

## Open issue

**Lesley Wood, Laurence Cox**

### Editorial

After a long wait, we are delighted to release the latest issue of *Interface*, covering both our normal issues for 2018 and marking the end of our tenth year publishing. This issue arrives in a world seemingly more turbulent than ever. It features pieces on movements in Malta, Western Sahara, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, China, Australia, the US, Canada, the UK, Egypt, Tunisia and Turkey.

2018 was a challenging year for *Interface* as for many other people in movements. As organizers, we often found that (as EP Thompson once said) there were too many bloody things to resist. As human beings in late capitalism, many of us found the pressures of precarity or productivity squeezed more than we could give out of our lives. And as an organization we struggled to absorb the losses of 2017, notably the death of Peter Waterman but also a series of people who left us for pastures new.

In the meantime we have welcomed a new cohort of editors, achieving at least one of our long-term goals: not to represent an activist or academic generation frozen in time. Our editorial spokescouncil still represents – as it always has – people involved in and researching movements across the world, with many different movement emphases as well as political and theoretical traditions; and it includes people who have come to social movements at many different points in time. The dialogue we seek to represent on our pages is one we are also working out among ourselves as we collaborate to bring *Interface* out.

It is worth saying that *Interface* is a sheer labour of love. Because of this, we sometimes lose editors to more “respectable” – academic – pursuits, as well as getting submissions from people who seem surprised that we don’t have a team of copyeditors and layout people to do the menial work on the intellectual “substance”. We also don’t have the career-building prestige (and ratings etc.) that would attract established intellectuals with more time to give to building the journal: but we are very happy to be a mix of people in relatively secure jobs, people just starting out and independent scholars – all weaving our way in and out of activism and the rest of our lives.

*Interface* has been a pathbreaker, not only in terms of pushing for more dialogue between activist theory and movement research, but also in terms of open access, which we have been from day one: something made possible by not being owned by a publisher and *doing the damn work ourselves*. We have received precisely two donations in all our time: a small donation from Peter that helped us renew our website many years ago now, and a small grant from York University secured by Lesley which is helping us update the software that runs our site. Everything else, we do ourselves: the only way to own the “intellectual means of production” is to do the work.

## **In this issue**

We start with a piece on this very topic. Working to understand the challenges of developing and maintaining autonomous media, Canadian scholar-activists, Sandra Jeppeson and Kamilla Petrick draw on six focus groups with eighty-nine media activists in their piece, “Toward an intersectional political economy of autonomous media resources”, which looks at how intersectionalism can complement political economy approaches.

This is followed by two pieces on the intersections of art and activism. The first, by Tiffanie Hardbarger and Cindy Maguire, offers “Explorations of an arts-based activism framework: ARTifariti International Art and Human Rights Meeting in Western Sahara.” This piece proposes a framework that bridges Community Cultural Development (CCD) and Socially Engaged Art (SEA). They base this work on ethnographic and practice in the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) refugee camps located near Tindouf, Algeria. Looking at the Italian context, Simone Maddanu’s piece “The theater as a common good: artists, activists and artists on stage,” uses interviews with political activists and artists and ethnographic observation during and after an occupation of the Teatro Valle, in Rome, an historical national theater. It finds that the artistic struggle for the commons outlasted the occupation itself, transforming praxis, identity and the conception of the political.

In a world riven by climate chaos, it is perhaps unsurprising that this issue includes three different pieces on the climate justice movement. Neil Gunningham “Mobilising civil society: can the climate movement achieve transformational social change?” speaks of the importance of grassroots ‘webs of influence’ in changing behavior and attitudes. There are two empirical investigations of the 2014 Peoples Climate March in New York City – the largest climate change march in human history. A team ethnographic project by Danielle Falzon, Samuel Maron, Robert Wengronowitz, Alex Press, Benjamin Levy, and Jeffrey Juris analysed the 2014 event from multiple angles, arguing that the features of recursivity allowed for the event to be a transformative one.

Lauren Contorno also writes on this event in her piece “Turtles & teamsters revival? Analyzing labor unions’ environmental discourse from the 2014 People’s Climate March.” She sought to better understand the barriers that stop the labour movement from fully engaging in the climate justice movement, and analyses 19 in-depth interviews with labor leaders and rank-and-file members who participated in the march. While she finds that the majority of these labor activists contend that climate change is a result of systemic political-economic arrangements, and mobilize around climate change under the master frame of environmental justice, many others in the labour movement remain wedded to a reformist *mitigation*.

Three pieces take a historical lens. Mike Aiken analyzes the oral histories of English activists in his piece on the role of emotion, ideology and autobiographical stories in activists’ political trajectories in his piece, “Tales we tell, speaking out loud: understanding motivations of social movement activists

through auto-biography and story”. In a different vein, Phil Hedges writes a follow up to his radical history piece in *Interface* 9/1 on the Campbell House Rent Strike (WHN). This postscript examines the ethics of using hashtags for historical research, focusing on the hashtag #NoCapitulation, created during the 2018 University and College Union strike over cuts to the USS (Universities Superannuation Scheme ) pension for its education workers in the UK. Looking further back in time, Tomás Mac Sheoin continues his terrific series of bibliographies on social movements, offering one on “Rural agitation in Ireland 1710-2010”.

Investigating both a movement, and a country that are rarely analysed in social movement terms, Michael Biguglio and Chistabelle Caruana describe participation in “Joining the Maltese men's rights movement.”

*Interface* doesn't often report on actual experiments – but in “All the protestors fit to count: using geospatial affordances to estimate protest event size,” Austin Choi-Fitzpatrick, Tautvydas Juskauskas and Md. Bobby Sabur try using drones to estimate protest size, and discuss the ethical and safety dimensions that unfold. They locate their results within a fascinating review of methods to estimate the size of demonstrations.

Finally, our book review editors Bjarke Skærlund Risager, Sutapa Chattopadhyay, and Dawn Paley have been hard at work to bring us a crunchy selection of ten of the newest books on social movements.

## **Farewells and welcomes**

In this issue we say farewell to Bjarke Risager, who has made great contributions to *Interface* as reviews editor.

We are delighted to welcome our new editors Sutapa Chattopadhyay, Helge Hiram Jensen, Melanie Kryst, Elisabet Rasch, Brecht de Smet and Todd Wolfson. Sutapa joins the Transnational group from Windsor, Canada; having lived, organized and done research in India, the Netherlands, France, the US and Canada. Helge is an experienced scholar activist in Norway, and joins the Western European team. Melanie Kryst and Brecht de Smet join us from Belgium. Melanie is working on and studying strategies for labour governance and Brecht is involved in supporting and/or researching Egyptian and Belgian struggle. Elisabet Rasch joins the Latin American team, while working against extractivism and for peasant and indigenous movements. Todd Wolfson joins the US/Canada crew, and researches media and movements, while organizing and teaching in Philadelphia. We are delighted to have them all aboard.

This issue concludes with a call for papers for issue 11/2 (November – December 2019) on understanding right wing movements. Our next issue (11/2, May – June 2019) is an open issue, and we welcome submissions on any theme.