

(Re)Localisation: Off-Site Exhibitions and Post-Internet Sacrality after *Civilising Rituals* by Carol Duncan

Felix Ashford

Abstract

Carol Duncan's seminal text *Civilising Rituals*, (1995) considers state museums as active, ritualized settings of social performance through analysis of their historical development. Following Duncan's thesis, this essay shall introduce the concept of 'off-site' projects, which construct their own paradigm of sacrality by restaging art outside of institutional contexts. Since the 2020-21 lockdowns, alternative curatorial platforms have begun to emerge online which utilise such strategies to reclaim collective autonomy. As a proto-case study, I shall begin with 'The Kitchen Show' (1991) by Hans Ulrich Obrist, to discuss how this earlier 'relational turn' anticipated a more recent tendency towards self-organization. Further, I aim to examine how these initiatives appropriate museological structures whilst displacing them.

Keywords: off-site, musealization, placehood, decentralization, topology

Introduction

In *Civilising Rituals*, (1995), Carol Duncan argues that the ceremonial function of museological environments can enforce secular metanarratives, by appropriating the features of ritualized space¹. Whilst largely concerned with state museums, Duncans thesis has since been challenged by recent curatorial activity which resituates these structures within non-institutional contexts. In particular, this essay shall examine how online 'off-site' platforms have decentralized these systems to reclaim collective autonomy. 'The Kitchen Show' (1991), curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist, will be discussed to contextualize these contemporary strategies of self-organization within a broader continuity². In comparison, 'Dirty Laundry' (2022), by the International Off-Space Network (ION), shall provide a current example of how these methods have evolved within a post-digital landscape³. This

¹ Carol Duncan. *Civilizing Rituals : Inside Public Art Museums*. London: Taylor & Francis Group. 1995.

² Hans Ulrich Obrist. 'The Kitchen Show.' *The Paris Review*, December 19, 2014.

<https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2014/12/18/the-kitchen-show/>

³ 'Dirty Laundry.' International Off-Space Network, 2022. <https://i-o-n.org/dirty-laundry/>.

will thus enable us to investigate the topology, semiotics, and efficacy of displaced curatorial practices, whilst considering how their ritualized function has been enhanced.

Civilising Rituals

In *Civilising Rituals*, Duncan reframes secular, museological space as a site activated by performance. Her thesis does not depend upon any singular anthropological model of ritual itself but instead considers how existing methodologies can trouble our assumptions of the museum's neutrality. Duncan is primarily concerned with the liminality of such spaces, and the way in which this situates the self outside of mundane reality. Liminality is deemed a necessary condition for contemplation since it substantiates our experience with significance. As Duncan states; “in the museum’s liminal space, the modern soul can know itself as above, outside of, and even against the values that shape its existence”⁴. The assumed transformative potential of such environments is utilized as an instrument of control. Through this ‘setting apart’ from ordinary existence, the individual is presented with a totalising representation of their community which either affirms or denies their position within it. As in a ritualized setting, this designated sequence of encounters is articulated by architecture, which defines the relationship between objects, and the mode of attention required. By considering the museum as a totalising network of interdependent variables, its underlying narratives become explicit. Whilst Duncan's focus is limited to state institutions, her analysis shall be expanded here to demonstrate how these systems are being subverted within alternative museological contexts.

‘The Kitchen Show’

Three years prior to the publication of *Civilising Rituals*, ‘The Kitchen Show’ (1991), curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist, would anticipate and challenge Duncan’s thesis through its radical exercise of agency within a non-institutional space. Held in the kitchen of his own St Galen apartment, this exhibition invited several artists to participate through works which responded to their domestic setting. In so doing, Obrist sought to consider how “the non-utility of my kitchen could be transformed into its utility for art. To do a show there would mix art and life, naturally.”⁵ This ‘off-site’ model of exhibition destabilizes the barrier between art and mundane reality, enfolding liminal experience within active space. Each work transforms our relationship with its environment, without disrupting its potential use. These contributions functioned as offerings, seeking the intimacy of private

⁴ Duncan. ‘The Modern Art Museum’, *Civilizing Rituals*. 130.

⁵ Obrist, ‘The Kitchen Show.’

engagement. Under the sink, a slither of amber light flickers from a crack between the cabinet doors. Here, sculptor Christian Boltanski has installed a hidden projection of a candle, described by Obrist as “a small miracle”. Above this, the duo Fischli/Weiss prepare “...a sort of everyday altar...” lain with oversized oblations from a wholesale restaurant supplier. Elsewhere, we find a mirrored plate balanced over cans of food by Richard Wentworth, or six dark marble eggs by Hans-Peter Feldmann occupying the fridge rack⁶. A space encoded with private domestic rituals becomes activated by social participation. As Obrist reflects; “it wasn't an art exhibition in the kitchen, no. The art took place in-between.”⁷ Here, I aim to demonstrate how this metaxic state of ‘in-between-ness’ can be understood as its own potential site of activity.

Off-sites and Online Curation

In recent years, the emergence of online ‘off-site’ platforms has further resituated curation within the realm of private devotion, through radical decentralized exhibitions. The off-site show reclaims agency by considering art’s role outside of an institutional context. Whilst this might be framed within the established discourse surrounding site-specificity, the recent off-site wave reflects a distinct contemporaneity. The proliferation of ‘off-spaces’ following the lockdowns of 2020, signifies a shift towards self-run collective action, demonstrating how artists could utilize their online platform to declare autonomy. These projects often operate on the peripheries, with platforms such as Plague (Krasnodar, RUS), Final Hot Desert (Utah, USA), and Solo Show (Perth, AU/Colorado, USA) based outside of established cultural centers⁸. In a departure from Obrist’s ‘The Kitchen Show’, these exhibitions no longer necessitate an in-person audience, but are often experienced solely online as documentation, (largely on Instagram). The intimacy of their initial installation becomes translated through JPEGs, flattening our experience of the site into dis-located fragments. In her seminal 2013 essay ‘Flatland’, curator Loney Abrams predicted this shift, noting; “... if the physical exhibition is only a means of generating documentation imagery and associative status, can we imagine a more efficient means to this same end?”⁹ More recently, the 2020-21 lockdowns provided a further justification for the absence of any physical encounter. As suggested by Obrist’s ‘The Kitchen Show’, this facilitates a certain tension between private and social modes of engagement. Today, the off-site exhibition must consider its online reception as well as its own

⁶ Obrist, ‘The Kitchen Show.’

⁷ Hans Ulrich Obrist. ‘Coffee in the Kitchen,’ *...dontstopdontstopdontstopdontstop*, Milano: Postmedia Books, 2010, p.22.

⁸ ‘Off-Spaces.’ International Off-Space Network, 2021. <https://i-o-n.org/info-off-spaces/>

⁹ Loney Abrams, ‘Flatland,’ *The New Inquiry*, August 12, 2013, <https://thenewinquiry.com/flatland/>.

location-specificity. As anticipated, these self-organizing projects have de-materialised museological structures, operating within their own independent networks. Through the staging of these exhibits, the off-site enacts a ritualized performance of collectivity.

Crisis, Magic, and Worldbuilding

In parallel to Obrist's 'The Kitchen Show', contemporary off-site exhibitions seek re-enchantment in response to crisis. In the former example, Obrist's embrace of the unspectacular resisted the superfluity which had fated the previous decade. Citing the economic crash of 1987, Obrist argues that overproduction has required art to "enable us to sort through the glut, and our rituals are once again directed towards the immaterial, towards quality and not quantity¹⁰." Or, as he more recently put it; "in a moment of crisis we need to reinvent rituals"¹¹. Likewise, this shift from production to selection has also been demonstrated by post-Covidien off-site exhibitions, which restage 'posting' as curatorial praxis. In the recent exhibition 'Dirty Laundry', this was emphasized by collaboration between 10 platforms and 66 artists across several countries. Since in-person audiences became possible again after lockdown, these off-site platforms have begun negotiating the relationship between virtual and physical spaces. 'Dirty Laundry' was conceived by ION as a means of resituating these memetic strategies of circulation within a localized center. Co-curated by Marian Luft, Torre Alain, and Gözde Filinta, the first phase of this project involved a series of installations, simultaneously organized by various groups and individuals at their own chosen locations. In the second phase, these works were shipped to Keiv Gallery, Athens, and recontextualised as an 'IRL' exhibition¹². In this sense, 'Dirty Laundry' presents a paradox, challenging the definition of 'off-site' by culminating in an institutional space. Excusing my own participation in this show, my preference for it as a case study here may be attributed to its scale, and hybrid forms of display. Additionally, the show questions Duncan's idea that "the ritual of the public art museum affirms the structure of this world and gives particular substance to the citizen's public self"¹³. Instead, 'Dirty Laundry' disseminates these structures by facilitating the emergence of new narratives within a trans-personal network. Rather than constructing a singular representation of its reality, the show enables a non-linear dialogue between multiple contexts. As the curators explain, these works "breathe out existential desire, recalling mythology and ancient knowledge, to find

¹⁰ Obrist, 'The Kitchen Show.'

¹¹ Asad Raza, 'A NEW AREA of SOCIAL IMAGINATION,' The Site Magazine, April 16, 2020, <https://www.thesitemagazine.com/hans-ulrich-obrist>.

¹² 'Dirty Laundry.' International Off-Space Network. 2022.

¹³ Duncan. 'The Modern Art Museum'. 127.

reconciliation with the present.¹⁴” The show thus seeks to enable alternative scenarios to be imagined, by confronting our mutual discomfort. The rituals of engagement described by Duncan are elaborated into a process of open-source worldbuilding, which becomes as significant as its product. The eventual exhibition does not signal an end as much as a suggestion, a taking-stock which enfolds these displaced localities into a singular context.

Placehood after the Internet

Whilst destabilizing virtual and physical topologies, the off-site also invites participation in personal narratives of placehood. Whereas museums purport to ‘neutralize’ their environment as a means of enhancing subject-object relationships, Duncan sufficiently demonstrates how these spaces are inscribed with the values of their present. As she claims, within the museum; “those who are best prepared to perform its rituals...are also those whose identities (social, sexual, racial, etc.) the museum ritual most fully confirms”¹⁵. However, the off-site disrupts this paradigm by enabling such individuals to construct their own embodied performance of identity, or even to reject this altogether. ‘The Kitchen Show’ enables collective participation into private rituals of domesticity - albeit unconventional ones, since Obrist never cooked. In this sense then, the works are less a response to the space itself, than to Obrist’s relationship with the space. These are site-specific interventions conscious of their context's active use. Inverting this, the curators of ‘Dirty Laundry’ invited each artist to stage works within their respective contexts. As the show's description explains; “careful of territorial understandings, DIRTY LAUNDRY engaged firstly with artists' existing realities in their own locality [...]”¹⁶. The exhibition does not enforce the requirements of a particular setting, but invites multiple settings to exist within its orbit. These pluralistic narratives unfold within separate worlds; from an abandoned plant nursery in Matsudo, Japan, to a scrapyards in Paris, France, and an abandoned takeaway shop in London, UK¹⁷. The rituals each artist participates in pertain to their physical installation, yet the actual encounter is no longer as significant as the fact of its occurrence, or the personal import of each chosen site. Just as museums mediate our experience through didactics, each show's documentation is assisted by passages of text, which display a recurring tendency towards mythopoeia. In one instance, co-curator Alain claims the exhibition to “create a sacred temple across time,” whilst elsewhere, ThunderCage presents “a jump to a post-explosion world”, and mcg21xoxo constructs

¹⁴ ‘Dirty Laundry.’ International Off-Space Network. 2022

¹⁵ Duncan. ‘The Art Museum as Ritual’, *Civilizing Rituals*. 8.

¹⁶ ‘Dirty Laundry.’ International Off-Space Network. 2022

¹⁷ Ibid.

“pseudo-ecosystems”¹⁸. These fragmentary assemblages of personal, political, and collective narratives explicitly seek to imagine parallel worlds within our own. Although a detailed analysis of each microtopia exceeds the scope of this essay, I aim here to demonstrate how the off-site sustains a tension between displacement and locality.

Metamorphic Space

Whereas Duncan cites ‘enframement’ as a feature of ritualized museological space, the off-site testifies to a radical ‘un-framing’ by perpetually redefining its own boundaries. Central to her argument is anthropologist Mary Douglas’s assertion that “a ritual provides a frame. The marked-off time or place alerts a special kind of expectancy...¹⁹”. Rather than designating the subject’s position, Obrist’s ‘The Kitchen Show’ presents an interactive environment, perpetually altered by continual additions to the space. Etymologically, the concept of ‘sacrality,’ (from the Hebrew root *Qdsh*, ‘to separate, cut off,) is intrinsically tied to spatial demarcation²⁰. Historian Joan R. Branham analyzes first-century Judaic temple architecture to demonstrate how museological space also constructs corporeal and metaphysical borders²¹. These architectonic structures configure bodies within space by defining points of access whilst establishing boundaries. By contrast, off-site platforms present a dynamic process in which these spatial borders are unsettled by a layering of physical and virtual topologies. As Torre Alain, co-curator of ‘Dirty Laundry’ stated in a 2021 interview; “beyond the practical purposes of networking exhibitions online, is the desire to harness this latent mysticism of digital space and connect it to the material rituals of creating off-site exhibitions.²²” Whilst the private installation of objects at a site may involve in-person audiences, the limits of engagement are thus expanded by online documentation, which reorients spatial relationships. The circulation of images online results not only in publicity but an alternative mode of participation. As documentation is posted between accounts, these fragmentary perspectives are re-assembled in new hierarchies of value. Through its manifold representations, the show’s ‘reality’ thus becomes collectively re-imagined.

This interplay between sites and their external signifiers enables off-site shows to be framed within multiple shifting contexts simultaneously. In this sense then,

¹⁸ Dirty Laundry. International Off-Space Network. 2022

¹⁹ Duncan. ‘The Art Museum as Ritual’. 11

²⁰ F. J. Streng. "sacred." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, February 12, 2019.
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/sacred>.

²¹ Joan R Branham. ‘Sacrality and Aura in the Museum: Mute Objects and Articulate Space.’ *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 52/53 (1994): 33–47.

²² Wade Wallerstein, ‘Magic at the End of the World,’ *Outland*, November 30, 2021,
<https://outland.art/magic-at-the-end-of-the-world/>.

‘Dirty Laundry’ recalls historian David Carrasco’s concept of ‘metamorphic space’, a model of ritual defined by spatial fluidity. Carrasco proposes that ritualized environments are activated by perpetual transactions between individuals, places, and objects. Citing the example of Aztec ceremonial warfare, he demonstrates how spatial boundaries expand and contract through performative exchange and imitation. As he expresses; “there are transformations within transformations, a magic circle that pivots, dashes, and circumambulates.”²³ Therefore, as bodies and objects are captured, distributed, worn and consumed their value is transferred, reconfiguring the centre of activity and the status of individuals. Likewise, the physical off-site installation totalises its relationships into a spatiotemporal image, which is fractured as documentation and disseminated. Carrasco’s model resonates with curator Natalya Serkova’s recent observation that the off-site assumes “a gradual mutation of areas rather than a qualitative change or delimitation, the impossibility of drawing a clear border...”²⁴ Whereas Duncan establishes the museum as an immobile center of civic worship, Carrasco’s methodology questions whether sacrality can instead be defined by its transformative relationships. Regarding our present topic, this provides a model of enframing which emphasizes social participation.

Relationality and ‘Being-There’

Recalling the ‘relational turn’ to which Obrist belonged, contemporary off-site exhibitions also seek immanent rather than analogical relationships to their content. Beginning with Obrist’s ‘The Kitchen Show’, his private intervention in domestic space reflected a milieu of relationality which began to emerge at the end of the 20th century. Signalling a broader transition to a service-based economy, ‘relational aesthetics’ considered art’s ethico-aesthetic responsibility to construct interactive experiences²⁵. The term was coined by critic Nicholas Bourriard in 1998 and has since defined a tendency towards socially engaged art-making²⁶. When operating within institutional spaces, relational art often employs strategies to disrupt the semiotics of gallery environments. These practices have often been typified by the ‘actual’ kitchens of Rirkit Tiravanija, who prepares food live for audiences. In its self-organization, ‘Dirty Laundry’ revives this collectivity, inviting participants to model “possible worlds”²⁷. The purpose of contextualizing

²³ David Carrasco. ‘Give Me Some Skin: The Charisma of the Aztec Warrior.’ *History of Religions* 35, no. 1. 1995. 24.

²⁴ Natalya Serkova, ‘Gallery Fiction’ by Natalya Serkova, Ofluxo, March 11, 2018, <https://www.ofluxo.net/gallery-fiction-by-natalya-serkova/>.

²⁵ Claire Bishop. ‘Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics’. *October*. 110, 110. 2010. 51–79.

²⁶ Nicolas Bourriard. *Relational Aesthetics*. Trans. by Simon Pleasance & Fronza Woods with Mathieu Copeland. Dijon: Les presses du réel. 2002 (1998). p. 113.

²⁷ *Ibid*

Obrist within this movement is to situate contemporary off-site exhibits within a broader continuity. Whilst seemingly un-relational in their detachment from physical encounters, these exhibitions importantly *desire* connection - whether in-person or online - through their organization. In my personal interview with Luft, he describes how ‘Dirty Laundry’ attempted to materialize these connections. In response to the “ghost of art” summoned by virtual shows, Luft explains “I already had the idea that [...] I want to touch this stuff. I want to feel it. I also want to have the resistance.²⁸” Paradoxically, by becoming displaced amongst multiple localities, the potential for encounter is also expanded - albeit through a chain of separate instances. In this sense, can the non-linear choreography of situations be articulated through any existing methodology of site-making? These established dynamics require a distinction between representational and embodied space. As Duncan reveals, the museum is enmeshed with meta-symbiotic relationships between artifacts, which function solely as objects of contemplation. In response, the off-site model proposes participation as an alternative type of engagement. Whilst this is not a novel suggestion, it effectively disrupts post-Enlightenment preoccupations with aesthetic judgment. The artworks in ‘Dirty Laundry’ constitute a totalising system of relations, yet their narratives are only formulated through our engagement. Whilst less explicitly relational than Obrist’s ‘The Kitchen Show’, ‘Dirty Laundry’ emerges from a dialogue between active agents, setting a superterritorial stage for performance. Rather than representing elsewhere, the off-site exhibit enfolds elsewhere *within* somewhere, at once placeless and enplaced by its own ‘being-there’.

Non-Site/Off-Site/Site

Further, the off-site exhibition complicates the dialectic between sites-in-themselves (places) and non-sites (i.e. museums). Here, it has already been demonstrated how these exhibitions trouble the distinction between sacred/profane experiences. By refocusing our attention towards alternative categories of space, I shall suggest that the off-site also inhibits its own topology. Firstly, it is necessary to introduce the concept of the ‘non-site’, as set forth by artist and theorist Robert Smithson. In sum, the non-site is defined as a three-dimensional logic picture which denotes an ‘actual’ site via a sample. Rather than signifying somewhere through a resemblance, the non-site suggests an abstract equation between a site and its extracted data, displaced within a new context²⁹. Within this distance between a site and its referent, there exists a “space of metaphoric significance”

²⁸ Marian Luft, (founder of ION), on a call with the author, April 2023.

²⁹ Robert Smithson. ‘A Provisional Theory of Nonsites.’ *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, Jack Flam: University of California Press, 1996.

which he terms a ‘non-trip’.³⁰ While the museum of Duncan’s civic rituals might be considered a non-site, the off-site operates within this metaxic ‘between’ space, occupying both destinations whilst located within neither. Further, the off-site is auto-mimetic, taking place at its own site of reference rather than representing from elsewhere. As Smithson deems the non-site to be “an absence of site,” we might frame the off-site as the presence of this absence *within* the site itself³¹. A site which denotes and represents an ideal of itself, through its own placehood. In this sense, the off-site comprises a spatio-temporal event at a specific location, which is experienced through its displacement across multiple sites simultaneously (i.e. virtual, physical, imaginary) . Returning to Duncan, it is expressed that “in the museum, art objects focus and organize the viewer’s attention, activating by their very form an inner spiritual or imaginative act³².” By contrast, the off-site enables this through the virtual ‘non-objects’ of documentation. To clarify, whilst Obrist’s ‘The Kitchen Show’ is nominally off-site in its occurrence outside of museological space, this model relates to the total deterritorialization which happens online. In ‘The Kitchen Show’, a less extreme instance of displacement occurs within a self-contained site of activity. Although Smithson’s non-site originated as a suggestion, the term ‘off-site’ is conveniently already in use, as prevalent within curation as it is within data analysis, supply chain management, or construction. Our task here is not to invent a new vocabulary, but to reframe this existing terminology within an appropriate theoretical framework.

Off-Sites as Responsive Environments

By topologising the process of site-making, we arrive at the substance of virtual environments. In 2022, upon the mudbanks of an undisclosed reservoir near the Saxon-Czech border, artist Don Elektro staged his contribution to ‘Dirty Laundry.’ Spanning from polymer clay dolls to schizo-memetic collages, these works were deposited as unlikely offerings to the landscape. In an accompanying text, Elektro reflects upon his internet-native objects and their agency within physical limits, concluding; “the off-site show represents the exact momentum of the In-Between”³³. To this effect, the reality of the off-site does not reside within its *potentiality* as documentation, or in the *actuality* of its physical installation, but in the suspension between these states. By contrast, the museum, according to Duncan, seeks liminality in order to isolate our activities within them, substantiating each encounter through its segregation. Against this, recent

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Duncan. ‘The Modern Art Museum’. 109.

³³ Don Elektro, ‘Altered States (the Sparrow in the Hand Is the Little Man’s Liver Sausage),’ Underground Flower, 2022, <http://undergroundflower.com/alteredstates.html>.

discourse surrounding ‘responsive environments’ has instead considered how we can design enhanced material conditions for experience, rather than systems. Or, as philosopher Xin Wei Sha asks; “can we make cracks in material, ordinary, physical situations in which extraordinary, nonteleological poetic activity can emerge?”³⁴ Sha is less concerned with a space's semiotic content than properties such as continuity, proximity, and thickness. Most significantly, he reveals that densifying spaces with media can emphasize the materiality of our relationships within them³⁵. Similarly, Obrist’s ‘The Kitchen Show’ demonstrates this by adjusting the threshold between allegorical and lived reality - without diminishing it. These works do not necessitate specific actions, nor provide any explanation of purpose, yet their ‘taking-place’ initiates possible encounters. The off-site, being situated within this dissonance between non-site and site thus sustains a critical tension necessary for the analogical structures of musealization to collapse, giving way to an a-narrative, a-linguistic poetics of lived reality. Online exhibitions do not require a marked-off time/space, but instead overlay physical existence. In their actual installation, the off-site *augments* our existing connection with the site itself, rather than seeking to facilitate its own structures.

Immanence within the Network

As platforms for inter-personal ritual, these relational ‘microtopias’ within off-space must now be considered in relation to their efficacy. Our preoccupation so far with questions of spatiality and agency have not intended to neglect function, but to establish a framework for this matter. As Duncan states; “a ritual experience is thought to have a purpose, an end,” and, in the museum, the intended outcome is a sense of enlightenment through aesthetic judgment³⁶. This condition is at once moralizing and spiritual, defined by its transformative effect. Whilst museums suspend the activity of life to achieve this, Obrist’s ‘The Kitchen Show’ attempts to “produce reality”, i.e. to phenomenally affect our experience within an active context, rather than to inspire an eventual change³⁷. ‘The Kitchen Show’ is tentative in this regard, yet ‘Dirty Laundry’ makes explicit its sacramental function, reflecting an acceptance of esoteric themes within contemporary off-site projects. In one sense, this had the consequence of such ideas becoming aestheticised, although the structures of online curation remain an elaborate, ritualized performance, encompassing its physical installation and virtual distribution. In his 2021 article ‘Magic at the End of the World,’ Wade Wallerstein considers how such exhibitions effect reality through the deindividuation of the self

³⁴ Xin Wei Sha. *Poiesis and Enchantment in Topological Matter*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013. 8.

³⁵ *Ibid*.

³⁶ Duncan. ‘The Art Museum as Ritual’. 13.

³⁷ Obrist, ‘The Kitchen Show.’

within an accelerative process. The identity-separation which occurs within a network thus detaches the self from the ego³⁸. Rather than replicating the transcendentalist structures of museum space, this is accomplished through immanence within an algorithm. Alternatively, this phenomenon has been termed ‘network spirituality’, by Remilia Collective, a group whose introduction exceeds the scope of this essay. In sum, they describe an online panentheism, enabled by “the shedding of meat-space ego and the adoption of a wired persona that's plugged into a network hive”³⁹. As objects are transacted within such systems (virtually or physically), these relationships afford their value. Whilst ‘The Kitchen Show’ anticipated this collectivism, ‘Dirty Laundry’ enables its acceleration, seeking multiplicity through a non-hierarchical locus of activity.

Conclusion

To conclude, this essay has demonstrated how Duncan’s *Civilizing Rituals* becomes troubled by recent curatorial initiatives, which appropriate these structures of secular devotion within non-museological contexts. Whilst acknowledging Duncan’s critical insight into the implicit sacrality of civic space, both Obrist’s ‘The Kitchen Show’ and the recent project ‘Dirty Laundry’ by ION propose a new model of exhibition. The ‘off-site’ thus presents not only a radical exercise in autonomy, but an alternative paradigm of sacrality. Here, these relational systems have also been suggested as topological, condensed with layers of virtual and physical activity. Duncan concludes her thesis by accepting the role of museological space in framing experience through meta-narratives. However, off-site exhibitions suggest art's potential to become enmeshed within the mundane rituals of life itself.

³⁸ Wallerstein, ‘Magic at the End of the World.’

³⁹ Charlotte Fang, ‘Network Spirituality, Collected Commentaries,’ goldenlight.mirror.xyz, April 29, 2022, <https://goldenlight.mirror.xyz/JHelf9ahizF3HXEL2XxIQfrqCyPdvtSp1P-AsWoHGr0>.