a medium, which would basically fix a ground for themselves, a ground they would then have to dig themselves out of, but rather, they should *become* a medium, or instrument, that acts on whatever ground is available.

For the contemporary 21st century remixologist who employs a kind of cut-and-paste as-you-go digital lifestyle practice, this intuitively generated creative act is all about the postproduction of presence and can be connected to the avant-garde lineage of artists, writers, philosophers and other innovators of creative de[con]struction who methodically play with the source of creativity, but do so in a self-consciously transgressive way. I'm constantly sampling from and remixing both content and form from those figures whose source material stimulates my own praxis. Sometimes the sources are a bit subtle, as in Borges' stunning investigation of the pseudo-autobiographical "I" in "Borges and I" (Borges 2007, 246) It's so short, just under 350 words, but in this brief ficto-critical "story-essay," where he investigates [t]his shadow other, the one everything happens *to*, I am able to sample his philosophical investigation of the pseudo-autobiographical "I" and filter it through something William Burrough's once referred to as "the IS of identity." ["Consider the IS of identity ... when I say to be me, to be you, to be myself, to be

others, whatever I may be called upon to be or say that I am, I am not the verbal label 'myself.'" (Burroughs 1998, 311)]. Burroughs would say "to be a body, to be nothing else, to stay a body," relating the pseudo-autobiographical "I" back to the body as a platform for remixing the data. His literary cut-ups, wherein he remixed the formal methods of his painter friend Brion Gysin, were, of course, a part of the rival tradition in literature and gave birth to what Kathy Acker referred to as William Burroughs' Realism.

Acker herself used to talk to me about embodying the spirit of writers like Rimbaud or Verlaine. The key word here is not *spirit*. In fact I may be misquoting her there. But she definitely said *embodying*. Her work comes across to the more middle-mind reader of literature as an in-your-face, post-punk aesthetic that I see as being simply submerged in this same rival tradition that all forms of transgressive art align themselves with. She and I would talk about embodying each other's language as *a form of creative cross-contamination*. She was great at sampling from what was, for her at the time, recently translated post-structuralist texts published by Semiotext(e) and remixing them with data from her own unique life experiences as well as classic avant-garde narrative form. She wanted to have nothing to do with the concept of *creativity* per se and connected it, creativity, to the tradition of patriarchal writing. But I thought her remixological tendencies were *the embodiment of creativity*. This is due largely to my sense of measure, a sense that tells me we are in the process of intersubjectively jamming with the metadata everywhere. The Source Material Everywhere, as I calculate it in *remixthebook*.

**DG:** Acker...definitely. She was, I would agree with you, one of the leading innovators in literary remix, "plagiarizing" (a word which all too often has unfortunate negative connotations but can, as the Critical Art Ensemble (1994) demonstrated, always be revalued and reinvested otherwise) everything from Dickens and Cervantes to William Gibson. In fact, I like to think that Gibson's recent celebration of the remix as "the characteristic pivot at the turn of our two centuries" (Gibson 2005, 118) is something Acker must have taught him back in 1988 with her remixing of *Neuromancer* in *Empire of the Senseless*. But I want to steer things in another, albeit related direction—one that has to do with all the name-dropping we have already had to (and perhaps could not avoid needing to) deploy. Typically when we tell the story—when we connect the dots that comprise this network we now call remix/mashup/cut-and-paste—we work into the mix proper names like Acker, Barthes, Brakhage, Burroughs, and Duchamp; innovative movements like

ready-mades, dada, and surrealism; and practices like collage, bricolage, pastiche, DJing/Vjing, etc. I recently, however, heard of another alternative history (maybe not "alternative" so much as supplementary), one that deploys a different set of figures and activities. This past week (at the Cultural Studies Association conference, Chicago 2011) Richard Edwards (another contributor to this volume) suggested that the lineage of mashup might be better situated not in the avant-garde tradition of Surrealism and ready-mades but in the deliberate constraining and mathematically precise practices of Oulipo (*Ouvroir de littérature potentielle*). His argument went something like this: What we see in DJ Danger Mouse's "The Grey Album," for instance, is a constrained technique, whereby the artist deliberately limited himself to only two sources, Jay-Z's "Black Album" and The Beatles' "White Album." And it was this limitation, this deliberately self-imposed restriction that made "The Grey Album" possible. Remix, told from this perspective, therefore, is not "anything goes" and "everything thrown together," as some critics might charge. Instead it is a carefully articulated and programmed set of constraints imposed in order to generate new forms of art in excess of the fantasy of genius, intentionality, and those other metaphysical authorities. I wonder, from your experience, whether this kind of Oulipean "constraint" plays a role in these recombinant practices and products?

**MA:** Of course, the Oulipo artists are all about remixing under constraint. What is Raymond Queneau's *Exercises in Style* if not an introduction to literary remixing? In fact, I start my remix culture seminar with this book and ask the students to return to the second session of class with their own remix of the banal story told over and over again in that book. Each exercise has its own title that then serves as a filter to port the remix style through. Any time you start setting your preferences, tweaking your parameters, or just initializing a formula to generate source material that you can then riff on, you are essentially creating the conditions for a remix performance. In the visual or sound arts, we would call this a procedural composition.

For me, setting up these parameters is an excellent strategy for generating source material. For example, I was invited to contribute to a collection of essays on "Time and Technicity" featuring contributions from figures like Bernard Steigler (of course, it's his subject), Ken Wark, J. Hillis Miller, etc., and the purpose of the book was to explore the theory and praxis of *technicity* in contemporary thought. Now, no offense to those who write smart academic essays, they are useful, especially to artists who are always hunting for more source material to sample from and

manipulate into their own free form poetics. My own contribution, though, that appeared at the end of the collection, was "Technicity, StyleTime, and the Loop: A Gertrude Stein Remix." Basically what I did was sample a block of text from *Tender Buttons* and infused it with a lot of the language that has formed around the interrelationship between technicity, technology, and time. As far as I'm concerned, Gertrude Stein composed her work in a style that I would call *remixological*. It employed loops, repetitions, and self-appropriation, often within the same sentence, as a way to visualize movement or, if you will, *the way language embodies movement*. Choosing an excerpt from the oeuvre of Gertrude Stein in general, and from her *Tender Buttons* in particular, was no random act. It could have been random, but like a lot of professional art DJs, I often spend a lot of time researching the archive for very specific source material to sample from for my remixes. For me, Stein's writing is at once original (or even *originary*) and yet very calculated in the way it intersubjectively jams with samples from the formal methods of her time (Cubism would be the most obvious art form that she must have transcoded into her language performances, but really everything going on in the cultural milieu she spearheaded in Paris at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century). Still, there is a very specific Steinian style, a radical *syn-tactics* that she brings to the table. Contemporary literary hactivists might call it *syn-tactical media*. How does she do it? How does she create this poetic yet DJ-styled narrative of/on technicity that intervenes in the conventional meaning making process that reeks of false consciousness? I'm not the kind of artist or scholar who wants to answer this question or even approach it in the guise of an academic paper loaded with advanced theoretical jargon per se [even though I am self-aware of how I am heavily sampling from it here in this dialogue with you]. I would prefer to just *remixologically inhabit* her style, what in the title I refer to as *StyleTime*, and then mash it up with language I find appropriate to the subject matter at hand. And it really feels like it all happens *at hand*, i.e. as if I were spinning her into the live set as part of the gestural economy my megamix performance brings into view. The end result is a work that I would put in the tradition of both Conceptual and performance art, but that is heavily influenced by new media as well. Here's a sample from the opening remix loops that start the piece:

*In the world there is technology, in technology there is language, in language there is meaning, in meaning there is feeling. In meaning there is feeling. In feeling anything is playing, in feeling, anything is enframing, in feeling there is*



*autonomy, in feeling there is epistemology, in feeling there is harmony and entirely situated there is unfolding. All the beings have heartbeats and all the writers have knowing and all the structure has partitioning and all the machines have machining. This makes technicity.*

*In the world there is technicity, in technicity there is language, in language there is meaning, in meaning there is feeling. In meaning there is feeling. In feeling anything is being, in feeling, anything is embodying, in feeling there is achievement, in feeling there is knowledge, in feeling there is thinking and entirely fabricated there is enframing. All the players have instincts and all the computers have processing and all the narratives have casings and all the filters have filtering. This makes style.*

*In the world there is style, in style there is language, in language there is meaning, in meaning there is feeling. In meaning there is feeling. In feeling anything is spacing, in feeling, anything is disseminating, in feeling there is proprioception, in feeling there is autocannibalizing, in feeling there is gorging and entirely caffeinated there is speeding. All the robots have instincts and all the people have processing and all the stories have frameworks and all the investigations have investigating. This makes research.*

Is this too theory?

**DG:** There's so much I can/want to say in response to this. And in a sense is this not what remix is all about, namely, responding and the responsibility we—you, I, all of us—have of making a response? A response to each other, no doubt, by way of the medium of the work but also a response to the work, the work as work and not as a mere conduit for the artist formerly known as "author." As everyone, from Plato up to Derrida, knows, what is both interesting about and a problem for writing is the fact that the written word "only says one and the same thing" (Plato 1990, 275d). It might be able to react, but it certainly does not respond. Remix, it seems to me, tries to take responsibility for responding—responding to the work, with that kind of careful and strategic attention that you describe, but also for the work responding to us, to our time, and to new things. And that appears to be, if I understand things correctly, what is happening with your

engagement with Stein's *Tender Buttons*. You are responding to it and taking responsibility for this particular mode of reading but also for other writers, other texts, other times, other possibilities, other others. But this gets us into the messy territory of ethics. What does it mean to respond? How does the remix and the remixer respond in a way that is or could be called responsible? Some one, not I of course but another, might reissue the charge initially articulated by one of Dostoyevsky's (2007, 661) characters in the face of the collapse of that final and ultimate authority, the author of all things: "god is dead, anything goes." I'm not necessarily asking you to formulate an ethics of remix, but how do you, how would you, respond to this question of responsibility?

**MA:** Sampling from Bracha Ettinger, I would prefer to see daily remix practice as part of a larger, com-passionate agenda that feeds into [literally *nurtures into being*] a kind of co-response-ability *as* intersubjective imperative. In other words, daily remix practice takes responsibility for nurturing co-response-ability in others and does this by dissolving the borderspace between the I and the non-I so that what emerges, or "co-emerges" (to use her term), is a mashup of subjectivities responding to the Source via emergent (and often times electronic) forms of peer renewal instead of a peer review. This renewal process changes the way we approach our profession and really calls a lot of out-of-touch academic protocol into question.

In my book *META/DATA*, I see this co-emergence and the co-response-ability that comes with it as a way to affectively become what I call the not-me. The not-me rejects a self-situated ethics of being and instead remixes digital flux personae into a transgressive form of networked performance that experiments with subjectivity in the field of distribution. It's like what Paul Miller (aka DJ Spooky) writes in *Rhythm Science* (2004) when he refers to "persona as shareware" and Ettinger refers to as "transgressive shareability" (Ettinger 2006, 168) Daily remix practice is not a self-centered ritual of dissipating the ego. It's much more intense than that. I think of it as a kind of embodied praxis where the artist-medium builds their chops by conducting an open source, cut-and-paste as-you-go, digital lifestyle practice that operates as part of this larger, com-passionate agenda to nurture feelings back into the mix. This is the only we can even approach what Whitehead refers to as the Higher Phases of Experience. Feelings: nothing more than feelings.

Of course, nurturing these feelings back into the mix requires total manipulation of the Source Material Everywhere that, for me, is a fictionalization process, one that is heavily

politicized. Positioning persona as transgressive shareware is always a risk. The Assassin's Creed that "nothing is true, everything is permitted," suggests that one can manipulate the Source Material Everywhere any way they please regardless of the consequences. As someone who has been labeled a writer of transgressive fiction, and whose very persona has virally infected the network under the name *Amerika*, nurturing feelings back into the mix always brings me back to writing, the techno-mother that births ethics in the first place. Writing is where remixed personae get processed (are processing or *always becoming*). The idea is to simultaneously *become* what you are writing *as* you write it, as it feels w-r-i-t-e. In my experience, it's all about training yourself to play with your unconscious readiness potential so that you are able to create a total field of action where the artist-medium uses the writing instrument, *the instrument of writing itself*, to prophesize their future tense. This is also what it means to envision and, as Flusser reminds us, this envisioning is deeply connected to the gesture of writing. Where else are all of our thoughts to go?

**DG:** Clearly this kind of engagement falls under that "interminable analysis" that Derrida assigns to all critical/interventionist forms of writing. We can, we must, and we should go on...and on and on. This is not necessarily "*das Schlecht-Unendliche*," the bad or spurious infinite, of Hegel (1987, 137), but is, as Niklas Luhmann (1995, 9) argues, the way that "self-referential closure can create openness." Remix—a specific, embodied, and finite practice—continually feeds itself producing more possibilities for additional and virtually endless remixing. Source Material Everywhere (a spatial dimension) but also, and in addition, for all time (a temporal dimension). Cut loose of all conceptual anchors and authorities—gods, the author, truth, etc.—remix is cast adrift in an infinite sea of becoming. This is, as Nietzsche (1974) had pointed out by way of mobilizing these same nautical metaphors, not necessarily some sad and gloomy thing, because of what has been lost (and let's not kid ourselves, what has been "lost" are all the firm moorings, certitudes, and assurances that had been assumed to be essential and fundamental). It is, in fact, the very source of our cheerfulness—the basis of a new *Fröhliche Wissenschaft* or *la gaya scienza*. Despite this, things do end and need to come to an end. Such an ending is not necessary, prescribed, or certain; it is more of a strategic decision—literally a cut into the material that cuts things off. So to bring this conversation to some kind of closure, to initiate the cut that will, at least for now, cut things off, I want to return to the thematic that organizes this entire volume and that you just referenced—transgression. As a so-called writer of "transgressive fiction" interested in channeling a

"transgressive form of networked performance," what is or what is called "transgressive" at this particular historical moment? If the very condition of possibility for transgression requires firm and established boundaries that are to be surpassed and violated, what sense is there to the notion of transgression at a time when it seems that all boundaries are up for grabs and "anything goes?" Is transgression as such still possible? And if so, how and where does it occur?

**MA:** These days, I find that just by being myself, my entire performance as a digital flux persona comes across as a transgression. This feeling of being an outsider or even a cultural outlaw is especially visible in my role as a professor of art and art history. I'll relate to you two stories to prove the point. The first involves a conversation I had a few months ago with the chair of my department. We were catching up on things and I was discussing some of my recent work, and the various solo and group exhibitions my work has enjoyed over the last few years. Without getting too caught up in the details, I think it's safe to say that lately I have had just as many if not more international solo and group shows than most if not all of my colleagues, and there are some very talented faculty rostered in my department, so this is saying something. It's also safe to say that my artwork and interdisciplinary artist persona has been written about more than any other faculty member in the department. This is not my ego talking, it's just a fact. And yet at one point in the conversation, the chair, in all seriousness, asked me why I was in an art department. Not why I was a professor, or what direction my research was heading in, but why would I locate myself in an art department? It was a really good question and we talked about that for a while as if this were exactly the sort of question I should be asking myself. I think what he was suggesting is that even though my artwork is very much circulating and gaining widespread recognition in the global networks, what I actually do as an artist, the way my practice reflects the practice of everyday digital life, does not, unfortunately, fit in with or properly reflect how most art departments, including the one in Boulder, are programmatically structured these days. It ends up that just by being a kind of post-contemporary or interdisciplinary artist, theorist, novelist and performer, i.e. someone who successfully transgresses disciplinary boundaries, I simply do not fit into an institutional mold that wants to clearly demarcate all of the proper territories for disciplinary-driven research to take place in.

The second story involves the subject we've been coming back to during the course of this dialogue: the remix. I have been teaching a seminar I call Remix Culture. For years, it's been

identified as fulfilling the theory requirement for our MFA students, students who I spend a great deal of time recruiting into our program and who are attracted to the research track I am developing within the program because of the way it creates a hybridized or transdisciplinary environment for them to invent new forms of theory that move beyond the *print book per se* and challenge traditional forms of scholarly production. These are issues that we directly address in the theory course and that emerging artists really need to think deeply about if they want to sustain a fair amount of influence over how their work is positioned within contemporary thought. The question we come back to throughout the semester is, "How can an artist remix theory into contemporary art-research practice and, in the process, reinvent *both* theory and practice as part of their creative research agenda?" Many of the discussions in this course have led to the experimental publication/performance/digital project *remixthebook*. As I mentioned earlier, this book is coming out with the University of Minnesota Press. Not too shabby, if you asked me, and coming on the heels of my recent collection of artist-theory writings with MIT Press, means that I have published quite a bit of individually authored theory. It could no doubt be argued that lately I have been publishing more single-authored innovative theory with top academic presses than any of my colleagues in both the studio arts and art history programs in my department. But to my surprise, the department recently disallowed my seminar to count as a theory requirement as it has over the last four or five years, thus "disincentivizing" my personally recruited grad students to take courses with me.

In one sense, this is just yet more of the incongruent departmental politics that all faculty face one time or another in their storied careers in academentia. But this also suggests to me that there is a lot of chaos just below the institutional surface, a kind of unsightly desperation, that's trying to reign in any move toward what to me feels like a perfectly natural transgression of boundaries rendered by the social mediated digital culture I, and most of my students, find ourselves immersed in. Transgression, it ends up, still happens at the boundary space of the personal and the institutional. Sometimes it's as easy as just being yourself, or at least the latest remixed version thereof.

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