Editorial

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Hard cash: A post-disciplinary digest

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May 6th 2010, 2.45pm. The Dow Jones Industrial Average falls by nearly 1000 points, trillions of dollars were 'wiped' from the value of major US stocks and, for a few long minutes, the global economy was on the brink of a new catastrophe. Then 'it' all came back. It remains unclear what, exactly, caused the 'Flash Crash'. More worryingly, it has always been unclear what, exactly, was 'lost' and 'regained' in those apocalyptic moments. This is as much a philosophical, anthropological, and aesthetic concern as it is also an economic or financial one – trillions of *what*, exactly?

Money has always been a profoundly ambiguous and highly volatile object. Events such as the flash crash and the global financial crisis before it, however, have brought this ambiguity and volatility into the arena of popular deliberation. Non-specialists like us may not know what Hard Cash *really* is but in this we are, as J.P. von Bethmann once pointed out, in precisely the same predicament as the specialists. This special issue – or what we like to think of a post-disciplinary digest – offers examples of what the fields of economic geography (Angus Cameron), political economy (Bob Jessop), art criticism (Max Haiven), literary history (Joyce Goggin) and political philosophy (Ole Bjerg) can offer us within such a predicament. Happy eating!



Figure 1. Cesare Pietroiusti and Paul Griffiths, *Eating money: An auction*, 2005-2007. Performance at the Ikon Gallery in Birmingham, UK. Photo by Caters News. Courtesy of the Ikon Gallery.

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