

# Table of Contents

More on Mute’s economy and organisation... . . . . . 1



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## Mute finance

After running on a mixed economy of barter, grant and private monies since its inception in 1994, Mute started receiving revenue funding from the Arts Council of England in 1999. The grant is now set at £65,000 per annum, having significantly increased in the past couple of years, and goes towards the core costs of staff, premises and production. ACE's 'core funding' is supplemented by project funds allocated to new initiatives; in recent years Mute has received nearly £100,000 from ACE for such projects. Grants were awarded for White Cube, Blue Sky (a book now renamed Proud to be Flesh: a Mute Anthology on network cultures); web tools resource OpenMute; business development, FLOSS migration and new online art commissions as well as an OpenMute national workshop tour, UserLand. Approximately £40,000 has also been received from creative-industries agencies London Innovations and CIDA for technology projects centred on wireless networking (YouAreHere) and software development (TNS).

## State funding and autonomous cultures

This makes Mute one of many European cultural organisations which discuss, profile or support autonomous practices while receiving their own financial support from the State. There are those who feel this generates unacceptable contradictions. Others regard the situation as merely a delicious irony. With corporate-oriented or voluntary-based models seemingly providing the only alternatives for larger provisions of 'public culture', Mute conceives of its present grant dependence as an opportunity to codetermine the purpose of such monies as well as use the investment to develop a model of self-sustainability. If the State has earmarked funds to keep alive its conceptions of citizenship and the public sphere, then there is scope for organisations to redirect these towards emergent alternatives. Rather than functioning as instruments to an authoritarian agenda of 'social inclusion' (or, in Europe's less conspicuously Blairite realms, the maintenance of an elite critical culture), at this juncture it seems imperative for us intermediaries to invite structural redefinition through public participation. Metamute.org's New Publishing model and website has certainly been developed in this spirit and in line with the groundswell of critical energy directed at governance globally, is subjecting its organisational and financial workings to as much of an overhaul as its content. Please watch this space for new sections, including financial reports and other organisational documentation.