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JOVE
2009**

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form of paper pages to communicate with the reader. There's no room for neutralities; quite the opposite: there needs to be an exercise in interpretation to ensure the page isn't simply a format for the art in question. You have to work to express the work or the artist's thesis through the paper.

Printed artworks turn their back on light, space... You shouldn't curtail their expressive capacity in pursuit of some supposed necessary neutrality. Designing art books becomes a somewhat risky exercise, but then isn't art itself an intellectual risk-taking exercise par excellence? When an artist's book is deprived of all expressive capacity, it becomes a catalogue. When it comes to designing, you simply have to make clear whether we're talking about one thing or the other.

NODE: Our studio has been working with art-related books since 2003 for a variety of different countries and occasions. Those publications do function as exhibition catalogues, in a classic sense, displaying a printed 'list' of what is being shown in an art show or as artist books, wherein art projects are realised in the form of a book. The latter are usually produced in a small edition and with minimal financial resources. Exhibition catalogues nowadays are most of the time overseen by a curator, and are becoming more comprehensive, often not even displaying works on show; they are meant to have a life of their own. Artist books are being developed in close collaboration with the artists. In recent years many designers and artists have

started publishing their own publications, using cheap production and distribution methods. Those magazines, artist books and readers are driving the "DIY aesthetics" that currently seem to have become fashionable. Production methods like the Risograph (a high-speed digital printing system, so production of one page is very cheap) are an inherent part of many students' and designers' work life. Through blogs and websites, production means and design aesthetics spread within very short periods of time. On the one hand, we have the feeling that there are too many low-key publications being produced; on the other, this pleasant development, including many new art book fairs and fantastic bookshops, has attracted considerable interest in the world of publishing and art book production.

PROJECTES D'INVESTIGACIÓ

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Among the new categories for the 2009 call for entries, in the case of research there was a desire to deal with an aspect of art production that all too often remains untouched, since it lacks visibility. The Sala d'Art Jove wanted the new call for entries to offer a more comprehensive approach to carrying out creative projects and create

resources in relation to each of the different phases.

We could also consider our initiative as a small-scale adaptation of grants for artistic creation from the Entitat Autònoma de Difusió Cultural and the Consell Nacional de la Cultura i de les Arts, which distinguish the process of research as a prior step to carrying out the project. However, in the case of the Sala d'Art Jove, awarding research grants would have a more direct link to certain aspects of production, as revealed by the complementary production of a publication and activity in relation to one of the selected projects, Alberto Altés and Marta Serra's *Performing Public Space*, and using the pages of the catalogue to exhibit results in the case of the other, Marc Navarro's *Per què tallar? Una genealogia del paper plegat* [*Why Cut? A Family Tree of Folded Paper*].

The idiosyncratic nature of the projects led us to conceive the research as something that might be far more complex than simply a previous step. It could be useful to consider some thoughts from the seminar *Al voltant de la recerca artística* [*On Artistic Research*] held in early 2010 at the MACBA, which compared the surge in use of this parameter with considering artistic practice as a process for producing knowledge. Given this complex situation, we asked Montse Romani, head of tutorials related to this field in 2009 to give her point of view below.

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**PERFORMING PUBLIC SPACE
Hybrid Collaborative Art Practices in the Contemporary Public Space**
ALBERTO ALTÉS ARLANDIS
AND MARTA SERRA PERMANYER

Do you see a capacity for transforming the city, its spaces or the use we make of them in artistic practice? Which public spaces do you use most day to day? Is there hope for the Santa Esperança public laundry? Do you think that Somanyprojects' action has served to reactivate this space and awaken it in the town's collective imaginary? Do you know of any other public space particular to women? What does the perspective of an artist offer us that an architect's doesn't consider when intervening in a space? What does a collaborative art practice consist of? Can an intervention of this type lead to some type of agencement on the part of the community? Would it be viable to consider more alternative uses of water such as public baths? How do you assess artistic practice as a work methodology for participatory urbanism projects? Would you be in favour of other activities being undertaken in public laundries besides washing clothing and the promotion of tourism? Are we very far off on the part of politicians from designing the cities where we want to live based on the needs of the citizens themselves? Do you have any questions for us? Do you have any questions for yourself?

Performing Public Space is a multiple voice: an artist from Missouri, a university professor, an architect, a city councillor for urban planning, a city councillor for culture, some curators, an art educator and researcher, five women who still do laundry at a public laundry, a family, a couple of doctoral students and all those who have not been included here. It is also a series of acknowledgements.

It is redefining and constructing the public space from a multidisciplinary view of the common space, art and daily life. Perhaps it is a hybrid collaborative art practice that highlights actions, initiatives, proposals and recognitions around a very specific and distinctive space like the thermal water laundries.

The initiative is based on the observation of the intervention of the artist Somanyprojects during the 2008 edition of the *Mostra Independent d'Art Urbà de Caldes de Montbui* [*Independent Urban Art Exhibition of Caldes de Montbui*], Barcelona. The performative capacity of this intervention together with others like that of Atsuko Arai allows artistic practices to be related with the production dynamics of public space and social and urban processes of transformation. As such they are practices that are implemented more as political tools than as artistic objects that result in an aesthetic experience.

The investigation turns to a cooperative process of creation and reflection in which the different actors or agents are located; they are positioned in the context and reveal their individual experiences through interviews. These different ways of

perceiving the same case are compiled in *Mirades: espais i veus* [*Perspectives: Spaces and Voices*], and they share the act of rethinking public laundries as public spaces with new common uses.

The role of the researchers is merged with that of the interviewed collaborators in the form of narrative. Each of their lived experiences, their subjectivity, is recognised as a source of knowledge from which to unite and link reflections on, uncertainties about and the possibilities and memories of the public laundries. These peripheral landscapes are introduced through the transcription of these voices, these conversations that took place, this word shared in the research process.

Everything that cannot be transcribed is volatile: the atmosphere of a space, the sensation, the intonation of someone or their silences, their prior anxiety. Beyond the written word, attention is paid to everything that conditions their subjectivity, their social context and the hierarchical relationships that exist between all of us and them. Presenting the ten interviews conducted allows a guiding thread to be established and for a story created from the overlapping of different lives and spaces to be read.

All of this work as a whole is made visible through a publication in the shape of a newspaper titled *Rethinking Public Space. Altres espais públics: comunitat, pràctiques artísticocol·laboratives híbrides i reactivació urbana* [*Rethinking Public Space. Other Public Spaces: Communities, Hybrid Collaborative Art Practices and Urban Regeneration*], which is disseminated among the

spheres involved: local, artistic and academic. At the same time, it serves to emphasise the explosive character of collaborative artistic action, which begins new processes of appropriation, dissent and the construction of propositional imaginaries which propose formulas for urban regeneration beyond the charged memory of these spaces, such as holding round tables. This brings together all of the participants and provides a space for discussion about the contrasts exposed, thus confronting viewpoints that would otherwise never have been faced. In tandem, nearly non-existent local connections are made stronger.

What is public space?

“Public space is a mix of something that belongs to the people with changing rules controlled by a collective idea. There is a flexibility and conversation that exists between the people using space and the existing rules that can be challenged to encourage creative use of areas that have fallen into ‘no man’s land’. That grey area is the place where many people find a public space in which to communicate their ideas to society... it is a magical estuary where need floods into dogma.”

(Charity Blansit, artist. Sun, 15 Nov 2009 16:00:00h, Missouri, United States)

“A space where you can be, whether open or closed, natural or constructed, public or private, but to which you are allowed access. For me it could be a path, a forest, or it could also be a public space, a museum, which is a private,

municipal building but which you can enter, act in... A bar would possibly also have the function of a public space. They are spaces for meeting, connecting, like a forum, an agora, or like the Roman *thermae*, which were spaces where the people interacted and made exchanges.”

(Anna Monleón, archaeologist. Tue, 10 Nov 2009 19:00:00h, Caldes de Montbui)

“For an architect, architecture is a very special functional art: it delimits the space so we can live in it and creates a framework for our lives, public and private. As to the lived space... as it is defined by De Certeau, it is the battleground between the spatial practices responsible for the restructuring of the conditions of life and the different modes of individual reappropriation. In this battle between what is organised, structured and designed and how the people reappropriate these spaces or exercise resistance is where the game is.”

(José Ángel Sanz, architect. Thu, 12 Nov 2009 16:30:00h, Sant Cugat del Vallès)

“To start off, I don’t think it can be said that the public space is a singular space. What interests me is the notion of ‘policies of public space’, i.e., that we cannot speak of a single public space but must rather speak of multiple public spheres, as has already been done by many feminist thinkers. This means that it is not a place of consensus but a place of dissidence or difference, and that it is in addition a place intersected by power relationships and as such a place that will never be neutral.”

(Javier Rodrigo, educator. Thu, 11 Dec 2009 20:35:00h, Barcelona)

“The public space must be an open space, of freedom and cohabitation, where the people feel comfortable. It must be resized and proportioned to human scale, being hospitable and easy to use. It is a space of cohabitation where all of the people in a community can be found, bearing in mind that we are in a Mediterranean context where the street life is much more intense. It isn’t a space belonging to anyone and free, where anything goes, but to the contrary: it is everyone’s, and this means it must be respected to ensure it can be used and to protect it, and if necessary, its heritage value.”

(Pep Gaspar, city councillor for culture. Tue, 10 Nov 2009 19:00:00h, Caldes de Montbui)

“I think more about who occupies it more than about what occupies it, taking into account the people who inhabit the spaces because they are its users. I would like to think of the public space as a public sphere, a space where things happen and where things are allowed to happen, a space of experiences.”

(Helena Piñelles and Vicenç Ferreres, Miao curators. Sun, 15 Nov 2009 17:00:00h, Caldes de Montbui)

“It is basically the space that we use every day, a daily space like an extension of home, the space we use to take the children to school, to go shopping... We use it quite a bit, the public space, both on foot and on bicycle.”

(Ignasi López and Xènia Gaspar, residents of the old centre. Sun, 15 Nov 2009 18:00:00h, Caldes de Montbui)

“I.M.: A place where there are a lot of people, where you can find a lot of people. Before the public laundry was a public space. M.C.: Also

a plaza... C.F.: Where there are celebrations and conversation. A park. J.O.: Up the road, down the road. The public laundry, the gardens. C.F.: The square behind the church, for example, which is a place you can’t imagine how many people go to, and it’s not in such great condition. J.P.: The people go and come out to look there. It’s a place you can see everything from.”

(María Cruz Ortiz, Juana Pérez, Carme Francàs, Josepa Olona, Irina Monterde, women from the public laundry. Wed, 11 Nov 2009 17:00:00h, Caldes de Montbui)

“It is the space all of us should be able to enjoy in the best conditions. We have to make sure it can be pleasant, safe and adapted to the needs of today’s society. Fifty years ago, the needs of public space were different; now we experience it more as a place to escape for freeing ourselves from the stress we undergo.”

(Josep Coral, city councillor for urban planning Sun, 11 Nov 2009 11:00:00h, Caldes de Montbui)

“I understand the public space essentially as a lived space, a space for sociability and connection. Its model would surely be taken from what we imagine the agora to have been, or the space of the Medieval European plaza, and then from much more situational moments in the history of the European city, but also of the towns—a communal space, essentially.”

(José Luis Oyón, professor at the Department of Urbanism and Regional Planning of the UPC. Sun, 11 Nov 2009 11:00:00h, Sant Cugat del Vallès)

(You can send your definition or opinion to performingpublicspace@gmail.com)

Life, the practices and relationships that take place in the space, the people, the people that inhabit this space are sometimes able to imagine, engender and produce still another type of space, or rather a multiplicity of “other spaces” that provide the “locus” for “other” desires, needs, ideas, transitions, “happenings”, changes, actions and processes that would not find their place in another way: a sort of space that is invisible but fully lived.

The most important characteristic of these “other” liminal spaces is, more than the possibility that they are home to a type of resistance that is static and enclosed within them, their potential to be used and reappropriated in such a way that they develop regardless of any control through spontaneous (or perhaps curiously planned) actions by different groups and individuals, with different objectives and intentions that escape those particular to the hegemonic order, and most importantly they frequently have unexpected effects and results that are thus difficult to control and neutralise. These spaces can be transformed into spaces for collaboration in which individuals and groups come together and discover potentials and values that are perhaps hidden, not only of the space itself but of their own situated knowledges and experiences. Through the sudden discovery of these potentials and the meeting of their bearers with a space equally full of potential, a landscape incredibly rich in possibilities unfolds.

The task, then, is to recodify all of these potentials and possibilities with the aim of

starting different processes of collaboration, finding and identifying the differential space, discovering its potential, encouraging the encounters, connections and “sharings” and developing them towards one or more collective projects that should ultimately aspire to complete a sort of expansive action against the omnipresent, alienating, mutant and apparently uncontested forms of power and control: a sort of action towards life.

The recodification of potentials and the detonation of processes sometimes requires careful and silent steps, or even that the final objectives or intentions are camouflaged, hidden or disguised as something else, embracing tactics or techniques that avoid overly defined or clear positions, “principled” positions, tactics that redraw the objectives and actions as something apparently inoffensive, thus pulling more and more people and groups towards collaboration and the fabric of a more and more complex network of relationships and connections that, starting with daily happenings and issues, evolve towards more genuine and essential “issues to be concerned about” to end up challenging the most rigid structures and institutions of power. Sometimes it is necessary to live behind a pirate’s mask, with perfect knowledge of their tricks, skills and attributes, and to appropriate them with other ends.

Perhaps this is the case with the interventions in the old public laundries of Caldes de Montbui, driven by a group of friends/curators from the local art exhibition who, sensitive to the

delicate situation of one end of the historic district bordering the river and the agricultural environment, proposed this sphere of intervention for the artists selected in the 2008 and 2009 editions.

What is produced is a transformation of the latent space into something else, something more, through the incorporation of certain energies, generated from the interaction between the curators, the art exhibition, the artists, their corresponding perspectives and the particular and inherent characteristics and potentials of the space itself. The combination of all of these energies makes a transition from the original latent space to something else possible: a different and more attractive interspace that recovers its public status as a space for discussion, as a space to be discussed, as a space that is no longer either excluded or included... A space that is attractive once more, a space that lives once more... A space that the community wants to inhabit once again. A space in which interaction is once again possible. The process of transformation could be called a “hybrid collaborative art practice”: an intensified system for meeting, interacting and exchanging that goes beyond the experience of the artistic happening. A neighbourhood reunion, a community bath, the reopening of an abandoned public space, an artistic performance, a discussion and a conversation (or more) take place in the same space at the same time.

All of this interaction and exchange also has other “secondary effects” or by-products, extending

to the spheres of what is social and public. The effects of this intense system of encounters and relationships go beyond the limits of the space itself in such a way that it could be said that the interspace is capable of interfering with and affecting the actor-network relationships. Radical political activism could then later be camouflaged as some variety of these hybrid practices and be developed progressively, not just in a liminal “third space”—which could in fact be the “locus” of conspiracy and incubation—but also in the very essence of urban life, thus becoming an alternative and effective way of actively producing the space and ultimately shaping the city.

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WHY CUT?

MARC NAVARRO

Grupo Zaragozano is one of the first, if not the first, European origami organisations. In *Per què tallar? Una genealogia del paper plegat* [*Why Cut? A Family Tree of Folded Paper*], some episodes of its history serve as an excuse for making a first approach to the “fold” as an aesthetic and discursive object. The aim of the investigation was not to legitimise “another” art but to explore its specificity more in depth, consciously circumventing any rhetoric about the distinction between art and material culture and taking for granted the points of contact and friction between both categorisations.

When we speak of origami, we mean a technique of representation. When we speak of a fold, we mean the organisation of the material. *Per què tallar?* is a pretext for assessing what factors have contributed to the standardisation of an aesthetic and the ongoing fascination for this technique; an inquiry into the spaces, people and objects that made this pastime a strange science, an improbable avant-garde, throughout the 20th century. About a year ago, I went to Saragossa to meet some of the origamists that still come together weekly at Café Lavante, a legendary locale in the heart of the city. Meeting with them was crucial to resolving many unknowns, straightening out objectives and finding out what might provide salvation from the speculative work that had begun a few months prior.

In the presence of these experienced origamists, my questions were revealed as insubstantial issues. Any attempt to redirect the interview towards when, how or why was squelched by an eloquent demonstration of high origami, by an intermittent and extensive presentation of complex figures in JPG format. My personal reading of the story had certainly been selective, and all of my questions revolved around a more or less agreed-upon legend.

The repeated meetings in this same cafe now seemed to have no more importance than the perpetuation of an inherited tradition: folding twenty, thirty or perhaps more pieces of paper, and—in the majority of cases—unfolding them when finished, without giving them any

importance. It's a radically processual approach that triumphs over the technical perfection of these constructions, an apt view of the original precepts of an organisation that pragmatically contaminated the civic and cultural spaces of a city.

In the back of the cafe, a small display case preserving a select collection of figures was put in at some point, a small tribute to some of the paper folding enthusiasts that participated in this meeting. I thought of another display cabinet, the one that houses part of the origami legacy of Eduardo Gálvez, a professor at the University of Saragossa, found in the Pedro Cerbuna Residence Hall since the 1920s. These are two examples of pseudo-heritage preservation that appeal to the documentary function of these necessarily fragile objects.

In its inherent productivity, origami is a debate between object and experience, and in all probability the growing consciousness of this polarity is the factor that has decisively conditioned its anecdotal and contradictory history.

The legend says that Miguel de Unamuno visited the World's Fair of 1898 in Paris. The legend also explains that aside from displaying a natural family from Angola at this fair with a markedly colonial spirit and quite aside from Gustave Eiffel, an attraction with little visual impact roused the admiration of the public. The World's Fair of 1898 also saw the presentation in ‘civilised’ society of origami, the Eastern version of what in France were called *cocottes* and in Spain *papirolas*.

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