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Propaganda Art from the 20th to the 21st Century

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‘Stellingen’ Propositions

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1. The origins of modern propaganda are rooted in modern democracy, which discredits the popular conception that propaganda is the inherent outcome of dictatorships and so-called totalitarian regimes.
2. To only speak of propaganda or propaganda art in relation to dictatorships, denies the historical roots of propaganda in modern democracy and can be considered a form of (unintentional) propaganda in and of itself.
3. As propaganda is not limited to dictatorships and so-called totalitarian regimes, but is also applicable to democracies and other structures of power, we should speak of “propagandas” in the plural.
4. Based on historical research into inter- and postwar propaganda sciences, propaganda can be defined as a “performance of power”, proposed by me in the formula: propaganda = power + performance.
5. Chomsky and Herman's propaganda model continues to be applicable in the 21st century, but must be expanded with a reversed propaganda model in order not to exclude emerging structures of power from contemporary propaganda.
6. The double meaning of performance – both in terms of the manner of executing an action, and of modes of representation in an artistic or theatrical context – makes it a crucial term in understanding the dual operation of power and art in propaganda art.
7. Different structures of power are performed as different propagandas. Each of these propagandas informs a specific form of (propaganda) art.
8. The definition of art in propaganda changes from the modern to the contemporary: with the rise of digital media, the expansion of film, and emergence of the gaming industry, new media become part of the definition of art in the context of propaganda art.
9. Whereas established structures of power use propaganda art to legitimize their existing hegemony, emerging structures of power use propaganda art to articulate their desire for alternate structures of (self-)rule.

10. To be a conscious propaganda artist, means to understand the interrelationship between power and artistic forms, and take both an aesthetic and political stance.

11. The goal of the propaganda artist is not to make art in the world as it exists, but to make worlds.

12. It is impossible to write a thesis on propaganda or propaganda art without being implicated in the practice of propaganda as such. The propaganda researcher and propaganda artist thus bear the responsibility to clarify their own stakes in propaganda, so that a public can critically discern their analytical research from their vested interests.

13. Faced with the current crisis of the European Union, our task as artists is not to affirm the Leave/Remain dichotomy; it is to contribute to the imagination of a third option: a *new union*.