



THE ART OF EXHIBITIONS is the English translation of a book originally published in German in 1991. It is a collection of thirty chapters, each documenting a significant art exhibition from the 20th century, compiled and edited by Bernd Klüser and Katharina Hegewisch. In 2001 a London art publisher translated, re-edited, re-scanned and re-designed the new edition. Then, just as the book was about to go to press, the company suddenly folded and the project effectively evaporated. In the six years since, the project files — which represent a couple of years of more or less hard labour — have barely survived several scarred hard drives and compact discs. We propose here to rescue the chapters from technological purgatory and offer them for dissemination under the auspices of this (very) temporary art school before planned obsolescence finally renders them irretrievable.

Sharing this material freely in the collective, constructive spirit which marks the majority, if not all, of the exhibitions documented in the collection (i.e. without having to pay a publisher or lawyer a lot of money) necessitates crawling through a copyright loophole into a grey area. Who has the fundamental rights to the collection: the original publisher, the secondary publisher, the editors, or the authors? Of course, we don't really want to put ourselves in the position of finding out, assuming any of the above would stake some kind of claim and set off a chain of ugly bureaucracy.

Copyright was first instituted in England with the Statute of Anne in 1710 (subtitled “An Act for the Encouragement of Learning”). The original legislative purpose was to disrupt existing printers' monopolies by securing an author's rights to their text.

Three hundred years on, rabid perversions of the original law have rendered it almost meaningless. For example, the Sonny Bono Copyright Term Extension Limit, also known as the Mickey Mouse Protection Act, was passed in 1998. Terrified that its early animated classics were about to fall into the public domain, Walt Disney Company lobbied extensively to protect its copyright (at least for another twenty years.)

Today, copyrights typically default to publishing houses, who have the legal and financial resources to enforce this privilege. On this occasion, however, STORE has paid £105 (the fee for a small business with less than 50 employees) for a year-long photocopy license.

This allows anyone on their property to copy a complete chapter or up to 5% of the entire book (whichever is greater)

∴ the book is 300 pages and 30 chapters,  
each designed to be exactly 10 pages long

∴ YOU MAY FREELY COPY  
ANY ONE OF THE CHAPTERS

The arbitrary limitation of 5% immediately provokes ways of getting around it, in order to collect more chapters. For example, sharing copies with fellow 'students', re-copying and distributing elsewhere, returning on other occasions, etc. — all of which reclaim the idea and ideal of school as community rather than institution.

Furthermore, given that this English edition was never printed and bound, does it actually qualify as a 'book'? What exactly IS this free-floating information in publishing limbo without a definitive material end in sight? And, in fact, what exactly does 'publish' mean now?

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