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CAN THIS BE A COMMUNITY WHEN YOU'RE TRYING TO SELL ME A LUXURY WATCH?

Rebekah Modrak

Virtual sites of commerce for niche products can be understood as terrains existing somewhere between reality and fiction.[1] These virtual spaces beguile us with social fantasies, made tangible with physical goods. Brand examples such as Best Made Co.'s website hawking artisanal axes or Shinola's site selling luxury watches using Black manpower, attempt to appeal to a young, urban, white male clientele. The brands use "calculated authenticity"[2] to build communities connected through consumption. Best Made encourages customers to "reconnect with their hands" and "embark on a life of great adventure"[3] by, among other actions, naming the $350 American Felling Axe that's arrived on the front doorstep swathed in wool straw inside a wooden box. The call to action involves (1) imagining a name for the tool and (2) writing this name on the registration card tied, with string, to the hand-painted axe. Shinola's initial ads, running full-page in *The New York Times*, aimed to connect the company with its adopted city of Detroit, while making a point of the city's dire economic status ("TO THOSE WHO'VE WRITTEN OFF DETROIT, WE GIVE YOU THE BIRDY")[4] and, simultaneously, casting Shinola's capitalism as a "philanthropic" effort to provide jobs to Black bodies in Detroit ("THERE'S A FUNNY THING THAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU BUILD FACTORIES IN THIS COUNTRY. IT'S CALLED JOBS. AND OF ALL THE THINGS WE MAKE, IT MIGHT JUST BE THE THING WE'RE MOST PROUD OF.").[5]

Drawing on the media-savvy tactics of New Left provocateurs like Saul Alinsky, the semiotic guerrilla warfare of the Situationists, and my own interrogation of the ways that consumer culture perpetuates racist and sexist messaging and exerts influence over the formation of our identities and values, this chapter explores my creative practice and asks: If companies attempt to build "community" through brand messaging and social media, can artistic interventionist practices into those

DOI: 10.4324/9781003169109-30

"communities" be understood through the lens of social engagement? In this chapter, I reflect on my engagement with communities of e-commerce through conceptual works that are satirical and subversive, yet profoundly political. I scrutinize the underlying, often unconsidered assumptions about consumerism, white supremacy, labor, and masculinity, as well as advocate for a contentious form of community-based art that's antithetical to the passivity of consumer culture and the convivial spirit often found in art as social practice.

Social and Consumption Communities

Socially engaged artists tend to define a community as people with a common experience or cultural connection. Most social practice art encourages participatory actions that support this community through positive psychological or economic outcomes: for example, the Ecuadorian women who wrote letters detailing their own domestic abuse and the men who read these letters out loud (Suzanne Lacy, *Cartas de Mujeres*); or Black girls learning about the literary and culinary history of Black female writers and mothers (Khaliah Pitts and Shivon Love, *Our Mothers' Kitchens*). At times, these actions partner with communities understood as marginalized and culminate in a positive social outcome in which both artists and participants learn to "inhabit the world in a better way."[6]

Students who take one of the seven "engagement" courses offered in the art school where I teach, the Stamps School of Art and Design at the University of Michigan, might work with elementary children in a Detroit public school, juveniles in detention, or geriatric adults with memory loss. Is it any wonder that art students have come to associate community engagement with "do good" types of projects? My goal is not to criticize this approach but, rather, to put forward alternatives that broaden our definitions of "community" and expand the methods and goals of socially engaged practice. When community-centered instructors and artists partner with particular community members—disenfranchised youth in prison-like environments or Black children growing up in Detroit neighborhoods without access to affordable housing and fresh water—there's a tendency to fixedly ignore the more nefarious factions of these communities: gentrifying neighbors alienating long-time residents and driving up housing prices, or people who should be held accountable for disproportionate policing of Black youth, or exorbitant water taxes that bankrupt families. I propose that artists acknowledge a community in its 360-degrees. Are there members who would benefit from our antagonism and critical engagement?

> In Chapters 10 and 15 Joseph DeLappe and Dalida María Benfield and her collaborators also write about projects that engage virtual communities.

My work engages communities that have vacuous and socially corrosive values. Although Best Made Co. and Shinola have operated as brick-and-mortar stores, these companies built their audience primarily through online means, taking advantage of the internet's ability to attract individuals across geographies. While virtual, these communities encamp in my own backyard.

On the surface, they appear to be neighbors to my affinities (art, design, economic growth, Detroit, labor). They represent white perspectives and enduring ideologies (and I say that as a white person), almost self-parodoxically. A me who lives in my house and neighborhood, with my education and my markers of social and economic class, would typically support these groups. That I appear to be a member of such communities may be one of the reasons that my critiques of Shinola and Best Made were met with hostility. My willingness to cast a critical eye on entrepreneurs extracting value from Detroit residents and charlatans posing as innovative designers is an affront to an etiquette passed down through parliamentary procedures found in *Robert's Rules of Order*, in which one member is forbidden from finding fault with the motives of another within community debate.[7] Ridiculing the vacuity of artisanal axes and exposing the racism of Shinola's marketing, even as MoMA acquires a Best Made axe for its collection and the College of Creative Studies (CCS) in Detroit proudly houses the Shinola "factory" within their buildings, betrays the fellowship of artists and the art community's unspoken norms of mutual affirmation and confirmation bias by one of its own.

Tracing the History of Brand Communities

Through the eyes of consumer culture theorists, Best Made Co. and Shinola are "consumption communities," that is, communities of members who create and negotiate meaning primarily around marketplace symbols.[8] The fact that, in these instances, I am engaged with "brand communities" rather than social communities might surprise a socially engaged artist, but it would not raise any eyebrows among experts in consumer culture studies or marketing. Scholars and executives in those fields have long used the term "community" in reference to people who gather together around an artisanal axe or a luxury watch. They use the term unapologetically and without any apparent irony, to kindle all the warmth we usually associate with the notion of community. In their view, brand communities provide information exchange, moral support, a shared sense of meaning, even an individual sense of well-being.

"Brand community" first appears in the historian Daniel Boorstin's 1973 study, *The Americans: The Democratic Experience*, an excellent resource for any artist who wants to understand how biscuits and sneakers came to define our psyches more than religion, family, and politics. Boorstin describes the emergence of "fellowships of consumers" as a product of mass-production. "Invisible new communities were created and preserved by how and what men consumed," he wrote, 23 years before the internet would make these imperceivable social networks starkly visible.[9] The emergence of comrades-in-commerce begins with the

pivotal changeover from owning unique, handmade possessions, bought and sold between neighbors within walking distance, to less personal acquisition and the knowledge that thousands of other people owned an identical copy, even if these owners were unknown to us—*especially* because we hadn't met those people. For immigrants to America during the Industrial Revolution, such as Jewish émigré Mary Antin, shedding hand-sewn clothes for factory-made garments symbolized the birth of a new identity. Newly arrived in Boston from Polotsk, Antin recalls being taken to "a dazzlingly beautiful palace called a 'department store,'" to exchange "our hateful homemade European costumes, which pointed us out as 'greenhorns' to the children on the street, for real American machine-made garments."[10]

With the advent of mass production, conversations about commodities shifted from intimate ones between two people—seller and buyer—to advertising's monologue to the millions. Community-building tactics that we often think of as contemporary, such as customer testimonials on Instagram, YouTube, or Facebook, originated over a century ago in the late 1800s when Montgomery Ward realized that he could target isolated and lonely homesteaders through mail-order catalogs.[11] To convince farmers to purchase from an unseen seller goods they hadn't seen and touched, he built trust by soliciting testimonials from local officials of the Grange—the agricultural group that lobbied the government and developed local infrastructure for farming needs. The 1875 Montgomery Ward Spring/Fall devotes a full page to the Secretary of the Michigan State Grange J.T. Cobb's effusive endorsement of Montgomery Ward & Co.'s prudence and bookkeeping, an assessment strengthened by his examining "numerous letters from Patrons indicating a flattering business confidence in the firm, and general satisfaction."[12] Dozens of testimonials of "good satisfaction" from farmers and Grange masters follow Mr. Cobb's lead, assertions of connection so effective that customers came to feel that they knew these men. Isolated by the homesteading act that required farmers to live on remote tracts of land rather than in towns, lonesome farmers began to shift their devotion from community to company.[13][14]

The "iron bonds" of traditional communities were replaced by the "gossamer webs" of shared patterns of consumption.[15] Boorstin describes consumption communities as "shallower in their loyalties, more superficial in their services" but "ubiquitous, somehow touching the American consumer at every waking moment and even while he slept."[16] With the emergence of e-commerce in 1995, that grasp extended and strengthened. Engagements now take place through social media posts and online reviews by strangers (who should have no legitimate influence on our opinions, but do).

Marketing is based on a network of associations with nostalgic and emotionally charged symbols—campfires, black-and-white aesthetics, a beanie cap, a wine glass—that may have little basis in our reality. In a Baudrillard-like hyperreality, the real disappears into the simulation and the signs of the real are substituted for the real.[17] The malleability of visual signifiers that identify occupation, status, class, and identity, such as clothing and tools, is even more obvious on online platforms because the internet presents the illusion of a world without the burden of proof or the weight of materiality. Companies can easily appropriate symbols of labor, Blackness, or spirituality to assuage the anxieties and insecurities of high-income, highbrow consumers.[18] Many brand-based communities, such as those generated by Best Made Co. and Shinola, offer the rhetoric of identity and value formation—such as developing courage, commitment to community, and the capacity for hard work—while alienating the consumer from those same values. It is doubtful that someone affluent enough to pay $350 for a tool is ever engaged in manual labor that's obligatory and not self-determined, and the purchase distorts their perception of work even more.

The Best Made Co. and Shinola Communities

Best Made Co. gained attention in 2009 for its hand-painted "designer axes," which have come to typify and to feed the "urban lumberjack" market. These bearded, flannel-wearing urban men deal with their crisis of masculinity by assuming the appearance of a nineteenth-century lumberjack put through a grooming regiment so meticulous that every pore and whisker has been tended individually. The modern-day lumbersexual, unlike his historic muse, is not required to live in oppressive and violent company camps and has no need to abuse alcohol to allay chronic fears of death from falling trees and fires.[19] Instead, Best Made's lumbersexuals occasionally dip a toe in the outdoors by traveling to a campground, such as Best Made's Lumberland, where they take a few whacks at a log, snap photos for Instagram, and brew coffee in their enamel camping percolator.

When I started working "with" them in 2013, Best Made Co. was a New York-based company.[20] Best Made purchases axes,[21] stripes them in design-savvy color schemes, sells them at a staggering markup (some models go for as much as $350), and promotes them using hundreds of images of men wielding axes, drinking whiskey, flying bush planes, and draped in American flags. The company markets its products using calculated and false associations with manual labor to persuade urban men with no practical use for such tools that displaying a striped axe above their mantel as a trophy will secure their connection with manual labor, which is to say: manliness.[22]

The company, Shinola, was the dream of Tom Kartsotis, the Texan entrepreneur worth an estimated $185 million dollars, and owner of the Dallas-based "brand-builder" Bedrock Manufacturing Co., Fossil Group Inc., and other ventures.[23] Under Kartsotis's direction, Bedrock Manufacturing planted the Shinola company in Detroit in 2011 in order to profit from American's nostalgia for the "glory days" of US manufacturing as represented by the automobile industry, which originated in the Motor City. But Bedrock Manufacturing paired this uncritical wistfulness for a Fordist era of white-owned manufacturing with an equally uncritical vision of contemporary Detroit as a majority Black city of

grit and resilience in which Black residents need to be saved by resurrecting America's manufacturing and (white) might. This mythmaking relies on historical ignorance or amnesia about conditions such as redlining, exploitation of Black auto workers subjected to the lowest wages and most dangerous jobs, exclusion from education and housing benefits, and post–World War Two disinvestment in the city by the auto industry and white residents who abandoned Detroit, forcing residents without mobility or resources to endure 60 years of decay.[24]

Shinola's main products are upscale wrist watches, pricey status totems its advertising explicitly associates with the postwar myths of American economic might and consumer-culture abundance. The watch motion "is an engine," Shinola's then-president Jacques Panis instructed students and faculty at the University of Michigan Center for Entrepreneurship. "And where would you go in the United States if you were looking to make an engine? You'd probably go to the Motor City, right? Uh, and so we found ourselves in the Motor City."[25] The disassociation achieved using the casual "found ourselves in the Motor City" is relevant to the verbal gymnastics that a company like Shinola uses to hoodwink customers into thinking of the enterprise as a heroic adventure rather than a multimillion-dollar corporation.

In Panis's lecture and Shinola's marketing, the fearless white savior is central. Panis told the U-M audience, "Starting up a watch factory in Detroit, just to give you a sense, did not take two guys sitting on the opposite sides of a big boardroom table. It took one wild, drunk Indian to do this." In his 40 minutes on stage, Panis referred to the Shinola operation as "crazy" four times. Placing the retail store in the "heart of Detroit," where "you used to go get your drugs. . . . That's kind of how . . . crazy we are. But we did it." He boasts of enticing white bike designers and watch makers, shown—in slides—dressed in personal clothing, to join the company team. Black assembly workers? They are outfitted in white work smocks in the style of Uncle Ben and offered as "incredible stories" of redemption. Crystal and Willie had been a janitor and a security guard in the building, respectively, when they appeared on Shinola's doorstep and asked to join. "And we said, 'alright, you got to pass the test." They "took our, uh, our visual test and the aptitude test, and passed both of them."[26]

When Shinola represents Black employees, this auction block talk and the branding and parading is palpable and, at times, literal. As the audience filed into the lecture hall, the black-and-white image greeting us on the screen showed a young Black girl dressed in clothing reminiscent of the Jim Crow period, with Shinola printed across her chest, a photograph constructed by Bruce Weber, the photographer known for his Ralph Lauren and Abercrombrie & Fitch campaigns. Shinola's marketing enforces perceptions of their "leadership" in Detroit counterpointed with images of Black Shinola employees being grateful for this so-called governance. To confirm this legacy of white supremacy, Shinola took the effort

to purchase their name from the Shinola shoe-polish company (1877–1960) that promoted its products using overtly racist caricatures of African Americans.[27]

Tactics for Engaging Consumer Communities

If we accept that consumption communities exist and that the messages they communicate are steeped in fantasies that preserve power for the status quo, then it becomes important that artists engage in this area. And yet, current models of community-based artwork are not particularly helpful in providing a framework for practice. In his handbook for socially engaged art, artist Pablo Helguera observes that the "typical community art project (for instance, a children's mural project) is able to fulfill its purpose of strengthening a community's sense of self by lessening or suspending criticality."[28] Most socially engaged art aims for "imminent togetherness"[29] or some variation of utopia where marginalized voices are amplified, disparate groups united, souls soothed, bodies fed, and urban walls painted in vibrant colors. But what strategies should we use when some or all aspects of the community's "sense of self" is built on corrosive and false storytelling, such as Best Made's idealized vision of white men armed with axes or Shinola's self-presentation as white corporate saviors of Black Detroit?

It is worth considering the language of "criticality" and confrontation. Saul Alinsky, the legendary 1960s activist and author of the tactical manual for community organizers, *Rules for Radicals*, imaginatively devised tactics of disruption meant to undermine the agendas of the powerful, such as hijacking the bathrooms at O'Hare Airport by filling them with organizers to interfere with passengers' dire needs to rid themselves of bodily fluids as they boarded and deplaned. The threat of this action caused Mayor Daley to halt an "urban renewal program" that would have displaced thousands of residents from the primarily Black Woodlawn community.[30]

Alinsky's activist tactics for community organizers offer an interesting segue between the Situationist practice of détournement (in which artists hijack a work so that the original meaning is subverted and recontextualized, leaving the original work legible alongside its transformation) and contemporary modes of social engagement. These are not conciliatory tactics, but activists and artists should be wary of politeness, especially artists educated in schools of higher education increasingly indoctrinated by professionalization, another side effect of the influence of corporatism on academia. The professionalization of the humanities and the corporatizing of higher education affect the language we speak. We start to talk with "purifying synonyms," a phrase Alinsky used to describe words diluting the honest expression of joy, horror, and other primal emotions. Alinsky refused to be "trapped by tact at the expense of truth."[31] In other words, conflict must be visible, especially when we challenge persons or entities in our presumptive social circles and want the larger community to witness dissent.

Creative Engagement of Consumption Communities

After reading about Best Made Co., watching their brand video, browsing their website, and wading through social media posts and follower comments, I rebuilt their "community," using the same language and visual style, but with a toilet plunger as my tactical weapon/tool of manliness to be passed down through generations (Figure 23.1). *Re Made Co.*, my satirical take on Best

FIGURE 23.1 Rebekah Modrak, *Re Made Co.* 2013–present, and the original Best Made Co. website and photographs.

Made Co., replaces the company's $350 American Felling Axe with a hand-painted $350 American Master Plunger. Because I wanted viewers to experience the plunger as a plausible commercial object, I designed the *Re Made Co.* website (http://remadeco.org/) as an identical version of Best Made's—a collection of plungers titled with Best Made's lofty axe names, such as "Flashman," "Black Donald, "Smithereens," narrated with literary-minded Jack London–type stories, brand video, Facebook and Instagram accounts, catalogue offers, and workshop opportunities—meticulously replacing "plunger" for "axe" in both the site's texts and images to highlight the absurdity of Best Made Co.'s pretensions and ideologies. While the tools are central, my poker-faced parody is also attentive to the company's extra efforts to hijack manual labor and mythicize the Best Made men; for example, I have recreated some of the labor porn they publish as slideshow "adventures," such as a trip to the "hot, dusty places where the work is never done" on a Kansas farm or "bagging elk" in Colorado.[32] The only difference between the axe and plunger websites will be discovered by browsers foolish enough to attempt to add an American Master Plunger to their cart: *Re Made* conjures up economist Thorstein Veblen for a fireside chat about the perils of cultivating value through consumable goods.

A fictive experiment that engaged with a community of commerce, *Re Made Co.* began with a question: Will consumers and bloggers accept artisanal absurdity in the form of a bespoke plunger if couched in a trendy, enticing aesthetic? To pose this question, the artwork *Re Made* had to function as a dynamic online work that presented opportunities for engaging with brand community and with the flexibility to evolve in response to queries. For the first year, I chose not to publicly identify the site as an artwork. Rather, I operated under the guise of *Re Made* founder and avatar Peter Smith-Buchanan, publicizing our products as innovative design to blogs and online magazines, many of which had promoted Best Made.

My seven years as the silent female CEO for *Re Made* gave me access into this community of men and an opportunity to undermine Best Made's appropriation of a symbol of manual labor as leisure-class fetish and their perpetuation of a violent, white masculinity. *Re Made*'s social media posts and user comments, emails (from men asking to buy plungers, men lauding Smith-Buchanan for his parody, etc.), invitations (for reviews, to create brick-and-mortar pop-up shops, or to feature the plungers in publications), redesigns of our website in 2015 and 2016 based on Best Made's changes, and legal pushback from Best Made compelled new creative and ethical decisions. How do I write an email in a "manly" way when posing as Smith-Buchanan? How should *Re Made* respond to Touch of Modern's request to sell our plungers to their male members? What does it mean when a group of men who work at the web design consultancy firm in Whitefish, Montana, start making handmade *Re Made* plungers?

While working on *Re Made*, I attended the Shinola/Panis lecture, rife with the subtext of Black subservience and white supremacy, at the Center for Entrepreneurship. In the lead-up to creating the artwork RETHINK SHINOLA, I interviewed labor organizers, such as Detroit labor activist Rich Feldman, who quoted Jimmy Boggs "The job ain't the answer," a manifesto to the fallacy of believing that jobs and trickle-down economics will solve systematic problems in the city.[3334] During tours of the city and in emails, Detroit historian Jamon Jordan pointed out connections and contradictions, such as between the 1959 destruction of Paradise Valley, Detroit's Black business district, for a freeway, and the present-day "development" in Detroit. I cast a wide net for expertise, talking with critical race scholars, artists, activists, antidevelopment activists and pro-development officials, and consumer culture experts. I interviewed Black working- and middle-class Detroit residents, some of whom saw Shinola as a contemporary plantation and one of whom was delighted to see a luxury brand—affiliated with wealth and exclusivity—associated with the city. RETHINK SHINOLA is an internet-based artwork analyzing and critiquing the company's branding messages, past and present, to expose the ideologies underlying Shinola's commercial rhetoric.

The artwork RETHINK SHINOLA (www.rethinkshinola.com) incorporates traditions of just-the-facts-ma'am journalism and politically engaged art to analyze and annotate existing "texts," in the spirit of artists such as Fred Wilson, Hans Haacke, Lorraine O'Grady, and Andrea Fraser. Its curtain opens on a cast of characters circulated by the Shinola shoe polish company, equating Blackness with servility and continues with a sequential tour contextualizing Shinola within racial histories (Figure 23.2). The site conjures up a Shinola promotional video presenting a typical day in the life of Jacques Panis; as Mr. Panis plays racket ball at an exclusive Detroit club with another "leader in the community," a choreographed succession of hats appears on his head. Painted by my team of animators, the hats reveal unspoken expressions of power. For example, as Panis describes the "craziness" of setting up camp in a city like Detroit, he wears the pith helmet of a great white explorer.

The second video is a recreation of the Center for Entrepreneurship lecture, transcribed from the original to include every "uh," pause, and projected image, and re-presented by a hired actor in the original lecture hall where it was first performed. Viewers witness Shinola's rep describing the city as uncivilized and Black workers as eager for white salvation in this presentation. Then RETHINK SHINOLA transports them to a new page in which Christopher Columbus's journals appraise the Lucayos as having the potential to be "good servants" who "seemed to take great pleasure in serving us," and predict an easy acquisition of the islands using glass beads to win the indigenous people's good will.[35] The artwork concludes with a brief account of economic oppression against Blacks in Detroit to contextualize Shinola within a racial history of cultural appropriation and the colonization of resources.

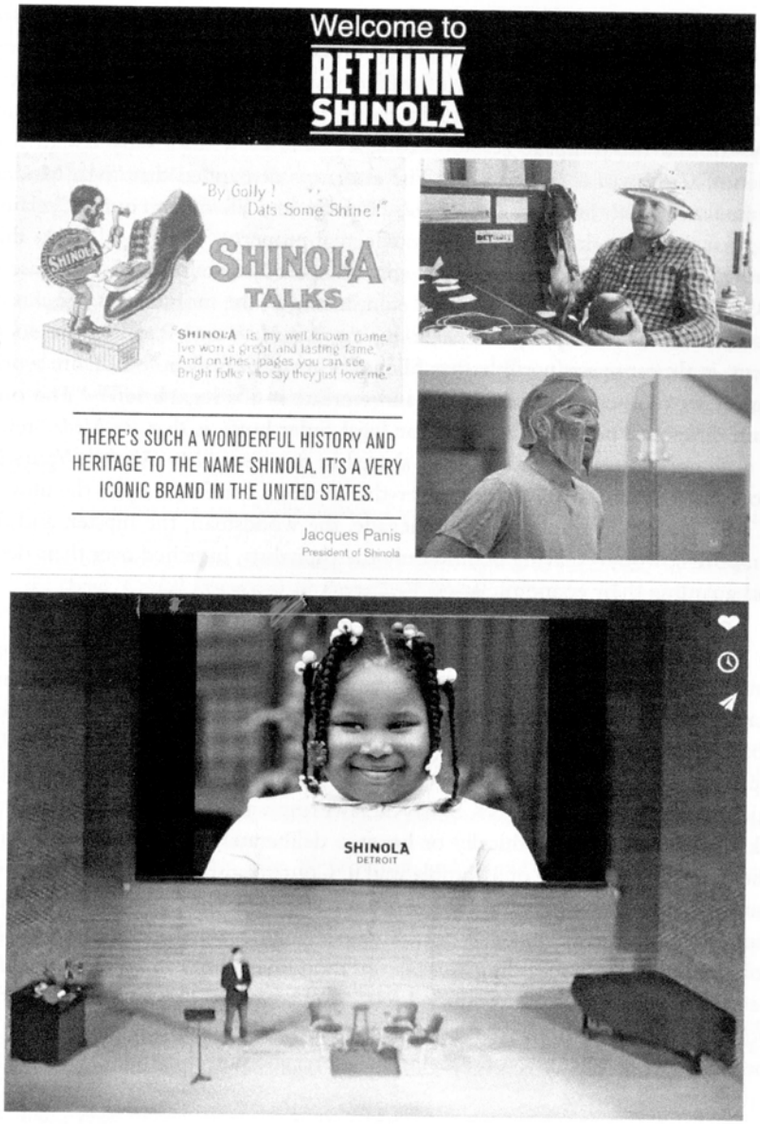

FIGURE 23.2 Rebekah Modrak, RETHINK SHINOLA, 2017–present.

Conclusion

In his social engagement handbook, Helguera recommends making room for socially engaged artworks that involve destructive relationships. "An artist's successful project," he writes, "could consist . . . in upsetting social relations, or

in simply being hostile to the public."[36] Tactics such as mimicry, parody, and critical annotation may provoke a community, compelling it to react in ways that further reveal its true values of profit over people. Best Made Co.'s executives were so irked by *Re Made's* imitation that they forsook their laid-back guys-around-the-campfire act and brought in the New York City law firm of Ellenoff Grossman & Schole LLP. The attorneys demanded that "Ms. Modrak immediately take down the *Re Made* Website and all of its content," claiming that the artwork violated their intellectual property. Their legal clerks diligently "investigated" the very public artwork/parody to build a 32-page case of "Re Made-to-Best Made examples," culminating in the momentous conclusion that . . . *the Re Made plunger is mimicking the Best Made axe*! Reading the document, it almost seems possible that Ellenoff Grossman & Schole LLP are working for *me* to document the parody and recreate it as a legal brief.[37] "The only main difference between the two," the legal order huffs, is that *Re Made* "refers to a plunger instead of an axe." As I shared in the essay "My Work is Yours To Do What I Want," the blustering, over-the-top legal brief dismantles the illusion of Best Made's community—the renegade, the woodsman, the hipster, and the campfire cowboy—leaving behind only the capitalists, hunched over their desks and guarding their economic assets.[38]

The artist/activist who perceives an inconvenient truth can hold a mirror up to communities based in hypocrisy and can serve as a conscience that exposes fantastical claims, unethical representations, and harmful stereotypes. I've found that false communities have a form of spectrophobia: they fear their own reflections. This is, presumably, why several faculty from CCS accosted my husband in a parking lot to express discomfort with my critique of Shinola; and why MBA students who view RETHINK SHINOLA during a guest lecture either earnestly ask me how to market ethically or become deliberately obtuse and ask for my assessment of the quality of a Shinola watch. Concurrently, members of the community harmed by the brand have written to describe the experience of seeing their discomfort visualized and corroborated, "I am a former employee of Shinola, and your work regarding Shinola was monumental to me. It was everything I ever wanted to say and everything I felt."[39] "We worked [for Shinola], . . . your work expresses everything that my partner and I have been feeling/dealing with for the last year. Thank you for saying what everybody is thinking."[40]

Participation Prompt

This three-part prompt is an opportunity to analyze a "text" and alter it to reveal implicit meaning.

- Select a communication that is biased, hypocritical, or that uses language or images in ways that allegedly say one thing but impart other messaging subliminally. The "communication" could be an email, personal letter, advertisement, website, announcement, photograph, video, newspaper article, or other written or visual messaging.
- Mark up the "text" to interrogate the author's speech. What is odd or problematic about their language and images? What is actually being said? What is not being said that should be? Highlight, redact, circle, replace words, define words more clearly, comment, question, imagine alternatives. If you're working with a time-based communication, you may want to work from a still or script.
- Now that you have an understanding of the implicit or problematic messages, recreate the text creatively, in a way that reveals these issues. Make sure that your recreation follows one logic and a singular voice that you've defined. For example, if you have determined that the tone of your recreation will be sincere, do not allow your voice to lapse into sarcasm.

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13. Rae Elizabeth Rips, "An Introductory Study of the Role of the Mail Order Business in American History, 1872–1914," (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1938), 7–16.
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20. In 2017, founder Peter Buchanan-Smith sold a majority interest to Bolt Threads, a Bay Area bio-materials start-up. In his words, the sale changed the company mission from peddling "wonder" to a "fully vertical apparel empire." In 2019, Buchanan-Smith left the company; and in October 2020, the Duluth Trading Co. announced that they had acquired Best Made. Also see: Alex Lauer, "The Fall of Best Made: Why the Enigmatic Axe Company Was Sold for Parts," *InsideHook* (26 October 2020), www.insidehook.com/article/gear/how-best-made-co-sold-duluth-trading.
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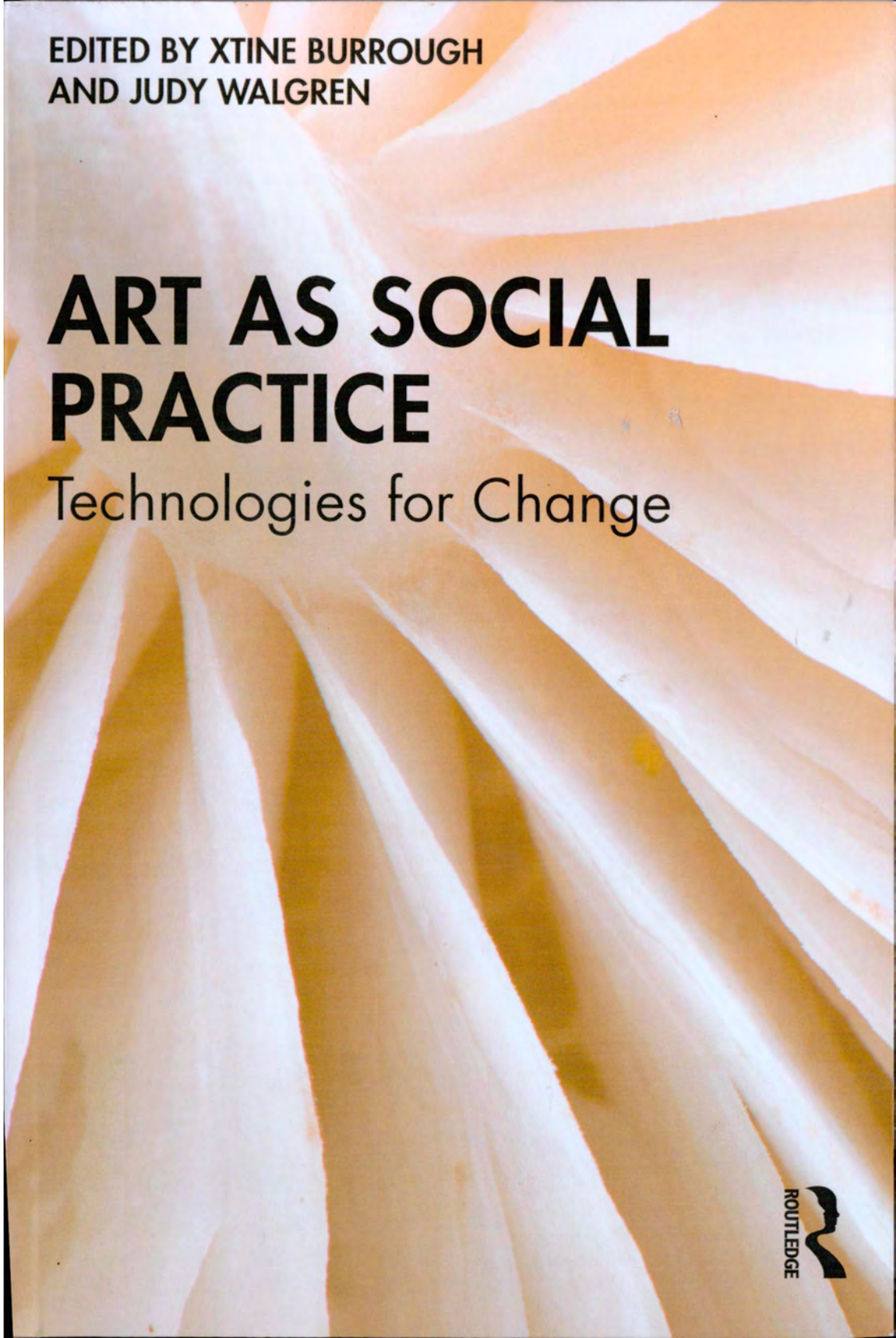
EDITED BY XTINE BURROUGH
AND JUDY WALGREN
ART AS SOCIAL PRACTICE
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