TRANS
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ACT

CULTURAL
PRACTICES
WITHIN
AND
ACROSS

This book brings together a series of reflections and practices around issues of local and trans-local cultural production within different contexts in Europe, prompted through the agency of a collaborative and networked project: Rhyzom (www.rhyzom.net).

All these cultures developed within local contexts are intrinsically related to political, economic, social and material aspects and to specific temporalities, spatialities, individual and collective histories and experiences. Like the whole Rhyzom project, the book is an attempt to create transversal links and connections *within* and *across* different local framings and to seize instances of the dynamic and complicated nature of notions of 'local' and 'culture' through multiple forms of practice, which address the critical condition of culture in contemporary society. In relations with 'local, and 'trans-local', 'place' and 'culture', issues of conflict and contest, ecologies, politics and care practices, common and commonality, institutions and agencies are addressed.

The book is written by architects, artists, activists, curators, cultural workers, educators, sociologists, geographers and residents living in different rural and urban areas in Europe and is addressed to anyone concerned with the relation between culture, subjectivity, space and politics today.

The list of projects and topics presented in the book is open: the Rhyzom website provides the framework for further displays and possible collaborations.

TRANS-LOCAL-ACT: CULTURAL PRACTICES WITHIN AND ACROSS

INTRODUCTION

TRANS-LOCAL-ACT: CULTURAL PRACTICES WITHIN AND ACROSS

We live in a moment of re-assessment of cultural practice and redefinition of the role of culture in a society which faces a number of economic, social, political and environmental crises. Globalisation has demonstrated its critical effects and localism is becoming a key term for the way we envision the management of the future. We are moving towards 'deglobalisation', to quote French landscape designer and ecologist Gilles Clement, which translates into a localised consumption and production of goods.[1] What is the role of culture in such a deglobalisation process? How is culture 'produced' and 'consumed' in a 'deglobalised' world? How can local forms of cultural production circulate and be connected through alternative channels? And also, what should be considered 'culture' and what are the criteria to assess it?

These were some of the questions that were addressed by the collaborative project Rhyzom, which was set up between five organisations, within the framework of the EU Culture 2000 programme. All these organisations had in common an interest in local cultural practice but each of them brought a different perspective and a specific set a questions. atelier d'architecture autogérée were interested in cultures of resilience, Agency in education as cultural practice, PS[2] in regional and rural aspects of cultural production, Cultural Agencies in models of cultural collaboration and institutional practice within peripheral contexts, public works in methodologies of exchange and networking cultural knowledge, goods, and people.

Fieldtrips were organised by each of the five organisations to investigate together with other participants their own questions and discover existing practices and initiatives in their field of interest with the idea of setting up connections and networks of production and dissemination. The Rhyzom project tried to literally 'make a rhizome', that is to say, if we quote Anne Querrien, 'going towards the other (…) in the perspective of an alliance and the construction of a temporary micro-territoriality that will soon after be shared with others, by the new offshoots of the rhizome'.[1]

It is this micro-territoriality that we wanted to discover when we visited a series of projects in different European regions that had in common lifestyles that questioned stereotypes and shared authentic values anchored in the local. In the South of France, we visited a series of self-managed farms (Cravirola, Bauchamp, Caracoles de Suc), eco-villages and intentional communities in Germany (Brodowin, Gut Stolzenhagen and Siebenlinden) as well as traditional forms of self-organised projects in Romania (Obste and Monasteries), emerging eco-networks like Transition Towns in Totnes or rural art

networks like myvillages in Höfer Waren. We have also participated in gatherings that addressed the role and necessity of creating new types of organisations or institutions that can stimulate the idea of common knowledge production and dissemination. (i.e. Casa Invisible in Malaga, Grizedale in Cumbria, Mobile Community Centre in Ballykinler Northern Ireland, Organic Centre and Leitrim Sculpture Centre in Ireland).

A number of workshops followed and sometimes overlapped with the fieldtrips. These workshops were moments of collaborative experimentation, fabrication and critical reflection which engaged directly local and trans-local participants. Notably, three workshops related to the projects of the three partners have involved students from Sheffield: aaa, PS[2] and Cutural Agencies, addressing issues of pedagogy in relation to differently contextualised local cultural practices. Another workshop in Höfer Waren addressed the idea of the transmission of feminine skills and creativity in rural contexts.

The production of workshops was disseminated locally in different formats (exhibitions, installations, shops, fanzines, etc.) but we have also decided to put together a collective publication in order to reflect on the experience of our networked collaboration and the findings and connections this has facilitated.

This publication continues a series that was initiated in 2007 by aaa-peprav, with the book *Urban Act: a user guide for alternative practice,* which addressed the idea of an urban activism that takes forms from radical opposition and criticism to a more constructive and propositional acting, embedded in everyday life.[2] Practices including artist groups, media activists, cultural workers, software designers, architects, students, researchers and neighbourhood organisations catalogued as 'local', 'tactical', 'situational' and 'active' in urban contexts were presented.

The current book is called *Trans-Local-Act*, and addresses ways of framing cultural acting through trans-local networks and agencies that connect without hierarchy and ideological limitation across heterogenous locations (rural and urban), following specific affinities between local practices of all kind: practices which create collaborations between existing and newly invented formal and informal cultural institutions - in rural areas, at the peripheries of cities or at the border between different kinds of identitarian systems (political regimes, disciplines, territories, etc.), practices which activate new types of socialites, alternative economies and ecologies, practices that are concerned with commons and communality, with the collective production of knowledge, etc…

The book has three main sections: **EXPERIENCES, READER and ATLAS.**

The EXPERIENCES section includes the five collaborative projects developed within the Rhyzom framework: *Cultural Agencies, International Village Shop, Fields, R-Urban, Agencies of Live Projects.*

Cultural Agencies is a project initiated by a group of curators, artists, architects, planners and cultural workers during 2009-2010, and seeking to develop contemporary models of cultural collaboration and institutional practice within the context of Gülsuyu-Gülensu, a *gecekondu* neighbourhood in the Asian outskirts of Istanbul. The project attempts to forge a trust-based relationship with selected local communities, conducts field surveys involving local residents, and draws participatory mapping of existing forms of agency.

International Village Shop project by public works, explores 'trade' as a methodology for exchanging

MYVILLAGES.ORG

London/Höfen (Kathrin Böhm), Rotterdam/Wjelsryp (Wapke Feenstra), Berlin/Heiligendorf (Antje Schiffers) and elsewhere

WHO an international artist initiative founded by Kathrin Böhm, Wapke Feenstra and Antje Schiffers
WEB http://www.myvillages.org
NETWORKS Museum in Bewegung - Ars Electronica - Overtures - Edith Russ Site - Jap Sam Books - Kunstverein Pforzheim - Rhyzom - Springhornhof - Städtsiche Galeie Nordhorn - Susanne Cockrell and Ted Purves - Über Tage – Somewhere - Grizedale Arts - public works – Skor – Mediamaker - KCO Kunst en Cultuur Overijssel - Wiener Sezession - Kunstverein Langenhagen - Langenhagen Art Association - Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery - Ditchling Museum - General Public Agency
KEYWORDS *rural - urban - art-practice*

Myvillages.org is founded by three artists that grew up in small rural communities: the artists Kathrin Böhm (DE/UK), Wapke Feenstra (NL) and Antje Schiffers (DE). We now live respectively in London, Rotterdam and Berlin. In 2003 we started to work as an artist cooperation. For years we had chatted about the farms and villages where we grew up. The participatory art practice - which we share in common - presents an utopian approach to community building. We agreed that we knew through experience a lot about small communities and the close though sometimes narrow relationship people have in villages.
For our first public event - at Antje's home village Heiligendorf – we brought food and produce with us from the rural places we grew up. Wapke offered a special kind of clove-cheese and a taste of horsemilk. Antje offered good German bread and liver-pâté that is made from her uncle's pigs. - The smoked Franconian sausages and the schnaps made by Kathrin's father also made a lot of friends. We share where we come from and frame the rural as a place of cultural production bringing it into the discussion of contemporary arts.
We run several ongoing projects including a travelling archive called bibliobox and an International Village Shop. We try to connect villages and we use our network to explore new ones. A method we like to utilize – besides bringing village produce - is called Rural Background Drawing. What does a farm look like in your memory? What was the last thing you did in the countryside? What would you call rural? We must say, we learn a lot going in and out of the rural and switching between art and non-art contexts.

PEPRAV

Paris, Brussels, Sheffield, Berlin

WHO an European network including groups working on related problems about the city
WHAT platform for collective action and research on alternative contemporary practices in the city
WEB http://www.peprav.net/
KEYWORDS *culture - activism - alternative institution*

À travers une géométrie rhizomatique, le projet de réseau-action PEPRAV (Plateforme Européenne de Pratiques et Recherches Alternatives de la Ville) basé sur des principes d'autonomie, d'échange et de complémentarité, assure la possibilité d'agir à différentes échelles spatiales et temporelles, permettant ainsi une transversalité institutionnelle et un ancrage territorial renforcés par des contacts avec des acteurs et des réseaux locaux multiples, par des échanges d'expériences et de méthodologies d'action.
Dans ce sens, le projet a développé, notamment, une série de moments de travail collectif (workshops) dans les différents contextes des projets menés actuellement par les équipes partenaires et a permis, progressivement, la mise en place des outils nécessaires pour les démarches d'un réseau trans-local

and networking cultural knowledge, goods, producers, consumers and users. The trade is not driven by commercial interest but by a shared interest in contemporary cultural production and value systems. It is set up as a pan-national platform to include and connect producers and audiences across cultural, geographical and language barriers, and uses formal and informal networks to grow and operate, engaging with grass-roots economic models. The International Village Shop works as a dispersed network of temporary and permanent production and trading places.

Fields investigates regional and rural aspects of cultural production. PS² collective from Belfast invited artists, architects, a geographer and a gardener from north and south of Ireland to work around the theme of cultural production in small towns and villages of the border regions between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. One island, similar in landscape and population, both nations developed politically and culturally different, especially between the 1970's and early 1990's during the political troubles in Northern Ireland. The collaboration questioned to what extent the rural is integrated in the provision of cultural centres and what alternatives it generates.

R-Urban project developed by atelier d'architecture autogérée in Paris and its outskirts, explores the ecological, economic and social complementarities between four types of local territories, spaces and activities: collective housing, ethical economy, urban organic agriculture and local cultural production. What is at stake is how to re-assemble economic, temporal, social and ecological bottom up initiatives into new agencies and collective processes that will facilitate the emergence of another political space and a new politics of the common(s).

Agencies of Live Projects is a critical reflection by Agency, a Research Centre on Transformative

WHO different projects and communities which experiment alternative lifestyles
WHAT this directory is about real examples of how such lifestyles with their different approaches actually look. They were and are being initiated by people who want to live differently and change something
WEB http://www.eurotopia.de/english.html
KEYWORDS *ecovillages - self-management - social economy - organic farming and permaculture*

'We eurotopians see utopias as healthy as long as people take them as an inspi- ration – and then translate that in-spiration into motivation for practical action. A utopia can be a guiding force for change. It should not be abused as a yardstick for judging real accomplishments against unrealistic ideals, so as to divide everything up into "good" and "bad" results until everyone finally loses interest. Utopias can get people excited about a new life. And we think it is essential to create new environments in which forward-looking and peace-promoting lifestyles can be de- veloped.' (foreword in Eurotopia book)

Research into Architectural Practice and Education. Agency has been involved in the Rhyzom project through three live projects at the School of Architecture, the University of Sheffield. Live projects are student led projects in a real context, happening in real time with real people and clients. In these instances the clients were three of the partners of the Rhyzom network: PS² in Belfast, Cultural Agencies in Istanbul and aaa in Paris.

All three live projects were specifically concerned with a local cultural production, addressing the issues through different methodologies: exploratory mapping, consultation and construction work. They also questioned whether architectural education can take the form of a local cultural practice, and if new forms of pedagogy can be a vehicle for trans-local production and exchange.

These five projects are true lived experiences of collective production, representation, negotiation and networking within their local contexts, which have also developed collaborations using the Rhyzom network. They were as such ways of testing and demonstrating the possibilities of a trans-local organisation.

The **READER** includes reflections developed by a number of participants in the network or by invited contributors on issues addressed in the Rhyzom project: local, trans-local, place, culture, rural and urban, conflict and contest, ecologies, politics and care practices, common and commonality, institutions and agencies etc.

A first group of papers deals with issues of 'local 'and 'trans-local', asking what exactly do we mean by these terms and how to represent localised practices without homogenising them. Working on the meaning of the 'local' is proposed as a way of reclaiming different discourses, theoretical frameworks and politics, in order to set up an ecology of practices and define the current cultural approach of the local. The term 'trans-local' is seen as a way of transcending globalisation effects and creating qualitative dynamics between specific locales.

The sometimes ambivalent role of cultural practices which is examined in another set of texts and experiences from specific localities offers ways of resisting the reproduction of the dominant modes of subjectivation: from the Finnish practice of *talkoot* to the experiences of a Romanian activist, to the 'in-between' as an important site of cultural practice and the naming of 'antibodies' functions developed to resist co-optation and preserve the radical potential of cultural practice and trans-localities.

Another group of papers investigates the relations between cultural practices, spaces and the infrastructure that supports them (e.g. comparatively in Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland). What culture where? asks one of the texts, problematising which practices and which objects are regarded as culture, and who decides on these categorisations. The potential and politics of care in cultural practices is highlighted through referencing other networks of informal labour, and the relationship between local initiatives driven by desire and need on a small scale versus institutionalised initiatives are explored.

The contested nature of the local and what role cultural practices can play in resisting forces of gentrification, development or the reclaiming of space is addressed by a fourth group of texts. Within

a (trans-)local condition, culture could become a powerful political tool. From an historical account of the struggle against eviction in Istanbul (by one of the activists involved) to a campaign to save a historical building in Sheffield, to the on-going struggle by a small group of women to rid their village of a British army presence, the entwined and highly complex nature of the local is highlighted – what if that which you would remove is also what supports you? What is the role of cultural practitioners in this context, is it merely to distribute and pollinate from elsewhere or is it also to serve as a provocation?

A final set of texts addresses the issue of the commons as a basis for thinking democracy, as mutual organisational structures and as forms of acting and thinking together. The necessary role of relational practices and the important place of women in reclaiming the commons (both socially and spatially) is highlighted, whilst writing a common text reveals the hidden structures of friendship and affinities that are the basis for commonality. How do we decide what is common? And how do we re-assemble structures and support to enable collective processes to emerge?

The **ATLAS** section includes a number of local and trans-local projects that have been quoted or invited by the contributors to the Rhyzom project. The Atlas, which takes the form of a collection/ archive of project descriptions is thus spread across the book, on the pages where these projects are discussed, mentioned or alluded to. Practices range from self-managed farms, neighbourhood organisations, housing and handicraft groups, rural art, civic agencies and cultural networks, to political initiatives, alternative agencies and institutions. Even if broad in range, the list is obviously not exhaustive, but rather particular to this book and its network. It was meant to generate new ideas and suggest non-hierarchical associations between heterogenous forms of 'local culture'.

The **COVER/POSTER** locates the **ATLAS** projects and their authors across Europe and beyond, as a way to grasp the whole book and its territory at a glance. Unexpected geographic and conceptual proximities are discovered and possible encounters are suggested. We imagine the European territory made up of a multitude of micro-territories of affinity and connection. We imagine the cultural 'biodiversity' of this territory, capable of ensuring the resourcing of European culture in all its present and future diversity.

TRANS-LOCAL-ACT is a manifestation of cultural biodiversity brought into existence by architects, artists, activists, curators, cultural workers, educators, sociologists, geographers and local residents who have authored the projects or the texts included in the book. It is a temporary network made up of many other collaborative local networks that pre-existed or formed through it, at the same time as being sites of local creativity and sites of life. In these times of crisis and uncertainty, in which cultural and artistic production, social science and humanities research in Europe is under threat by the serious cuts in funding decided at national and European levels, we hope that this network will continue to make its way, by connecting and disconnecting within and across, by a rhizomatic dynamic.

[1]   Gilles Clément, Toujours la vie invente Réflexions d'un écologiste humaniste, (ed. de l'Aube: Paris, 2008), p.47

[2]   cf. *Urban Act: a user guide for alternative practice,* (aaa/peprav: Paris, 2007), see also PDF version (http://www.peprav. net).

[1]   Anne Querrien, 'Les Cartes et les ritournelles d'une panthère en ciel, *Multitudes*, 34 (2008).

Five collaborative projects developed within the Rhyzom framework are presented as 'experiences'. They are not only 'projected' ideas but lived experiences of collective production, representation, negotiation and networking within their local contexts. Experience is defined, if we follow John Dewey in *Art as Experience*, by our capacity to see the detail, the expressive gesture within an action, even if it is not necessarily a clear, neat and exhaustive vision. The experiences of these five projects bring a close-up vision of what might be the passage from local to trans-local. The five collectives who tell the stories of these experiences have also conceived, edited and designed their own contribution in the section.

Cultural Agencies develops contemporary models of cultural collaboration and institutional practice within the context of a *gecekondu* neighbourhood in the outskirts of Istanbul. The cultural agencies proposed include an office, a collection, an archive, a library and a series of events.

International Village Shop by public works, explores 'trade' as a methodology for exchanging and networking cultural knowledge, goods, producers, consumers and users.

Fields investigates regional and rural aspects of cultural production within the context of small towns and villages of the border regions between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

R-Urban explores the ecological, economic and social complementarities between four types of local territories, spaces and activities (collective housing, social economy, urban agriculture and local cultural production) in Paris and its outskirts.

Agencies of Live Projects is a research and pedagogical experience through three live projects at the School of Architecture, University of Sheffield developed by Agency in collaboration with the partners of the Rhyzom network.

EXPERI
ENCES

CULTURAL AGENCIES

WHERE Gülsuyu-Gülensu / İstanbul - Türkiye

WHO Nikolaus Hirsch, Philipp Misselwitz, Oda Projesi, Ece Sarıyüz

WHAT 'Cultural Agencies' is a non-profit initiative. A project with a duration of two years that seeks to develop contemporary models of cultural collaborations and institutional practices. This project attempts to forge a trust-based relationship with selected local communities, conduct field surveys with the help of architects, planners, artists, activists, students and local residents, which will lead to the participatory mapping of existing forms of agency.

WEB http://cultural-agencies.blogspot.com/

NETWORKS YNKB www.ynkb.dk - Etcétera www.flickr.com/photos/51960260@N07/ - www.youtube.com/watch?v=UhD4haqZSr0&feature=related - Live Project / İstanbul www.08liveproject2009.blogspot.com - Platform Garanti Contemporary Art Center www.platform.garanti.com.tr

KEYWORDS *collaboration - agency - culture - periphery - mapping - oral history - institution - gecekondu - public - semi-formal*

While current planning for Istanbul's European Capital of Culture 2010 celebrations is focusing on the historic city centre, 'Cultural Agencies' breaks out of this 'cultural bubble' and shifts focus on narratives of Istanbulites inhabiting the largely ignored periphery.
The project will enrich the broader, cross-disciplinary discourse on how to intervene in an ambiguous civic sphere, which blurs the boundaries between public and private, stable and instable, physical and virtual, local and global, the site-specific and the abstract and utopian.

collaborative
transversal
transmedial
translocal

COLLECTIONS OF MINDS

İstanbul

ODA PROJESI

contemporary art centre
residencies

PLATFORM GARANTI

collaboration
agency
culture
periphery
mapping
oral history

CULTURAL AGENCY
Gülensu-Gülsuyu

cultural agencies
office
collection
archive
library
events

cultural agencies
office
collection
archive
library
events

COLLECTION

OFFICE

COMMUNICATION

LIBRARY
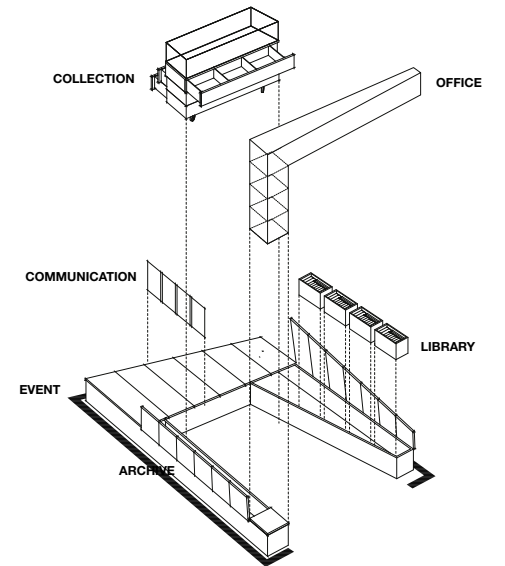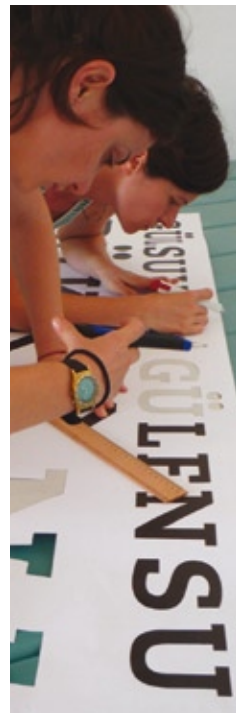
EVENT

ARCHIVE

PLATFORM & CLOCK BY
Danny Kerschen & Shane Munro

cultural agencies
office
collection
archive
library
events

cultural agencies
office
collection
archive
library
events

Ayşe Nur Akdal

Giorgio Giusti

draw in pulled
out position

0,6

1,73

0,5

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perspects lid

draw 3

draw 2

draw 1

mobile base

cultural agencies
office
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events
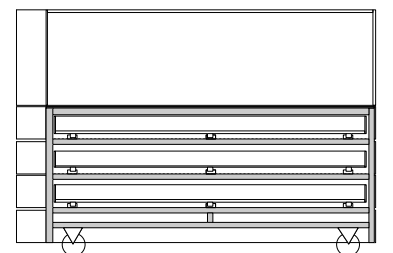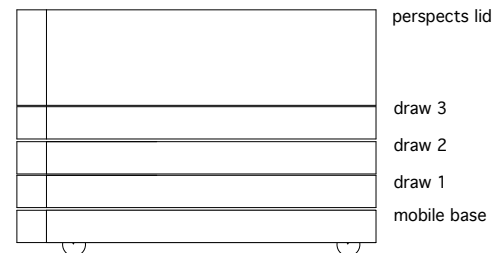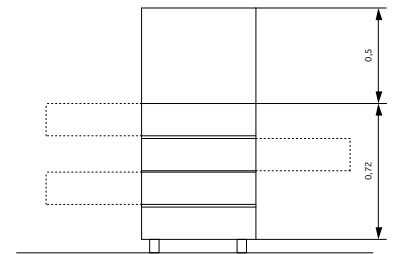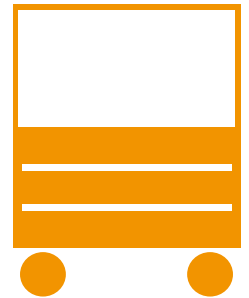
**gülsuyu-gülensu dükkânı
ayla sokak no:90 / maltepe
wednesday, sep. 2, 2009.
19:00**

mobile vitrine in the neighbour- hood

Residents of Gülsuyu and Gülensu are invited
to help curating an exhibition on the urban history of
the neighbourhood. A mobile vitrine serves
to collect, process, inventorize and accumulate
a shared public collection of diaries, letters, posters,
documents, photographs and everyday objects.

We will be so happy to see you with your objects
and memories that you wish to exhibit or
just drop by out of curiosity!

kültürel aracılar cultural agencies | etkinlik events koleksiyon collection arsiv archive iletisim communication kütüphane library ofis office

cultural agencies
office
collection
archive
library
events

cultural agencies
office
collection
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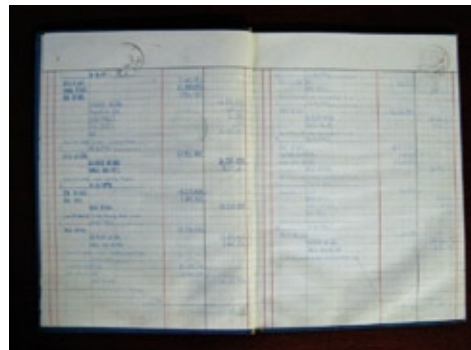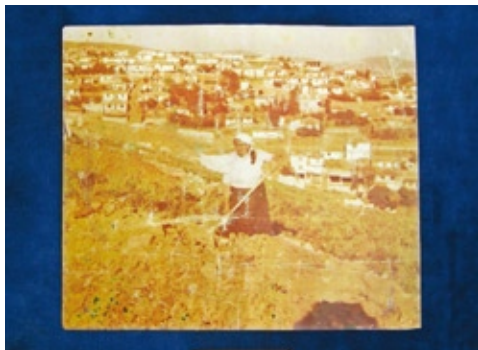
cultural agencies
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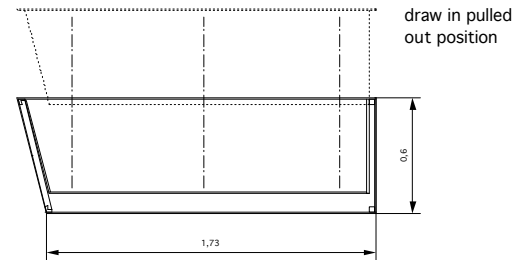library
events

**Turan Kazan, 22 May 2009
Interview done at the Solidarity Association
of Çorum Mecitözü Dağsaray Villagers
Gülensu - İstanbul**

Q Mr. Turan, could you briefly introduce yourself?

A I am Turan Kazan, I came to Istanbul in 1939. 5 years after the Erzincan earthquake… I am originally from Erzincan. Now you're going to figure out my age. I am 67, sorry 77. At the time the population of Istanbul was 350000 people and there was an aristocratic life in Istanbul. The trams used to have 1st and 2nd classes, 2nd class cost 3 cents and the 1st class 5 cents. There weren't military men walking around in Beyoğlu. It was not permitted on that street. The cinemas were divided into groups; with female company and without female company, with a tie and without a tie. There was lots of discrimination but there was also a lot of love and respect between people. People were tolerant. During the Germany war they had passive protection at night. Passive protection means; no lights showing through windows. Bread was given out with a ration card. I went to Alaeddin Pasha primary school. I studied there for five years. Primary schools back then were the same level as today's high schools. When you reached 5th grade you would be given an exam under the supervision of the group representatives. I studied in the Tophane Old Alaeddin Pasha Primary School and was a master worker in the school where you studied (MSU). A blacksmith. That's where I broke my foot too. In the Fine Arts Academy, today's Mimar Sinan University . On one side there was a wood storage on the other a beach, we'd go swimming there. Zeki Müren

studied there too, we'd even tease him by calling him "Sister Zeki". Of course life conditions were totally different back then. We were poor, we came from poverty. We couldn't come close to our rich family. The pride of the rich back then was stronger than today's royalty. People were vain, if they had a bit of money too… We came to Gülsuyu in 1960. This place is a little complicated, it used to be Greek vineyards. When we came here all the stones were gathered to make a big pile. Big piles of stones were made with sticks and branches… There weren't trees like in the forest, you'd be scared to walk alone around here. They grew grapes… there was a cave there next to the fountain underneath the Cem Foundation building. They used to call it the Battal Gazi Cave. When Battal gazi would come to Istanbul he would leave his horse in the cave before going to Byzantium. There were brick harvests. This town, the neighborhood, was connected to the Soğanlı Village. We founded the organization in 1963. The Gülsuyu Improvement and Protection Foundation.
My roots are in the Democratic Party. But I left, and this is how it happened; we went to the pebble field in Yıldıztabya to hang out. Of course back then we didn't know about these parties. We joined the Democratic Party. I became a president in the youth groups. When I was a president there was a guy named Muhittin Tırpan, anyway let's not mention names. The party's doctrine was very strict back then. There was a neighborhood representative. One day we go to the governor with this representative named Ali Bey. And he enters the governor's room without taking off his hat. I said "Mr. Governor, you are a governor, a representative of the government. A neighborhood representative comes and enters your room like this." I said. He said "will you be on my side?" I said "of course". He said "otherwise he will make a complaint about me" then I got it, "he'll have me expelled to the East" he said. Then we see a bunch of bulldozers approaching my coffee shop. A guy called Immigrant Ali came. He came running and said "They're going to build a mosque on my land", I said "What are you talking about?" "without your consent?" I thought ok. I left the coffee shop, went with all the young people and laid on the ground in front of the bulldozer. I said "You want to represent Islam but you cannot build a

temple by force on a land that isn't donated to Islam". Then they fought with me, like the district president and things… And expelled me all of a sudden. I said "It's good that you expelled me" After that I moved here. What I want to say is, the important thing is not the political party the person belongs to but the thoughts in his head. Of course they had some strict things… in those times it was the national front, this front that front… the public was divided. But we came here and here is People's Republican Party. For forty years I've been in this party.

Q Why did you come to Gülsuyu? Why Gülsuyu?

A What is the reason that drives people to live in the mountain? Poverty of course… Since we didn't have the means to buy a house in the city we had to construct a squatter house in a rural area. I didn't choose it, it was destiny. Do you know where you will end up next? It's all fate. Sometimes people say: "The human holds his destiny in his hand". If he has the means. The history of the slums originated in France. An old woman in France couldn't find a house anywhere so she goes after five o'clock to the front of two apartment buildings and builds a squatter house. The residents complain but they can't take it out because it is built at night. Namely, left there at night. This place developed through the same system. When we founded the organization there were 83 squatter houses. I left it when it was 400 houses. Of course construction here wasn't easy. In these kinds of settlements feudal and neighbor relations take importance. Everybody supports the people they know. But back then there wasn't any religious, educational or economic discrimination. Nobody was watching what the others were doing. Then all of a sudden such bad conditions took over, the demolitions started. They beat me up and took me away. They even gave me an ultimatum and asked "Why are you building squatter houses?" I said I'm not building squatters. Squatters are built after five o'clock. Why? Because government offices close at 5 o'clock, which is when they start building the houses. Everybody would help each other. When the area was first developing that's when the religious divisions started. The Alaouite and Sunnite conflict started. Of course even with these
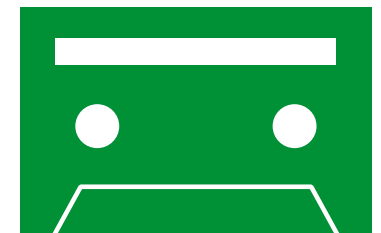
developments, no matter how poor Gülsuyu appears to be, or if it is named the slums, the problem is if the ideology of the people in Gülsuyu resembles the crooked structure of the houses. They were all intelligent people. That's because poverty makes people wise. A person looking for a solution becomes as informed as a doctor. We were looking for a life solution here and we found it. But of course there were some people here doing revolutionary activities towards the end of the 80s. For me revolution is the ability to earn one's living. Those that can't earn a living cannot be revolutionaries. Hard work is extremely valuable. There are a lot of well-meaning folks, and they work. There is no immorality in Gülsuyu and those that create confusion here are ones that come from outside. Sometimes people that come from outside create confusion and then leave. Actually Gülsuyu is a source of moral and intellectual virtue. There is no bad intention here. But when a person does a bad thing he will get his response. Of course we are a little backwards in terms of education. The reason is, when the poor man has to worry more about being able to feed his kids rather than sending them to school, education loses priority. But all around the world, uneducated people, even if they live in gold mines, are not different than donkeys because they don't have the foundation of education, and we didn't have schools here. We lost 22 young people at traffic accidents every year on the Ankara road. The last was my nephew going to middle school in Maltepe, who had an accident by the bridge there. He died in the accident. Then we blocked the road for three and a half hours to have that bridge built there. During my presidency days I had all the roads we used to come into Gülsuyu, in other words most of the roads in Gülsuyu, drawn onto a cardboard. I am not a constructor or an architect. Good or bad we have come until today. When we were connected to Soğanlı, they took money in our name from the government, from private administration. When they didn't give us this money I made a peresipit in 1963. I had a statement written to the district government saying that it was impossible for us to join with brigade because there was the military building between us. Between Maltepe and us there is only the Ankara road. We had a peresipit built and moved over to the Maltepe district. Of course in the beginning, when we

were first building the organization, we didn't know. Actually the Gülsuyu Improvement and Protection Foundation was illegal. We got an aid of ten thousand Lira from the government and built a school with the money and have survived until today. Now this it Gülsuyu's situation. You came here for the first time to see, but they've tried to evacuate us two or three times. I went to three meetings. Before 80 there was the senators office. We had meetings with senators to pay for the costs spent in the building of the 80 squatter houses in Gülsuyu. Instead they wanted to take it all into the Maltepe trash. I asked the senator "What are you going to do?" he said: "We're going to construct buildings" I said "How did you become a senator? You're telling me that I'm illegally occupying the area, you are the person creating the laws and you will push us out to move there yourselves. What kind of legal system is this?" I said. "You can't build anything there." He said "I'll have you imprisoned", I said "We are already in prison, poverty has made us humble, at least there is food in prison" and then left. Of course the people that came today into this big space forgot about the struggles and bad conditions of the old times. Look, it's like this: Your father will build a four storey house for you, you will never ask about the difficulties he had building the house, but one day your father will give up and say: "How was this house built?" The first thing that you will think is: "You are my father, you have to look after me." This is what happened in the squatter houses. The hardship and suffering was forgotten but I do believe that the government has its eye here because it is suitable for construction. A ten-storey house in Maltepe has a sea view, in Gülsuyu a one-storey house has a sea view. They wrote an official report stating that it is soft ground and a landslide region here. But think about it, we lived through the '99 earthquake, you may or may not have felt it. In the '99 earthquake they made planned, developed and controlled buildings with contractors in Maltepe. In Maltepe fifty-three government schools were disrupted. 120 buildings became inhabitable. At a time when 53 buildings were quickly evacuated, in Gülsuyu there wasn't even a crack even though Gülsuyu had no one claiming to be a construction worker. How is it possible to be soft ground here? Now they're talking about an organization called

TOKI. Surely all around the world it is a good thing to give a house to the homeless, this is the government's function, but the government can't build a house by taking what's already been made and victimizing those that live and survive in those homes. We don't want help from the government, what we want is them to give us the development authorization, like they did in Maltepe, so we can give it to the contractor. A sketch drawn by the municipality can be our guide in planning. Without straying from that plan we can construct our own urban renewal plan. One of the reasons I came here was because of my fellow countrymen. In the beginning there were a lot of people from Erzincan and Sivas. Then changes happened. I'm actually a world citizen. When you look at it that way you have a lot of fellow citizens. My aunt's son blocked someone's road. He erected trees there and infringed upon someone else's right. One rainy day we were walking home with a friend. With Abdurrahman Temel… There used to be a creek by the Singer factory. They had put a wood plank on the creek. It had rained on the plank. We had just come out of work. Back then there were radio bags. The guy was short, I mean like shorter than you. The bag was dragging on the floor, he was also carrying two other suitcases. When he saw me he dove right into the water with fear. I said "Abdurrahman, go catch that guy". As soon as he saw me he started running, I wondered why. We caught him and I said "Mr. Murat, did I do something bad to you unintentionally?" You see me all the way from the Ankara road and jump into the middle of the cars, start running extremely fast, now you're in the water… What's up?" He said: your aunt's son blocked my road and put up a tree there. So I made a complaint to the governor saying "take him to the organization's president so that he can take care of the situation". "So why didn't you bring him to me?" I said. "Uhmmm. Well because it's your aunt's son" I said come and took him to the organization building. "This guy says that you're blocking his road. And the road is really blocked, tomorrow these trees will be taken down." I said we'll take them down and left. So he goes and tells my father: "I'm your sister's son. Tell Turan not to open this road so I can get this place for myself." My deceased father replies: "There is two things

I don't get involved in; God's business and Turan's business." My father could not read or write but he spoke 6 languages like his native tongue. English, Arabic, Kurdish, Zazaki Kurdish, Russian. He spoke 6 languages.

I want to thank you for doing an interview for the first time, why? For example, when you go to the movies… You go, don't you? They always applaud the lead actor. Wow! Such great acting… But they forget that it's the scriptwriter, director and the people behind the camera that make him what he is. It's our job to bring these working people into the spotlight, and I do believe that these kinds of efforts will give their fruits tomorrow. If not tomorrow, after tomorrow cause someone will see and understand from the written history.

Q Did you build your own house?

A Nowhere in the world a man builds his own house, he hires a construction worker to build it. There are few people in the world that have the capacity to build their own house, even in shanty-towns construction workers spring up. Now there's the saying, does a mouse like an empty grain storage or full? Full of course. When we build a squatter house in the storage we all work hard, there's the construction worker too, with the dream of the prize. You contribute too, of course. You carry your own material, you do this and that, but at the end the constructor builds it. We have a saying "the amateur blacksmith learns from a Kurdish donkey" because he nails the horse-shoe but he has no idea where he's hitting the nail. The constructors here, if they make

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a mistake in one house, when they're making the second one they try not to make the same mistake again. Of course there is a big difference between the houses that were first made and the more recent ones. There are some aesthetical differences. Imagine you're walking around town, and your father was the one that built your house, you walk around and you see a different building and think "I wish my father had seen this, he could make it like this." Because that house will have something different. It changes from one constructor to the next.

My house was demolished three times… I was the president of the organization, when they were taking down the house my brother's son was inside playing on the swings. I had a tavern in Cevizli. We were drinking there together with the Chief of police. He said "you know where we're going? To Gülsuyu, to demolish the squatters." All of a sudden I thought, I hope they don't demolish my house. We were sitting together. Here we are sitting and there they're demolishing my house. They can tear it down, I never did anything illegal. I didn't do anything just because it was my house. Right then when they were taking my nephew out of the swings to demolish the house they said to me "Doesn't

to remember the neighbourhood

A cultural agency has rented a shop in July 2009 to use it in terms of memory sharing of the neighborhood. The shop will function as a space for collecting the memory of Gülensu–Gülsuyu through meeting with the local people either passing by or arranging meetings. This archive will create one possible narrative of the neighbourhood with the photos

and documentation from periods of 50"– 80'-90', we ask from people concerning the past of the site. The questions asked to the interviewer is such as;

Lets meet in the shop to remember the neighbourhood and contribute to the archive!

he have a father?" I said "officer, he has a father but I'm not sure about you." "What are you talking about?" he said. The chief of the municipal police said "what happened Turan?" I said "this is our house." So he says "stop it, stop doing that and step aside". "why didn't you say something" he said. I said "Why would I?" "Let's say you're tearing down a house, you're not going to treat me differently because I'm the president of the organization. Your words have offended me" I said. Then they left it. They tore it down three times. When I was building my shop the chief officer came, there was an officer called Nedim here, I mean a guard, and the guy from Sivas. They came here and said "president, give us some money to buy a cigarette." At that time İbrahim Güreci was building my small shop with a shovel. He's working there and they say "give us money for a cigarette." Back then Maltepe cigarettes were seventy - seventy five cents, or ten liras, something like that. I gave the money, and he said look I got a bribe. When he said that I grabbed the money from him. Right away they headed down the street. We didn't have a phone here. It was difficult to communicate. They go to their house and call the police station: "the president is building a squatter". All of a sudden the chief officer ended up in the house. He came here, sat down, and I offered him a coffee. I had the coffee made in my house. He said "give me three thousand liras and build your house". I said "look, mr. chief officer, if you see this coffee as a bribe, may it turn into poison. I never bribed anyone in my life, and never took a bribe from anyone." I went to court for three years. Finally I was exonerated. Of course a lot of things happen here. For example, we were in the stone mines, I had hired a guard to stay up all night, and he said let's go the men are bringing women from outside. I said no way, how did this enter into our neighborhood? I notified the police and the guard. I said "we're going to come to the stone mines at night and wait." I told the guard not to blow his whistle or anything. All of a sudden I see a bed arriving. Just when the woman came and we were about to bust them, the guard blew his whistle. The men and women started running. I said to the guard you are collaborating with them. You're fired, how about that? Of course there are some sweet memories too. And believe me there was this

big respect between us then. They would see the organization's president like a government official. When we were building a road towards the Ankara road there was a Sütçü Fatma (milklady Fatma) working as a real estate agent. You see, bad people's name flourishes while the good people's name moulds in the shadow. Now that place is called the Sütçü Fatma Stop. One day I see her bringing a police officer. I had brought a sacrificial animal to the stop. They said "You are an Alaouite Red Head, nobody can cut your animal." I'm Alaouite. I stopped, thought for a minute, ok then. I called a guy called Aziz Zozok from Bayburt. I said "Mr. Zozok, sacrifice this animal". "Of course president" he said. I said take this five lira, you can keep the skin, the head and feet, take half of it and take it to the operator and the other half to the oil maker. He got up and left. When we were going to dig the asphalt here, look there is the Ankara road, this is the bridge, and we're going to dig all the way from here. We were about to start and they brought a police. His name was Avni… He had a map in his hand and was pointing at the map with these poles. He said here you can't dig the road more than three meters. I said who are you? He said I'm a police officer. I said do you know who I am? No. I am the Gülsuyu Government's president. I said to the bulldozer driver you're going to dig up to here. We dug ten meters of the road. We even went through some registered land, we've been through all that, now that's an interesting and nice memory.

In the history of the neighborhood the Organization has an important place… We founded the organization in 1963 on Kazım Karabekir street, no: 3. Of course back then, in order to make our voices heard from a place of poverty we needed to start a mass initiative. An organization's stamp represents all the individuals in society but personal interests cannot be taken into consideration. Firstly our goal was to organize and we succeeded. A person can't achieve anything alone. The way the organization was back then is different than the way it works now. Today many political issues penetrate into organizations. Everybody tries to apply his own ideology. Back then there was none of that. In the old days, it was the ideology of life in Gülsuyu. How did the people live here? We didn't

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have a leader in the neighborhood. The district government had granted the president of the Gülsuyu Organization the right of administration. We could even give out domicile papers. Because back then, people's political, cultural, economic, religious views were left aside. People were looking for a place to live. After they got their places, during those 4 years they didn't have a chance to think about much else. They barely finished their homes. There were no schools as you know. Demirel, the president at that time in 1959 has a saying. When he said "everybody is going to apply individually for their requests, and follow up their own cases" we went to Ankara and gave a request to the Ministry of Education. 3 or 4 months later they came to find a location for the school. The organization had a lot of work back then. It had its function as the organization and was also administering the neighborhood. So in a way it was also on the board of directors of the neighborhood. The organization had a system to administer the neighborhood. If I remember correctly we were about 9 people in the organization. My memory is a little rusty, it was a long time ago. Of course there were people that were working for their personal interest, but we fired those people. At least since the beginning until today we taught people something at the organization. We taught them not to fall into the trap of deceiving their own race in the very place they live. We also did another thing. For example, where you're sitting right now a guy was building all around that. Some guy named Şaban, he was from Çankırı or Kastamonu. He was making a farm here. He had a shotgun in his hand, and he was pointing it to us while coming with the bulldozer, and I said

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to him "dig there not here". There is a hill there I made him dig there. At the end he didn't shoot at us, apparently he had some apartments and buildings down there. After this he ran away. If we were to permit certain things they would really abuse it. Of course there have been some little abuses but that much is normal. It is impossible for human beings who can think, see, hear or move, not to error. The important thing is we tried to reduce these errors to the minimum and we succeeded. Now we're happy. We used to have weekly meetings in the organization and I'd hear the complaints of the neighborhood. We would make an effort to communicate to those whose problems we were able to solve. If someone was in need of financial support we would support him the amount he needed and at the beginning of the next month he would pay us back. That's the kind of solidarity that existed.

Q How did the process of politically organizing the neighborhood, in fact the process of planning, start?

A There is no planned organization in the neighborhood. Now, of course, calling the planning "there" as something political would be wrong. But those that know the situation here, they gave out those places randomly to people who needed a home. I mean it was a sort of aid. If it was for a political cause they would've sold those places because a cunning person pretends to be a landowner, we were the only ones digging roads illegally there. If it was a political aim, then one clever person would have sold the land and become a land agha; it was just an illegal act of opening roads with dozers. The parcels were made according to what we thought and given out. It was created out of a necessity. That situation had nothing to do with political power or anything like that. It was a power that was created out of adversity. I mean the power… That's my observation. There may be bigger observations than mine. Look, we have a saying "A man that falls into water holds onto a snake". But when you see a snake outside you kill it so that it won't bite you. Out of a necessity in the past, the most capable people made the planning here. For example we'd say leave 10 or 20 meters here. Like, make a road after twenty meters, after another twenty meters

make another road, make a street here for 15-20 houses. We didn't construct this place in a planned way but we did all we could, sometimes wrong sometimes right, to answer the needs of the people at the time. There can't be equal space for everyone. Of course some will have 300 some will have 200. There's no such a thing as equal space. Even god didn't create human beings equally. You're black, he's brown, she's white, so on so forth… Nothing can be equal. There's no equality in life. Nowhere in the world there can be an equal life. After five o'clock in the afternoon civil service offices are off and the gecekondu's are on. When you go into the details, the construction materials were coming from Maltepe. When we started building our houses, a lot of brick harvests sprung up there. Everybody was coming to sell materials here. They were selling so much material that they would come and leave us the material and say you can pay us later, because the sales were big. The main principle in Gülsuyu was this: we didn't build squatters for people that had houses outside. For example we were going up from the fountain down there towards the market owner Mustafa's place, some guy named Şaban had dug up the area around the water tank and he was cultivating a farm there. I did some investigating and what do I find he has an apartment down there at Tobacco Factory houses. I was going to dig there with a bulldozer just like that. They said "Şaban is waiting there with a rifle." I went up there with the bulldozer and said "The man who points his rifle has to shoot." I said "You will get out of this place!" When I said get out of this place, there was the space in front of the Municipal Police by the fountain. So he goes and occupies that space. We pushed him out of there too. Of course everybody knew what was happening. Our goal was not to rent this space to get money. It was to do our best to provide a space for the poor to live in. We didn't let in anyone who had two or three houses and we never took any bribes or deposits from nobody. Nobody! Money wasn't an issue here. People who came here were struck by poverty. If you demand money from these people your ideology your philosophy loses all its credibility. There's no such a thing here. There is something in the gecekondu area that we have to be careful about. The people in a

gecekondu are never satisfied with the amount of land they have. The people living in Gülsuyu are never fulfilled with the land. They want a bigger land. They say they are big so they want a bigger land. You can't ask for a bigger land in a small space. If I bring you a dress of a woman of 1.80 meters you can cut the skirt to make it shorter, but if I bring you the dress of a 15 year old, what skirt are you going to cut? Because he's big he wants a big space. You know, even brothers started fighting with each other because of land. The thing is, a lot of people that came here from the villages never had any land before. They were yearning for land, they were farmers living in landlord's houses. And here they have this idea that "All will be mine." But there is no parcel over 400 meters in the gecekondu land. This number can go down but doesn't go up. So when the urban renewal plan comes here and the 200-meter land is joined with the 400-meter land there can't be equal division there. The guy will say: "I'm paying tax for 400 meters, this guy is paying for 200 meters." The conflict is this but when the government gives the official development authorization in its value, an agreement will be made with the contractor. The contractor will say: "I will give 50% to the one who has 400 meters, and 30% to the one who has 200 meters" and an agreement will be made.

Q Let's talk a little bit about the Turan cinema that has become characteristic in the life of the neighborhood…

A Around 1946 – 47 – 48, when I was working as an assistant at a blacksmith's shop I would get permission from my boss to go to the movies every Wednesday. I used to live in Tophane then, at the city center. Wednesday was the cheaper day for the public and the cinema would get full. We used to go that day. We watched Aziz Basmacı, Bahri Öz and many other artists. I would get so happy… The theater is the center of culture for a backwards country. So much so that a person who has never seen a theater, even under these conditions a person that has never gone there, doesn't have a clue about the world. Theater has live stories happening right in front of you… When you see the master's way of telling the story, his mimics, manner and attitude, you start to question yourself. "I

wonder if there is a piece of me in his behavior, his style?" We would always search for that. We would go to the movies and watch 3-watt films, after that when I came here I developed a love for cinema. I already used to go to the theater. To İsmail Dümbüllü's theater in Tophane… İsmail Dümbüllü would make you laugh through his art and his physical aspects. He had so many expressions. At that time in 46 there were the elections and İsmet İnönü had come to Tophane for a propaganda. Believe me when you looked at İsmet İnönü's face he had such a pure and radiant face. All the tough guys of the old times had joined the Democratic Party. We used to sell soda. A roughneck started challenging him and saying "There is no democracy!" this and that. İnönü says "come here for a minute my son, let's talk." His bodyguards didn't let the guy come close but İnönü said "let him come". İnönü said to him "my son how much more democratic can you get, you're talking to the president of Turkey". After that the whole time we were in Tophane the People's Party always won. When we came here I said: "There's no fun here." But in Gülsuyu a guy from Erzincan had brought a television from Germany where he was working, we would go all the way up the hill to watch television. It's a place of poverty. Nobody had any audio or visual devices to follow what was going on in the world. People were too busy trying to survive. These battery operated radios had just come out, some would carry it around on their shoulders like a shopping bag. Right around then we were hanging out with a friend, he had a brother. We bought some bricks with a payment plane to make a wall, another friend brought the machine and we started a cinema. With a 16mm machine I showed films for like 3

years. Our favorite films were those of Yılmaz Güney. They were films about life. A person living here can't see what is happening to him, when something happens doesn't even know it, but when he would see it on the big screen he would be illuminated and say "this can happen to me too."

I love art. When I was the president of the organization in the neighborhood I built a theater stage and a library in the school. Of course when the school got demolished everything was destroyed. The Turan cinema existed between 1967 and 71. Down there is the Çeşmebağı stop where there is Özkuruşlar Market. It was the property next to Özkuruluşlar. It could fit 300-400 people. Of course in order to be successful like everything in Turkey you have to be a little corrupt. I wouldn't sell tickets under the table. I never accepted it. Whatever little thing it was, be it 5 cents, they would try to put the money in the municipality's pocket. I was against that. There was Dar Film in Beyoğlu. We would go to there to buy films. They had lists, whatever film we wanted… When you buy a film you have them prepare the next one. After you show them you would bring them back. We would show for 3 or 4 days. It would depend on the film and how much you paid for it. The closing of the cinema was like this. I owed money to someone and I couldn't pay it back. When someone asks me back for the money they lent I get offended. I sold the machine, the chairs, everything in the cinema. Otherwise I would've continued. If I had money now I would build a cinema in the front yard of my house. I always like films with social themes. Why? Because when someone sees their life on the big screen, the apathy that has settled on their soul comes out and flies away.
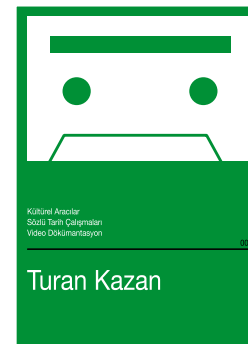
Q How do you see the future of the neighborhood?

A They gave development authorization for 25% of the land down there. What this %25 means is: in a 100 square meter land you can make a 25 square meter building. They were happy before the election, when we said this in the meeting they started. If they gave us %60 percent this place will go under urban planning by itself. Everybody will give a little bit, there will be roads, the plan and the project will be

made, there will still be green areas left but if we lose it to that place TOKI believe me %35 of the residents here will not have a place to live and will leave here.

When a neighborhood problem comes to the forefront everybody will have to protect the interest of the neighborhood regardless of their political and ideological views. Most of the people that came here and most that are giving a struggle here today didn't used to be here. When the neighborhood was formed they were born into their parents homes and grew up in this neighborhood. Surely the stress of the old days exist today too. Those that don't know sometimes give very strong reactions. And this harms the structure of our neighborhood. It is not necessary to destroy a place in order to obtain your rights. Never. Sometimes I hear about buses being set on fire here. These things do nothing but harm the people here. The people here use these buses to go to work. The buses are bought with our tax money. We are actually harming ourselves. It should be everyone's duty to seek for legal paths. No matter how much they say democracy doesn't exist in this country, it still exists. The moment we destroy democracy we will destroy ourselves. Even if it is a democracy that turns with the wrong wheels and revolves around lies and corruption, the important thing is for the citizens to gain awareness to make it work. When we look at urban renewal the first thing that comes to mind is that %30 - %40 percent of this place is going to be demolished. First of all we have a demand from the meetings we have had until today and the dialogues had with the concerned parties. We also want to live like humans. Of course it should be a modern city. But when we say modern city, urban renewal cannot mean leaving people who have dedicated their life here and have grown children here. They can give us the development authorization for %60, the concerned municipality can draw a plan and a project, can give us this project and we'll apply the urban renewal for free. How is that? Because when we give it to the contractor and tell him "you can't go outside of this plan urban renewal will happen by itself. It's like that. And if there is a group that may be disadvantaged by that, 1 in a hundred or 2 in a thousand, it should be a requirement to give them a place too. Because

when you think about it when the guy came here he didn't have any children or anything. It was just him and his wife, now he even has grandchildren. 2 people turned into 10. He put all the kids inside the squatter house he built. Under today's conditions he has no opportunity to go anywhere else. He can't go back to his village. When urban renewal is being made here, if the development authorizations are given to the residents and the projects given to the contractor and as long as nobody goes outside the project plan, urban renewal will be achieved.

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"protesto etme" halinin başka yolları var mıdır?
"imece usulü eylemlilik" nedir?
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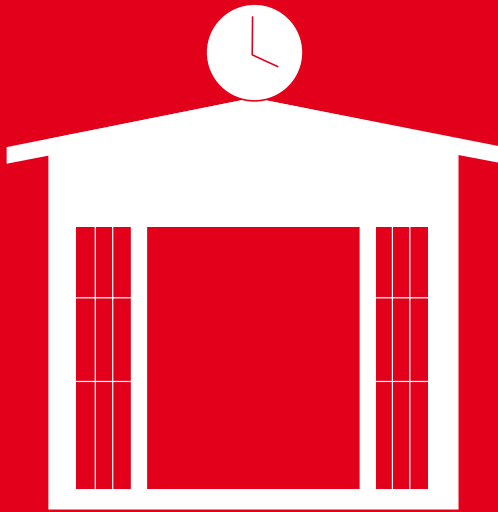
dükkân'da cuma buluşmaları 12

30 Nisan 2010
Cuma 16.00

Gülsuyu-Gülensu Dükkânı
Ayla Sokak no. 90, Heykel Meydanı
Maltepe - İstanbul

Canan Şenol and Sevim Şahin
Friday Talks VI / 26 February 2010

kültürel aracılar cultural agencies   etkinlik events koleksiyon collection arşiv archive iletişim communication kütüphane library ofis office

cultural agencies
office
collection
archive
library
events

Çocukların Dilinde Zaferin Adı

Mahalleden Portreler Sergisi

etcetera

dükkân'ın uzun süreli misafirleri - 2

13 Temmuz 2010
Salı 17.00

Gülsuyu-Gülensu Dükkânı
Ayla Sokak no. 90, Heykel Meydanı
Maltepe - İstanbul

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events

Etcetera,
Çocukların Dilinde Zaferin Adı

Contributers

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d'Architecture
Autogérée)
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Anadolu'da Yaşam ve
Tüketim Kooperatifi
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Yiğit Battal
Hakan Bozoglu
Çiğdem Calap
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Ali Danacı
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Zeynep Sema Demir
Burcu Demircan

Gizem Demirci
Sebile Dışkaya
Erdem Dilbaz
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Etcétera
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Federico Del Vecchio
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Paul Wild
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Erdoğan Yıldız
YNKB
Damla Özgü Yıldız
Zeynep Zilelioğlu

and all the
Gülsuyu-Gülensu
neighbourhood

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Philipp Misselwitz
Oda Projesi

Coordinator
Ece Sarıyüz

2009 - 2010

PUBLIC WORKS

culture-clash

GRIZEDALE ARTS

• Coniston

gardening
direct action
public space
producing knowledge

rural space
cultural production
small scale
collaborative research project
private/public space

art & architecture
local archive
shop
co-authorship

MY VILLAGE
• Wjelsryp

GUERILLA GARDENING

PUBLIC WORKS
HACKNEY WICK CURIOSITY SHOP

shared
communal
ecological

ECO VILLAGE SIEBEN LINDEN

• SiebenLinden

• London
• Stratford

SOMEWHERE
ABBEY GARDENS/WHAT WILL THE HARVEST BE

LEA BANK SQUARE PURPLE GARDEN

community garden
urban food growing

community garden
public space
community led
public space
art

support
display
exhibition
scaffold

SUPPORT STRUCTURES

• Berlin

INTERNATIONAL VILLAGE SHOP

WHERE Across a network of production and trading places for goods with strong local connections, both in urban and rural settings

WHO The International Village Shop is an open collaboration between organisations and producers who set up permanent and temporary trading places for goods that are rooted locally. It has been growing as a shared ambition since 2007, with Grizedale Arts, myvillages.org, public works and Somewhere as the initiators

WHAT Everyday local production and traditions mix with local and visiting cultural practice

WEB www.internationalvillageshop.net

NETWORKS Shopkeepers, collaborators, hosts, producers, programmes: Grizedale Arts (UK) www.grizedalearts.org - myvillages.org (NL, Ger, UK), www.myvillages.org - public works (UK), www.publicworksgroup.net - Somewhere (UK), www.somewhere.org.uk - Fernando Garcia Dory (Spain), www.fernandogarciadory.com - Kultivator (Sweden), www.kultivator.org - Agri-culture (pan EU), www.agri-cultur.eu - Dorian Moore (UK), www.theusefularts.org

KEYWORDS *collaborative production - local production - trade - connections*

A shop is a familiar and everyday space of exchange and social encounter. It requires production, distribution, communication and trade. The International Village Shop is a cultural project that explores trade as a methodology to exchanging and networking cultural knowledge, goods, producers, consumers and users. The trade is not driven by commercial interest but by a shared interest in contemporary cultural production and value systems.
It is set up as a pan-national platform to include and connect producers and audiences across cultural, geographical and language barriers, and uses formal and informal networks to grow and operate, engaging with grass-roots economic models.
The International Village Shop doesn't exist as a single shop, but as a dispersed network of temporary and permanent production and trading places.

• Höfen

PUBLIC WORKS
HÖFER WAREN

• Heligendorf

women and rural
production
collaborative production

MY VILLAGE

rural space
cultural production
small scale
collaborative research project
private/public space

Rhyzom meets International Village Shop

International local prolocal translocal
Shop trade Village
dop Shop

Lydia Thornley and Ashley Mc Cormick from the Friends of Abbey Gardens Group, Sarah Murray from Ballykinlar via the PS2 Rhyzom network, and Nina Pope from Somewhere, What Will The Harvest Be and International Village Shop.

The International Village Shop as a field of themes, activities and connections, entered the Rhyzom project at various points: in descriptions, discussions, fieldtrips, workshops and new collaborations.

public works organised two fieldtrips with myvillages.org as partners, one to Grizedale Arts and one to eco-villages in former East Germany (together with Matthias Heyden). Two International Village Shop production workshops took place, one in Abbey Gardens (together with the friends of Abbey Gardens and Somewhere) and one in Höfen (together with Céline Condorelli).

The following pages by public works illustrate some of what has come together, and some of what has come out of it - intentionally and randomly.

The plain templates for these pages can be downloaded from the International Village Shop website: http://www.internationalvillageshop.net/products/shop-brochure.

Fruit fields near Höfen, where orchards were traditionally grown on the clay-rich fields.

Rhyzom has one budget, the International Village Shop has many and at times none. The public works Rhyzom budget was used to develop aspects of the International Village Shop network further, and to open it to new collaborators.

Some shops so far:
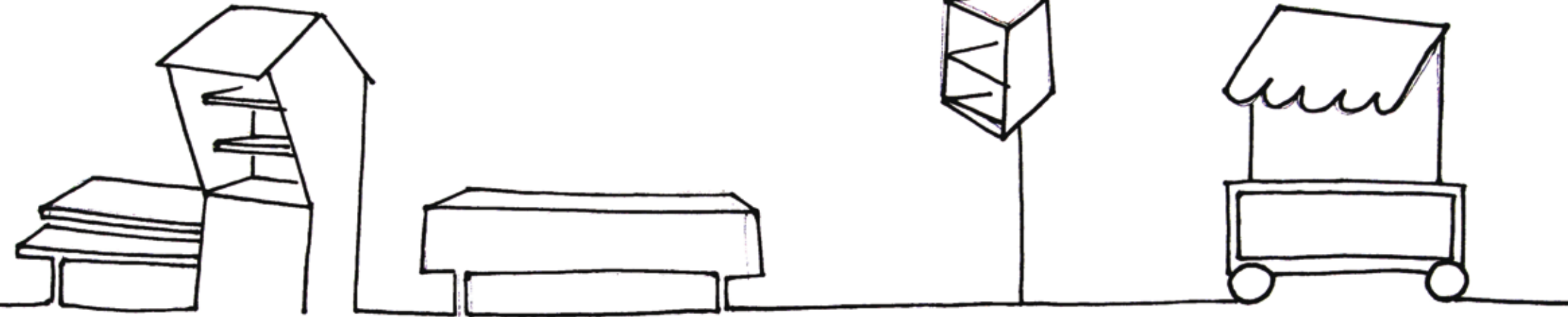
The Lawson Park Honesty Stall is next to Lawson Park Gardens and Grizedale Arts offices. It is always open to the public, and stocks fresh produce from the gardens and outcomes from Grizedale Arts collaborations and commissions. You pay what you think it's worth.
Run by Grizedale Arts since 2005 - ongoing. First built by Adam Sutherland (Grizedale Arts) and later extended by Wapke Feenstra (myvillages.org).

A one day Internationaler Dorfladen at the Kunstverein Springhornhof in the village of Neuenkirchen in Lower Saxony. The shop was to launch the start of a new product development in the village - open to all - and myvillages.org introduced a public workshop for the recording of local connections.
By myvillages.org, November 2009.

The Internationale Dorpswinkel in Leeuwarden occupies a corner in a veterinary waiting room, offering some international village produce alongside horsemilk products from Wjelsryp. The shop is open during working hours. Films to explain the making and origin of the goods are shown on a small screen.
Run by Wapke Feenstra and Maaike Fenstra, 2006 - ongoing.

The Abbey Gardens Honesty Stall has a mobile and a fence shop, both based at Abbey Gardens in Stratford in East London. On offer is fresh produce from the garden, including fruit, flowers, small plants and more recently Abbey Gardens seed-bombs, plus goods from the wider network.
Designed by Andreas Lang (public works) and run by Friends of Abbey Gardens, since 2009 - ongoing.

GRIZEDALE ARTS

Lawson Park Farm, United Kingdom

WHO Grizedale Arts
WHAT Grizedlae Arts (GA) is based in the English Lake District National Park, and has over the last decade acquired a significant reputation for pioneering new approaches to artistic production and exhibition. In contrast to traditional institutions and, indeed, to its own history in the UK land art movement, GA has neither studios nor exhibition space, but rather provides artists with the opportunity to realise projects using the social, cultural and economic networks of the area and beyond
WEB http://www.grizedale.org/
NETWORKS list of linked activities: Lawson Park, http://www.lawsonpark.org/ ▪ Thinking Space for the North, http://www.thinking-spacenorth.org/ ▪ GTV, http://www.grizedale.org/projects/gtv ▪ Museum Sheffield, http://www.museums-sheffield.org.uk/coresite/html/whatson.asp?calendar=millennium-exhibitions#/?i=2 ▪ Sao Paulo Biennial, http://www.fbsp.org.br/ ▪ John Ruskin Memorial Blog, http://www.grizedale.org/the.john.ruskin.memorial.blog/ ▪ Jeremy Deller, http://www.grizedale.org/projects/sao-paulo-bienal/so-many-ways-to-hurt-you-the-life-and-times-of-adrian-street ▪ Adrian Street, http://www.bizarebazzar.com/art.htm ▪ Guestroom, http://www.guest-room.net/ ▪ Live in your Forest, http://www.grizedale.org/projects/golden ▪ Somwhere, http://www.somewhere.org.uk/honesty ▪ Happy Stacking, http://www.happystacking.tv/ ▪ Toadball.tv, http://www.grizedale.org/projects/toadball ▪ The Return of the Seven Samurai, http://www.grizedale.org/projects/the.return.of.the.seven.samurai ▪ Cumbriana Proof, http://www.grizedale.org/projects/

cumbriana.proof ▪ Roadshow, http://www.grizedale.org/projects/roadshow
KEYWORDS *rural - culture - culture-clash*

From the Grizedale Arts Website: 'Grizedale Arts runs a thought-provoking programme of events, projects and residencies that develops the contemporary arts in new directions, away from the romantic and modern assumptions of culture, making artists more useful in this complex and multiple-cultural environment.
The picturesque landscape of Cumbria is often cited as the primary feature of the region; however it is the sociological circumstances and attitudes to the landscape that distinguish it. Of particular importance is the way in which numerous ideologies are projected onto this countryside, and this has produced a multiplicity of micro cultures: Farmers, conservationists, tourists, extreme-sports enthusiasts all compete for a stake in the land.
Furthermore - as a manifestation of the wider trend towards globalisation - there has been a rapid increase in pressure on the land and the way it is used. As such, the Lake District represents a microcosm of the wider world and presents itself as an ideal laboratory situation to test out new approaches to culture and its impact on society and its environment.'
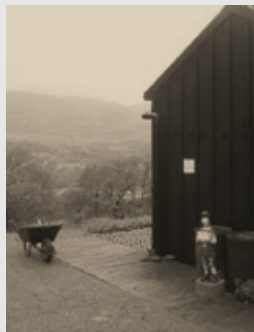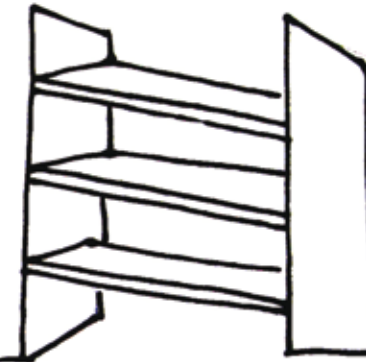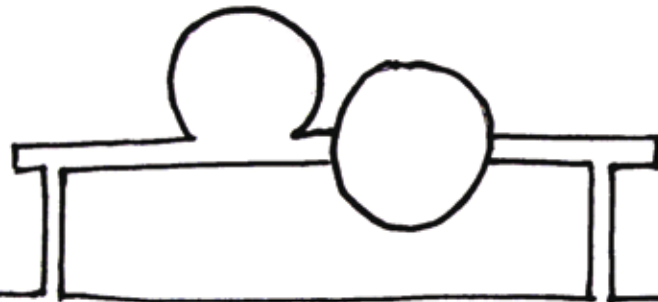
Products enter the shop on a local level.

They come from existing productions, such as horticulture,
crafts, art, medicine, conserving food, etc.
Or they are made especially for the shop.

New products are developed collaboratively by local groups
and/or individuals and sometimes visitors from elsewhere.

New goods can be anything.

Shop rules are simple.

Everyone can run a shop for however long they want.

The form of trade is set by those involved in running the shop.
It can be cash/set price, swaps, 'pay as much as you think', ...

Shops stock local goods and those travelling the network.

For official applications we calculate between Eur 5.000 to 10.000 for the development and production of a new collaborative product. This includes fees, travel costs, workshop costs, product development, prototyping and manufacturing. We can also make new goods without a budget - using in kind support, gift economies and local connections. Ideally a 'Village Produce Film' (between 4 - 7 min) is made to explain the background and making of the new product.

The set up of a shop doesn't necessarily involve costs. A shop needs some space and construction material - often found or reclaimed - and a shopkeeper/s. Stocking, arranging and explaining always requires more time than anticipated.

Lawson Park

Bristol

Leeds

Oland

Loughborough

London

Abbey Gardens

Echigo Tsumari

Neuenkirchen

Wjelsryp

Toge

Rotterdam

Berlin

Nordhorn

Leeuwarden

Picos de Europa

Boxberg

San Francisco

Madrid

Höfen

Linz

Langenthal

Fanas

Shops

Production sites - often with shops

Höfer Waren - Internationaler Dorfladen - an annual shop in Höfen, Southern Germany.

Village Produce Films

Höfen

Beifuss

Fruit Liquor

Grape Juice

Conserve

Horsemilkproducts
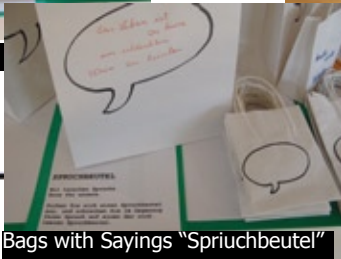
Frog Corks

Jarlamps

Doily Bags

Frogbutterspoon

Bags with Sayings "Spriuchbeutel"

Hay-bale-string Bags

HEUTE 10-17

Lawson Park

Toge

Wjelsryp

'Höfer Waren' (Höfer Goods) started in 2006, and the shop takes place annually during the village fete in Höfen. 'Höfer Waren' presents new products each year, alongside existing produce from the village. The new product is developed collectively by the Höfer Frauen, Kathrin Böhm (public works/myvillages.org) and external guests.

Public life during the village fete centres around the pub, the Sunday church service in front of the chapel, and the setting up of the village fete tree. The International Village Shop is open on the Sunday and it is popular. It was sold out in 2006 and 2007. The first two years Wapke came from Rotterdam to make it international. In 2007 we started mixing local and travelling goods.

'Höfer Waren' started as part of the ourvillages series by myvillages.org.

Belfast

Berlin

London

Nürnberg

Höfen

Bamberg

Höfer Frauen: Waltraut and Gabi Müller, Hildegard Lyssek, Rosa Leimbach, Resi Derra and Waltraud, Lotta and Juliane, Gertrud Stowasser, Maria Seuss, Ingrid Fischer, Kerstin Fischer, Annette and Christina Güthlein, Erna Güthlein, Gunda Derra, Sieglinde Gast, Paulina Köst, Rita Schuller, Bärbel Batzner, Marlene Baum, Birgit Raab, Sylvia Helmut
Kathrin Böhm (public works, myvillages.org, Rhyzom), London/Höfen
Andreas Lang (public works, Rhyzom), London
Céline Condorelli (support structure, a42.org, Rhyzom), London/Nürnberg
Bryonie Reid (PS2, Rhyzom), Belfast
A42.org (Berlin/Nürnberg): Arno Brandlhuber, Silvan Linden, Martin Eberle, Barbara Geralis, Tamara Härty, Matthias Spielvogel, Nils Wolfbauer, Andreas Oberhuber.
Guest: Michael Back, Wolfgang Gunzelmann, Andrea Bischof

Hildegard makes some clay marbles, using clay brought by Bryonie from her garden in Ireland. The last time she made them was during WW2 when they couldn't get hold of glass marbles.

A new Höfer Good is under way and gets developed in experimental cooking sessions, where local produce and the soil it grows in come together through methods of Hausfrauentechnik (knowledge gained from running a household).

A travelling product: the Frogbutterspoon

The Butterspoon was the first "Höfer Waren" product. The idea and brief was developed by Höfer Frauen in collaboration with Kathrin Böhm. The product development and prototyping was done by Angelika Seeschaaf, a product designer based in London. The moulds were made by Manfred Frey, a porcelain designer in nearby Bad Staffelstein. Manufactured by a small company in Oberküpps.

The villagers are called 'the frogs' by others, and the idea was to have a frog related product that has to be functional. It is made in porcelain which has been manufactured large scale in the region until recently. The spoon has three functions, to take cream off the milk, to spread butter and to print a frogfoot into butter. Why?
It refers to the story of a frog who has fallen into a pot of cream, and has to swim until the liquid is turned into butter, so the frog can jump out - leaving only its footprint.

The local pharmacist buys four spoons - for special dinners.

Kathrin finds a spoon stuck into a flower pot during filming of the Village Produce Films.

One woman from the village wants 10 spoons - the sale is done in private.

Wapke and Antje sell a spoon during a One Hour Shop in San Fransisco - this is surprising news in Höfen.

ONE HOUR SHOP

70 spoons are sold for Eur 10 each in the first Höfen shop - against a lot of scepticism.

Höfer Goods is a product series which is rooted in stories, materials and skills that are particular to the village. Villages have always been places of intensive production, from agriculture to meat and dairy production, gardening, fruit and vegetable processing etc. Today the meaning of agriculture and associated products has declined dramatically, but the village remains a rich resource for numerous materials, craft and labour skills and creative thinking.
Höfer Goods offers a space to consider village production today and to translate and transform existing resources into new products, together with the input of guests and supporters.

Costs product idea and development: all in kind. Costs prototype and travel Angelika paid from a related commission. Molds: initially in kind, later supported with Eur 250 from income from sales. Manufacturing costs per spoon Eur 5.00 All journeys to and from the manufacturers paid by W. Böhm. Distribution costs: hand luggage, sometimes by post.
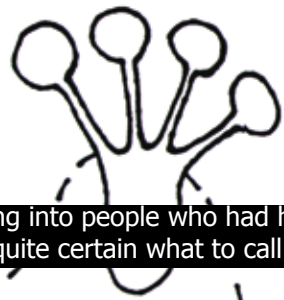
Bumping into people who had heard about the spoon, never quite certain what to call it or how to use it.

Kathrin brings the spoon to the first Rhyzom partner meeting to Paris in May 2009, to explain the International Village Shop as a trans-local network and methodologies for collective local production.

Peter from PS^2 in Belfast takes the story of the spoon and the shop to Anne-Marie Dillon, who has just started to run a mobile Community Centre in a caravan in her village called Ballykinlar in Northern Ireland. The idea is, that something like the shop or a new product might work in Ballykinlar, which has a fractious community and existing common ground is highly contested.

Spoons are in stock in many shops. They are small, precious but durable, not too expensive, and have a good story to tell. By summer 2009 they are called a 'shop classic'.

One spoon sold in Nordhorn.
Three at Late at Tate.
Two at the Launch of Lawson Park.
One at a shop in Nürnberg.
Two in Boxberg.
The spoon in the Leeuwarden shop is
still the initial one.
Only one or two were sold at the Grizedale
Honesty Box Rochelle Branch.

May 2009: 100 new spoons are ordered.

Many were given away as gifts in meetings to
explain the production and shop idea.
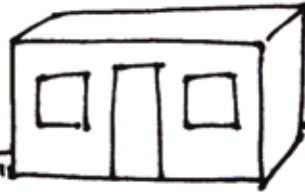
The spoon is used at the start of the Abbey Gardens workshop to
explain what a collaborative local product development could be.
At the end of the two days the spoon travels with Anne-Marie to
Ballykinlar, and gets used as the sugar spoon for the weekly tea
meetings in the caravan community centre.

The Rhyzom group and guests visit the caravan community centre
in Ballykinlar during a workshop in June 2010. Kathrin again gives
a brief presentation using the spoon to describe what she does and
why she is here.
Anne-Marie mentions that the first spoon has broken by now,
so this spoon stays as a replacement.

16. October 2010
Whilst struggling with the production for the Rhyzom publication, Kathrin and
Andreas receive an e-mail from Peter, confirming that funding for a product
development workshop in Ballykinlar is in place. This means a production
workshop and a Ballykinlar version of the International Village Shop in 2011.
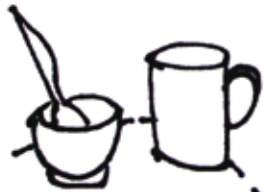
Peter from PS² in Belfast starts fundraising for a production workshop and
International Village Shop in Ballykinlar.

Anne-Marie joins the Rhyzom Production Workshop at Abbey Gardens

What will the Harvest Be?

Leather Garden

Industrial Estate next door

The Greyhound Pub
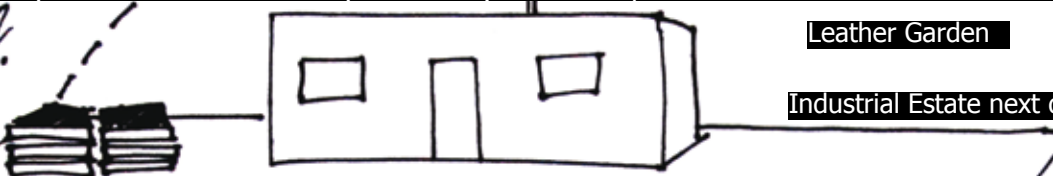
London

Collaborators and visitors:
Dorian Moore, Katrin Bohn, Lucy Gillian, Piotr Poleski
From the Design Interactions, Royal College of Art:
Elliot Montgommery, Ben Faga, Ilona Gaynor, James
Gilpin, Veronika Runner, Maximilian Gubbins

Organisers and Friends of Abbey Gardens:
Andreas Lang, Kathrin Böhm, Nina Pope and
Karen Guthrie, Lydia Thornley, Ashley McComerick

Food shops near-by

Channel Sea House

Garden web-site

Busy Bee's Cafe

Abbey Gardens

Three Mills

Sheffield Agency, Cristina Cerulli

Play Sow Grow Scheme

Paris AAA : Nolwenn Marchand

Ballykinlar PS2 (Belfast – IE/UK):
Sarah Murray and, Anne-Marie Dillon

Resources nearby:
Production of waste (timber, cardboard)
Used tea bags and food waste.
NO local fresh veg on offer.
Possible users of locally grown veg: Kebab place
Communality through stories of food.
Big view of sky from the site.
Possibilities for satellite-spotting.
Need for signs that point to the different local initiatives.
History of food processing, mainly gin.
Tidal movement of the Lea river as energy resource
To link local gardening projects.
Generate tools to negotiate the use of empty sites.
Sharing gardening resources and tools.
Land-share.
Involve older generation in oral history about growing food.
Community Notice Board.
TO DO things signs, rather than what not to do.
Collect seeds locally.
To harvest material for compost.
To include private gardens in the local gardening network.
Try cultural exchange with corporate neighbours.
Communal composting scheme.

Time: gardener, use of workshop space and garden tools covered by Friends of Abbey Gardens group. Workshop material covered by Rhyzom. Timewise: a few days preparation and 20 people attending a two day workshop.

The workshop was organised by public works, Somewhere and Friends of Abbey Gardens. The idea for the workshop is to brainstorm and develop new objects/items/goods that derive from the context of Abbey Gardens as an urban food growing site. The brief is open and will be developed collectively and in reference to specific aspects of Abbey Gardens, such as communal gardening and harvesting, urban food production, social and historical aspects of the site, etc.
The aim for the two day workshop is to develop a brief for one or a number of new products, and if possible, to assemble first prototypes. The new items can be anything: from food or tools to plants or processes and of a real or digital nature.

ABBEY GARDENS/WHAT WILL THE HARVEST BE

Abbey Gardens, Stratford, East London

WHO friends of Abbey Gardens, Somewhere (Nina Pope and Karen Guthrie)
WHAT Community Garden and public space
WEB http://www.abbeygardens.org http://www.whatwilltheharvestbe.com/
NETWORKS friends of Abbey Gardens, http://www.abbeygardens.org/ · Somewhere, http://www.somewhere.org.uk · West Ham Allotment Society, http://westhamallotments.org.uk/ · Friends of Westham Park, http://fwhp.co.uk/default.aspx/ · Manor Gardens Allotment, http://www.lifeisland.org/ · South London Botanical Institute, http://www.slbi.org.uk/ · City Woods Services, http://www.citywood.co.uk/ · Guerrilla Gardening.org, http://www.guerrillagardening.org/index.html · Landshare, http://www.landshare.net/ · Capital Growth, http://www.capitalgrowth.org/ · Edible Estates, http://www.fritzhaeg.com/garden/initiatives/edibleestates/main.html · Energy Café, http://energycafe.wordpress.com/ · Fallen Fruit, http://www.fallenfruit.org/
KEYWORDS *community garden - public space - community led - public space - art*

Led by the Friends of Abbey Gardens a neglected wasteland has been transformed into a unique open-access Harvest Garden in East London. Abbey Gardens is the site of 'What will the Harvest Be?' an artist's commission by Somewhere to help establish a collectively managed public space. The 80m x 20m garden was launched in spring 2009 as a social and horticultural experiment: its 30 large-scale raised beds are freely accessible to anyone who wants to grow and harvest flowers, fruit and vegetables. Three weekly garden club sessions with a trained gardener are available to all users.

Travel: Rhyzom partners and collaborators paid by Rhyzom. All other journeys covered privately. Some fee for public works and Somewhere. Food and drinks covered by Rhyzom and cooked by Kathrin.
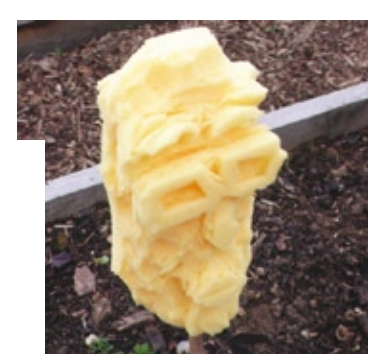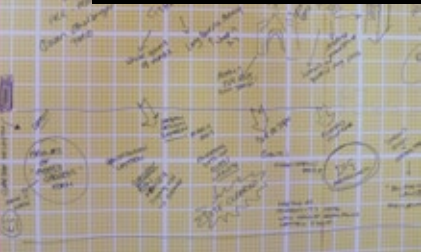
FIRST PRODUCT IDEAS
Bags for transporting waste to Abbey Gardens
Plant signs and tags
Local Fusion Food
Gardening services
Map of local gardening schemes
Food compressor
Car Greenhouse
Manual for Land Share
Stories-collector for the different voices of the local history
Label free garden
Planting pots/ swap pots
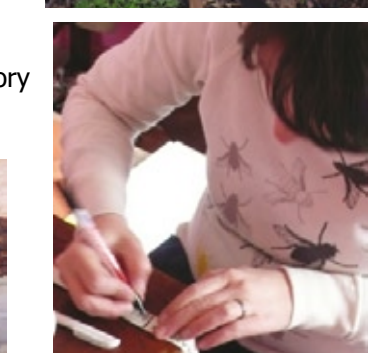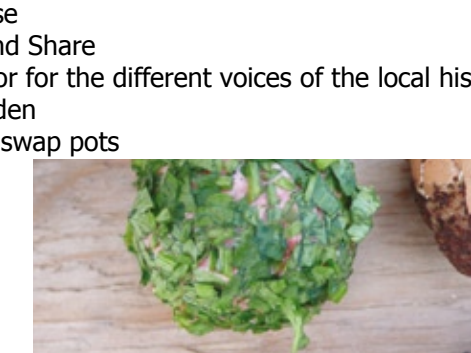
Free resources available locally: used tea bag and food rubbish for communal composting scheme. A shared but differentiating memory of the history of Abbey Gardens. Compost and seeds and vegetable and herbs. Knowledge about cooking.

A compressor

The press is a simple hand powered off the shelf 10 tons hydraulic bench press. It is mounted onto a trolley, and sheltered by a wooden box which breaks down into a series of tables and chairs for an instant workshop space. Garden material is pressed into CNC cut plywood moulds.

Clarke STRONG-ARM

10 TONS

The unit was made by public works as part of a 'Shred Exchange' for London Festival of Architecture 2010, commissioned by Canary Wharf Ltd. The press contributed to a three day public event and then came to Abbey Gardens.

The press goes travelling, to make seed bombs for the 'Sunflower Avenue'.

'Sunflower Avenue' is a local initiative by Sona and Nadira Abantu Choudhury, who run the Lea Bank Square Purple Garden. By planting sunflowers along a route which cuts straight through the heart of Hackney Wick, two parks will be conencted: Mabley Green Meadow and Victoria Park.
Sunflower Avenue is going to be established through guerrilla gardening. 150 new seed bombs were made for 'Sunflower Avenue'.

Sona from Lea Bank Square and Andreas from public works pulled the press from Abbey Gardens to Lea Bank Square Purple Garden. It took two people one hour on a Sunday morning.

The production happened as part of a public works project called Route Book, which is connected to the 'Hackney Wick Curiosity Shop'. Costs: New mould £130.00, flyers £ 24.00. Fees paid through the Route Book commission. Food brought along by participants. Soil and compost and sunflower seeds by Lea Bank Square Purple Garden.

WICK CURIOSITY SHOP
Hackney Wick, London, UK

WHO public works, Hilary Powell, Polly Brannan
WHAT The Wick Curiosity Shop is a small-scale archive and cultural space dedicated to the specific locality of Hackney Wick and Fish Island. It aims to document, host and promote local cultural production.
WEB http://wickcuriosityshop.net/
NETWORKS Hackney Wick, public works ▪ Space, http://www.spacestudios.org.uk/ ▪ Hackney Wick Route Book, http://wickcuriosityshop.net/blog/232 ▪ Manor Garden Allotment, http://www.lifeisland.org/ ▪ Hackney Wick Festival, http://www.hackneywickfestival.org.uk/Hackney_Wick_Festival/Welcome.html ▪ Leabank Square, http://leabanksquare.blogspot.com/
KEYWORDS *art & architecture - local archive - shop - co-authorship*

The Wick Curiosity Shop presents a narrative understanding of the area, a space full of stories about the Wick told in a multitude of ways. It is an archive of local cultural activities and artefacts that help to document the process of change in the area with the close involvement of its local residents.
The Wick Curiosity Shop is as much an archive as it is an event structure and platform for further cultural activity. It allows existing histories to be collected and new memories to be formed, thus capturing the life of a community in transition through a series of close engagements. Archiving and registering what seems relevant from the viewpoint of the Wick and its residence and users.

LEA BANK SQUARE PURPLE GARDEN
Lea Bank Estate, Hackney Wick, London, UK

WHO residents of Lea Bank Square Estate
WHAT self-initiated local garden project
WEB http://leabanksquare.blogspot.com/ http://hackneywickgarden.blogspot.com/
NETWORKS amongst many others: Wick Curiosity Shop ▪ Abbey Gardens ▪ public works ▪ Hackney Wick Partnership
KEYWORDS *community garden - urban food growing - freecycling - recycling*

When the Olympic Development Authority (ODA) took away Arena Fields and chopped down the local orchard, it became increasingly crucial to create garden spaces in Hackney Wick to counteract green spaces being lost in the area. Being short on funds has meant that a lot of the gardening at Leabank Bank Square (LBS) boils down to freecycling, recycling, growing plants from seeds and generous donations from residents and locals. The riverbank had been locked up and as such our star asset left to decay and fall into disuse. Fed up with the situation, local residents managed to unlock the gates and slowly transform our riverbank into a space our community could truly enjoy. LBS welcomes any generous donations of gardening equipment, seeds, seedlings, cuttings, plants, trees and large containers. Please email Leabank Square Gardening Club at leabanksquare@london.com

Photo by Lydia Thornley

The idea to produce seed bombs for Abbey Gardens came up years ago when the Friends of Abbey Gardens group first laid claim to the site, but could not yet access it as it was overgrown and not cleared for use by the council.
Seed bombs are one way to start using a site remotely and would demonstrate to the council that the group was serious about getting the site - but the seed bombing never happened and the garden started in a different way.

One of the ideas that came up during the Rhyzom workskhop at Abbey Gardens was the development of a tool which could facilitate the collective and possibly public production of a wider range of products: a press or compressor.

On a sunny afternoon, 3 years after the idea first surfaced and with the help of our brand new 10 ton press we produce the first seed bombs in the garden.

Costs of producing seed bombs at Abbey Gardens: no direct costs. Gardening advice from Hamish Liddle via Abbey Gardens garden-club sessions. Soil, compost and seeds from Abbey Gardens.

Internationale Dorpswinkel — Winkels — Producten

Zoek | Ga

New local products enter the local shop and the website

Abbey Gardens Seed bombs are on offer at the permanent and mobile Abbey Gardens Honesty Box, and enter the International Village Shop.
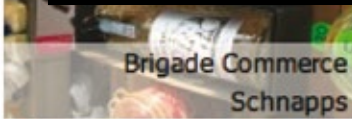
Brigade Commerce Schnapps | Butterspoon | Cabbage | Chocolate Peppermint | Clayfruit with noses | Clover Cheese
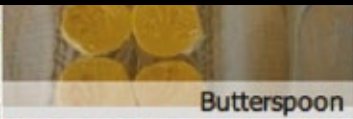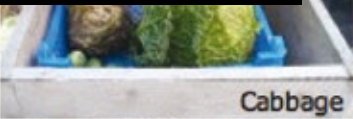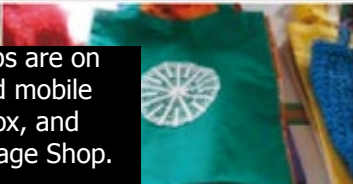
Cucumbers from A... | Gar... | Fanas Arrow | Flower bouquet from Abbey Gardens | Freshly pressesd apple juice | Frogcork
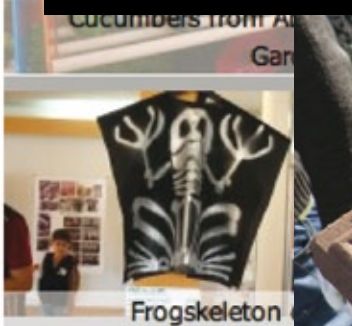
Frogskeleton | Gamoneu Cheese | Grape Juice | Grizedale Arts publications | Höfener Jam 2008

Homemade butter | Horn egg spoon | Horsemilk powder | Horsemilk shampoo | Horsemilk Soap | Jarlamp

Knipp | Lawson Park Conserve | Lawson Park Parsley Seed | Lawson Park summer produce | Lawson Park Surprise Seeds | Love Cup

Michael's Aubergine cane tops | Norma Olden's notorious pickled onions | Oil towers | Olympic Jam | Parametenmeterware | Peter's Pots
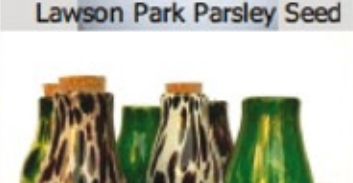
PS²

rural and context specific
cultural production and
AFTER
HURL Leitrim

organic
gardening
green alternative
education
community

experimental
artist
led
socially

PS2
• Belfast

HERI

LEITRIM SCULPTURE CENTRE

ORGANIC CENTRE

• Ballykinlar

learning
Home University
knowledge exchange
HURL Roscommon •

FOREVER YOUNG PENSIONERS
community work
as happening
grassroot

ROUND UP ARTIST COLLECTIVE
artist collective
experimental
non- urban
rural

Co.Clare •
AFTER
public interventions
rural context
environmental
social issues
landscape change
artist led
site specific

COLLECTIONS OF MINDS
collaborative
transversal
transmedial
translocal

Interventionist R
Embedded Artist
Rhyzomatic Prac
caravan

PARK FICTION COLLECTIVE
PARK FICTION
• Hamburg

PS²

FIELDS

WHERE Belfast, Northern Ireland

WHO PS² : visual artists and multi-disciplinary creative practitioners

WHAT small studio collective and initiative of art projects

WEB www.pssquared.org

KEYWORDS *experimental - artist-led - socially relevant - transformative*

For RHYZOM, PS² invited artists, architects, a geographer and a gardener from north and south of Ireland to work on the project, less as a group than as individual researchers. Orbiting like satellites, their contribution gravitated around the theme of cultural production in small towns and villages of the border regions between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. One island, similar in landscape and population, both nations developed politically and culturally different, especially between the 1970's and early 1990's during the political troubles in Northern Ireland. To what extent the rural is integrated in the provision of cultural centres and what alternatives it generates, was and is part of ongoing projects by the participants within and across their professions. For PS², RHYZOM resulted in individual and collective outcomes producing new work, many connections and future projects. Bryonie Reid, Craig Sands, Sarah Browne, Ruth Morrow, Gareth Kennedy, Fiona Woods, Anne-Marie Dillon, Peter Mutschler

BRYONIE REID
INCLINED TO WANDER: PART TWO

First walk: Monday 12th April 2010

On a day which happens to be sunny (one of the first of spring, after weeks of hard cold and rain) I make hurried arrangements for my mother, who is visiting, to look after my son, and leave in a flurry with the dog, feeling unprepared. A sense of possibility nonetheless wells up as I drive carefully out of our valley; with a seven month old baby it is a novelty to be able to make even such a modest expedition as this. I have brought the wrong sort of bag (uncomfortable to carry), leaky summer shoes and inadequate maps, and am conscious of the particular constraints a breastfeeding baby's hunger places upon time.

I go to Kiltyclogher, a village on the border between Counties Leitrim (in the Republic of Ireland) and Fermanagh (in Northern Ireland), to gather my thoughts and make a rough plan for the walk. Beginning with the idea of a rural psychogeography, in which the *dérive,* or perambulatory drift, is central, I had had the idea of wandering border roads and attempting to interpret the landscape around me in relation to recent political, economic and socio-cultural history. This now seems too vague and too trite a project, and given that I am relatively familiar with this part of the border, promises little scope for exploration. Instead I turn at a sign for Dean's Lake, park my car, and begin walking eastwards down a lane, hoping that this movement, which is certainly a drift, will prove productive.

The dog is glad to be free of the car, and scouts far ahead. I do not see any animals, but notice that the barbed wire to my left is tufted with wool, and that sheep dung and fragments of straw spot the mud underfoot. Calling her back, I imagine my voice carries easily across the still air and rumble of nearby machinery. Colours are bleached and wintry despite the mild day, and though the sky is bright it turns to steel grey in the lake.

The third gate I pass through brings me into land owned by Coillte.[1] I hear birdsong and the bleating of sheep. At the fourth gate, the dog reappears from the

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1 Coillte's website describes it as 'a private limited company' whose shares are 'held' by the Ministers for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and Finance 'on behalf of the Irish State'. State forests were handed over to Coillte in 1989 (www.coillte.ie, accessed 31st July 2010). The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food maintains a Forestry Service as well, whose functions seem to overlap substantially with those of Coillte, the main difference being, as far as I can see, that Coillte is a commercial company.
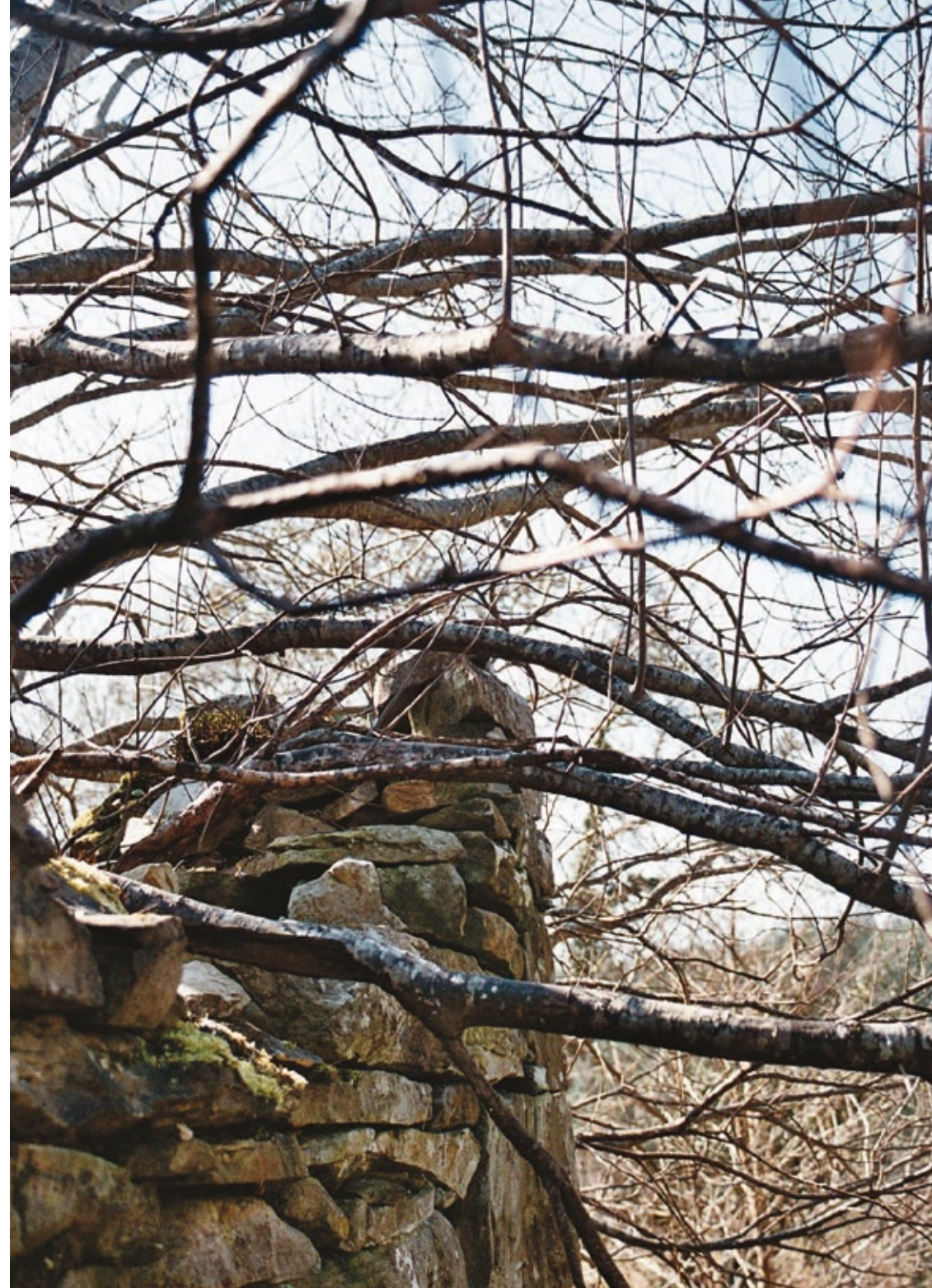
dark fastnesses of the forest and splashes through a drain. I cross a gleaming cattle grid, blocked in pale concrete. My sense of what may be ahead shifts to accommodate farmland, although the place already feels remote. Ahead I see the slate-blue path and sky the colour of a bird's egg, and to each side blanched and wilted grass and bare trees, some ivy-laden. A glossy beetle hurries over the stones by my feet and my dog waits patiently for me to move again, tongue out.

As I round a corner, my assumption that I have ventured some distance from settlement is abruptly contradicted. Ahead is a newly-built house, large and pristine and set in a bland expanse of gravel, and as I approach it an old cottage comes into view on the other side of the lane. Its face smacks of abandonment and ruin, but when I move closer, curious, I see behind it a neatly tended vegetable garden. I retreat quickly, feeling suddenly intrusive rather than exploratory. Returning to the track, I follow it up to the new house and discover it ends bluntly at an earthen bank. I turn and wander back the way I came, speculating on the odd scene: a mile or so of rough and pitted boreen, several farm gates, an empty cottage whose garden serves someone's table, and an imposing house on raw ground, also empty.

Gazing abstractedly into the forest my eye catches on a configuration of trees which looks domestic. I pause to look deliberately and at length, and eventually see a grey lintel amongst a greyish tangle of twigs and branches. I ease through the barbed wire fence and make my way gingerly through trees, hedge and brush and across clumps of rushes to a little fallen-down stone house. Its rooms are filled with muscular brambles and thorn trees press in from outside, but a handkerchief clearing now scattered with buttercups remains before the space left by the door. As I struggle around the house's perimeter I realise that the summer's growth of brambles and nettles would make exploration impossible. Everywhere surface dryness gives way to sucking cold and soon my shoes are clammy inside with muddy water. I am conscious of my bare arms and ankles, and periodically pick thorns from my clothes and skin. I hear birdsong, my dog panting, and far away the hum of a car. I contemplate the impossibility of forays such as this with a baby on my back.

Later I stand above Dean's Lake wondering if I am looking at Co. Fermanagh in the distance. The machinery continues to clank and I hear a child's shout. The ripe scent of cattle sheds follows me back to my car. Thinking about this last and most decrepit house my plans for my walks shift from exploring the border to looking in forest for abandoned houses. Given the potency of the rural cottage as a symbol of Irish identity and nationhood throughout the twentieth century, it seems both poignant and shameful that state forests should not only cover once-cultivated land, but encroach to the very doorstep of a house, all but obliterating traces of domesticity and family life. I imagine this process as akin to the state swallowing itself.

Second walk: Tuesday 13th April

Aware of the necessity of carrying out these walks without my baby, I take further advantage of my mother's visit to go out on the following day. Having formulated the notion of exploring areas of forest in search of houses, I set out feeling calmer and clearer and less hurried than I did the day before, intending to investigate a possible site less than a mile from where I live.

My cracked shoes feel damp and gritty against bare feet and I stop to shake them out. Again the sky is pale blue, the sun shines and the air is still behind birdsong and the buzzing of flies and bees. On the ditch are primroses in milky yellow and gold, the dark pleated leaves of wild strawberry and a few violets. A grey-green ash sapling stands smooth and nude in the hedgerow. A sound like a stone plopping into water draws my attention downward, where I notice a small pool, overgrown and almost invisible, behind a patch of road which is always wet. A spring, I suppose. The sun lights up the reddish mud and gives the water an oily sheen. I become aware of the noise of an engine ahead of me and look up to check the whereabouts of the dog and beckon her close; I hear the vehicle turn up a lane, and when I hear it coming back deduce that it is the post van, which soon appears in leaf green on the brow of the hill ahead. While I wait on the verge for it to pass I watch the sporadic flutters of a moth whose wings are pressed and flimsy, marbled and pale.

At the darkest and coldest spot on this route, where the sun barely shows above the spruce, lies my entrance into the forest. Two gateposts crouch reticently among the trees, with fence wire strung between them and a stone functioning as a kind of stile helping my climb in. These posts are my clue to the presence of a house within. My feet are touched immediately with dewy cold. A narrow trail beaten by sheep leads along the tree line into a dense thicket of gorse, from where a blackbird flaps up with a flash of orange beak. I turn back and duck into the forest, sinking into soggy black peat and needling my hand on groundsel. I roll up my jeans a little and push ahead, twigs scratching my limbs, pulling at my hair and prickling my scalp. I cut westward across an open corridor of colourless papery grass dotted with shimmering spider webs, and clamber over what looks like a sunken lane to re-enter the forest bowed low.

Bent double I can move fairly fluently downhill towards the river. My dog is there already, splashing and gulping. I cross a drain thickly lined in moss and bordered by hawthorn whose branches reach in unison for a meagre patch of light. The sound of water gets louder and articulates itself into separate trills, gurgles and ripples. At the river I pick gorse spines and spruce needles from my back and arms and crouch low to look along the bank. Sunlight gleams in water the colour of tea.

I spend time fighting my way along the river but discover nothing except an overgrown boundary wall, the stones announcing themselves cold and unyielding under their covering of grass. On my way back uphill I come to another clearing

where a holly and hawthorn stand intertwined and hung with a few blackened berries. I am still for a while, searching for further indication of a house. I am hot and thirsty and tired and prickle all over. Moving east and downhill again I come to a group of mossy old alders on the riverbank where a drain tumbles stones into a crescent of gravelly mud. Further east and uphill I find I am treading golden saxifrage under a cluster of ash and blackthorn, and glancing round notice what looks like an old lane walled in velvety stone. Following this track, convinced I am on the point of discovering the house, I end up back at the river at an enchantingly dappled spot and lose my pen. I am frustrated.

I resume my laboured progress uphill and eastward again through the forest and finally come upon a thoroughly hidden ruin. It seems to appear suddenly. Spruce grows against its walls, and its natural approach from the road, along which I began, is blocked by gorse. I can discern the remains of a house and an outhouse, and stumble over a broken wheel shaft half buried in dry and slippery needles. I piece together the relics of domesticity still extant in the forest – overgrown lanes, native trees, wild flowers, stone walls – in an attempt to imagine the landscape of home and farm. The brown gloom imparts a melancholy to my find and I feel deflated, not least by how swiftly I regain the road.

On my way home I am noticeably less observant, my sense of exploration gone. I see that my dog is limping and stop to extract a thorn from her paw. My arms and legs are pink and scratched and my hair and clothes are spiked with pine needles. The day has warmed.

Third walk: 25th April 2010

This time I plan my walk with the aid of an Ordnance Survey map. It feels underhand, since psychogeography centres on the impulse-led drift. However, I specifically want to discover a house and have limited opportunities to do so, and having silently reasoned this out, pore over the map to see where forest has encroached on houses and farms. I locate a promising stretch on the border river between Rossinver in County Leitrim and Garrison in County Fermanagh. The baby is cutting a tooth and feverish and when I leave he is in a storm of tears. My husband, tired after a week's hard work, carries him around the garden to distract and soothe him.

We have had a night and day of light, intermittent rain, and when I set out it is cloudy and damp and mild. Willows are powdered with yellow, hawthorns display their fresh and succulent green and ash trees show black knots. Dandelions, daisies and forgetmenots crowd the verge. Blackthorn blossom shows pearly against its sombre tracery of twigs and thorns, a composition which always seems Japanese to me. After stopping to fill the car with petrol I telephone home and am reassured that the baby is settling down to sleep.

Having descended from the blonde and brown hills of our valley, where spring growth is hindered by exposure to wind and cold, the road to Rossinver seems lushly verdant. Here the blackthorns are heavy and bridal and jostle against banks of brilliant gorse. The new horsetail bordering the road looks, as usual, thoroughly decayed. My route snakes along the shore of Lough Melvin and I turn right just before the border, which is marked by the Kilcoo River. After passing some trim houses and orderly gardens I am soon moving through unkempt fields, dark forest, peeling gates and dense hedgerows. A pair of horse heads cast in concrete marks one entrance, while another is cheerful with daffodils. Nearby someone has constructed a fence from birch poles, their frayed and silvery bark catching the light.

I begin my walk about a mile from the particular forest I intend to explore. The dog is with me again, glad to be free of the car. I look north towards Fermanagh across shorn and convulsed acres of harvested forest. The meadows to the south of the road are being recolonised by deciduous saplings, a sign that they have not been grazed for some time. A small stone in my boot (I wear stouter footwear today) and the persistent sound of heavy machinery some way ahead are bothersome. I strain to identify the sound, but cannot, and all I can

see from where I stand are rushy fields patched with forest. The mechanical noise fades and then returns, carried on a southerly wind.

I arrive at a river and bridge where I expect them to be, just beyond the way into the forest. The river is low and its banks are starred white with wood anemone. I turn and retrace my steps. The road is lined with brambles against whose wine-red leaves wild violets glow. The broad forest entrance soon narrows to a lane which comes to an abrupt and overgrown end, marked by a scrawny hawthorn. However, the raised ditch on either side continues through the trees and undergrowth and I am quite certain that this path will lead to a house.

I lower myself into the sunken lane, which is mossy and dim and floored with smooth black mud. Ivy and holly trail jungle-like around me and crimson cupped fungi show vivid in the gloom. I see a wall ahead, crush a rotten branch underfoot and swipe a sticky web complete with spider from my face. I arrive at a small clearing in the middle of which sit the remains of a house. Golden saxifrage and creeping buttercup populate the damp ooze underfoot. The forest is dark and dead-looking and exhales cool air, turning my breath to vapour, and as I move closer I see that what I took for a house is in fact an outhouse. The house itself sits further back in the clearing, against the tall spruce, and judging by the remnants of plaster on its walls seems to have been abandoned more recently than the others I have seen. The ground sucks at my feet and I am glad I wore boots. The place feels more than a little eerie. Then the throaty repetitions of a wood pigeon remind me of summer mornings in my childhood home and dispel any sense of the uncanny.

The forest falls away behind the house and I make my way down to look. I come out from the trees into cleared brush and hear running water, belatedly realising I am at the Kilcoo River and therefore the border. The river tumbles cheerfully eastward, clear and amber-brown, wide and shallow over a stony bed. Opposite I see a muddy finger of land reaching down to the water, presumably a drinking spot for cattle. A little way to the east is a bridge crossing the river and the border, not old and not young. Built, I think, before the farm behind me was swallowed up by forest, since now there is little point in joining these two stretches of land.

Returning uphill through the spruce wood sorrel is luminous in the murk and I walk back to the road on a path parallel to the sunken lane, which proves easier going. The trees are generously spaced, there is more light and no need to bend double. I find an old and dingy hazelnut shell near the beginning of the lane, but see no hazel tree. The coconut scent of gorse pervades the road as I walk back to the car.

FIONA WOODS
COLLECTION OF MINDS#1

collection of minds is a fluid platform for collaborative activity, initiated by visual artist Fiona Woods, in which people from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines are invited to contribute to projects that question the prevailing horizon of political, social and economic possibility.

#1 is an ongoing collection of minds project, commissioned by PS² for Rhyzom, that includes works by Ece Sariyüz (TUR), Fernando Garcia Dory (ESP) and Fiona Woods (IRL). Using zines and posters, each of these works explores the idea and practice of commons from various perspectives, drawing in contributions and collaborations from other people in the production and/or the distribution of the works. By using online and hand-to-hand distribution of physical materials for situation within the public domain, through existing and ad hoc networks, the project employs the local and the trans-local as circuits of production and distribution, parallel to the institutional site of art.

The work of collection of minds #1 is both the productions themselves and the fluid, shifting sets of relations between people, ideas, locations, practices and forms that emerge through the distribution of the works over time. Included here are some of the images showing the distribution of is it common?, Woods' poster work for the project.

www.collectionofminds.net

Is this common?, fiona woods. Photo and distribution by James Merrigan, San Francisco, 2010

'est-ce qu'on a ça en comun?', fiona woods. Photo and distribution by aaa, Paris, 2010

Is this common? fiona woods, photo and distribution by Áine Phillips, Kyoto, Japan, October 2010

'vi har til faelles?' fiona woods, photo and distribution by Thomas Gunnar Bagge and Mia Sloth Møller, Denmark, 2010

'avem acest lucru in comun?, fiona woods. Photo and distribution by Gareth Kennedy, Romania, 2010

'is this common?', from woods. Photo and distribution by Andrew Gryf Paterson, Helsinki, 2010

'is this common?', from woods. Photo and distribution by Brian Twomey, Aughinish, Co. Galway, Ireland. 2010

'har vi detta gemensamt?' photo and distribution by Emma Houlihan, Stockholm, 2010

'is this common?', from woods. Photo and distribution by Ian Tully, Moulamein, N.S.W. Australia, 2010

PS² FIELDS

'Fields' is a text around nine topics by Bryonie Reid, Ruth Morrow, Peter Mutschler, Fiona Woods and Sarah Browne. They are short responses, articulations and objections about reoccurring themes during the RHYZOM project. 'Fields' could be understood like a conversation on a walk in the countryside, with meandering paths, straight hedgerows, different groupings and with silence in between. 'It demonstrates each author's (and PS² associates) theory- and practice-based relationships with each other and offers a sense of our collective interests: that is, why we as a group are participating in Rhyzom.'

PS²
Belfast, Northern Ireland

WHO visual artists and multi-disciplinary creative practitioners
WHAT small studio collective and initiative of art projects
WEB www.pssquared.org
KEYWORDS *experimental - artist-led - socially relevant - transformative*

For Rhyzom, PS² invited artists, architects, a geographer and a gardener from the north and south of Ireland to work on the project, less as a group than as individual researchers. Orbiting like satellites, their contribution gravitated around the theme of cultural production in small towns and villages of the border regions between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. One island, similar in landscape and population, two nations different in political and cultural development, especially between the 1970's and early 1990's during the political troubles in Northern Ireland. To what extent the rural is integrated in the provision of cultural centres and what alternatives it generates, was and is part of ongoing projects by the participants within and across their professions. For PS², Rhyzom resulted in individual and collective outcomes producing new work, many connections and future projects. PS² and collaborators: Bryonie Reid, Craig Sands, Sarah Browne, Ruth Morrow, Gareth Kennedy, Fiona Woods, Anne-Marie Dillon, Peter Mutschler

1. Geographical and Cultural Context

One island, two countries; one belongs to the United Kingdom, the other, more than twice the population, forms the Republic of Ireland. They share similar geographies and a colonial past: a cause of constant struggle for political identity, forms of dependence, independence and nationalism; continuing up until this day in Northern Ireland.

Religious culture, political culture- or

in their perfect dualism- two cultures: North / South, British / Irish, Protestant / Catholic.

More than 90 years of independence in the South and decades of 'direct rule', with dependence from the British Westminster government in the North of Ireland, have shaped politics, the regional development and the conditions of culture. The 'rural', to the scale of small towns and villages, is in the recent decade an area of creative interest and location of

art/cultural production and distribution in the South, with series of projects like **'Ground Up'** in Co. Clare, **'AFTER'** and **'New Sites, New Fields'** in Co. Leitrim. In the North, 'culture' exists mainly in the few cities, with little regional competition.

The differences between both country's cultural politics, infrastructure and funding are comparable specifically if it comes to the border regions North / South of Ireland.

Available EU 'Peace' funding for Counties at the border during and after the peace process in Northern Ireland (-/+ 1998) was- and to a lesser degree still is- used for cultural initiatives in the South, hardly ever in the North.

Rural and local projects: from alternative gardening (**Organic Centre**) to productive art institutions (**The Dock**, Carrick-on-Shannon; **Sculpture Centre**, Manorhamilton) expand the term of culture, widen

participation through workshops and outreach programmes and wipe out the boundaries between urban and rural. PM

Again – if you ask Heather in CAF she might dispute – peace money funds lots of the community arts initiatives that they are involved in and that we saw in Creative Transformations book. RM

How do they expand the term culture? RM

2. Contesting Spaces

Spaces are subject to contestation at multiple levels. The most obvious spatial conflict in the Northern Irish context is sectarian in nature and involves claiming territories as Protestant and unionist or Catholic and nationalist. The juxtaposition of the army camp with the village in **Ballykinler** communicates something of Northern Ireland's troubled politics in a starkly spatial sense, but territories here are shaped too by

differences predicated on generation, class, gender and the status of insider or incomer. **Belleek's community garden**, created specifically as a shared space, is nonetheless subtly inflected by grades of ownership and belonging. In the Republic of Ireland processes of contesting space are no less immediate, although less overtly sectarian. Diverse narratives and practices intersect in the space occupied by the **Organic Centre** in north **Leitrim**, where organic horticulture has taken root in an

agriculturally traditional area. Tension and even discord over spatial imaginaries and practices serve as a reminder of the complexity inherent in all spaces. BR

All spaces are contested. All creative practices, whether art or architecture-based that are located in space either ignore that fact and remain on the surface (superficiality can be legitimate); or they engage with it with the acceptance that they can not resolve, but simply make explicit and attempt to be part of a process that begins to manage the contestation. In Northern Ireland the conflict around space is overt, at times overwhelming and certainly threatening – but it offers 'critical' examples through

which the latent conflicts in all spaces can be better understood. RM

The discomfort of explicit contestation of space is painful, but potentially productive, and perhaps this is an undervalued legacy of decades of communal conflict in Northern Ireland. BR

Contested space - one of the key terms in Northern Irish politics, planning and art intervention, practically ranging from sectarian enclaves marked by national flags (Irish/British) and 'peace walls' to an invisible, but collectively embedded knowledge of past histories of places (as locations of conflict, battles, murders). As trespassing wasn't allowed nor advised in the past (The Troubles), when public and private spaces were clearly defined and allocated, politics now moves towards the solution of a

consumer space. The task might be, to contest space, its users and inhabitants, with cultural attacks and sporadic floods. PM

3. What is PS² ?

PS² is both a physical space in Belfast that provides artist studios and a gallery/ project space, and something else that is more like a set of ideas and research interests. This more fluid entity is kept afloat by a dispersed group of interested people (us) who are associated more or less formally with PS² at different times. There is a core artist collective who run the studio space in Belfast in addition to the network of affiliates who work on

projects, exhibitions and publications that are concerned with the practices of public space, civic participation, gardening, identity and belonging, art and the built environment. The organisation receives funding from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland in addition to other sources. SB

PS² as an organisation, re-distributes funding to artists and spatial practitioners for creative and socially relevant experiments in art, public intervention, research and fringe activities of cultural production. PS² as an initiative, works with models of participation, collectivism, singled mindedness and changing constellations of associated individuals and groups.

RHYZOM follows the Robin Hood theme: with a new gang of like

minded people, social, cultural and spatial condition are studied, questioned and probed with the aim not to fight the cultural establishment, but to plant new cultures. PM

PS[2] evolved from a small artist collective with studio space in the centre of Belfast. It uses a ground floor space, with shop windows, as a project space and platform for art projects. It is run entirely on a voluntary basis with external funding covering only the costs of external contributors and resources. Working in this 'lean' manner, it focuses on art and creative practice in the urban context. The starting point is not to create public art, but to initiate and facilitate creative actions and

PS[2] aims to find ways to bridge the gap between cultural creative projects and the public. It makes space, both physical and intellectual, for creativity and social engagement. To date, the spaces it has made use of or is attracted by tend to be small scale, temporal, low cost, imaginative and tailor-made to socio/creative interactions. In this way the work of PS[2] offers a direct challenge to architecture, urban design and other forms of creative practice that exclusively pursue permanent, large

PS[2] is a complex solar system, with inner and outer planets, the odd comet, cosmic winds, black holes and eccentric orbits. PS[2] is not a fixed entity but a process of gathering people and practices together in a collective production, with Peter as the pivot and Ruth as an important gravitational force. FW

My most extensive and sustained experience of PS[2] has been in the context of Rhyzom. I see it in this sense as a group of people with overlapping areas of research and practice cohered in part through Peter's constellation of interests, which I consider to include space and place as these relate to visual art practice, the creative and performative possibilities of small-scale food production, urban and rural contexts for art and the significance of the Irish border for cultural activity.

processes within the public realm. It functions as a loose coalition of practitioners; artists, architects, geographers, writers, political activists, academics and designers. For the Rhyzom project, PS[2] became a grouping of practitioners already engaged or interested in rural contexts. Their interest overlaps in action coupled with debate in a socio-political context and importantly a continued search for excellence in creative outcomes.

scale interventions that poorly serve and ineffectively engage with the real needs, desires and dreams of communities. RM

4. Where art grows greener?

In part a utopian hope/ideal of the rural as a more challenging and productive location or laboratory for new art and cultural production, in part- see question mark- a negation: agri-culture works with fertilizers, what makes culture grow better and more productive for the social environment? Is it the physical environment, fields, cows, small villages or the mental space- the rural in our mind. PM

For me the group is consolidated further by personal relationships both pre-existing and resulting from the Rhyzom process. BR

It is not really typical for contemporary artists – here I mean mainstream, professionally active people engaged in their field whether that is architecture, music etc. – to choose to work outside metropolitan areas and institutions with their attendant resources and professional networks. As such it is a choice (if it is a choice) that becomes remarkable, and necessary to explicate, articulate, defend, indulge, describe, and in general reflect upon a great deal, even if it did not initially seem to be

that critical a dimension to that artist's practice. The decision to work in a rural setting tends to act as a professional marker. This can either diminish or bolster an aura of privilege that is directly indexed to mobility.

Some of the clichés about life in the country are true: it generally is quieter than the city and time can move differently. These might be conditions conducive for some artists to work better. Being an artist in a rural

context can shrink the distance between producer and audience, if that artist chooses to make their work public in their locality. Even if they don't, their identity as an artist is likely to be more a visible and public affair if they're living in a relatively small settlement of people. As such there may be particular challenges and opportunities for developing art practices in dialogue with other forms of production, such as vegetable growing or gardening or farming.

There is often a difficulty for professional cultural practitioners (such as artists, architects, academics) to earn a living in their immediate locality from their work, so that economic dependence may be tied to urban centres. Cultural institutions, organisations and individuals in Ireland also rely on public funding, chiefly from central government administered by the Arts Council; in the border region this is augmented with **Peace funding** and various **cross-border schemes**. As such, artists and

farmers in rural areas are often dependent on similar strategies of

subsidy, administered through separate bureaucratic lines from Brussels and Dublin. SB

Economics is indeed a pressing concern if academic as well as visual art practices are to flourish in rural as well as urban spaces. Dividing oneself spatially in order to earn a living can aid creativity, but at a pragmatic level saps energy and steals time. BR

Potentially art becomes more visible and shared in a rural community compared to the social cliques of the urban context. RM

Interesting that farmers have become

like art a subsided and indeed a cultural activity! RM

Within the course of the Rhyzom network this issue became contentious and debated.
On the one hand it was argued that such urban forms are inappropriate in scale and form for rural contexts, but more especially they become burdensome in a funding landscape that is targeted on project rather than core funding (i.e. running costs). Such urban forms however are notoriously hard to sustain. Energy, cleaning and maintenance costs can start to influence the cultural programming,

placing more urgency on income generation rather than cultural production. This naturally leads to proposals that cultural spaces of production and dissemination should be more appropriate to their (rural) context or rather the 'off-side', non-metropolitan funding landscape they occupy. Such spaces might be fluid, flexible, seasonal, small scale in core yet expandable in 'fair' weather. They might best survive by fitting closely to their context while elevating their intentions by marrying local

5. Nature of Space

From the work carried out by **University of Sheffield Students** of Architecture, from the instincts of individuals in PS² and from the evidence of Rhyzom field visits, we have come to realise that publicly funded cultural buildings within the rural context seem to adopt recognisable 'urban' forms.
(see NI Arts Councils Policy to build a cultural centre within 25miles of every NI inhabitants – ref / Iain Davidson)

production to 'urbane' discourses and interactions.

On the other hand, the argument that rural practices require the same forms of cultural dissemination as their urban neighbours exposes that space is not just functional but carries status, cultural and societal significance. There is of course a natural default that equates permanence | (i.e. a building) to relevance, visibility and status. But perhaps the concern is more for the

The question of whether grounding one's practice in a physical space (however tentative) is a matter of ethics and responsibility is important too. BR

existing representations that exist, such as the artistic retreat or the search for the 'good life', and often a deliberate self-consciousness about appropriating and subverting these expectations of the rural as a peaceful, romantic, ahistorical, unconflicted kind of experience. This necessity of mediating 'the rural' perhaps assumes that it is being told to 'the urban'. Does the rural tell its story to itself, can it become its own centre? Is there a necessity or possibility to develop a language

dedicated, white, permanent art spaces that urban forms offer. Such spaces, 'abstracted' from their context offer greater creative and intellectual freedoms than 'connected' spaces. Ultimately, the question arises whether abstracted and connected spaces (institutions) can exist in parallel or whether the existence of one naturally instates a hierarchy that diminishes the role of the other. RM

Inner- outer- urban- my- private- public- collective space.

Spaces between, above and under; dark and bright spaces; sunny and shadowy.

Occupied spaces, open spaces, shared spaces. No space, spaces free. PM

vegetable garden, washing lines from tree to tree, tight community...are replicated or re-invented in an urban context, with potato plants in buckets, washing lines in the courtyard and neighbourhood cafés and centres. PM

where the terms of engagement aren't based on dichomotomous pairs? SB
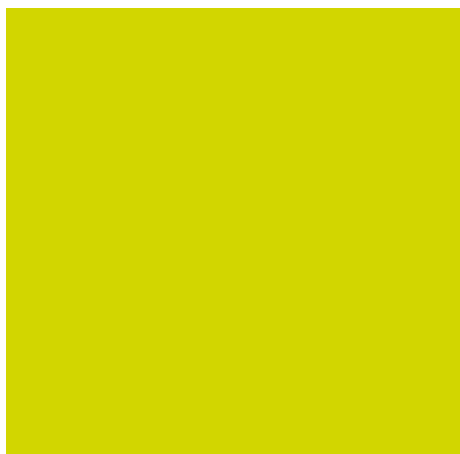
6. Rural

Not the opposite of urban. '**My villages'** replaces the rural term and refers to a categorisation of size/ population. The term village allows even its use in a city context, where areas are subdivided into villages- a name tag, however mostly restricted to affluent, culturally/ activist rich quarters (see the term 'Stadtteil' in German or 'Kiez' in Berlin). Ways of living, which would be initially associated with village living,

'The rural' exists as a narrative as well as an actual place of dwelling, a story told to oneself as well as to people living elsewhere. My research has mainly been concerned with migrants to the **Leitrim** area, most of whom are engaged with environmentally- or artistically-directed forms of cultural production, and this has been a common theme in my/ their sense of articulating the rural as a lived experience. There is an attempt to impose or integrate a personal narrative within and through the pre-

Perhaps it follows from the construction of urban and rural as binary opposites that rural practices are being justified continually to metropolitan centres. BR

from Belfast into a rural part of north Leitrim; and who is aware of having only a tentative hold on belonging there. BR

How can an arts facility and an organic gardening facility come together to enhance their individual productions and extend notions of 'rural' and 'culture' in ways that increase the possibility of developing critical, socio-spatial practices? What forms of agency are available to rural dwellers? FW

What I imagine of the rural and how I act in the diverse rural contexts in which I live and which I pass through is inflected multiply by my personal history. I approach the notion of the rural as someone who has grown up in a town; who has cherished desires to live in the country since childhood; who has made space and place the subject of a decade's academic research; who is intellectually critical of the romanticisation of rural Ireland but nonetheless retains a sense of it as ineffably beautiful; who has moved

7. Processes by which space is produced

What the different practices gathered around Rhyzom seem to have in common is an intention to open a critical space within an existing context, with a shared interest in the social relations of production and/or the symbolic representations which serve to maintain or disrupt those social relations.

The temporary gathering of practices

through the virtual space of Rhyzom creates an inventory of tools and methods used to facilitate subtle transgressions of Capitalist space; as such, Rhyzom is a circuit of production and distribution of ideas and knowledge related to the generation of critical spaces, but also a potentially critical forum to consider the implications of those. FW

Wondering if this latter section of Fiona's could be added to section 3. RM

8. conflicts

The conflict which interests me most arises from the PS² fieldtrip, in which much discussion focused on the spaces housing cultural activity in rural areas. Compared with the innovative use of a touring caravan as a community hall in Ballykinler, the buildings at the **Leitrim Sculpture Centre** and the **Organic Centre** appear unwieldy and financially burdensome. Although temporary and informal spaces can be liberating for

imaginations and practices, their existence often is a response to neglect. Participants disagreed over whether these spaces should be celebrated and emulated, or viewed as disheartening proof of a general contempt for the arts. BR

On the Rhyzom trip to **Ballykinler**, we discovered that the British Army has adopted the language of community arts as a military tactic in Afghanistan. This begs the question – what is it that we do when we develop new cultural tools? FW

9. Impacts

The toothbrushes of Fiona's kids left behind as proof of increased meetings and family inclusion during the RHYZOM project- an aspect never addressed in applications nor in practice. The model of a Robin Hood gang- group of artists, architects, geographer, with whom PS² worked before in different projects, but not in this wider constellation, was new. The centripetal forces were: the common research aspects, existing friendships

and similar social-cultural ideals, the centrifugal spin-offs were: the individualities and their own artistic/ creative practices. A relatively free floating working method with no gravitational forces and no strings, pulled by a co-organizer (PS²)? In part re-distributing the allocated project money is always one fat string. Should we have equally shared the budget? PM

The most fruitful aspect of Rhyzom for me has been the experience of working in parallel with people from other disciplines. This has revealed for me some unexpected disciplinary defensiveness within my own practice, as well as the constructive-ness of different forms of critical discussion. SB

Since my sense of PS² as a group of practitioners is solely in relation to the Rhyzom project, the most significant impact for me of Rhyzom has been to cohere this handful of people and provide a thematic framework for our interactions. As a result of this process, various members of the group have been able to identify common research interests, make contributions to each other's projects and begin to formulate plans for future collaborations. Making points of

connection within a European framework as part of the Rhyzom process also guards against a provincial perspective on the part of PS². BR

I have been really struck throughout the Rhyzom Network, especially on the field visit of **Ballykinler**, at how people from different social, intellectual, cultural backgrounds could still share a common love of cake coleslaw and quiche. I am sure places like **Ballykinler** rarely see such inter- cultural / national / professional / generational collections of people. There is something to be said for using EU funds to host such 'parties' of people.

PS² can only remain fruitful, if it applies creative thought to all levels of its activities from its use of small-scale resources to its openness and responsiveness to the thoughts and actions of others. The Rhyzom network seems to echo this as a whole and embrace, with large dollops of equality, each interaction it encounters. RM

If PS² is a solar system then Rhyzom is a constellation of stars. It looks different depending on where you are standing at any given moment. There are many trajectories that we could continue to trace and I hope we will. FW

EXTRACT OF RHYZOM FIELDTRIP REPORT: GARETH KENNEDY ON BEHALF OF PS²

Fieldtrip to three Orthodox Monasteries in the Calinestilor Valley in the Loviste region of Romania.

Organised by Community Foundation for Local Development (FCDL) Brezoi and aaa 5th-8th April, 2010

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Hosts:

FCDL Brezoi	Mihaela Efrim
Obstea Brezoienilor Asociatia Pro-turism Nedeea Valceana	Mircea Onica, Gigi Efrim
Rhyzom co-organisers	aaa - Doina Petrescu, Constantin Petcou
Guests	Fernardo Garcia Dory, Gareth Kennedy

- -

This fieldtrip's agenda as set by aaa was to focus on traditional (and rejuvenated) forms of collective organisation, management and production in a mountain area in Romania. These forms are embedded in particular social, geographic and economic conditions (ie. communities in isolated areas, formed around particular agro-ecological and cultural activities - sheep rising and pastoral activities, monastic life, common land management etc.). We are interested in the relations between culture, nature and resilience, the outcomes and the disseminations of such practices.

I (Gareth Kennedy) attended on behalf of PS². Fernando Garcia Dory, an artist from Asturias in Spain was the other guest.

The following is a series of bullet points, observations and open queries. The Lingua franca of the trip was of course Romanian and then primarily French. Although I was very well facilitated with English translation by Doina, Constantin and French speaking Fernando, I appreciate and acknowledge that some things are invariably either diluted or entirely lost in translation.

April 6th: The Monasteries

On day one we visited a succession of 3 different Orthodox monasteries in the Brezoi region. Although sharing a geographical proximity (all within walking distance of each other), due to differing topographies, altitudes, and degrees of solitude or access each of the three manifested a particular system and response to circumstances, and hence also expressed very differing daily practices and ethos.

To explore some of these differences I have composed a table:

Monastery	Geography/ topography	Access	Number of monks/ infrastructure	Economy, enterprise/ commerce?	Lay people as a function of Monastery	Facial hair
Stanisoara	High mountain valley, nestled in bowl, south facing with high limestone crags to the north	Dirt road or mountain/forest trail. 4x4 vehicle necessary. Anticipate it to be very cut off in harsh winter.	10 monks, 5 of which are resident in monastery with another 5 dwelling in huts and sanctuaries in and around monastery. Evidence of accommodation for many more. Simple infrastructure. Well maintained grounds: green house, newly tilled garden plots, chicken coop, many diligent guard dogs.	Self subsistent, with some reliance on donations from visitors. Income also generated from small quantities of schnapps, wine and honey produced at monastery. Also a gift economy in play with the complex and deferential interactions between the monks and their visitors. Vegetarian diet with dried fish bought in valley. Simple division of labour and duties. Economy is strictly a means to an end – that end being the maintenance of devout and austere spiritual/ religious practice.	No lay people are in the direct employ of monks. Public comes to visit monastery as pilgrimage of sorts, and may stay over night. The ethic of the monks is to still accommodate and feed people out of hospitality but for donation.	Long, quite wild and unkempt

Monastery	Geography/ topography	Access	Number of monks/ infrastructure	Economy, enterprise/ commerce?	Lay people as a function of Monastery	Facial hair
Turnu	Situated at a lower altitude on the south facing side of the Cozia valley.	Secondary road.	Approximately 30 monks. Beautifully manicured and maintained grounds. Old dwellings carved out of solid embankments of limestone converted into mini shrines as evidence of the monasteries austere origins. Dedicated workshops. Evidence of expansion and growth.	Much enterprise and attendant infrastructure. Specialised division of labour with specific monks as cooks, woodworkers, bee keepers and tailors. Dedicated woodwork shop, tailor shop for production of religious garments to export, aquaculture pond, conversion of truck in workshop to hold 20+ beehives which will become a travelling pollinator! Substantial and very well designed cattle shed. Producing cheese, wine, milk, honey, fruit, furniture, garments for export/sale to external markets.	Lay people in employ of monks as workers. Eg. The master wood worker monk works with a number of locally employed men. Other young men attend to cattle in sheds.	Long hair but more groomed

Monastery	Geography/ topography	Access	Number of monks/ infrastructure	Economy, enterprise/ commerce?	Lay people as a function of Monastery	Facial hair
Cozia	Located on floor of valley beside the river Olt and directly adjacent to a primary European road running up into Transylvania. Many roadside mini markets selling produce and also religious and Romanian themed kitsch.	Easy access. Just off primary road. Adjacent to famous spa baths and both a large neo vernacular hotel from circa 1900 and a modernist communist motel, both of which serve visitors to the spa waters.	50+ monks who were to be seen moving about grounds in small convivial groups in between tourist/pilgrims. Extensive well maintained grounds. Beautiful Orthodox church with very old frescos in central location. A few big blocks with accommodations for tourists/ pilgrims. Visitor centre with museum of artefacts. Evidence of expansion – new accommodations for visitors.	Service economy: appears quite like a monastery as roadside motel. Plugged directly into the surrounding economy of hotels, the spa, and the street vendors. Indeed, coupled with the Spa baths, it is the origin of this tourist trade.	Local people employed in upkeep of grounds and accommodations. Very large footfall of visitors/ tourists/pilgrims as is principal attraction within area.	Some long and wizened, but many also sporting stylish groomed goatees

Stanisoara Monastery

Observations

Each monastery manifests a social system in response to its location and its external relationships. It is interesting that in spite of their proximity we were told they have very little to do with each other. Each Monastery's 'Conductor' (Abbot) is in charge of the structure and material and spiritual maintenance of their Monastery – the system is strictly hierarchal and pyramidal with the Conductor's rule as absolute. We were led to believe that rather then being a generic homogenised practice each Monastery shares common Orthodox practices, but their daily regimens (everyday life) are very different. There is a sense, and this is only speculation on my part that as Cozia (the first monastery) became more and more established, splinter groups looking for a more sincere and isolated practice moved higher up into the valley for solitude and to concentrate on the core of their spiritual practice.

We discussed how the antiquity of the Orthodox church and its resurgence since 1989, offer the monks total legitimacy and support within the locality and beyond, with as I heard, some monks being regarded as 'super stars'. One or two of the monasteries were over 700 years old, an extraordinary lineage, and as with many religious practices there is a sentiment to move out of time and to cultivate a sense of the eternal.

We had good discussion on the monasteries and their relationships to growth and limitation, with growth being a function of the number of monks – that is men who in principle surrender themselves and self interest in the service of a higher external power – god. This principle is directly applicable to Stanisoara, (where only monks do all the work), then in the other monasteries who employ external labour and can therefore delegate work – particularly evident at Cozia where the Monks seemed at the greatest remove from the physical maintenance of their system (I may be mistaken here but I don't think so).

It was fascinating to see how each monastery manifested a distinct economic system. I was particularly intrigued when Constantin (perhaps a little hastily)

Turnu Monastery

Cozia Monastery

Calinestilor Dam on the River Olt by Cozia Monastery.

asked the monk at Stanisoara to explain the economy of the place and the monk redressed this question with emphasis on the spiritual, with the economy being totally subservient to this practice – most visible in the 7-8 hours of prayer the monks engage in daily. All work (and I have the feeling it is hard, repetitive work) is centred on sustaining this daily devotion – in base terms, on sustaining the bodies of the monks, their shelter and the system on which this prayer depends. This was contrasted with later discussion with the Monk at Turnu who described with enthusiasm the various enterprises of the Monastery – its aquaculture, mobile beehive pollinator, wood workshop etc. These were all activities geared towards export and markets external to their monastery system. Cozia as a 'service industry' was astonishing to see juxtaposed with these two other examples. I find the relationship between spiritual practice and material processes/physical work especially interesting here.

With regard to Turnu's mobile beehive pollinator, this is an extraordinary enterprise in the context of the monastery. I am very intrigued by the geographical scope of its operation and its articulation as a 'service' I presume to large fruit growing enterprises.

It was extremely insightful to visit these three monasteries in sequence. Undoubtedly each system is robust and operates on its own terms in its external relations. I sincerely doubt they have much need of the services of external cultural practitioners, but any project conducted in the area would not want to be blind to their presence and influence. Each monastery undoubtedly has massive so called 'cultural capital' in the area.

The monasteries are a collective but strict hierarchal order, whose premise functions on the monks surrendering of self interest to the practice and maintenance of a Monastic life devoted to a higher power. There is very little motivation for this 'selflessness' within secular systems. Fernando asked a very good question regarding is it possible to operate collectively without ideology or shared belief systems.

Artist's particular and ongoing interests with respect to the RHYZOM fieldtrip to Brezoi and the Calinestilor Valley, Romania:

Brezoi and the timber factory. Italian immigrants moved to the area in the 1850's to establish a timber mill and furniture factory. The expanse of the Olt river would have been used to transport timber downstream from the mountains to the Factory in Brezoi. This factory functioned under one order or another until 1997(?). I am very interested in this factory's output of furniture through time, made from Calinestilor timber – how do these articles articulate / embody the social mores, cultural tastes and economic history of 20th century Romania. What form would a suite of furniture take if produced for today?

IKEA's presence in Romania. I understand that IKEA uses much Romanian timber and has several factories in Romania. I am interested in how they negotiate these factories. It would be worthwhile to locate these IKEA factories and sub contractors in Romania. How does the scale and magnitude of the IKEA manufacturing phenomenon impact on localities and their natural resources?

Brezoi Furniture school. This was mentioned by Mihaela and was set up in the late 90's. What became of this? What became of this skills base within the area? What articles has this school left behind?

WORLD WIDE WEB
OPENWEAR

ecovillage
cooperative dwelling
limited collective
self-financing
self management
self-sufficiency

MICROPOLITICS RESEARCH GROUP *Micropolitics*
militant research
● London *subjectivity*

ECOVILLAGE SIEBENLINDEN

● SiebenLinden *activism*
alternative institution

ISPARA *participation*

HUSTADT PROJECT
● Hustadt *social utopia*
migration
integration
● Berlin
cooperative house K77
self-management
self-building
shared communal spaces

KAFIC *internationalization*
● Leipzig *migration*
twin-cities
local networks
participation
hospitality / hostility

AAA

PEPRAV *...ology*
...silience
self-organisation
rhyzomatic
AAA
RURBAN *agencies*

● Colombes
PEPRAV *alternative urban practice*
● Paris *action research*
collaborative network
LE 100

R-URBAN

ECOBOX

WHO l'atelier d'architecture autogérée (aaa) is a collective platform conducts actions and
research on urban mutations and emerging practices in the contemporary city, involving
architects, artists, students, researchers, activists and residents with different social and cultural
backgrounds.
aaa's projects focus on issues of self-organisation and self-management of collective spaces,
emerging networks and catalyst processes in urban contexts, resistance to profit driven
development, recycling and ecologically friendly constructions, collective production of knowledge
and alternative culture. Recent projects include Ecobox (2001-2006) which builds ecourban
network at La Chapelle community in Northern Paris and Passage 56 (2006-2010), an eco-interstice
in the East of Paris which acts as a cultural and social space where the ecological aspects
include energetic autonomy, minimal ecological footprint and a compost laboratory. aaa has also
coordinated PEPRAV (2007-2008), and Rhyzom (2009-2010)
WHAT a strategy for local resilience involving the creation of a network of locally closed
ecological cycles linking a series of urban activities (i.e., economy, habitat, culture, urban
agriculture) and using land reversibly
NETWORKS RURBAN www.rurban.net - European Platform for Alternative Research and Action
in the City (PEPRAV) www.peprav.net - RHYZOM, European network of trans-local cultural practices
www.rhyzom.net - Multitudes, revue politique, artistique, philosophique http://multitudes.samizdat.net/
KEYWORDS *three ecologies - resilience - self-organisation - rhizomatic agencies - urban interstice*

R-Urban explores the ecological, economic and social complementarities between four types of local
territories, spaces and activities: cooperative housing, ethic economy, urban bio-agriculture and local
culture production. What is at stake is how to re-assemble economic, temporal, social and ecological
bottom up initiatives into new agencies and collective processes that will conduct to the emergence of
another political space and new politics of the commun(s).

open source
fashion
community
ethical
peer production
WORLD WIDE WEB
OPENWEAR
● Ljubljijana

traditional collec-
tive organisation
commons
self management

CHIOSC *cultur...*
● Chisinau *activi...*
altern...

STANISOARA MONASTERY *self-organi...*
spirituality
OBSTE ● Cozia *self-subsis...*
● Brezoi

FUNDATIA COMUNITARA DEZVOLTARE L...

PLATEFORMA 9.81
● Zagreb *architecture*
activism
MAMA *critical urbanism*
media art *participation*
critical theory
hacking
free software
civic struggles
anti.gentrification

● Bucarest MUZEUL TARANULUI R...
peasant culture
alternative ethnography

R-URBAN

« The Earth is not a present from our parents. We only borrowed if from our children. »
Indian proverb

Why ?

It is perhaps the first time in history that our society develops global awareness and calls for the necessity of collective action to face the challenge of the future: global warming, depletion of fossil fuels and other natural resources, economic recession, population growth, housing and employment crisis, consequential increase of social divide and geo-political conflicts, etc.

The Earth's population currently consumes two and a half planets. This consumption is mainly located in the urban and suburban areas of the developed countries. There is an urgent need for efficient new models of ecological living and urban retrofitting. While governments and organisations seem to take too long to agree and act, many initiatives started at a local scale. (1)

These initiatives are nevertheless confronted with the difficulty of changing the current economic and social model of society based on increased global consumption. How to construct a socially oriented economy, which does not depend on the global market? How to initiate progressive practices and sustain ecological lifestyles while acting locally? How to reactivate cultures of collaboration and sharing in a world that promotes individualism and competition?

The R-Urban strategy proposed by atelier d'architecture autogérée explores alternatives to the current models of living, producing and consuming in cities, suburbs and the countryside. It draws on the active involvement of the citizen in creating solidarity networks, closing local cycles between production and consumption, operating changes in lifestyles, acting ecologically at the level of everyday life.

What?

R-Urban proposes a retrofitting of the city through principles following the ecological Rs: Recycle, Reuse, Repair, Re-think, etc.

R-Urban also aims to explicitly reconnect the Urban with the Rural through new kinds of relations, more complementary and less hierarchical.

As other emerging strategies, it aims to increase the social, urban and cultural Resilience. (2)

In contrast to ecological resilience, social, urban and cultural resilience could be adaptive and transformative, inducing change that offers huge potential to rethink assumptions and build new systems. (3) It is this transformative quality that interests us within the R-Urban approach, which is not only about sustainability but also about change and re-invention.

In the case of European cities, the resilience capacity should also allow for the preservation of specific democratic and cultural values, local histories and traditions, while adapting to more economic and ecological lifestyles.
A city can only become resilient with the active involvement of its inhabitants. To stimulate this commitment, we need tools, knowledge and places to test new practices and citizen initiatives, and to showcase the results and benefits of a resilient transformation of the city.

TRANSITION TOWN TOTNES
Totnes, Great Britain

WHO a self-organised and diverse group of local people from all backgrounds, ages and experiences (primarily volunteers, 2 full-time and 6 part-time people)
WHAT a community-based organisation with nearly 40 local projects and 9 thematic groups working to strengthen the economy and prepare for a future with less oil and a changing climate
WEB http://www.transitiontowntotnes.org/
KEYWORDS *activism - alternative institution -participation - ecological cultural practices - alternative economy - collective organisation*

TTT help create thriving, healthy, caring local communities where people's ways of life take into account the needs of future generations as well as the present ones. Rising fuel prices, economic uncertainty and climate change bring many challenges. However, TTT focuses on these as opportunities to increase personal and community well being, to expand our local economy, and to find ways of living that are in line with our Earth's natural systems. The Transition Network are there to support the ever-increasing network of Transition Initiatives across the UK and the world and train communities as they self-organise around the transition model, creating initiatives that rebuild resilience and reduce CO2 emissions

Strategy

The R-Urban strategy is built upon coordinated actions at different local scales (domestic, neighbourhood, city, region) and complementarities between five fields of activity:

• residential (co-operative ecological housing)
• economy (social and local economy)
• agriculture (organic urban agriculture)
• culture (local cultural production and trans-local dissemination)
• mobility (no fossil fuel dependent transport)

These fields cover the essential aspects that define the contemporary urban condition. Flows, networks and cycles of production - consumption are formed across these fields, closing chains of need and supply as locally as possible, but also in as many and as diversified ways as possible.

To overcome the current crisis, we must try, as French philosopher A. Gorz states 'to produce what we consume and consume what we produce'. (4) R-Urban interprets this chain of production - consumption broadly, well beyond the material aspect, including the cultural, cognitive and affective dimensions.

réseau d'éco-rurbanité
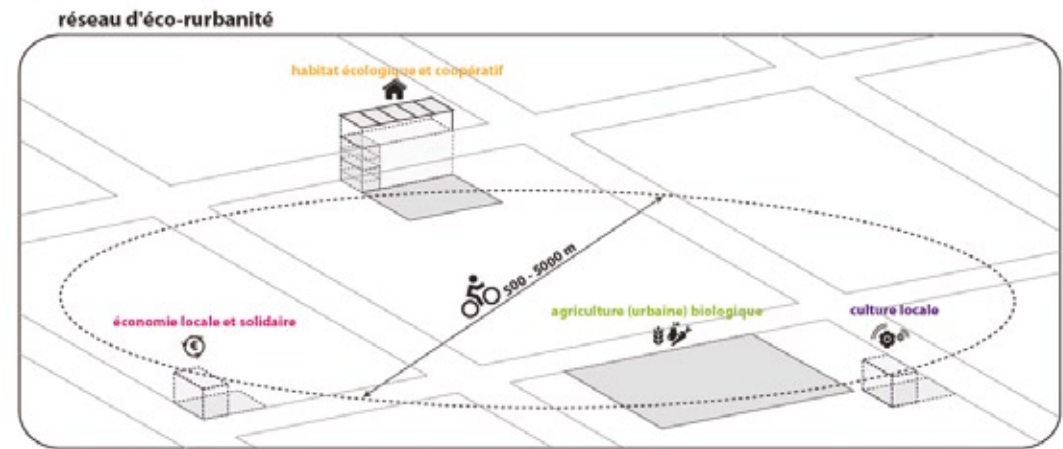
possible locations of fields of activity within R-Urban in the context of European cities
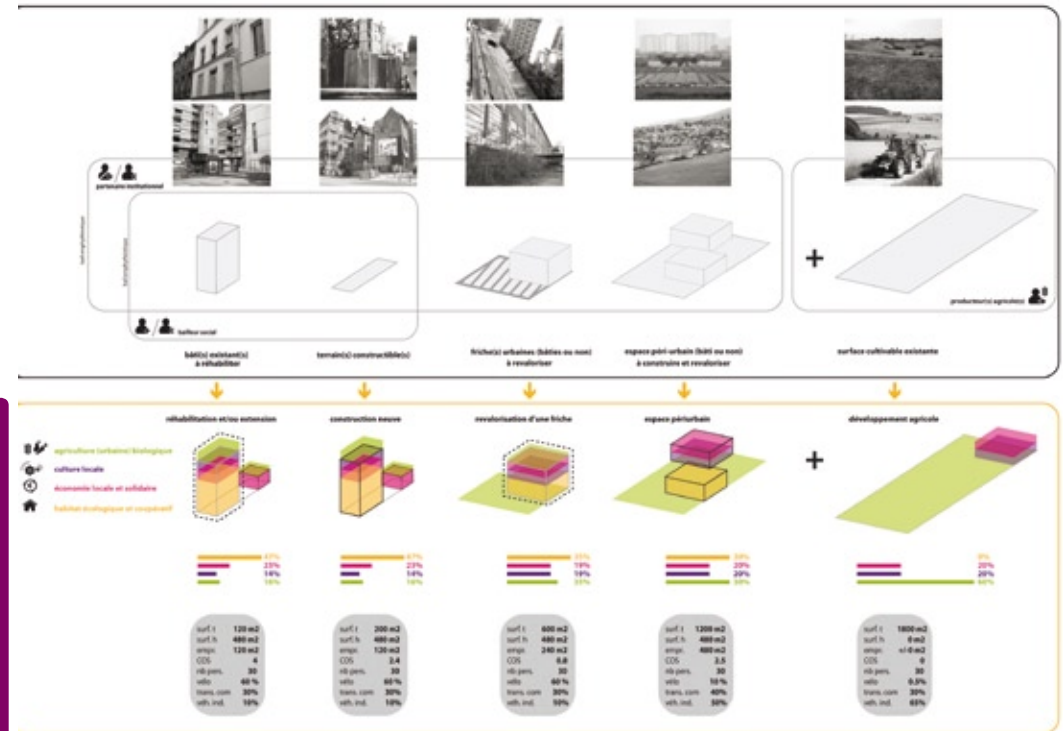
resilience potential of different micro-urban contexts

CONTEXTS OF INTERVENTION

Schumacher College aims to help participants experience what Dartington's founder Leonard Elmhirst called "the abundant life". The communal life of the College takes place in and around a medieval house near Totnes. During the day, lectures, discussions and small groups take place. Afternoons provide opportunities for field trips to the coast or Dartmoor, walks, private study, tutorials or specialist lectures. There is the opportunity for a period of meditation, a group meeting and a session during which participants help with preparing food and maintaining the immediate environment. This aspect of the course is an essential part of the College life. Embedding the intellectual discussions in the everyday business of taking care of the buildings and each other promotes a level of understanding in which combines personal values and the course objectives.

20%
autoconstruction

élément
autoconstruit

-50%
consommation
d'électricité

réseau public

ECO CONSTRUCTION
recyclage de matériaux

-50%
d'émission de CO_2

redistribution
possible localement

+10%
biocapacité
environnementale

-30%
déchets
ménagers

-50%
consommation
d'eau pour l'habitat

réhabilitation de
bâti ancien

ECONOMIE LOCALE
ET SOLIDAIRE
échanges de services
échanges en nature
entre-aide et mutualisation

surface agricole cultivée

+20
emplois créés pour 30
habitants

élevage /
fructiculture /

céréales

maraîchage

espace d'activité économique

AMAP
partenariat
habitants / maraîcher

classe verte
activités enfants

CULTURE LOCALE
restaurant coopératif
résidence étudiants / artistes
espace corps/santé

Locally closed ecological cycles:
material (water, energy, waste, food) and
immaterial (local skills, social economies,
local cultures, self-building, self-organisation).

STRATEGY OF RESILIENCE

Where?

The R-Urban strategy could be applied in suburban contexts to deal with the collapse of the modern urban ideals (monotonous urban fabric, obsolete tower blocks, real estate bankruptcy, segregation, social and economic exclusion, land pollution…) and their transformations. Between the urban and the rural, the suburban condition could valorise the potential of both.

R-URBAN strategy could also operate within dense urban contexts, in which the rural is internalised and disseminated through specific practices, economies and lifestyles (i.e. urban agriculture, exchange systems, self-build, waste-recycling, etc.).

Local Mapping

We have started by identifying micro-local practices and interstitial spaces that could immediately be connected and activated (i.e. local skills and ecological practices, active individuals and organisations, underused spaces and urban leftovers, opportunities or gaps in rules and regulations, etc.). Local residents are involved in the setting up and management of the strategy, contributing to its social, environmental and economic sustainability. The project fosters local exchanges and (rural and urban) networks and tests methods of self-management, self-build and self-production.

CRAVIROLA
Minerve, France

WHO ten people of diverse age and background
WHAT a self-managed and agricultural co-operative
WEB http://www.cravirola.com/
KEYWORDS *culture / activism / ecological cultural practices / collective organisation*

La Coopérative Cravirola regroupe une dizaine de personnes d'âges et d'origines divers. Elles partagent valeurs et aspirations, travail et revenus pour expérimenter de façon collective et autogestionnaire une alternative au système établi. Tout à la fois idéalistes et pragmatiques, elles font vivre un lieu ouvert, Le Maquis, dont la polyvalence reflète et concrétise leurs convictions. On y trouve : * Une ferme qui produit des aliments biologiques (fromage, viande et charcuterie, pain, légumes, etc) selon les principes de l'agriculture paysanne… * Des formes d'accueil originales où les hôtes sont impliqués dans la gestion et l'animation du site (chantiers solidaires, camping participatif autogéré,…) * Des installations diverses pour faire place aux initiatives culturelles, artistiques, pour s'informer, échanger, à propos de questions sociales, politiques, environnementales… * Un lieu de rencontres autour du projet 'Cultivons le Maquis' : camping participatif, chantiers solidaires (sans subvention),… *Un 'compagnonnage alternatif' par l'accueil d'artistes en résidence, de groupe militants, de stages, etc.

Empty buildings and leftover space mapped by residents

CATALOGUE OF LAND AVAILABILITY
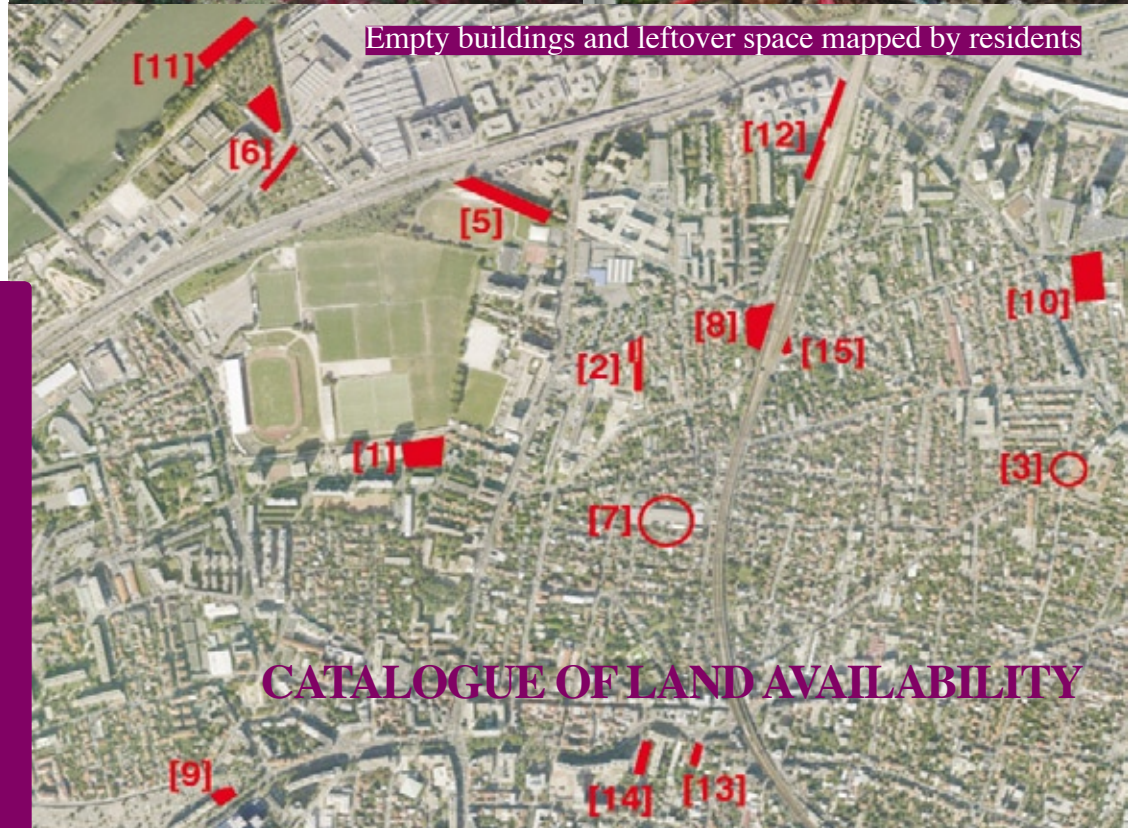
Prototypes

In order to begin, we have constructed and tested a number of prototypes for urban agriculture (in Paris and Colombes, a suburb in the North West of Paris) and related practices: recycling and cultivating roofs (ECOroof), vertical green walls (aaa office), windows (aaa office), compost toilets (Passage 56), recycling of urban matters and their integration into agricultural soil (Passage 56) etc.

We have also set up social, economic and cultural networks based on existing and emerging local initiatives. We have conceived and experimented with ecological devices and locally closed cycles: water, energy, waste (Passage 56, Jardins d'Audra).

We have identified and encouraged local skills necessary to support such initiatives, some of them marginalised or overseen and have invited specialists to contribute to learning and re-skilling processes (workshops Passage 56).

We have elaborated forms of knowledge production and skill exchange (Participative Urban Laboratory - LUP).

These prototypes allowed us to experiment with simple methods of implementation of an ecological approach at the level of everyday life and to generate self-managed collective use and environmental practices.

Compost toilets, a growing window and a vertical vegetable garden in a small residential courtyard

PROTOTYPES

MUZEUL TARANULUI ROMAN
Bucarest, Romania

WHO Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcaş, Horia Bernea, Irina Nicolau, Tatomir and current staff
WHAT a public institution dedicated to Romanian peasant culture
WEB http://www.muzeultaranuluiroman.ro/
KEYWORDS *peasant culture - alternative ethnography*

The Romanian Peasant Museum is in possession of an especially rich collection of objects, hosted in a Neo-Romanian style of historical monument-building, the Museum developed a highly original museography honored in 1996 by receiving the EMYA – European Museum of the Year Award. The originality of the exhibiting style is continued in the Museum's publications, in actions such as the Missionary Museum, the Village School, concerts, conferences and exhibition openings.
'Whatever others may feel, we feel at home in our Museum. We feel good here, we like to look around the rooms with painted walls, full of beautiful, surprising or simply familiar objects. We feel closer to our parents and know there are stories here to share with our children. Working together everyday, we sometimes feel like a big family. Do you hesitate to believe us? Come to the Peasant Museum and see for yourself…' (MTR homepage)

Passage 56

Use of recycled materials and self-building, Passage 56, Paris, 2006-2009

ECO-CONSTRUCTION

Transformation of roof terrace into a vegetable garden by adding a new wood structure and re-using plastic crates and plastic bottles, Workshop run in collaboration with the University of Sheffield, as a live project.
ECOroof - le Cent, Paris, 2009

RECYCLING, REUSING, RETROFITTING

URBAN AGRICULTURE
IN DENSELY BUILT AREA

food growing on terrace roof,
ECOroof - le Cent, 2009

Active dwelling

The dwellings developed by R-Urban are composed of different active spaces, which allow for self-building and re-design by users. These dwellings include workshops in which one can acquire traditional techniques and skills in fabrication of objects and installations by using different organic or recycled materials, notions of medical and nutritional science, body techniques.

R-Urban provides spaces for concrete transformation of green materials, experimentation with recycling techniques, methods of producing renewable energy and other ways of reducing the ecological footprint. All residents will have access to DIY facilities and collective workshops. Children's game and playgrounds will stimulate the imaginary of fabrication, making, construction, gardening and care. Knowledge and skills in organic agriculture, as well as other forms of manual work will be revitalised.

The dwelling will rediscover its intrinsic quality of productive space, being liberated from the limitations imposed by a society that promotes lifestyles strictly based on consumption; the consumerist dwelling will be replaced by an active and productive dwelling.

R-Urban is based on a micro-urbanism approach: a soft urbanism which activates at a small scale, at the level of everyday life and through self-built and re-design approaches. This 'soft urbanism' valorises other essential dimensions of dwelling; it provides spatial opportunities for social relations of proximity and micro-facilities to activate collective living and ecological practices at the level of everyday life.

BEAUCHAMP
50 km near from Bordeaux, France

WHO a group of 3/5 persons who live in Beauchamp
WHAT Beauchamp property was bought eighteen years ago, at which time it was a ruined building with collapsed roof, hay fields with cattle, neglected vines and woods. With the help of hundreds of people Beauchamp has come to life again. Other constructions include a 20m2 workshop with wood machines and tools, a 25m2 cabin, external compost toilets, a tipi – all built from green wood – and numerous polytunnels
WEB http://beauchamp24.wordpress.com/
KEYWORDS *organic ecofarm - permaculture - wwoofing*

'We have opted for living a simple life that is affordable for many, doing as much as we can to be self sufficient, depending as little as possible on outside resources. Mostly we eat together – vegetarian food, lots of which comes from the garden. If not, it is bought locally and/or organically. The building is heated with our own wood – a central heating boiler that runs during the winter months, and a wood stove for cooking and heating water. We use composting toilets and our grey water is processed by a reedbed system that feeds into a pond full of fish, which is then pumped to water the gardens. We store, filter and use rainwater from the roof. There are no flush toilets and no mains sewage system. We have electricity, a telephone, use computers, are connected to the Internet, have cars and bicycles (but no television).' (Beauchamp homepage)

Green productive spaces

Considering the living condition in a broad sense, which extends to include everyday activities, R-Urban proposes another presence of nature in the city. Green productive spaces will be integrated into residential, public, cultural and economic spaces, which will be, in this manner, retrofitted through ecological activities and collective care. These green productive spaces will be defined according to the urban local contexts and the particularities of the users involved.

By hybridising different types of activity, we encourage interactions between different kinds of production (economic, social, affective, etc.) and between different users. Such activities include DIY workshops, music, debates, cooking, pedagogy, gardening, etc. This multiple productivity which encourages exchange of knowledge and skills, allows, at the same time, new local actors to emerge while creating porosity between different types of knowledge: contemporary and traditional, amateur and professional, popular and savant. In this way, the urban activities will contaminate each other and articulate new cultural, social and professional configurations. These urban articulations have by themselves a capacity of regeneration and activation, creating what Guattari calls 'new productive agencies'. (5)

Democracy through living

The diversity of co-operative dwellings and self-managed cultural and economic activities should allow dis-assemblages within the desubjectivised social systems in which we currently live. For this, it is necessary to act tactically in accessible interstitial spaces and temporalities, to facilitate the participation of all those who have only limited availability. The R-Urban approach allows a first step into this little-by-little disassemblage of a system in crisis. The transformation of these small disassemblages into a sustainable and large scale strategy depends on the long term involvement of each person and large scale strategy depends on the

Passage 56, a self-managed ecological and cultural urban interstice

ECO VILLAGE SIEBEN LINDEN

Ökodorf Sieben Linden

WHO   an intentional community/village of people who are committed to self-sustainable and low-emission living. Different organisational and legal relations are organised in various co-operatives
WHAT   from the website: 'The Ecovillage of Sieben Linden is a social and ecological settlement in Altmark in the region of Sachsen-Anhalt (former East Germany). The concept for this Ecovillage came up around 1989. After 4 years, in 1993, a group of people bandied together to purchase a "project center" in order to more effectively search for land to settle on - and to promote the concept to politicians and others. In 1997 they found the land that we have (and continue to) built the Ecovillage of Sieben Linden on - located 25 km south of the project center.'
WEB http://www.siebenlinden.de/
KEYWORDS *shared - ommunal - ecological - rural development*
see also Atlas p. 305

long term involvement of each person and on the collective dynamics that are formed around these individual initiatives.

R-Urban promotes an urban environment which can adapt itself to the aspirations of becoming as they are expressed by every city dweller. This should be constituted progressively, by welcoming the most varied range of activities proposed by all kind of residents, including everyday life activities that people can develop in their free time. In a second phase, these non productive activities could evolve into economic, cultural and ecological activities, which will gradually replace the current productive and re-productive relations and will fundamentally define more democratic and more sustainable ways of working and living.

R-Urban recognises the condition of 'dweller' as political, and promotes an emancipatory politics of living within populations who are usually limited in their existential choice by their social condition and the spatial, social and cultural experiences they have access to.

R-Urban actualises the potential of urban dwelling according to social and ecological values, which include ethical and environmental principles: waste and energy reduction, use of renewal resources, recycling, etc. In this way, sociability takes on ecological dimensions and becomes an eco-democratic sociability.

By introducing the capacity of multiple productions (green productive spaces, active dwelling, local economy, etc.) R-Urban enables a more sustainable democracy, understood as a re-appropriation of commons. In their recent texts, Hardt and Negri define this as: 'The common is what we have in common- it is not discovered but produced (…) We call "biopolitical production" the current dominant model to underline the fact that it involves not only a material production in straight economic terms, but also it affects and contributes to produce all other aspects of social life : i.e. economic, cultural and political. This biopolitical production and the increased common

mur de voisinage, collective garden and self-managed micro-urban devices, Passage 56

new forms of commons developed within a self-managed collective space: everyday life activities, skill exchange, collective workshops and debates, etc.

OBSTE

Brezoi, Romania

WHO commoners of the village of Calinesti organised in Obstea Mosnenilor
WHAT traditional organisation of residents who own collectively and manage the commons of the village since the 18th century
KEYWORDS *traditional collective organisation - commons - self-management*
see also Atlas p 280

which it creates, support the possibility of democracy today' (6). A sustainable democracy should be based on a long term politics of the commons but also on social solidarities understood as commons.

Cultural resilience; cultures of resilience

In contrast to other initiatives that deal exclusively with issues of sustainability as technological, environmental or social, (7) R-Urban states the importance of culture. The future is culturally formed as much as the past is, says Arjun Appadurai, and this is because culture deals with 'the capacity to aspire'. (8)

Within a resilient condition we need to reach an 'ecosophic' stage of culture, which considers mental, environmental and social aspects alike. In this respect, R-Urban operates with an extended notion of culture that includes material and immaterial production, skills, mentalities, habits, patterns of inhabitations, etc.

But how exactly does this relate to the idea of local? Can a resilient culture be localised? These were the questions that R-Urban brought to the agenda of the Rhyzom network. (9)

Localisation is a term usually discussed in relation to resilience. Rob Hopkins, the founder of Transition Town network, defines it like this: 'The concept of localisation suggests that the move away from globalised distribution systems is not a choice but an inevitable change in direction for humanity. The rebuilding of local economies offers a response to the challenges presented by peak oil, as well as a tremendous opportunity to rethink and reinvent local economies'. (10) However, within the contemporary condition, culture can't be assigned anymore to a geographic location. If we can localise economy we will never be able to fully localise culture. Cultural resilience negotiates between the necessity of rebuilding local economies and keeping us globally connected.

But how can we still be connected in a resilient way? How to associate and empower resilient practices, skills, mentalities, habits, economies at a bigger scale? Maybe 'from local to local', through relational institutions which federate heterogeneous components, both cultural and environmental, amateur and professional, civic and educational… In such way, resilient practices could go beyond the sphere of the local and become trans-local, could operate a re-weaving of scales and issues through the construction of a

PARTICIPATIVE URBAN LABORATORY (LUP)

Series of public debates on current political and ecological issues

practices could go beyond the sphere of the local and become trans-local, could operate a re-weaving of scales and issues through the construction of a trans-local mode of functioning.

Living practices, deep locals, cultural and social biodiversity

As many other projects within the Rhyzom network, R-Urban addressed also the idea of a deep local, a multilayered local made out of multiple and heterogenous micro-locals. Such micro-locals are also expressed at the level of everyday life practices, proximity dynamics, domestic habits, neighbourhood relations. They represent specific cultures of living.

In addition to existing local cultures of living, R-Urban proposes new collective forms of these cultures through reinventing and revitalising proximity relations based on solidarities (i.e. ways of being involved and deciding collectively, sharing spaces and group facilities, rules and principles of co-habitation etc.). Urban life styles in neo-liberal societies have abandoned progressively the different forms of solidarity that were perceived as inadequate and outdated. Though, it is exactly these relations of reciprocity which constitute the fundament of social progress. In his analysis of the connections between the economic and the political (inspired by Tarde's sociology), Lazzarato describes the civilisation of 'progress' as 'a constantly renewed effort to replace the reciprocal possession by the unilateral possession'. (11) Or, it is exactly these relations of reciprocity and solidarity that are missing in the urban environment today.

In contrast, the dwelling and the living models proposed by R-Urban are based on solidarity relations and implicitly produce sociability and common values and affective relations. They can allow for further emergence of conditions for the production of locality through authentic cultural phenomena, which are fed by their territorial anchoring and their transversal co-operation. (12)

The 'locality' is formed as such through a multiplicity of micro-social and cultural phenomena which are embedded in their territories. Guattari underlined the role of micro-practices in what he called a heterogenesis process: 'it is essential that micro-political and micro-social practices, new solidarities organise themselves (…) It is not only that these different levels of practicing haven't been homogenised (…) , but that they operate in a

meeting of the urban gardening group Jardins d'Audra, Colombes, 2009

VIEL AUDON
Balazuc, France

WHO Association *Le mat*
WHAT a cooperative village
WEB http://vielaudon.free.fr
KEYWORDS *activism - ecological practices - collective organisation*

Le hameau du Viel Audon est un ancien hameau abandonné, redécouvert dans les années 70 par un groupe d'amis qui ont voulu lui redonner vie et construire une expérience cooperative et pédagogique. Aujourd'hui ce hameau abrite une ferme caprine, un centre d'accueil d'éducation à l'environnement et au développement durable et un gîte d'étape. L'équipe permanente du village coopératif du Viel Audon assure la responsabilité et la coordination de l'ensemble des activités du site et agit pour une gestion durable des ressources (économie d'énergie, recyclage des déchets, production agricole respectueuse des cycles). Les choix de consommation et les modes de vie développés sur le site sont une base pour la réflexion, l'action et la pédagogie.

CULTURES OF RESILIENCE

heterogenesis process'. (13) It is this kind of heterogenesis process that can produce and preserve local cultural and social biodiversity which is based on sustainable solidarity.

Transformations have to take place at micro-scale with each individual, with each subjectivity and this is what constructs a culture of resilience and at the same time a resilient culture. As Hopkins puts it: 'Resilience is not just an outer process: it is also an inner one, of becoming more flexible, robust and skilled'. (14) The culture of resilience includes processes of reskilling, skills-sharing, building social networks, learning from others, learning from other experiences. These micro-social and micro-cultural practices are most of the time related to lifestyles and individual gestures, they prompt attention to details, to singularities, to the capacity of creativity and innovation that operates at the level of everyday life. R-Urban offers a platform for such

practices to gain visibility and feel empowered in their singularity while being connected to others through relations of reciprocity. This is a form of cultural resilience.

Pioneering R-Urban

Currently, R-Urban strategy is tested for a first implementation in Colombes, a city of 30 000 inhabitants in the North West suburbs of Paris. The local council and a number of local organisations have formed the first R-Urban Agency. Available plots have been identified and connections have started to be established between some of them.

An urban agriculture pole has been initiated at the foot of a high-rise building

PIONEERING

JARDINS SAUVAGES D'AUDRA
Colombes, Suburb in the Ile de France Region

WHO habitants de Colombes
WHAT auto-gestion des terrains urbains délaissés
WEB http://beauchamp24.wordpress.com/
KEYWORDS *community gardening - suburban estates - self-organisation*

Cette association de quartier est à l'initiative de l'appropriation des espaces urbains délaissés pour les transformer en jardins de proximité et autres types d'activités sociales, économiques et culturelles. Actuellement 60 familles sont investies dans différentes activités

Les Jardins Sauvages d'Audra» a pour but la promotion d'activités d'écologie urbaine (jardinage, agriculture urbaine, ateliers, recyclage...) par une réappropriation par les habitants des espaces urbains délaissés, friches urbaines et industrielles.

on a plot negotiated for reversible use with the Poste company which owns the land. A social economy cluster and organic food market will be initiated in connection with the cultivation of plots. A Recycling Unit which will process construction materials and a co-operative housing built from these materials will start next year. Seminaries, debates and workshops disseminate knowledge and skills necessary to the process. A trans-local research centre will disseminate cultures of resilience in the region. R-Urban is on the way.

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1   Transition Towns, Incredible Edible, Continuous Productive Urban Landscapes (CPULs), to name only a few, are such initiatives that have started at the local scale and have further developed into extended networks.

2   The word 'resilience' expresses the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and re-organise itself while undergoing change, so as to retain essentially the same function, identity and feedbacks. The cities will need to be resilient at ecological, economic and social level.

3   cf. Brigit Maguire and Sophie Cartwright 'Assessing a community's capacity to manage change: A resilience approach to social assessment', (2010); http://learningforsustainability.net/susdev/resilience.php.

4   André Gorz, in Manifeste Utopia, (Edition Parangon: Brest, 2008), p. 13.

5   Félix Guattari, Les trois écologies, éd. Galilée, 1989, p.43

6   Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, Multitude, Guerre et démocratie à l'âge de l'Empire, éd. La Découverte, 2004, p.9-10

7   see note 1.

8   cf. Arjun Appadurai, "The Capacity to Aspire," in V. Rao, M. Walton (Eds.), Cultural and Public Action, (Stanford University Press: Stanford, 2004)

9   Rhyzom network provided a model of propagation and exchange within R-Urban, based on reciprocity and mutual interest, and a form of exploring modes of trans-local relationality, which respect the diversity of local cultures and practices.
Within Rhyzom, we were interested in learning more about different cultures of resilience as they were developed within other local contexts and through different types of practice (i.e. artistic-agricultural, political-agricultural, existential-political-economic, gendered-craft, architectural-agricultural, etc.). aaa has initiated a number of fieldtrips to visit and document

self-managed farms (Cravirola Bauchamp), eco-villages and intentional communities (Siebenlinden, Can Masdeu) as well as contemporary forms of traditional self-organised villages (Obste in Romania), emerging eco-networks like Transition Town or rural art networks like myvillages. We have also participated in gatherings that addressed the role and necessity of creating new types of organisations or institutions that can stimulate the idea of common production and its dissemination. (i.e. Casa Invisible in Malaga, Grizedale in Cumbria, Mobile Community Centre in Ballykinler). With the Schumacher College in Totnes, an organisation that was instrumental for what has now become the Transition Town network, we have understood the importance of a local centre where knowledge is produced and disseminated. We have also understood the importance of transmission, of places, networks and tools of dissemination of alternative knowledge.

10   Rob Hopkins, ' What communities can Do' (HYPERLINK "http://www.postcarbon. org/Reader/PCReader-Hopkins-Communities.pdf"www.postcarbon.org/Reader/PCReader-Hopkins-Communities.pdf, 2010)

11   Maurizio Lazzarato, Puissance de l'invention, La psychologie économique de Gabriel Tarde contre l'économie politique, éd. Les Empêcheurs de penser en rond, 2002, p.354

12   for the notion of 'production of locality' see the work of Arjun Appadurai

13   F. Guattari, ibid. p.45-46

14   R. Hopkins , ibid. note 9

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AGENCY

microfinance
poverty alleviation

AGENCIES OF LIVE PROJECTS

solidarity

WHERE University of Sheffield, School of Architecture + Istanbul, Paris, Belfast and different locations along the Border between Northern and Southern Ireland

WHO Agency - Transformative Research into Architectural Practice and Education (Cristina Cerulli, Florian Kossak, Doina Petrescu and Tatjana Schneider) **Live project teams: Ireland /** Students: Nick Evans, Dean O'Brien, Pol Gallagher, Caitriona McGhee, Stefan Amato, Lee Jin Ting / Mentor: Florian Kossak / Client: PS2 (Ruth Morrow, Peter Mutschler). **Istanbu**l / Students: Tim Caston, Daniel Cook, Tom Kirby, Natalie Lunt, Gurcan Ozyigit, Paul Wild / Mentor: Cristina Cerulli, Stephen Walker / Partner: Platform Garanti / Client: Cultural Agencies (Nikolaus Hirsch, Philipp Misselwitz, Oda Projesi and Ece Sarıyüz). **Paris** Students: Miles Phillips, Lucy Block, Laura Collins, Toby Knipping, Tatiana Vela Jara, Sami Mallis / Mentor: Doina Petrescu / Partner: atelier d'architecture autogérée (Constantin Petcu, Nolwenn Marchand, Gregoire Baraud, Sarah Hunt, Louis Coulange) / Client: Le100, établissement culturel solidaire (Frédéric de Beauvoir, Sébastien Eymard, Pierre Manguin)

WHAT Live projects conducted by MArch students from the University of Sheffied in relation to projects by three Rhyzom partners: Remote Control – Cultural Production in the Border Region between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland / PS[2] Belfast - Cultural Agencies In Gülensü and Gülsüyü /Platforma Garanti Istanbul - ECOroof/atelier d'architecture autogérée Paris.

WEB http://www.liveprojects.org / http://www.ssoa.group.shef.ac.uk/ - http://ecoroof.ning. com - http://www.remotecontrol09.blogspot.com/ - http://www.shef.ac.uk/architecture - http://www.shef.ac.uk/architecture/research/researchcentres/agency.html

NETWORKS Le Cent http://www.lecent.fr - atelier d'architecture autogérée www. urbantactics.org - Public Works http://www.publicworksgroup.net/ - Rhyzom www.rhyzom.net

KEYWORDS *student run projects - critical pedagogy - situated knowledge - ethics of engagement in academia - collaborative production - trans-local connections*

The Live Projects are a pioneering educational initiative introduced by the School of Architecture at the University of Sheffield. They are run at MA level, as equivalent to studio based design assignments and as such they are different from the models of work placements and learning through work. Architecture students work in groups with a range of 'clients' including local community groups, charities, health organisations and regional authorities. In some cases the projects involve actual building, in others the design of urban masterplans or consultation exercises. In all cases the students are looking for new critical and creative ways to engage with and actively change architectural practice for the people architecture is for. The Live Projects set real constraints, responding to budget, brief and time and place a large responsibility on the groups to deliver; as opposed to most student projects these are public and accountable.

• New York

culture
art commu-
nity support

ORGANIC CENTER

Leitrim • Rossinver
LEITRIM SCULPTURE CENTER • Manorhamilton   • Belfast

art
residencies

• Annaghmakerrig
TYRON GUTHRIE CENTER *archive*

ROCHDALE PIONERS

context-responsive • Rochdale
participation
collective action
intervention

BLACK DOGS
Leeds •

RATHFRILAND FARMERS' COOPERATIVE SOCIETY

agriculture
co-operative
market

Dawn • • Sheffield

ENCOUNTERS
creative collaboration
arts/ ecology
place-making

gentrification
resistance
collaborative action
equality
WARDS' CORNER

SCHUMACHER COLLEGE
TRANSITION TOWN
• Totnes

London •

urban agricultur **CPULs**

urban agriculture
sustainable cities

• Brighton

cooperative
members
mutual
food market
collective response

community design
urban action
participation
neighbourhood

DISTINCTIVE SHARROW ACTION GROUP

AGENCY / UoS
LIVE PROJECTS

student run projects
critical pedagogy
situated knowledge
ethic of engagement

SOMEWHERE
A CIRCLE OF HAPINESS

plotlanders
Jaywick
off-grid
settlements
social club
mutual

• Jaywick

AAA
RURBAN

• Paris

LE 100   **CIP-IDF** *self-managed produc-*
*self-managed cultural*   *tion & dissemination*
production   *collective knowledge*
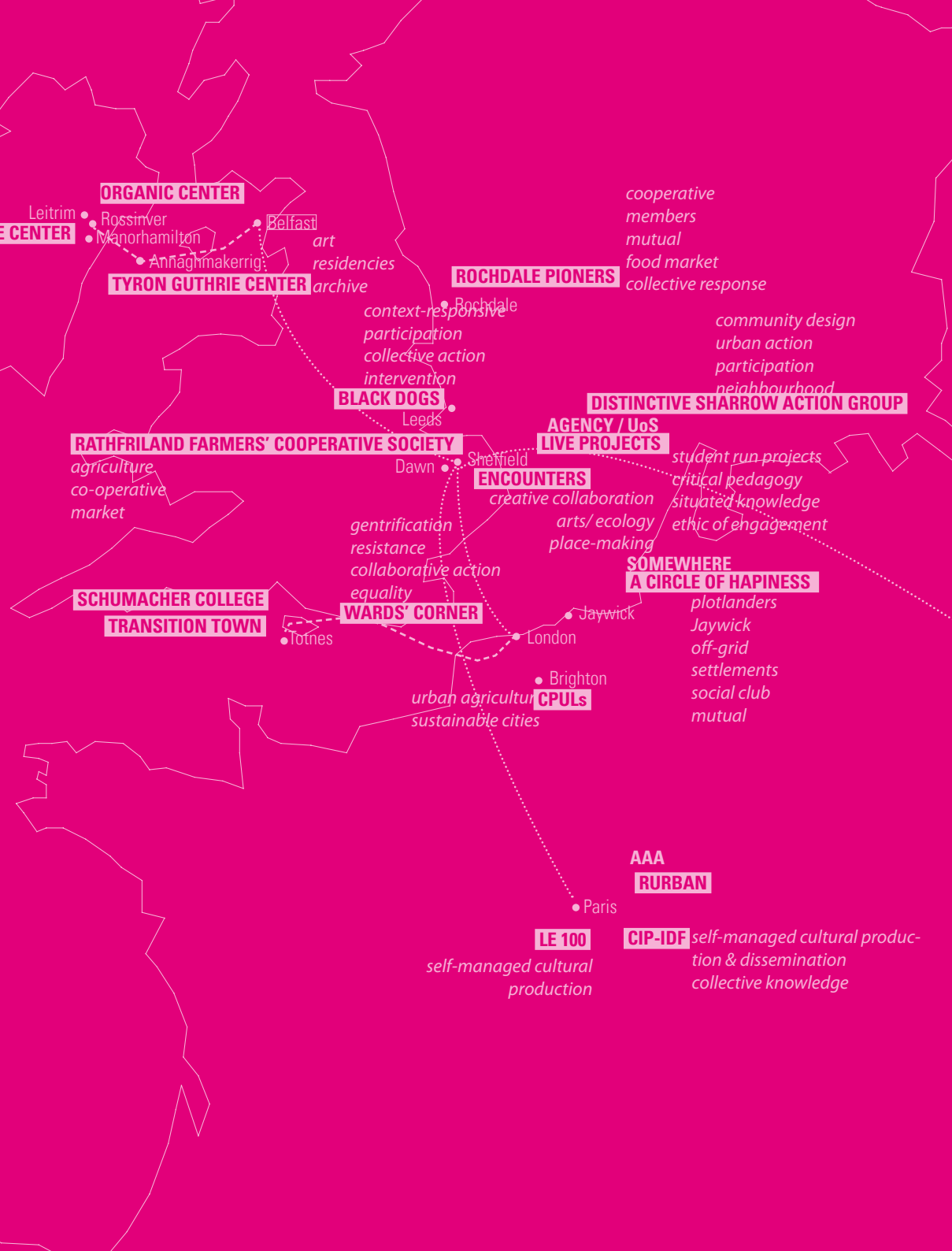
AGENCY is a Research Centre at the School of Architecture, University of Sheffield, with a specific interest in the relationship between architectural practice and education – we take a critical view of normative values and standard procedures in this area, in order to propose alternatives. The Live Projects are one such pedagogical alternative as they challenge supposedly 'safe' academic environments within which we, as academics, and the students operate.[1] Live Projects push students out into the world, instead of letting them remain passively contained within the educational institution, so that they become agents acting both within and between the fields of research, practice, education, and civic life. During a period of six weeks, students get immersed in the complexities of a 'real life' situation with a 'real client'; they are exposed to the social, political, economical and ecological conditions on the 'outside'. AGENCY is interested in practicing this expanded field that the Live Projects open up. We work with these rare instances created for crossing disciplinary boundaries through which new collaborations emerge that facilitate a critical redefinition of given parameters and conditions.

Some members of AGENCY had already experimented with the Live Project format in the context of PEPRAV, a previous trans-European collaboration between aaa, Recyclart and the University of Sheffield,[2] but whilst our focus there had been on the creation and support of an alternative platform for architecture, for Rhyzom, we were interested in whether architectural education can take the form of a local cultural practice and how new forms of pedagogy could become a vehicle for trans-local production and exchange.

The following text is an account of the three Live Projects that were conducted in collaboration with Rhyzom partners in Paris, Belfast and Istanbul, each explained on its own, following five overarching categories. Each project is first contextualised through its locale and how the 'local' is played out; secondly, each reflects on the cultural aspects, both those intrinsically contained and the broader notion of 'culture' per se – what is each project's *culture*?; thirdly, the network is investigated both on a local as well as a global level in relation to Rhyzom; fourthly, the locally specific methods and pedagogical approaches for projects in Belfast, Istanbul and Paris are discussed and the outputs – installations, publications, exhibitions, et cetera – described; and, finally, the consequences of each of the projects, their life after the official six-week long intense involvement of the students are examined. This is followed by a critical reflection through both our and the students' voices, addressing questions raised in the work produced with and for PS[2] (Belfast), Cultural Agencies (Istanbul) and aaa (Paris). The work, discussed at more length later, addressed local issues through a series of 'imported' and locally devised methodologies such as exploratory mapping, consultation and construction work.

Agency leaflet (Sheffield, 2010).
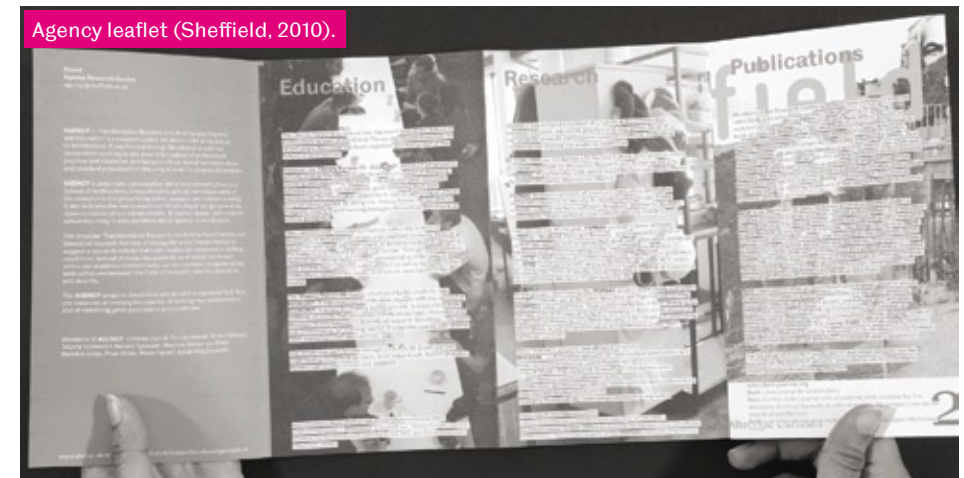
Some of the big questions that we raised in the beginning of Rhyzom about AGENCY's contribution to the project still remain. We asked how a large educational institution such as the University of Sheffield could become engaged in mostly small scale cultural production? This is particularly relevant in an ever increasing top-down managerial control both over our time and money, with the elusive 'impact' of research looming over all our work.[3] But, what is the impact of these types of agencies, what forms of agencies are activated, which – culminated together – add up to a substantial networked force? How can a network such as Rhyzom become not only a network but an operational and powerful spatial force?

1   Reyner Banham has formulated this as "black box" (Reyner Banham, 'A Black Box: The Secret Profession of Architecture', *New Statesman*, (1990): 22-25.) and Hugo Hinsley, deeply critical of an appallingly limited view of education, the entrenchment of the profession, and the general separation of students of architecture, wrote back in 1978 that the current education system – not much has changed since then - produced either "bureaucracy fodder" or "master race PhD architects" (Hugo Hinsley, 'Education Special. What the education debate is about', *SLATE*, (6) (1978): 9).

2   This work was published in Florian Kossak and others, *Live Projects and Alternative Ways of Practice: The Live Project 'Live Project'*, (Sheffield: Agency Research Centre, 2007).

3   Academic research conducted at UK Universities is peer assessed at regular intervals of around six to 8 years. For the first time, this assessment will also take into account the 'impact' of that research outside of academia. 'Impact', however, is largely defined through qualitative, and often monetary, measurements creating a problem for more experimental forms of research or where 'impact' cannot be measured within a relatively limited time-frame.

REMOTE CONTROL
Cultural Production in the Border Region between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland

The Client for this Live Project was the Rhyzom partner PS[2] in Belfast and the project formed part of PS2's work that had already begun to consider the border condition on the Island of Ireland (between North and South), its different cultural policies, regional independence and interdependence, the creative activities in rural landscapes, villages and small towns. The different impact of PEACE III Funding on both sides of the border in relation to cultural activities are exemplified at the border region, which includes Leitrim (Republic of Ireland), the county with the lowest population, Co. Armagh and Co. Fermanagh in Northern Ireland.[4]

In this context, the Live Project *Remote Control* (a title that the students[5] chose several weeks into the project) was intended to be a cross-border project with a strong visual outcome that would include a comparative study of what appears to be ground-up cultural activity on the southern side of the border and a top-down cultural organisational structure in the north. Within this research the students were asked by PS[2] *'to produce some form of alternative cartography/mapping and analysis of cross border conditions (past-present-future), indicating cultural sites of production/dissemination in a rural context (formal/informal), and rhyzomatic formations of alternative cultural activities (alternative gardening/housing/economy/creative practice/art projects) through distant and at first glance dis-connected locations'.[6]* Out of this analysis students were encouraged to come up with propositions for *"temporal cultural centres'* (small and large scale) as well as proposals for *'housing the fluid'* and *'location[s] of new rural sites for cultural production and communal use'.[7] [8]*

Local
Whereas the other two Live Projects dealt with either one specific building (and its immediate surrounding), or a specific neighbourhood as their locality or local context, *Remote Control* had to deal with an altogether different scale of local – a whole region along both sides of a national border.[9] And although the Irish border is in most parts not a visible, physical border, it defined the local context on both sides through different political and economic contexts. The border, *'a bold line on the map, a political gesture, a definition of territory',[10]* was itself a locale of *'cultural activities and networks of exchange'* and a *'porous zone of activity'.[11]*

What made the local context of this Live Project also specific in comparison to the other projects, is that it is truly rural.[12] On an island that has very few urban centres, Belfast and Derry in the North, Dublin and Cork in the South,[13] the rural is a prevailing condition, a condition that is both object and context of a

large part of Ireland's cultural production. Yet, as the students stated, the notion of rural as opposed to the urban is also dependant on the many subjective perspectives amongst the people of Ireland and varies from Belfast, a large city of almost 300,000, to a town of 1000 such as Manorhamilton in Co. Leitrim,[14] or indeed from those who are actually situated within the rural such as a single farmer as opposed to an 'urban' artist who has taken residency in a remote rural location.

Culture between 'farming' and 'High Art'

Since we visited such a diversity of places, institutions, organisations, events, and individuals, the notion of culture and that of cultural production within a specific locale (if one can summarise the Irish Border Region under one locale) remained as diverse and contradictory as the term could possibly be.[15] It stretched from international art residencies in one of the publicly funded galleries and workshops, producing conceptual 'High Art' within an internationally connected institutional context and almost completely independent from its locality, to the deeply routed culture of farming and its associated rituals as expressed through a cattle market. *Remote Control* acknowledged both aspects of culture and tried to consolidate these within their project.

Crossing through Networks

The networks that this Live Project was confronted with in Ireland existed and operated on various levels. They were both institutional (such as art institutions or farmers' organisations) as well as based on personal (private and/or work) connections (such as the various friends and colleagues of PS[2]). They were in parts very tangible and concrete (as in the case of the volunteers of the Organic Centre),[16] in parts hidden but decisive (such as the political and funding bodies from local to EU level). In that respect, the students participating in the Live Project

Art gallery (top) and cattle market (bottom). Ph: Remote Control team

TYRON GUTHRIE CENTRE

Annaghmakerrig, Co. Monaghan, Ireland

WHO Tyron Guthrie Centre, Annaghmakerrig, Co. Monaghan, Ireland
WHAT Artist Residency Centre
WEB http://www.tyroneguthrie.ie/
KEYWORDS *art - residencies - archive*

'The Tyrone Guthrie Centre is a residential workplace open to professional practitioners in all art forms. Artist residencies/retreats are for maximum periods of three months in the full board Big House and six months in the self catering Farmyard Cottages.In a tranquil, beautiful setting amid the lakes and drumlins of County Monaghan everything is provided for, including delicious food. […] "The Big House" as it is affectionately known, accommodates up to eleven residents and up to seven can stay in the self-catering cottages. […] In partnership with Dublin Institute of Technology, the Centre has initiated an innovative project: ArtLog; a living archive which will record, archive and analyse the cultural activity of the Centre focusing particularly on the creative process itself.'

remained mere observers, in some cases short-term guests, crossing through these various networks. They were at no point able to penetrate or became part of them – a circumstance that can be attributed both to the very short period of engagement but also their position as outsiders, professionally as well as culturally.[17]

Mapping as method of engagement

One main task within the Live Project brief was the mapping of cultural activity and/or production in the Irish border region. In order to do this, the group ventured on a seven-day field trip, organised by PS², to visit a whole range of cultural institutions, local cultural networks and individual cultural producers. The definition of what a cultural producer might be was deliberately left open and places/ people visited ranged from Arts Council funded art galleries to the Organic Centre to the Rathfriland Cattle Market. Topical issues of the mappings were audience compositions, finance and funding sources, agri-time versus culture-time, access cycles, or international exchanges. Through these mappings of institutions and moments on both sides of the border, the Live Project visualised the sometimes obvious, sometimes hidden differences between the conditions on both sides of the border. In a second stage the students developed 'postcard proposals' – in many instances light-hearted ideas aimed at generating a discourse about the possibilities of cultural production in the border region that could consequently lead to more strategic proposals.[18] These strategic proposals were generated through a matrix in which the postcard proposals could be interdependently combined following a set of categories such as accommodation, infrastructure, event and funding.

Afterlife

Two students of the *Remote Control* group went on the Rhyzom Fieldtrip to Belfast and the Irish border that PS² had organised after the completion of the Live

RATHFRILAND FARMERS' CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY

Newry, Co. Down, Northern Ireland

WHO Rathfriland Farmers' Co-operative Society, Newry, Co. Down, Northern Ireland
WHAT farmers co-operative, live stock cattle market
KEYWORDS *agriculture - co-operative - market*

'The Rathfriland Cattle Market, formed of a busy ring packed with buyers and sellers from the region of both sides of the Border, represents a standard day's work for the Rathfriland Co-operative. Based in and around Newry, the agricultural landscape reflects the agricultural culture practiced by the majority of inhabitants — seasonal, routine, wet, and muddy. [...] Optimistic and jolly, the punters were happy exchanging up to £700 for a pick of cattle, preparing for the big 6 ringed, (inter)national market near Omagh next week.' (Live Project Report, Remote Control — Re-imagining cultural accommodation in the rural border communities, (University of Sheffield, 2010), p. 46).

Remote Control exhibition, Sheffield. Ph: Remote Control team

Project. During that trip, the students had the possibility to present their work, mappings and proposals, at the Millennium Court Arts Centre in Portadown to a wider Rhyzom group as well as to some of the cultural producers that they had encountered during their first trip. In that respect, the group's work was brought back to the local and cultural context that had been the very object of their observations and reflections. Beyond that, the Live Project's involvement is difficult to qualify and its 'success' in terms of distribution and effect might yet have to come. However, the temporal nature of the group's engagement – common to the Live Project format – in combination with a partial involvement in other parts of Rhyzom meant that the students' analysis, mapping and own remote yet local production (not least of postcards) remained a small, but productive moment, in a larger discussion on cultural production in the Irish Border Region. [19, 20]

4   The student group also visited cultural institutions and locales in counties Tyrone, Down and Monaghan.

5   See also, www.remotecontrol09.blogspot.com

6   Sheffield School of Architecture, *MArch Handbook 2009/10*, (2009), p. 14/15.

7   ibid. Quoted from PS[2] brief to the students.

8   Comment A by PS[2]:

'Agency on the other hand asked PS[2], not to interfere too much into the way the students research the brief. "As you may be aware the Live Projects are very student led and our role is really more that of a mentor than that of a tutor." So I won't see them everyday and haven't seen them today. However, we agreed to establish some form of e-forum where we can collect and exchange our growing research and other work.' PS[2], Email to F. Kossak (Agency), 30.09.2009. 'How much directional input PS[2] as a client should exert, was not defined. Cautious to interfere too much, this may have led to a more speculative than concrete outcome. To recognise aspects of culture in the rural, without being housed in a formal institution (i.e. arts centre, cattle market), it would have been interesting to approach the rural like the students at the Istanbul Live Project investigated the local area, with the awareness that the context will be very different, foreign and in need of completely fresh look, unconditioned of cultural preconceptions.'

9   Comment A by Caitriona McGheee (Live Project Group)

'We (the students) struggled with the sheer scale of the region and the somewhat vague and subjective concept of "cultural production".'

10   Live Project Report, *Remote Control – Re-imagining cultural accommodation in the rural border communities*, (University of Sheffield, 2010), p. 20.

11   ibid.

12   Rather ironically the Irish Census Authority (CSO) defines many of these places as urban, i.e. places with a population of more than 150.

13   Technically the following places are defined as cities: Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick, Waterford, Belfast, Derry, Lisburn, Newry and Armagh.

14   The Leitrim Sculpture Centre, one of the rural art centres visited by the Live Project, is located in Manorhamilton. The town and Co. Leitrim are also home to a large community of creative producers.

15   See notes 41-42, p. 212

16   The Organic Centre is located in Rossinver, Co. Leitrim and acts as a local and trans-local education centre where one can attend courses in organic food production, natural energy and green building as well as arts and crafts. See also, www.theorganiccentre.ie.

17   Comment B by Catriona McGhee (Live Project Group)

'That said - you did get the sense that if we had of [sic] been there for a longer period of time, say 6 weeks or longer that we could have become very much a part of this network - the people that we met were very friendly and receptive to "outsiders" – I guess that this openness only helps to reinforce and expand the network. In short, it seemed in no way an impenetrable clique.'

18   The postcard ideas included the alternating use of galleries for cattle market and exhibitions, the re-introduction of railways, the use of 'off-season machinery' for spatial interventions or development of harvesting machinery that could produce 'crop-art'.

19   Comment B by PS[2] **Project Critique by PS2 03.02.2010**

'Did we learn anything? Yes of course. The rural cultural production is not easy to identify, to get a close personal insight and to find means of mapping. Ideas of 'culture' and the structures of its dissemination are (often) predetermined by urban contexts and high art models. A mere smaller scale copy of institutional forms and building types doesn't seem to work nor is a common (urban) methodology of analysis and mapping transferable. Personal contact and exchange in such a live project is essential and can't be replaced by phone or Skype. Although the live project is a student led programme, we would see the input of "specialists" (residents, artists, rural stakeholders) as important. Our/ PS[2] project brief was in retrospect too wide and demanding [for the short timescale the students were available] and would have better focused on a smaller area/ village. However: We did very much like the dedication and enthusiasm of the students and their courage to take on this quite neglected, non-urban subject. If we expressed a more downbeat critique here, it is mainly out of an understanding that you are close to transform your material into something very interesting and new and a slight frustration that this ignition didn't quite start- yet.'

20   Comment C by Catriona McGhee (Live Project Group)

'The very fact that the majority of our time was spent remote from the location made the mapping/postcard task seem a bit naïve and outlandish - this might have been more effective if we had some user engagement, interacting with passers by, getting opinions and ideas from local people, lay people etc. We could have had an open house type thing, maybe using the PS2 shop-front as a base.) It would have seemed more real.'

CULTURAL AGENCIES
In Gülensü and Gülsüyü - Istanbul

The client for this live project was the Istanbul based Rhyzom partner *Cultural Agencies*, a collaborative project and a group seeking *'to develop contemporary models of cultural collaborations and institutional practices',*[21] curated by Nikolaus Hirsch, Philipp Misselwitz and the artist collaborative Oda Projesi. This project had the remit and aspiration to challenge traditional cultural production in Istanbul and, in reaction[22] to the context of the Istanbul Art Biennial 2009 and of Istanbul's award of European Capital of Culture (2010), chose to work outside the 'cultural bubble' of the cosmopolitan centre of Istanbul and focus on a heavily politically charged context at the periphery of the city, in the neighbourhoods of Gülensü and Gülsüyü. Students were asked by *Cultural Agencies* to develop an architectural concept for transforming the 'Dükkânı', a former shop turned into project base for Cultural Agencies, into a prototype of a new neighbourhood institution. The initial brief and programme of work given to the students by the client was structured around the concepts of *'generic institutional programmes'*[23] as tools for cultural agency: Office, Archive, Communication, Events, Collection and Library. Students worked within this proposed framework suggesting new possible uses, future developments and exit strategies for the Cultural Agencies project and their base in Gülensü, the Dükkânı.

A Highly Charged Local
The context of the project were the adjoining neighbourhoods of Gülensü and Gülsüyü within Istanbul's eastern Maltepe district, which emerged informally when Anatolian migrants started to arrive in Istanbul in the 1960s. The neighbourhoods grew into an intricate and lively informal settlement of gecekondu ('built

Workshop at the Dukkani. Ph: Cultural Agencies team

ODA PROJESI
Istanbul, Turkey

WHO ODA PROJESI - Seçil Yersel, Özge Açıkkol and Güneş Savaş
WHAT artists' collective
WEB http://www.odaprojesi.org/
KEYWORDS *artist collective - collaborative tools - strategies - interdisciplinary*

A collaboration turned into art project in 2000, it started when the founders decided to rent an apartment, sharing it as a studio, in Galata. The apartment evolved into a multi-purpose private and public place, as the group worked mainly in the neighbourhood, using a variety of tools, strategies and tactics, whilst achieving significant international recognition. Due to the gentrification of the area the group had to leave their studio-apartment and are now mobile and considering options for new places. Oda Projesi works with different tools and strategies; working with 'neighbours' and with people from different disciplines, producing posters, adverts, stories, postcards, newspapers and broadcasting on a local radio channel.

overnight'), with a strong local identity and, as they became established, from the 1970s onwards, strong solidarity networks and local activism became one of the distinctive features of Gülensü and Gülsüyü. The neighbourhoods are currently threatened by 'Urban Transformation Projects', where the municipality is seeking to exploit the prime land value of the area, because of its ideal location within an earthquake safe zone and unique panoramic views across the Marmara Sea and Princess Islands, to develop upmarket housing. Despite the fragmented and fractured nature of the networks existing in the neighbourhoods, when faced with a real threat of displacement, in 2004, residents united and successfully resisted redevelopment, opening 32 court cases against the planning decision and delivering 12,000 petitions to the municipality.

Students from Sheffield spent just over a week in Gülensü and Gülsüyü and their experience of the complex web of social and political connections in the neighbourhood was intense, albeit inevitably incomplete. They observed how the *'multifaceted power structure makes for both strong bonds and violent divides'* and how *'political factions run the microcosm monitoring the inhabitants'*, creating alternative/parallel value systems, set of rules and judgements. Students also got an insight into spatial manifestations of engrained cultural norms, like gender specific ways of appropriating space and places for socialising, observing how *'shared spaces at street level form informal gathering spaces for sociable male tea drinkers, while gaps and doorways provide daily refuge for wives, mothers and their children.'*[24.] Finally, students had the opportunity to explore the relationships with and attitudes towards people from outside, including themselves and their client, *Cultural Agencies*. Whilst they observed how *'visitors are received with intrigue, curiosity and sometimes severe distaste'* and how *'any form of recording or monitoring is questioned and often frowned upon'*, they also noted that *'the community … can be unbelievably welcoming and giving'*.[25]

Formal and Informal Culture

Cultural Agencies as a group set out *'to develop contemporary models of cultural collaboration and institutional practice'*, and the Cultural Agencies project *'instigates new forms of cooperation between artists, architects and communities at Istanbul's vast and fast changing periphery'*.[26] Whilst the programmes of the Istanbul Biennial 2009 and Istanbul's European Capital of Culture 2010 focused on the historic city centre, Cultural Agencies chose to turn to the *'largely ignored and illegally developed periphery'*,[27] where traditional typologies of cultural institutions like museums, galleries, libraries, and theatres, abundant in the centre, are totally absent. Underpinning the project is the hypothesis that the apparent void of formal cultural infrastructure has been occupied by a multitude of new forms of cultural agency that are informal, familial, kinship based, communal, religious and political,

Fieldwork, Gülensü. Ph: Cultural Agencies team

whose modes of operation are based on free agency, self-help and improvisation.[28] Whilst acknowledging the provocative nature of the choice of 'generic institutional programmes' as a framework to explore agency tools within the context of Gülensü and Gülsüyü, students highlighted how, despite the critical stance towards conventional cultural production systems and modes at the root of the project, the approach adopted by Cultural Agencies was in danger of re-enacting and re-proposing established cultural values and modes of production. The generic institutional programmes used as a framework to explore local cultural production might have provided a clear and useful structure to the Cultural Agencies project, but at the same time, based on conversations that the Live Project students had with local actors and anecdotal evidence, it would also appear that they might have undermined the Cultural Agencies project by being perceived somewhat institutional. The students' critical understanding of the Cultural Agencies project needs to be seen in the broader context of the Live Project, where, for reasons of time and limited cultural exposure, students' understanding of the context they operated in was inherently limited and incomplete, inevitably missing some of the complexity of the politics in place and the intricacies of the participatory practice.

Intermeshing global and local Networks

The Cultural Agencies Live Project was the result of the intersection of and mutual interaction amongst a number of networks that included internationally operating professional cultural operators, intellectuals, local activists, residents and students from universities in Germany (Städelschule Frankfurt), the UK (Sheffield) and Turkey (Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi). Central to this Live Project was the network of and around the curators of Cultural Agencies: an established partnership of two European professional curators and academics (one temporarily based in Istanbul) in collaboration with the local artist collaborative Oda Projesi, well known for their critical approach to community based art. This initial network extended to European Universities and cultural operators and was the premise for the input in Cultural Agencies, at various stages, from students from Munich and Mimar Sinan University and for their participation in the Rhyzom Project, which in turn generated part of the funding for the project and the Live Project with students from Sheffield.

Another network of which Cultural Agencies was part is that of the local and international artists associated to one of the project's supporters, Platform Garanti a *'dynamic catalyst for the dissemination, research and practice of contemporary art in the city'*[29] funded by one of Turkey's largest banks (Garanti). Another set of networks central to the project were those predominantly determined and shaped by the religion and geographic area of origin of many of the residents of Gülensü and Gülsüyü. These rather insular networks appear loosely (and often

Collaborative Mapping, Gülensü. Ph: Cultural Agencies team

tenuously) connected externally, but enjoy very strong ties internally and are the engine of any (cultural) activity in the neighbourhood. Finally there are the networks of the spheres of influence and audiences of each of the above networks: from the global arts world (Cultural Agencies was presented at an event at the Istanbul Art Biennial) to the local municipality, to the architecture education community and the European cultural scene. These various networks constantly interact creating dynamically changing configurations. Sometimes the interplay of these networks create synergies, amplifying small, local, events and broadcasting them to an international context; other times, they collide resulting in tensions, clashes or disengagement.

Method

At the beginning of the project there was a productive tension between the methodological stances of the students, embedded in the long established culture of community participation and collaboration, an engrained principle of Live Projects at the School of Architecture in Sheffield, and the *Cultural Agencies* project and group, with their established curatorial, artistic and cultural practices. Having had only a partial vision of the whole project, students questioned, in particular, Cultural Agencies' methodology *'based upon the creation of mini-conflicts and discourse through inserting 'alien-objects' into an existing context whilst recording the community's response'.*[30] They articulated this methodology using the metaphor of a 'bird hide', which they saw resonating with the existing praxes of the 'Dukkan'[31] in that it is where local residents *'are used to explore alternative practices of research and cultural exploration. [Cultural Agencies] Thought this model minimises impact on the lives of the local residents, the physical presence of the 'bird hide' causes anxiety'.* In this context, students saw themselves as the *'alien interviewers (foreign students)'*, needed to overcome anxieties and to encourage collaboration.[32]

PLATFORM GARANTI

Istanbul, Turkey

WHO Platform Garanti Contemporary Art Centre
WHAT a space and a cultural program funded by Garanti, one of the major Turkish banks
WEB http://platformgaranti.blogspot.com/
KEYWORDS *contemporary art centre - residencies*

'Platform acts as a dynamic catalyst for the dissemination, research and practice of contemporary art in the city, and also provides a meeting point for exchange between contemporary artists, curators and critics. In addition, the center has become a cultural portal for the region; through our residency programme and other initiatives we work with countries where the structure for a contemporary art scene is forming, but where there are few arts institutions or funding structures to provide further support at this time'.

Exploring what the Archive could be, Gülensü. Ph: Cultural Agencies team

Whilst in Gülensü and Gülsüyü students explored the neighbourhoods and their broad themes of **Office, Archive, Communication, Events, Collection and Library** in a number of participatory activities ranging from playing football with and against local teams, conducting intimate interviews, a photographic portrait campaign, a participatory neighbourhood model and collaborative mapping. On their return to Sheffield they worked on developing their design proposals for the Dukkani and produced a report on the whole process of their Live Project. They also produced a critical installation for the Live Projects public exhibition held in Sheffield City Centre in November 2009, based on their metaphor of the bird hide where a *'black enclosure is reminiscent of a rigorous researcher's abode'* where *'everything is logged and recorded and various connections are made'*.

Afterlife

A few weeks after the completion of the Live Project students were invited by Cultural Agencies to present the project to a Rhyzom workshop/event in Istanbul. Part of the discussions at that event revolved around issues of ethics of projects like Cultural Agencies. In the context of that event new networks formed that linked local residents and activists directly to some of the Rhyzom partners; these new networks are now working on new cultural projects, like, for instance, one involving the Public Commons,[33] a collaboration between artist Fiona Woods, working with the Northern Ireland Rhyzom partner PS², and Ece Saryüz, initially working with Cultural Agencies.-

21   *Cultural Agencies* website, http://cultural-agencies.blogspot.com/.

22   *Cultural Agencies* implicitly criticised the Art Biennial and the EC of Culture for focusing on traditional, western-like cultural production and for only engaging with the cosmopolitan city centre. The Cultural Agency group, however, was also part of the Biennial where it hosted a panel discussion around the Cultural Agencies project.

23   Cultural Agencies, *Agency Tools* (09/2009). Briefing produced for Live Project group.

24   Live Project report, *Cultural Agencies in Gülensü and Gülsüyü*, (2009), p. 21.

25   ibid., p. 28.

26   ibid., p. 21.

27   ibid., p. 21.

28   See: *Agency Tools.*

29   Platform Garanti Contemporary Art Center (2000), http://platformgaranti.blogspot.com/2000_01_01_archive.html.

30   *Cultural Agencies in Gülensü and Gülsüyü*, p. 36.

31   ibid., p. 57.

32   ibid.

33   A zine about the project available at http://issuu.com/collectionofminds/.

Cultural Agencies Live Project Exhibition, Sheffield. . Ph: Cultural Agencies team

ECOROOF
Paris

The ECOroof Live Project explored urban food production, ecology, self-managed architecture and collaborative working methods. Part of the Rhyzom network, the ECOroof was developed by a team of 6 students in collaboration with aaa and in connection with aaa's Rurban strategy for Paris, which is an attempt to sustain local resilience by developing and sometimes connecting existing complementary activities through short ecological cycles. This Live Project involved students in a collaborative working situation where they explored issues related to the implementation of such a strategy, through the realisation of a prototype for a community that desired to grow food within their own building and to distribute it locally. The role of the Rhyzom partner was different here than in the other Live Projects: aaa acted more as a collaborator and mediator than a client. The client here was *Le Cent* - a self-managed art centre situated in the 12th arrondissement of Paris, which provides space and support for professional and amateur artists without a selection process. The ECOroof was located on the roof terrace of a building formerly belonging to the French Electric Company (EDF), currently occupied by *Le Cent*. The artists using *Le Cent* were keen to improve the comfort of their working space and the quality of their living conditions and had decided to grow their own food.[34] They became as such 'the client' of the live project. Part of the Live Project brief was to involve students in organising the participation of *Le Cent's* users (artists, public and staff) in the conception and realisation of prototypes for several green devices, such as rainwater collectors, composting facilities, garden modules, etc. The roof facility was conceived as a means of closing a number of ecological cycles in the building, mainly related to food, energy and water, and in order to contribute to this self-managed community becoming more ecological.

The ECOroof - from a project to the realisation of a prototype. Collage & Ph: Ecoroof team

LE CENT ÉTABLISSEMENT CULTUREL SOLIDAIRE

Paris, France

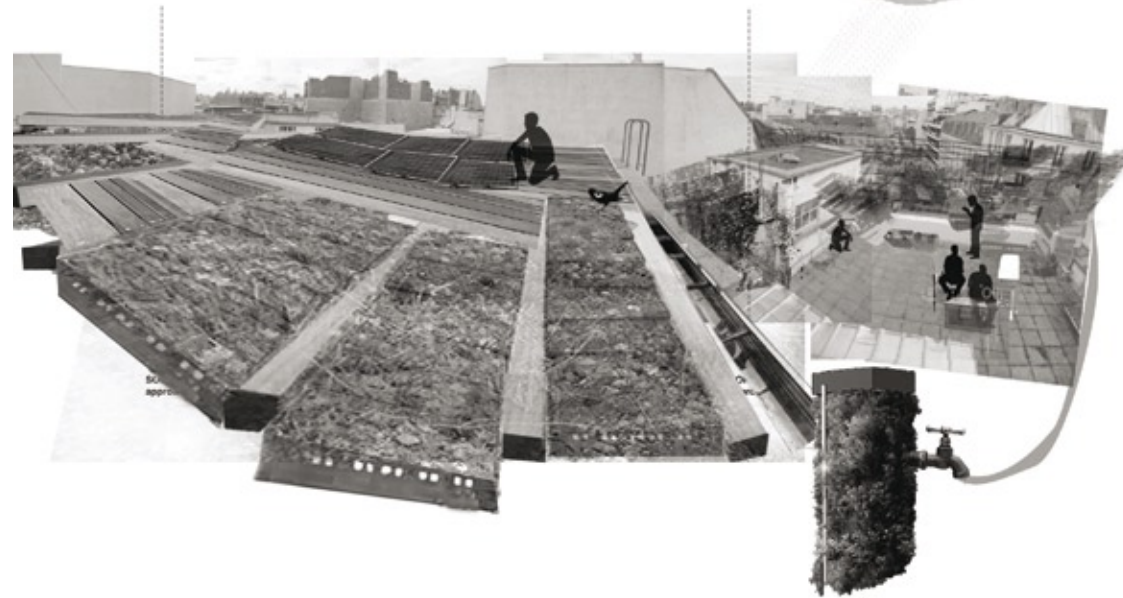**WHO** *Le Socle, Matiere premiere, Atelier en commun organisations*, artists and cultural workers
WHAT self-managed cultural centre providing managerial support for artists and access to collective workshops and cultural production spaces (*ateliers en commun*) for affordable renting prices.
WEB http://www.lecent.fr/
KEYWORDS *self-managed cultural production - management and dissemination*

Le 100 est un équipement culturel expérimental de 1800 m2 pouvant accueillir simultanément au sein de ses ateliers et de sa couveuse de projets une centaine d'artistes, professionnels et amateurs, réunis autour de disciplines variées (arts plastiques, arts vivants, photo, vidéo,...). Le 100 est également un groupement d'employeurs se proposant de mener un travail commun de réflexion et d'expérimentation de rapports nouveaux entre la création artistique et la société dans ses rapports à l'économie, l'aménagement du territoire, la solidarité, le « vivre ensemble ».

Local within short ecological cycles

The project has a strong local element as space, community and project are strongly embedded within the Parisian context. Self-organised artists communities have a political history in Paris, which has to do with the artists' working conditions, French Government centralised politics of culture and the local resistance to top down cultural management. An intermittent artist movement emerged in 2000, leading to one of the most important political events of the last decade in France concerned with the precarious condition of cultural workers.[36] The emergence of spaces such as *Le Cent* is related to this movement and to the necessity for self-determination and self-organisation expressed by the cultural workers that took part in the movement. The ECOroof project took the idea of self-organisation and democratic access to space and tools further by involving local users (artists and other people working on the site) and by trying to make connections with people from the neighbourhood (for example, the live project team proposed that vegetable waste from the local market could be composted at *Le Cent* and redistributed to the gardens/inhabitants of the neighbourhood).

Specific attention was paid to the materials used, to the reduction of the carbon footprint of the new construction and the future use of the roof garden. The notion of 'local' took new meanings within the ecological dimension of the project. The project had to be local for reasons of energy reduction and to create short ecological cycles. It was also meant to change the mentality of *Le Cent's* users, to be more proactive and more ecologically aware of the way they use their space.

Culture and ecology

Le Cent is an alternative institution for cultural production that has developed strong concerns with democracy and politics of culture. The ECOroof Live Project suggested that the idea of self-organisation, already present in *Le Cent's*

LA COORDINATION DES INTERMITTENTS ET DES PRÉCAIRES (CIP-IDF)

Paris, France

WHO intermittent artists and precarious cultural workers
WHAT professional and civic organisation of intermittent artists and precarious cultural workers
WEB http://www.cip-idf.org/
KEYWORDS *self-managed cultural production & dissemination - collective knowledge - coordination as form of political organisation*

CIP was created in relation to the social movement that burst in 2003, as a reaction to the French Government's reform that attacked the right of people working as *intermittents du spectacle* (temporary showbusiness workers) to claim unemployment social benefit. Beyond issues related to job security for this particular set of cultural workers, the movement addressed the precarious working conditions of artists in the post-capitalist context, and prompted important political discussion about the social rights and the generalised precarious condition of intellectuals and flexible workers in contemporary society. The movement helped to create numerous information and co-operation networks, and generated new forms of political mobilisation and organisation. CIP coordinates protest actions and organises debates, events and research about the precarious condition of cultural workers in France and in contemporary society.

Tatiana and Lucy collect discarded crates in the Aligre market. Ph: Ecoroof team

mode of functioning, could be extended to include the ecological management of space, its retrofitting and its productive aspects: food, water and energy sufficiency. The concept of 'democratic culture' developed in *Le Cent* evolved into one that included ecological and economic aspects: self-production of energy, food sufficiency, water recycling. This development has consequences not only on the comfort of space but also on what is produced in this space. As stated by Guattari in his *Three Ecologies*,[35] culture, sociality and economy, can't be separated from ecology.

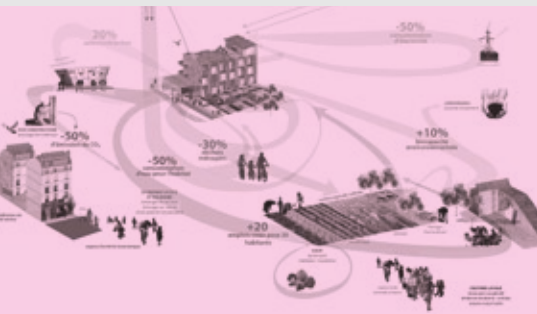### Connecting a building to its neighbourhood

The idea of collaboration and sharing, fundamental to *Le Cent's* functioning, was extended by the Live Project group beyond the building's boundaries. The design process involved discussions and consultations with *Le Cent's* users, but also exchanges with local organisations and the market situated on the same street. Crates, wood and other waste materials were reused from the market, compost and vegetal waste was offered by other community gardens in the area and it was hoped that these exchanges would develop further. Little by little a proximity network emerged, starting to connect the isolated roof terrace to the neighbourhood. All this was just the beginning of a process that could result in the emergence of a creative community located in the Aligre neighbourhood.

Collaboration and transmission within a self-building process

During the live project the students and aaa made a team in which both aaa's members and the students took specific responsibilities: contact with users and communication about the process, construction site organisation, material provision, realisation of different construction parts, etc. They developed a prototype for an ecological roof and a user guide to continue building the remaining areas of the roof. The prototype is a site specific, replicable construction, which seeks

Students and aaa members organise themselves to transport and process the wooden structure on the roof of Le Cent. Ph: Ecoroof team

R-URBAN

Paris and its Region

WHO atelier d'architecture autogérée and residents of r-urbanised areas
WHAT participative strategies, practices and networks of local resilience
WEB www.rurban.net / www.urbantactcs.org
KEYWORDS *three ecologies - resilience - self-organisation - rhizomatic agencies*

The R-URBAN project initiated by aaa proposes a participative strategy to increase the urban resilience of European cities through the creation of civic networks of locally closed ecological cycles linking a series of urban activities (i.e., economy, habitat, mobility, urban agriculture) and using land reversibly in the medium to long term.
see also Experience p 138

to demonstrate and test elements of a wider strategy of greening roofs in densely built urban contexts. The horizontal and vertical planting is irrigated by rainwater and fed with compost produced on site. It tests the suitability of plant species and design solutions, and provokes discussion amongst the users about the wider use of the roof. The idea behind these two types of outcome was to test and transmit a method that could be appropriated and developed further by *Le Cent's* users. Such a method, in line with that of self-build pioneers such as Walter Segal, empowers non-architects to participate in the design and building processes. Rather than simply handing over a product it provides users with tools for an 'open source' architecture: an architecture which continues to grow after the architects have left.

Afterlife of a prototype

The transmission and appropriation stages within a participatory project are long term processes. Since November 2009 when the Live Project took place, the prototype made its way slowly into the life of *Le Cent.* Some parts (e.g. the vertical watering system and the furniture made of recycled crates) didn't work properly and some plants didn't develop. There is space for improvement, yet it is now up to the user community to take charge of the continuation and transformation of the project. The prototype is in place: it was an attempt to open possibilities, which are currently waiting to be enacted upon.

34   *Le Cent* initially contacted aaa with whom they planned to 'green' the roof and to transform it into a productive terrace for food growing, rain water collection and energy production. They also wanted to make the place more pleasurable, more comfortable.

35   cf. F. Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, (New Jersey: Athlone Press, 2000).

The vertical garden prototype. Ph: Ecoroof team
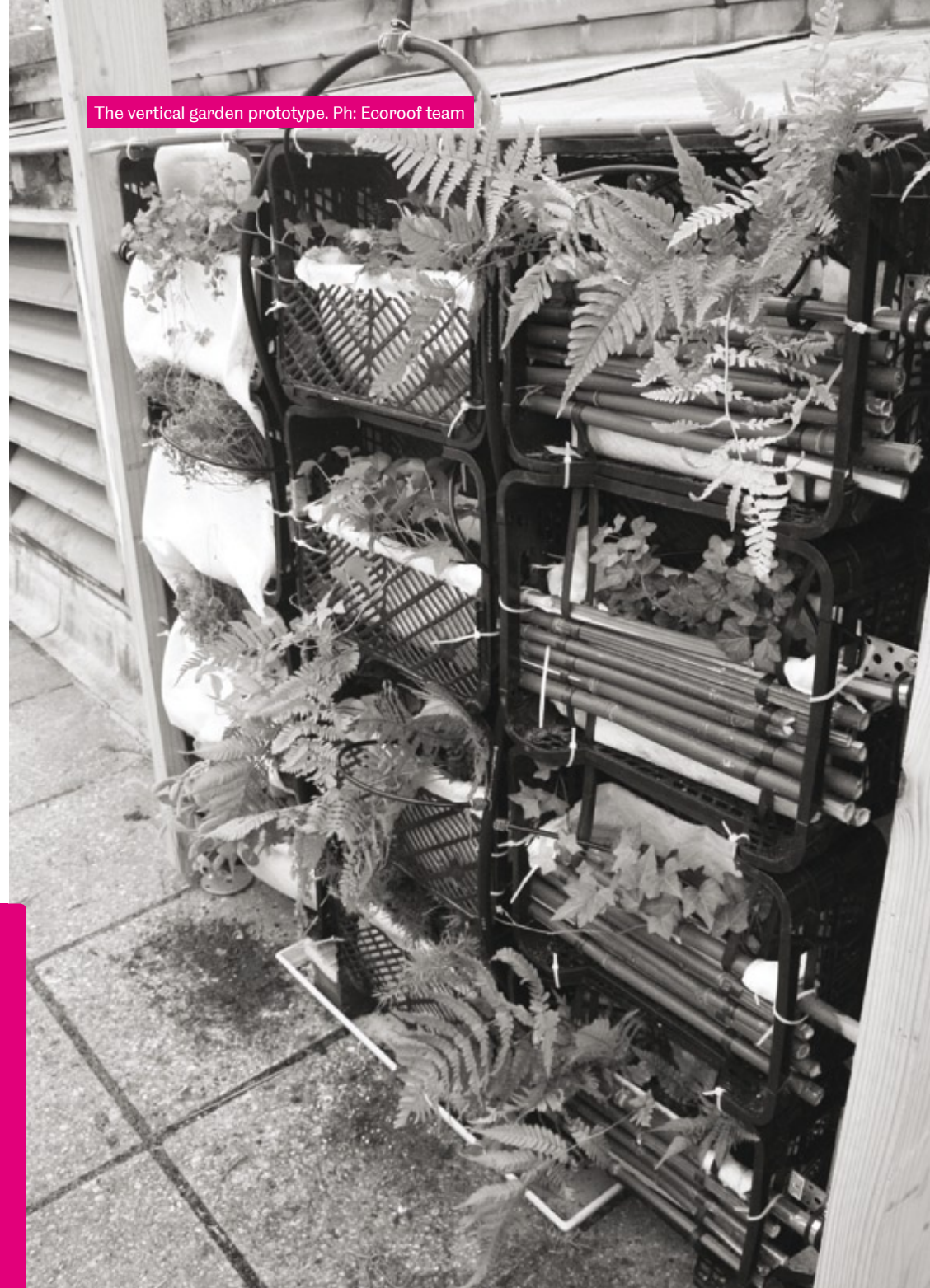
CONTINUOUS PRODUCTIVE URBAN LANDSCAPES CPULS

Brighton/ London, UK

WHO Katrin Bohn and Andre Viljoen architects
WHAT a research project and policy framework for designing urban agriculture for sustainable cities
WEB http://arts.brighton.ac.uk/research/sustainability-network/cpul /
http://www.bohnandviljoen.co.uk/
KEYWORDS *self-managed cultural production - management and dissemination*

CPULs argue for the creation of networks of productive open space as essential elements within the spatial planning of cities and advocate the idea of sustainable food planning. The productive urban landscapes are based on the appropriation of available surfaces of the city: streets, walls, terraces, roofs, etc… to be cultivated and maintained by city dwellers.

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CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

How do live projects address the question of the 'local'?

The live projects, which by definition take place in real contexts with real clients could be understood as tools for community-based or place-based education. As David Gruenewald states, place is profoundly pedagogical.[36] So is the 'local'. In Ireland, students learned how place, politics, culture and sociality are related and how a highly 'local' element such as a border line could shape cultural practices and cultural policies; in Istanbul they learned how class differences shape culture and questioned the role culture can take in political conflicts, understanding the necessity of small scale and locally driven initiatives as opposed to institutionalised initiatives; and, in Paris, they learned about the necessary ecological extensions of culture in an age of climate change and 'Peak Oil', and the role of architecture can play in addressing these processes. In all these cases learning was the result of the involvement of students in the existing activities, being situated in and mediated by particular places and contexts. They were involved in local 'communities of practice' (Schugurensky) that embodied a set of values, behaviours and skills that influenced their learning process. This is what pedagogues call 'situated learning'.[37]

During the Live Projects, which involve students in social, cultural and spatial productions, the students do not only experience or learn from but also contribute to the local, community, and regional context. Sometimes they themselves become agents of change, sometimes they only prepare the ground for others to become agents of change. Students felt it very strongly in Istanbul where they took a critical position within the activities of Cultural Agencies and critically interrogated the local cultural politics and the relations between cultural workers and local residents. Something was challenged through their presence: they prompted the necessity for more open communication and transparency of means, intentions and goals. They have also been challenged in return: they realised the responsibility of their gestures, their doings, their say, their presence and the impact they have as outsiders on the local context. They realised also that as an actor of cultural politics, one participates directly in the politics of place. They shaped the place and the place shaped them.

Learning that occurs by personal and collective experience throughout 'life' is beyond the bounds of formal educational settings and is significant. Through such Live Projects as practiced by students at the University of Sheffield, School of Architecture and also elsewhere,[40] students learn about life and about architecture at the same time. They also learn how to connect the social and the spatial. They learn that space is not an abstract entity, but along the lines of Henri Lefebvre, it is socially, culturally and affectively constructed.[39] These instances of situated learning enrich their living experience and at the same time question the boundaries of the architectural profession and keep them asking 'what is architecture?'

Live Projects as cultural practice

If one tries to analyse the meaning of culture in relation to the Live Projects in general, as originating from and being situated within their very own specific culture, but also in relation to the three specific Live Projects that were engaged with particular cultural productions and clients in distinctly different cultural settings, one is reminded of Raymond Williams' statement: *'Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language'* and that *'within [each] discipline, conceptual usage has to be clarified.'*[40] Williams distinguishes four fundamental layers of significance for the term culture. Firstly, it is a direct *'physical process or relation'* – an example he gives is germ culture; secondly, it is used as an *'abstract noun - describing a general process of intellectual, spiritual, aesthetic development'* – here the term is somewhat similar to the term civilisation; thirdly, it is used as an *'independent noun - indicating a particular way of life of a certain people, period, or region'* – this would be a tribal culture, football culture, Renaissance culture; and finally, culture is used as an *'independent and abstract noun - describing the works and practices of intellectual and artistic activity'* – where one might write culture with a capital 'C'.[41]

The methodology of the Live Projects as participative educational tool within the architectural curriculum of the Sheffield School of Architecture most resonates with Williams' second definition of culture. The Live Projects initiate and/or foster within the students, in the ideal case, a certain approach of producing architecture which contributes to a continuous development of culture understood as civilisation. But this process goes beyond the education of the students themselves as their engagement with clients and local communities, groups or individuals inevitably leads also to a stimulation of their continuous intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development, which in consequence and as a sum of these individual developments produces culture in Williams' second category. In that sense the Live Projects and students were confronted with differing cultures in Paris, Istanbul or the Irish Border Region. One of the challenges in these engagements with local cultures was of course that these were by no means coherent but diverging between, for example, the institutional art scene and farming community along the Irish border.

Most notable in its diversity is the confrontation and engagement with different cultures in meaning, as explicated by Williams in his third definition of the term, that has arisen through the three different localities in Ireland, France and Turkey in which the Live Projects were situated – and of course Sheffield from where the students were coming. But even within each one of those localities one

could distinguish different cultures, for instance in the Istanbul context, the culture of the Gecekondu dwellers with former rural and/or Anatolian backgrounds on the one hand and that of the cosmopolite Istanbul based intellectuals on the other hand.

Whilst the ECOroof Live Project in Paris was the only one to touch upon the first meaning of culture, all three Live Projects were confronted with the term's fourth meaning as they involved in all three cases artists and intellectuals with their respective artistic production. All of these different levels of culture and their relevance both for the Live Projects and the wider Rhyzom project can of course not be seen in isolation but depend upon one another. Or, to quote Williams again, *'it is the range and overlap of meanings that is significant'*[42] when one talks about culture in such a varied yet related context. Of specific significance here is the context of architectural production per se or, in other words, the culture of architecture. The Live Projects challenge the still prevailing understanding of an architectural culture that is foremost concerned with the production of objects and that produces those as if the producer, the architect, can indeed be situated outside the actual perception, performativity and agency of the object. Instead, Live Projects, and for that matter the three Live Projects related to the Rhyzom project, engage with a situated praxis of architecture that develops and experiments with new understandings of the producer of architecture (including or combining architects, clients and 'users'), with new forms or formats of architectural production (including participatory and bottom-up approaches), and with new pedagogical and educational approaches (student-led, 'live', process oriented). Ultimately this contributes towards a process that aims at a redefinition of the culture of architecture.

Working in Networks

Collective production is central to much of the pedagogy established at the School of Architecture in Sheffield, exemplified by the Live Projects, and, in particular, to the pedagogical stance of AGENCY. Live Projects offer a unique learning opportunity where students can experience and test forms of production that involve high degrees of co-operation and collaboration, within their group and outside, with clients, users and, in general, networks of actors related to their project. The Live Project experience is also complemented by the professional practice and management curriculum, designed to develop co-operation skills and expose students to socially motivated praxes and mutual organisational models. The aim is to develop skills that can empower students and graduates to conceive and implement their own praxes in a way that is aligned with their ethos and value systems. Central to these aspects of the curriculum is the idea of working in a meaningful and ethical way, together with others across distributed networks of actors, rather than in isolation, with an awareness of the dynamic relationships of individual actors with the networks they operate within.

Yet, whilst working across networks brings up ethical questions, overall *'the ethos of network-based design practices is intrinsically one of equality and is reliant on collaboration with others, and on relationships of mutual support.'*[43] It is this ethos embedded in the feminine that is beginning to emerge in increasingly networked modes of practice[44] – taking initiative, but also giving support or advice to others, building strong links among individuals or organisations in order to promote innovation and positive change, co-operative, intuitive and creative approaches to addressing issues. This ethos of mutual and reciprocal relationships[45] resonates with the feminist ethics of care as formulated by Carol Gilligan's *In a different voice*[46] and Nel Noddings' *Caring: a feminine approach to ethics & moral education*[47], where they propose an ethical theory that emphasises the importance of relationships, where caring is *'rooted in receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness is a more basic and preferable approach to ethics'*.[48]

Lovink and Schneider present the idea of the network paradigm in design as a useful way to bypass the preoccupation with end product, and investigate the everyday nature of workings between actors, materials and places: *'the networking paradigm escapes the centrality of the icon to visual culture and its critics and instead focuses on more abstract, invisible, subtle processes and feedback loops. There is nothing spectacular about networking'*.[49]

Students undertaking Live Projects in Paris, Istanbul and the Irish Border region had to become aware of and deal with the complexities of the interplay between the networks that generated their projects and those that were somehow affected by their development and outcomes. They had to learn to see the dynamics and the changing geometries of those networks and to position themselves critically and sensitively within and in relation to them.

In Gülensü and Gülsüyü the tensions between the various actors became apparent from the outset, as were the differences in approaches employed by them. Students had to mediate these tensions and carry out their work within the required framework, whilst remaining critical of it and true to their own beliefs. In Paris, one of the undertakings of the students was to catalyse the formation of a network between *Le Cent* and its surroundings in the Aligre neighbourhood, creating positive exchange loops and interactions. Along the Irish Border students were confronted with the difficulties of working across heterogeneous and disconnected networks, like those of formally constituted cultural/art institutions and the rural communities that live in their proximity. They developed an awareness of the specificity of the codes of each network and of the challenges of communication across networks, using codes that are understandable and acceptable to all parties involved.

Networks have, by definition, a degree of internal coherence, given by the nature of the links and relationships between their nodes. When interactions and exchanges are internal to the network, the nature of the relationships amongst nodes and the very identity of the network are not usually questioned; when interactions occur across networks, the coherence, the validity and legitimacy of these networks is questioned and needs to be re-articulated in relation to the codes and value systems of the other networks. This was the case, for instance, in the work by the *Remote Control* Live Project, who became a sort of translating device to articulate the raisons d'être, the values and the codes of the seemingly disjointed communities of the professional art arena and agriculture.

Method / pedagogy

The Live Projects as they are run in Sheffield, are a form of alternative, *soft*, but always critical form of pedagogy, which opens up and breaks the often imparted and sequential character of learning.[50] Instead, the Live Projects practice critical inquiry and doing and the three live projects were a case in point.

On the one hand, the three Live Projects illustrated how neither the production of space nor the observations of or the work within space can be, and never are, neutral or abstract. As John Law writes, *'Observations could not be neutral. They cannot be disentangled from the context of training or the process of puzzle solving which makes up the hinterland.'*[51] On the other hand, each project was a testing ground for how students of architecture at the University of Sheffield, School of Architecture could become embedded and situated in the respective local context of Paris, Belfast and Istanbul without losing their 'home' identity, but applying their knowledge across these national and cultural boundaries. Education, and in particular the Live Projects, have been conceived to consider and question the framework of the profession and to (re)establish pedagogy and practice as one and the same arena for action. Because Live Projects are as much about the understanding, analysis and investigation of a specific locale as they are about the awareness that this analysis is not done on the back of the local 'amateurs', but together with them, the Live Projects create deliberate places of potential friction but also the opportunity to engage with different knowledge.

The architecture students, arriving as small teams in Paris, Belfast and Istanbul were each working with a local group on a local question or more concrete project, immersing themselves both in the given information about each particular situation, but then also taking their own steps to relate this to their own and other people's knowledge. These three Live Projects did away with the architect as 'expert', but instead tried to formulate an idea of a professional, still, but one with a different set of skills and mind set. Acting trans-locally, they still had a local 'back-up' team when it came to the explanation and introduction into specific

political, cultural or social contexts. Yet, having this fallback position, they could concentrate on the critical interrogation of methodologies and methods applied.[52] Making these structures visible - through the mapping of geography, context, relationships and so on - provided the ultimate starting point to quickly develop and engage in very local discussions about space and each actor's agency within each project. As Brian Holmes, relating back to Fredric Jameson's notion of an aesthetics of cognitive mapping as collective pedagogy writes, *"Networks have become the dominant structures of cultural, economic and military power. Yet this power remains largely invisible. How can the networked society be represented? And how can it be navigated, appropriated, reshaped in its turn?"*[53] The Live Projects are an attempt to visualise the ground; and, whilst not always able to act themselves, at least prepare the ground for others to act on their behalf.

The trans-local / local collaborations in the end became an attempt to make architecture and architectural knowledge more relevant to a much broader section of the society. In these instances, these 'knowledges'[54], as Donna Haraway calls them, then became a transformative tool. *Knowledges* that emerged out of these operations were arrived at through negotiation with others, as in the ECOroof and *Remote Control* Live Projects, then became a collective good, which is understood as a product of participative spatial encounters that not least crosses disciplinary and other boundaries. Rhyzom in some sense 'forced' but through that enabled AGENCY, together with the groups of students, to engage in these encounters and asked whether the Live Project as a form of pedagogy could be a vehicle for trans-local production and exchange. In this, these collaborations between a large educational institution, the School of Architecture in Sheffield, and the small scale local cultural productions became displays of the power of the Live Project as pedagogical tool. It not only activated the students as agents, but enabled others to become active participants.[55]

Architectural education remains notably under-theorised as an underlying discipline and has remained largely unbothered by reformist educational movements such as 'critical pedagogy'[56], with the result that its central structures and methods have hardly altered since they were founded in the École des Beaux Arts in the early nineteenth century.[57] The Live Projects, and in particular the three projects referred to here, are one way of addressing a revaluation and potential restructuring of education as they take students beyond the self-defining milieu of an architecture school.

Ethics of engagement

As academics working in architectural education one of the most immediate discussions, both with the students but also amongst us, turns towards the ethics of engagement and the responsibility architects carry when engaging in a

Live Project. Yet, this engagement is never the same, never easy and also never homogenous, and, as we will explicate, seeing the Live Projects only in the light of external responsibilities means to miss one of their central points.

To begin with, Live Project clients have different expectations of the students and the students' work and they will have a preconceived idea of what it might be that the students should produce for or deliver to them. Clients will also have different backgrounds; they were, as in the case of Belfast, an interdisciplinary team of architects, artists, pedagogues and geographers, or, as in Paris, an artist collective, or, as in Istanbul, an institution, an artist group and a team of architectural researchers. Whilst every single one of these clients – PS², Cultural Agencies and *Le Cent*/aaa –found it easy enough to let the students in, let them participate in their projects in various forms, the process and moment of handing over and of finalising an engagement that simply couldn't continue due to pedagogical constraints and time frames defined by the curriculum, wasn't nearly as comfortable and straightforward. The reports that the students produced for their respective clients at the end of the six-week period of the Live Project represented the students' own views and perceptions of a situation or place – Belfast, Istanbul and Paris - and often contained observations that might be and sometimes were considered sensitive information in a local context.

Because each of the Live Project partners were also geographically remote, the students' engagement in a local context was limited to a short period of time. The students ended up reacting on and reflecting upon what was an intense, but short and superficial exchange with each local context. What the students produced, therefore, was not always what the respective client or partner had asked for or had expected simply because the Live Projects, back in their home context of Sheffield, took on a life of their own which was different to the reality they had encountered when embedded in Belfast, Istanbul or Paris. Each project's afterlife, the projects' life beyond the students' involvement and its continuation in the local context through the local partners was, not surprisingly, difficult. The students' work came to stand for itself, became a statement of a specific engagement that had taken place through a specific lens during a specified period of time that had not been necessarily connected to any of the local projects' timescales.

What then, are the Live Projects, really? What is live about them? The term Live Project might be misleading even, as, one could argue, these projects are not really live. Yes, they deal with real life clients and situations in real life time. Live Projects are treated as if they were 'real' architectural projects and the students end up carrying this load: the hope that can be associated with design or creativity (that architects can transform something), the social responsibility of engagement (on which they have to fail almost by default), and so on. At the same time, however, the Live Projects, more than being live, are in essence pedagogical projects

simulating practice or what real life practice might be: having to respond to multiple voices and multiple points of views.

Whilst this discussion about the level and ethics of engagement is important and still an essential part of each of the three projects, the afterlife of the Live Projects in terms of the students' education is also important to consider. After all, the 'Live Projects' are live for the students, they form part of their education and constitute a real, tangible and also assessed part of their work. What we as AGENCY, as academics, in this process are concerned with is also how the students bring this experience of the Live Projects back into their own education. What are the consequences for them, having been exposed to the external conditions and other voices, in terms of both their education and their position towards architectural practice? What does being situated and embedded in a real life context mean for these students of architecture and for us, their tutors?

As Rhyzom partners, we can question the impact of these three Live Projects that took place simultaneously in three Rhyzom locations. What did the Rhyzom partners and networks get from this intense experience? Perhaps, along with an effective push to their local projects, the Rhyzom partners got strong feedback from students which even if limited in time and sometimes partial, was fresh and genuine, asking the obvious 'outsiders' questions that those who are deeply involved in a local project might fail to ask.

We would have liked this experience to be more sustainable and to develop longer forms of engagement during the afterlife of the Live Projects, that could involve students more deeply in the research aspects of Rhyzom. This comes down to politics of research and education. Even if we managed to convince the University to step into such a project, we failed in negotiating sustained institutional involvement and in liberating time for longer term research and educational experience. 'Life' as a subject is not only generous but also exigent and our academic contexts are still slow in accommodating the contingency of collaborations with small cultural practices and non-academic communities. The Rhyzom experience was a very promising step in pushing this negotiation further.

36   D. Gruenewald, 'Why Place Matters: The everyday context everywhere of experience, culture, and education', *Annual conference of the Association of Educational Research in America*, San Francisco (7-11 April 2006).

37   See D. Schugurensky , 'Strategies to elicit informal learning and tacit knowledge: Methodological notes from the field', *Rethinking work and learning: Research findings and policy challenges*, organized by the Research Network on Work and Lifelong Learning (WALL), Toronto. (4-5 June 2006). See also Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider, and Jeremy Till, *Spatial Agency. Other Ways of Doing Architecture,* (London: Routledge, 2011).

38   Such programmes include, ASD projects at the Department of Architecture and Spatial Design at London Metropolitan University, Yale Building Project at Yale School of Architecture and Street Society programme at Queen's University Belfast, amongst others.

39   cf. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space,* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

40   Richard Williams, *Keywords – A Vocabulary of Culture and Society,* (London: Fontana Press, 1976), p. 87.

41   all: Williams, p. 90.

42   Williams, p. 87.

43   Cristina **Cerulli and Anna Holder, 2008. Stereotypes and prototypes of the design entre**preneur: Rebranding, and banding together. Re-Public, (special issue). Available at: http://www.re-public.gr/en/?p=345.

44   Cristina Cerulli, 'Architects of a Deeper Green: beyond Environmental Sustainability in Architecture', *International Journal of Green Economics,* 5 (1)(2011): 61-66.

45   See also chapter Mutually, Commonly

46   Carol Gilligan. *In a different voice: psychological theory and women's development* (Harvard University Press, 1982).

47   Nel Noddings, *Caring: a feminine approach to ethics & moral education* (University of California Press, 1984).

48   ibid, p. 2.

49   Geert Lovink and Florian Schneider, cited in Anthony Burke & Therese Tierney, *Network practices: new strategies in architecture and design*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2007), p. 58 - Networking here is not understood in the conventional sense of the business world, where it is a practice founded on manipulative and exploitative relationships, but rather as an open source, non hierarchical way of operating based on equal relationships.

50   See Paolo Freire and in particular Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970).

51   John Law, *After Method. Mess in Social Science Research,* (Oxon: Routledge, 2004), p. 44.

52   Students were experts, were explorers, were investigators, listeners; sometimes naïve, sometimes ignorant, sometimes innovative. At the same time, none of these individual roles were fixed and always negotiable.

53   Brian Holmes, 'Counter Cartographies', in *Else/Where: Mapping,* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Design Institute, 2006), pp. 20-25 (p. 20).

54   **Donna Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privi**lege of Partial Perspective', *Feminist Studies*, 14 (1988): 575-599.

55   As was the case with the production of a self-build manual as part of ECOroof.

56   As, for example, theorised in Freire as well as in Peter McLaren. *Predatory Culture: Oppositional Politics in A Postmodern Age,* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

57   The work of Thomas A. Dutton should be named as an exception here who has been instrumental in bringing critical theory to the attention of architectural educators. See: Thomas A. Dutton, *Voices in Architectural Education: Cultural Politics and Pedagogy*, Critical Studies in Education and Culture Series, (New York: Bergin & Garvey, 1991). **This idea is further contextual**ised in Awan, Schneider and Till, *Spatial Agency.*

READER

This section includes reflections on issues addressed during the Rhyzom actions: local, trans-local, place, culture, rural and urban, conflict and contest, ecologies, politics and care practices, common and commonality, institutions and agencies etc.

CULTURES RHISOMATIQUES ET TRANSLOCALES

CONSTANTIN PETCOU

CRISES GLOBALES / CRISES LOCALES

Au XXᵉ siècle, la vie culturelle s'est fortement concentrée dans quelques grandes villes et métropoles. En trouvant dans les milieux urbains plus de libertés individuelles que dans les petites villes ou les milieux ruraux, ainsi que plus de possibilités d'être soutenus économiquement dans leurs démarches, les artistes et d'autres créateurs ont préféré y vivre et travailler. De plus, sont apparues progressivement des "communautés" artistiques favorables à un échange et développement intense de valeurs communes. Les « internationales » artistiques (dadaïstes, lettristes, situationnistes, etc.) ont contribué encore plus à cette concentration culturelle métropolitaine et à un effet de visibilité de très grande échelle. Mais, cette visibilité internationale, installée simultanément dans l'économie, le social et la politique (en grande partie parallèlement à l'évolution des transports à distance et des mass-media), est devenue, par son pouvoir communicationnel, un vecteur de domination à grande échelle. L'échelle locale a été progressivement vidée de ses diverses valeurs et repères culturels, ceux-ci étant remplacés progressivement par d'autres qui s'imposaient et qui interagissaient à échelle globale. À travers des phénomènes similaires, la vie économique et politique locale est actuellement profondément affaiblie suite à la domination des phénomènes de grande échelle. Progressivement, à échelle locale, il n'y a plus de rôle actif et créatif important à jouer ; la culture locale est simplement spectatrice de la culture globale. Le global a poussé le local dans une position consumériste ; actuellement le local est devenu un consommateur de global. Comme le soulignait Marc Augé récemment, «la couleur globale efface la couleur locale. Le local transformé en image et en décor, c'est le local aux couleurs du global, l'expression du système.»[1]

La récente crise économique, qui est loin d'être terminée, ne fait que réduire encore les possibilités individuelles de trouver un rôle social et un devenir à échelle locale. Le local est de plus en plus vidé de ses potentialités économiques et sociales. Dans ce contexte aux enjeux globalisés, la réactivation des dimensions et des valeurs locales s'avère fondamentale pour permettre aux individus de s'imaginer et de construire leur futur et leur identité. Et il y a urgence à résoudre la crise économique avant qu'elle ne provoque une crise sociale majeure. Alain Touraine souligne très clairement une certaine incapacité d'action à ce sujet: "en face de la masse impressionnante (et menaçante à la fois) de l'économie globalisée, le monde des institutions sociales ne connaît plus ni fonction ni cohérence interne."[2]

GLOBAL REMAKES LOCAL

Une série de phénomènes culturels et sociaux des dernières décennies, me permet d'avancer dans une analyse rapide de l'évolution des phénomènes culturels locaux. Je note, premièrement, l'augmentation du temps libre à échelle de masse, un phénomène dû aux changements des modes de travail (industrialisation, organisation syndicale, etc.), à l'augmentation de l'espérance de vie et aux déséquilibres économiques favorisant temporairement les populations de certains pays.

Parallèlement il y a eu une homogénéisation culturelle due à certains aspects de la globalisation : le rôle d'"éducateurs planétaires" attribué rapidement aux stars promus par des chaînes comme MTV, l'impact sur les comportements des jeunes à travers les marques de fast-food, de vêtements et autres produits de masse à bas prix type MacDonald, l'explosion des réseaux sociaux sur internet, l'addiction aux jeux vidéos et le cinéma d'effets spéciaux, etc. L'effet de déterritorialisation spatiale produit par cette homogénéisation culturelle est très bien décrit par Marc Augé dans ses analyses sur le fonctionnement et l'impact d'une série d'espaces identiques d'un continent à un autre, des espaces qu'il définit comme des « non-lieux ». Cette déterritorialisation et cet affaiblissement des cultures locales sont, en partie, provoqués par la disparition du rôle actif tenus normalement par les activités économiques dans la définition des identités locales. [3]

Par un "renouvellement" et remplacement des identités locales disparues, mais en visant en fait le potentiel commercial représenté par le temps libre de masse, une industrie de fabrication "ex-nihilo" de pôles "identitaires" est apparue. En commençant avec le premier Disneyland en 1955, et en mettant l'accent sur le spectaculaire et les sensations fortes, des « theme park » sont apparus au départ aux États-Unis, un pays ayant bénéficié parmi les premiers de ce temps libre de masse et étant, par son histoire récente, en manque de lieux et régions ayant des identités culturelles commercialisables.[4]

L'enchaînement des phénomènes décrits ci-dessus, intimement liés au rapport inégal entre local et global, est devenu aujourd'hui systémique. Hannah Arendt a souligné, dès 1954, la déviance des portées sociales et politiques de la crise de la culture : "l'industrie des loisirs est confrontée à des appétits gargantuesques et, puisque la consommation fait disparaître ses marchandises, elle doit sans cesse fournir de nouveaux articles. Dans cette situation, ceux qui produisent pour les mass media pillent le domaine entier de la culture passée et présente». Et ils préparent ce matériau «pour qu'il soit facile à consommer».[5]

Dans un comble d'absurdité en matière de "stratégie locale et culturelle", des pays "en manque" de potentiel touristique à cause de leur tradition culturelle (nomade comme dans le cas de Dubaï), font actuellement des efforts gigantesques pour construire une "identité" culturelle contemporaine ; malgré l'artificiel, la superficialité consumériste et la non-durabilité de leur entreprise. Cette stratégie réussit, pour l'instant, à capter une population récemment enrichie originaire de pays en grande transformation politique et économique, une population déracinée elle-même. Des nouveaux riches sont attirés par des fausses identités locales, des « attractions » pour une population ayant de plus en plus de « temps libre» et étant en quête d'identités légères, voire jetables, d'autant plus qu'elles sont saisonnières et renouvelables d'une année l'autre.

Nous avons à faire au remplacement de la culture populaire par l'« entertainment » consumériste.[6] Ce "local" n'est plus de l'ordre de l'identité, de la construction et du vécu mais du spectaculaire, de la consommation et du divertissement ; un local consumériste préfabriqué « pour le temps libre ». Dans une analyse précursive, Hannah Arendt précise : «peut-être la différence fondamentale entre société et société de masse est-elle que la société veut la culture, évalue et dévalue les choses culturelles comme

marchandises sociales, en use et abuse pour ses propres fins égoïstes, mais ne les <consomme> pas. (…) La société de masse, au contraire, ne veut pas la culture, mais les loisirs (entertainment)».[7]

BIOPOUVOIR GLOBAL ET AU DELÀ

Quel rôle et quel fonctionnement des cultures locales dans ce contexte globalisé ? Quelles sont les conditions pour que des nouvelles formes culturelles puissent émerger à partir de ces territoires homogénéisés par les modes de vie et les valeurs propagées par les mass-media ? Quelle échelle de visibilité nous devrions préserver pour certains phénomènes locaux pour ne pas altérer leurs formes sociales et culturelles spécifiques ? Est-ce qu'il y a une échelle intermédiaire, translocale, qui se constitue progressivement à travers différents types de réseaux, comme un équilibre entre l'échelle locale et l'échelle globale ? Et, dans ce cas, comment fonctionner à travers des réseaux translocaux tout en préservant un degré important d'autonomie locale ? Quels enjeux culturels et politiques peuvent être visés en agissant de manière collective à échelle translocale ?

Ces questions nous ont motivé tout au long du projet Rhyzom et, à travers les différents fieldtrips, observations, discussions et autres actions organisées à cette occasion, nous avons pu explorer un nombre de projets locaux, initiés généralement par des changements radicaux de mode de vie de leurs initiateurs et, parfois, développés dans des contextes économiques ou politiques difficiles. Nous avons pu rencontrer des militants et collectifs impliqués dans le développement de lieux et projets novateurs mais marginaux, de discuter avec des groupes d'initiative qui résistent devant le rouleau compresseur de la culture de masse transformée en loisir.

Par contraste, les différents déplacements occasionnés par le projet Rhyzom nous ont permis de constater aussi, une fois de plus, les similitudes des aéroports et des marchandises vendues, des périphéries des grandes villes avec leurs entrepôts et leurs panneaux publicitaires quasi-identiques, des grandes surfaces et des centres historiques des villes européennes transformés partiellement en décor pour des magasins de grandes marques.

Portée par des flux financiers et médiatiques, la globalisation laisse des traces profondes et semblables dans la plupart des grandes villes et métropoles, mais aussi dans une diversité d'autres recoins de la planète : ports maritimes, villages de vacances, quartiers d'affaires, plates-formes industrielles, parcs d'attractions, zones d'habitations, etc.. Sans oublier le cinéma, les jeux vidéo et les portails Internet.

D'où vient cette omniprésence des traces de la globalisation ? Le rôle stratégique des phénomènes de globalisation fait que leur contrôle est devenu un objectif prioritaire pour les centres de pouvoir géopolitique et financier. Un des exemples dans ce sens est cité par Paul Virilio qui remarque : "depuis le début de la décennie 90, le Pentagone considère que la géostratégie retourne le globe comme un gant! En effet, pour les responsables militaires américains, le GLOBAL c'est l'intérieur d'un monde fini dont la finitude même pose des problèmes logistiques nombreux. Et le LOCAL c'est l'extérieur, la périphérie, pour ne pas dire la grande banlieue du monde".[8] Suivant cette vision, le local n'a plus aucune valeur stratégique actuellement. Mais il s'agit d'une vision limitée strictement à l'argent et au pouvoir, d'une vision du monde qui a évacué complètement les dimensions culturelles et sociales ! C'est une vision qui sert quelques intérêts privés en oubliant les valeurs communes, les seules qui peuvent assurer la vitalité d'une société à long terme, à la fois à échelle locale et globale.[9]

CRISE DE LA BIODIVERSITÉ CULTURELLE

La crise écologique, et la crise économique, sont des crises globalisées. Néanmoins, de manière indirecte, le local a été "pris" aussi dans les crises du global, les deux échelles étant connectées. Les deux crises, économique et écologique, sont liées par les modes de production, par les types d'énergies utilisées, par l'épuisement des ressources, par les effets de pollution, etc. Comment sortir, localement, de ces crises produites à échelle globales ?

Le renforcement du local par l'économique impliquera d'autres modes de production, en remettant l'accent sur l'identité et la subjectivité du producteur. D'où l'importance de provoquer un renouvellement et une diversification des modes de production locaux (plus artisanaux, garants d'une qualité durable, permettant une appropriation subjective du travail). La reconstruction des économies locales devrait inclure dès le départ les critères écologiques et interagir, à moyen terme, avec la dimension globale. À partir d'analyses focalisées sur les dimensions politiques et économiques de la société, Lefebvre souligne déjà en 1974 l'importance de la vision écologique, dans sa capacité fondamentale qui est celle de pouvoir se ressourcer. Nous devrions envisager, suggère Lefebvre, un autre devenir, après celui imaginé par les modernistes, un devenir plus relié à la nature, à ses dynamiques et rééquilibrages permanents : «la nature chez Marx figurait parmi les forces productives. Aujourd'hui, la distinction s'impose, que Marx n'a pas introduite, entre la *domination* et l'*appropriation* de la nature. La domination par la technique tend vers la non-appropriation : la destruction. (…) La nature apparaît aujourd'hui comme source et ressource : source d'énergies (indispensables, immenses mais non illimitées).»[10]

Malgré les analyses et diagnostiques comme celui de Lefebvre, du Club de Rome, et des premiers rapports du GIEC, les pouvoirs politiques publics, sous la pression des grands acteurs économiques globaux, ont pris acte de la réalité de la crise écologique et de son lien avec les activités humaines économiques, avec beaucoup de réticence et de retard. C'est, par exemple, très récemment, que la dimension de « source et ressource » de la nature a été reconnue comme primordiale par des approches à la fois économiques et écologiques.[11]

Reconnaître l'importance fondamentale de la capacité de ressourcement de la nature, son rôle crucial pour les activités économiques mêmes, implique d'accorder aussi toute son importance à l'accueil et à la préservation de la biodiversité. À l'exception des grandes réservations naturelles, cette capacité d'accueil et de ressourcement a été en partie préservée, en échappant à la gestion utilitariste et réductrice du territoire, dans les interstices et lisières non contrôlés par la logique administrative réduisant la nature aux plantes directement utilisables. Ces interstices et lisières accueillant la biodiversité sont définis par Gilles Clément comme du Tiers Paysage : "un territoire de refuge à la diversité. Partout ailleurs celle-ci est chassée».[12] D'une manière similaire, à travers ses diverses occurrences, le local peut assurer un accueil durable à une "biodiversité" culturelle, point de départ vers un équilibre entre les critères économiques et les critères écologiques. C'est cette biodiversité culturelle qui sera capable d'assurer le ressourcement de la vie locale dans toute sa richesse.[13]

PRODUCTION ET CONSOMMATION LOCALE

Cette qualité de "refuge" pour une biodiversité de projets, de collectifs et de modes de vie, à long terme, pourrait régénérer les équilibres économiques et écologiques à échelle locale, avant d'interagir ultérieurement avec l'échelle globale. Sur la base d'une compréhension écologique de la réalité, Gilles Clément affirme «que nous allons nous acheminer (…) vers une <démondialisation>, c'est-à-dire une consommation et une production localisée de biens. Cela n'empêchera pas d'avoir une économie étendue à l'échelle de la planète, mais elle devra s'organiser à une échelle locale.»[14] Il s'agirait de réinitier des cycles de production et de consommation locale, tout en prenant en compte les cycles écologiques et économiques à diverses échelles.

Et c'est toujours à cette échelle locale que nous pourrions faire (ré)apparaître des qualités disparues dans les modes de vie actuelle (convivialité, partage, échange, solidarité), en incluant ces qualités dans les modes de production également. Comme le précise, dans ses analyses, Ivan Illich : «j'entends par convivialité l'inverse de la productivité industrielle. Chacun de nous se définit par relation à autrui et au milieu et par la structure profonde des outils qu'il utilise. (…) aux deux extrêmes, l'outil dominant et l'outil convivial".[15] Ce type de travail, pouvant être réintroduit à échelle locale, n'est pas concurrentiel et accumulatif, mais coopératif, basé sur l'échange et le partage.[16]

En essayant d'explorer les différentes formes de résistance à l'homogénéisation induite par la globalisation, nous avons visité une série de projets dans différentes régions d'Europe, ayant en commun des modes de vie questionnant les stéréotypes, le partage de valeurs authentiques et ancrées localement. Nous avons pu constater, premièrement, que le local n'est pas une qualité liée forcément à l'isolement. Des projets ayant une forte dimension locale peuvent apparaître dans des milieux urbains, en résistant ou en échappant au contrôle et à la planification de l'administration et des urbanistes. L'existence de ces lieux a pu même bénéficier, parfois, d'une volonté des pouvoirs publics attentive à ce type de projets.

Nous avons observé, néanmoins, que la plupart des phénomènes culturels locaux apparaissent habituellement dans des territoires marginaux, éloignés, ruraux, pour la simple raison de pouvoir être localisé dans des lieux accessibles en termes économiques ; des lieux pour lesquels les prix de location ou d'achat sont encore abordables, en ayant échappés, pour différentes raisons, à une spéculation foncière généralisée jusqu'aux derniers terrains agricoles.

Nous avons pu observer, parfois, un certain épuisement de ces collectifs pionniers dans leur démarche, des situations de conflictualité dues au nombre réduit de la plupart des équipes, la fragilité des "modèles micro-sociaux" mis en place (en comparaison avec les normes occidentales contemporaines : accès aux soins de santé, de sécurité sociale, etc.). Il est d'autant plus remarquable de constater l'existence de groupes ayant plus de 15 ans d'activités, qui ont réussi à mettre en place une reprise des projets par des nouveaux noyaux porteurs ou qui arrivent vraiment à développer leur projet avec des nouveaux venus et des nouvelles initiatives. Certains groupes trouvent un nouveau souffle en développant des réseaux locaux et régionaux de coopération.

RESEAUX TRANSLOCAUX ET COMMUNAUTÉS TRANSVERSALES

Soulignons que ni l'économie, ni l'écologie et ni les phénomènes culturels ne pourraient être réduits et limités à des formes et manifestations strictement locales. En initiant des réseaux reliant des identités qui gardent des forts ancrages locaux et qui restent, en partie, autonomes, les formes d'organisation rhizomatique construisent le translocal comme une échelle intermédiaire entre local et global, un réseau polymorphe et hétérogène. C'est une échelle qui favorise la multitude et la subjectivation, les échanges et l'hétérogenèse, ce qui devrait être fondamental pour l'émergence et le développement des phénomènes culturels authentiques.

D'autre part, même en ayant un mode de vie très localisé, chacun de nous est aujourd'hui plongé dans une réalité qui a, potentiellement, une dimension translocale. Comme le remarque Mulder : "en moyenne, une école accueille aujourd'hui des enfants de 26 nationalités différentes. Chaque ville abrite des résidents de 95 nationalités différentes, certaines concentrées dans des quartiers spécifiques, mais répandue pour la plupart sur l'ensemble du territoire urbain. Toutes ces nationalités et tous ces sous-groupes, qui ne sont pas toujours compris par les "outsiders", "actent" leurs propres cultures (...) Personne n'a plus une seule culture ; tout le monde participe d'une multiplicité de "cultures."[17]

Cette appartenance à plusieurs territoires et à plusieurs échelles (par multiculturalisme, temporalités superposées, etc.), peut constituer un terreau d'apparition de nouvelles cultures au croisement des échelles territoriales. Ce multiple ancrage constitue aussi la condition d'émergence de nouvelles sociétés au croisement de différentes cultures contemporaines : sociétés diasporiques, communautés et réseaux d'artistes, etc.

Le local commence à être marqué, et changé lentement, par l'apparition de réseaux translocaux : des rhizomes hétérogènes qui rendent possible l'apparition de multiples identités. Comme s'interrogent Deleuze et Guattari, "c'est peut-être un des caractères les plus importants du rhizome, d'être toujours à entrées multiples".[18] Cette entrée multiple est essentielle pour la subjectivité rhizomatique ; un sujet multiple constitué par une diversité d'identités et, également, par une diversité de distances. Comme le précise Latour, «les réseaux - ou les rhizomes - permettent non seulement de distribuer l'action, mais aussi d'opérer des détachements et des arrachements à la proximité et, inversement, des rattachements au lointain."[19]

Les distances, et les voisinages, jouent un rôle principal dans la définition des réseaux rhisomatiques. Porteurs d'une identité spécifique, même si elle est multiple, les collectifs que j'ai pu rencontrer dans

CAN MASDEU
The outskirts of Barcelona, Spain

WHO a group of 25 persons who live in Can Masdeu and a group of 80 persons who works on community gardens
WHAT a collective house with a social and environnemental education center and community gardens
WEB http://www.canmasdeu.net/
KEYWORDS *activism - alternative institution - environnemental education - ecological cultural practices*

Can Masdeu es una antigua masía okupada. Desde aproximadamente 1906 hasta finales de la década de los 50 del pasado siglo XX fue utilizada como leprosería, tras lo cual fue abandonada y no volvió a habitarse hasta que fue okupada a finales de diciembre de 2001.
Los proyectos que actualmente dan vida al valle son: "http://www.canmasdeu.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/campana-reducida.jpg"
El colectivo de vida, compuesto por todos los habitantes estables de la masía, actualmente 25 personas.
Los Huertos Comunitarios, donde unas 80 personas, en su mayoría vecinos cultivan en grupos o de forma individual alguna de las parcelas de tierra en torno a la masía.
El Punt de Interacció de Collserola (PIC), centro social abierto principalmente los domingos, salvo verano y festivos. Cuenta con una amplia y diversa programación que ofrece a los visitantes talleres, charlas y actividades gratuitas, encaminadas a la concienciación social y el crecimiento personal.
La Educación Ambiental, es un recurso pedagógico que ofrecen los habitantes de Can Masdeu a todas las escuelas, centros de educación de adultos, esplais y grupos diversos que quieran desarrollar actividades relacionadas con el medio ambiente, la agricultura, la energía, etc.

ARQUITECTURA Y COMPROMISO SOCIAL
Sevilla, Spain

WHO an university association of professional, teachers and students in architecture, urban planning and sociology
WHAT the association contributes to the construction of a more human urban environment through the implementation of processus of popular participation
WEB http://www.arquisocial.org/
KEYWORDS *culture - activism - critical approach - participation*

El objetivo central de ACS es contribuir al desarrollo humano a través del fomento de procesos de mejora del hábitat capaces de fortalecer el tejido social. Entienden el desarrollo como la conquista de grados crecientes de autonomía por parte de las comunidades. Consideran la mejora del hábitat como una tarea colectiva y transdisciplinar que persigue la racionalidad y sostenibilidad social, cultural, económica y ambiental de los asentamientos humanos y la consecución del derecho universal a la vivienda, a la ciudad y a los servicios básicos

des contextes culturels et locaux particuliers, fonctionnent souvent par des réseaux reliant des groupes similaires mais situés à des distances géographiques importantes. La distance ne constitue plus un handicap dans la création de réseaux, en comparaison avec l'affinité et le partage de valeurs et de démarches similaires. Concrètement, ces réseaux apparaissent plus facilement à échelle régionale, nationale et internationale, en comparaison avec l'échelle strictement locale.

Le rhizome construit ainsi une identité qui est, à égale mesure, une communauté de subjectivités hétérogènes et une "communauté d'intervalles".[20] Le rhizome est une communauté d'identités différentes et de distances liées par des transversalités ; le rhizome se construit comme une « communauté transversale », un tissage hybride de multiples identités ancrées dans des contextes hétérogènes, reliés par des échanges, coopérations et intervalles entre ces identités.

APPARTENANCE ET DEVENIR RHIZOMATIQUE

Quels types d'agencements rendent possible la mise en place et le fonctionnement, à long terme, de ces communautés transversales ? Quels types de liens permettent de relier de manière flexible les identités hétérogènes qui les composent ? En continuité avec la pensée de Deleuze et Guattari, et en s'appuyant sur une distinction entre les concepts de molaire et moléculaire, Lazzarato distingue : «l'agencement molaire est à l'origine de ce que Deleuze et Guattari appellent une <segmentarité dure>, une segmentarité dichotomique. Le moléculaire, au contraire, (…) constitue ce que Deleuze et Guattari appellent une <segmentarité souple>, une segmentarité différentielle. Le molaire, ou majeur, consiste en des *états* qui reproduisent une situation en fixant les possibles en dualismes; le moléculaire, ou mineur, consiste en des *devenirs* qui pluralisent les possibles.»[21] C'est cette segmentarité souple qui permet une pluralité de devenirs, nécessaires pour la constitution des communautés transversales et, implicitement, pour explorer les possibilités de reconstruction du local.
Grâce à une diversité sociale et culturelle accrue, les villes gardent un potentiel local, qui peut s'amplifier encore, si elles sont traversées par des cultures et collectivités rhizomatiques. La complexité et la richesse de la ville nous permettent d'enrichir les relations sociales en permanence, d'avoir de l'imprévu, de garder le potentiel d'un devenir ouvert et non linéaire. Comme le note Ulf Hannerz, "en ville, certaines

des relations les plus importantes sont celles qu'on n'a pas encore".[22] Les cultures et les collectivités rhizomatiques peuvent amplifier encore plus ce « devenir potentiel ».

Dans une société marquée par la difficulté d'accéder à des identités individualisées (à cause d'un système social qui nous cantonne dans des situations transitoires, intermittentes et précaires), la porosité et l'ouverture de certains projets rhizomatiques ouvrent la possibilité d'exister à des subjectivités définies par l'appartenance ; à un collectif, à un projet, à des modes de vie.

Cette communauté transversale structurée sous une forme rhizomatique et collaborative correspond à ce que Gabriel Tarde considère être une dimension fondamentale du social : «la société, en effet, est <la possession réciproque, sous des formes extrêmement variées, de tous par chacun>».[23] A contre-courant de certaines mentalités actuelles, les relations sociales affectives, constitutives pour les communautés transversales, pourraient restructurer la société, et sans affaiblir les libertés individuelles. [24]

DISCOURS HÉTÉROGÈNES

Quelle serait la manière de communiquer à l'intérieur des rhizomes translocaux ? Comment représenter les communautés transversales sans les homogénéiser ?
Pour décrire le rhizome et le translocal, nous devrions faire un changement discursif radical dans le rapport entre les parties représentées et la description du processus d'ensemble. Nous pourrions être inspirés par les géographes qui ont essayé de restructurer leur discipline en prenant comme objectif de ne plus représenter la Terre considérée globalement, et fonder ainsi "la chorographie (qui) a pour objectif l'étude des réalités partielles".[25] Nous pourrions ainsi passer d'une représentation globale des projets locaux à une représentation "chorographique" plus attentive aux spécificités de chaque partie.

PLATFORMA 9,81
Zagreb, Croatia

WHO informal student organization founded at the Zagreb Faculty architecture
WHAT An informal approach of architecture and urban planning's projects, non-institutional strategies of action, tendency towards research and away from habitual practice
WEB http://www.platforma981.hr/
KEYWORDS *culture - activism - critical approach - participation*

Platforma 9,81 was created in 1999 as a reaction to the inability of the architectural scene to establish an interdisciplinary and open dialogue within the scene and externally in regard to the problems of urban space culture, digitalization of the environment, influences of globalization to the perception of space and the needs of new educational methods in architecture today. They explore spatial and urban phenomena in the context of shifting political, economic and cultural identities. Developing new methods in architectural practice, using cross disciplinary educational and research networks, they promote activism and new urban techniques through public events and mass media

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CHIOSC
Chisinau, Moldova

WHO Loose Associations/Slobodne veze and the Moldavian association Oberliht
WHAT a platform for public participation and cultural production
WEB http://www.oberliht.org.md/chiosc.html
KEYWORDS *culture - activism - alternative institution - participation*

The CHIOSC is a project, a cultural info-point and a platform for public participation taking place in the city of Chisinau. It has been conceived in a complex social and political context that marks the period of transition, with the intention to promote contemporary art and youth culture in public space by contaminating the urban territory with relevant information. It is meant to encourage active participation of diverse social groups representing often marginalized or less visible domains by putting at their disposal a public platform for manifestation, to strengthen local and develop regional and international network of cultural operators and professionals, to influence the existing public policies and local authorities to extend the access to public space and allow it's less restricted usage

D'une manière similaire, pour l'ensemble d'un rhizome, nous devrions équilibrer la représentation du réseau et des collectifs participants. Nous serions proches des modalités discursives collectives, transversales et mutualisées, développées récemment dans des écritures collectives et évolutives de type Wikipedia, mais avec des vraies collaborations et échanges. Au-delà de ses motivations et objectifs locaux, le discours rhizomatique constitue un « créatif commun » discursif. Pour le réaliser, nous devons articuler des éléments différents, voire contradictoires. Guattari souligne l'importance d'un background affectif pour réussir ce discours hétérogène, d'une manière proche de celle réussie par Deligny qui, pour ses expériences pédagogiques, " a agencé une économie collective de désir articulant des personnes, des gestes, des circuits économiques, relationnels, etc.»[26]

Au-delà de son a-centricité, le rhizome se caractérise par une absence de limite. La présence des rhizomes culturels dans les milieux urbains peut contribuer à la vie démocratique par leur structure et fonctionnement-même. Comme le précise Richard Sennet, «la plupart des plans urbains utilisés actuellement en enseignement privilégient la notion de limite, à la fois pour sa définition légale et sociale. (…) Je veux argumenter que cette situation n'est pas démocratique. Elle pousse l'énergie en dehors des villes en bouclant les différences de chaque partie. « «Comment pouvons-nous remplacer ces limites par des marges? « se demande finalement Richard Sennet pour qui, à la différence des limites, les marges ont une épaisseur et accueillent la diversité.[27]

Et Sennet continue en précisant son intérêt pour "les conditions de frontière (bord) entre les communautés. (…) Les bords peuvent être de deux cas de figure. Dans un cas, il s'agit d'une marge (border). Dans l'autre c'est une limite (boundary). Une marge est une zone d'interaction où les choses se rencontrent et se croisent.[28] «le problème est de savoir comment agir pour transformer des espaces en marges vivantes.(…) Si nous regardons la membrane/paroi d'une cellule il y a deux conditions qu'elle doit remplir; elle doit être résistante et elle doit être poreuse."

Les rhizomes peuvent nous permettre l'apprentissage de cette résistance et porosité ; il s'agit d'un apprentissage constitutif qui permettra la construction des rhizomes mêmes. Et, dans le temps, ces collectifs rhizomatiques pourront renforcer, par des exercices de fonctionnement quotidiens, la démocratie comme négociation permanente.[29] Et c'est, peut-être, cette démocratie rhizomatique qui pourra trouver des directions pour sortir de la crise qui est derrière toutes les crises actuelles : la crise du politique. Le rhizome étant ainsi un espace de (ré)apprentissage politique.

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[1] Marc Augé, *Où est passé l'avenir ?,* éd. du Panama, 2008, p.57

[2] Alain Touraine, *Après la crise*, éd. Du Seuil, 2010, pp.92-93. Quelques pages auparavant, Touraine précise que "la vie économique et la vie sociale ne pourront être sauvées qu'ensemble" (p.82). Or, toutes les mesures lancées par les divers gouvernements et organismes internationaux n'ont pris en compte, jusqu'à maintenant, que la sauvegarde du système bancaire, et quasiment pas celle de l'économie ; et pas du tout des mesures concernant la crise sociale. Et, d'ailleurs, cette crise sociale ne peut pas être résolue par le haut, à partir du global. Les crises économiques et écologiques sont globales et les solutions pour les résoudre doivent partir de nouveaux équilibres globaux ; la crise sociale pourrait provoquer, par contre, une refonte de la société à partir de l'échelle locale.

[3] Dans ce sens, Anne Raulin note : "à la suite de la crise économique qui a touché tour à tour les productions houillère, textile et métalurgique qui furent en leur temps le support de toute une culture - bourgéoise et ouvrière - et la fierté de toute une région, la nécessaire redéfinition identitaire a mis l'édifice à l'honneur : sa profondeur patrimoniale sert la mise en valeur touristique", cf. Anne Raulin, *Anthropologie urbaine*, éd. Armand Colin, 2001, p.146

[4] Accéléré par le développement des réseaux ferrés, le tourisme de masse apparu, au départ en Grande-Bretagne et aux Etats-Unis, s'est répandu ultérieurement dans tous les pays "développés". Et, avec le tourisme, l'industrie des "theme-parks" a été exportée à la suite, des Disneyland et autres "truc-lands" étant construits en différents pays et continents.

AULABIERTA
Granada, Spain

WHO Architecture students from University of Malaga
WHAT a platform of self-managed learning in university
WEB http://aulabierta.info/
KEYWORDS *culture - activism - alternative institution - participation - self-managed learning*

Aulabierta es una experiencia de diseño y construcción de una plataforma de aprendizaje autogestionada, dentro de la Universidad de Granada, por sus propios estudiantes. Aulabierta pretende ser un espacio que conecte la universidad con otros contextos (profesional, social...). Un lugar que permita salvar el desfase existente entre el aprendizaje y su puesta en práctica, que ponga a trabajar de otra forma las relaciones entre los roles universitarios (profesores, alumnos, PAS) así como introducir otros nuevos (colaboradores externos). Aulabierta es un espacio consecuentemente abierto; que trata de constituirse como en una plataforma que active la investigación y producción de conocimiento, retomando el carácter social de éste como algo colectivamente construido

COX 18
Milano, Italia

WHO squatting community
WHAT a social center of street Conchetta in Milan, center of the bookshop Calusca and the Primo Moroni's archives
WEB ttps://cox18.noblogs.org/
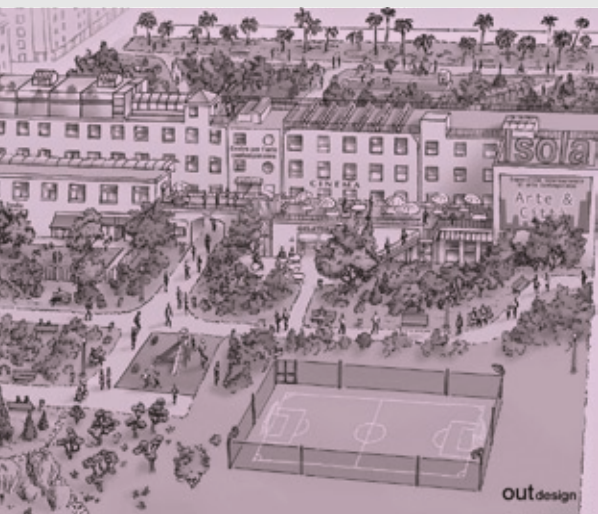**KEYWORDS** *culture -alternative institution - activism - urban struggles*

Cox18 è uno spazio sociale, occupato e autogestito dal 1976. I collettivi che ne fanno parte rifiutano le ideologie dominanti o che vogliono dominare, rifiutano la delega, scelgono la forma assembleare per prendere decisioni ed esistere, cercano relazioni personali non strumentali, perseguono l'autogestione generalizzata, creano aggregazioni e reti di solidarietà.
Dal 1992 il centro ospita la libreria Calusca City Lights di Primo Moroni e dal 2002 è sede dell'Archivio Primo Moroni

[5] Hannah Arendt, *La crise de la culture*, éd. Galimard, 1972 (1954), pp.262-265

[6] Un détail parlant : pendant des années la page d'actualités Google en français incluait une rubrique « culture », et celle en anglais (USA et UK) annonçait la même rubrique sous l'intitulé « entertainment ». Depuis peu, la page en français a changé. La rubrique « culture » a été "ré-traduite" par « divertissement ». À première vue, nous pouvons déduire qu'il s'agit d'une traduction d'un terme anglais en français, de la langue globale dans une langue locale. Mais, en regardant mieux le changement effectué récemment, nous devrions constater qu'il s'agit, en fait, par ce changement de terme, d'un choix stratégique pour favoriser certains types de marchandises, produits avec certains capitaux, et voués à un certain niveaux de profit ; une stratégie globale imposée au cœur du local : la langue même.

[7] H. Arendt, *op. cit.*, pp.262-265

[8] Paul Virilio, *La Bombe informatique : essai sur les conséquences du développement de l'informatique*, éd. Galilée, 1998, p19-23

[9] cf. Constantin Petcou, *La ville - Construction du Commun*, in Rue Descartes, éd. Collège International de Philosophie/PUF, n° 63/2009

[10] Henri Lefebvre, *La production de l'espace*, éd. Anthropos, 2000 (1974), p396

[11] voir notamment l'ouvrage *Cradle to cradle* de Michael Braungart et William McDonough, ed. Vintage, 2009

[12] Gilles Clément, *Manifeste du Tiers paysage*, éd. Sujet/Objet, 2004, p.13

[13] voir les courtes présentation sur internet de certaines expériences qui permettent la mise en place de nouveaux modes de vie, de nouvelles formes de travail et de sociabilité : "nous récupérons, filtrons et utilisons l'eau de pluie du toit. Il n'y a pas de toilettes à chasse d'eau d'alimentation et aucun système d'égout. Nous avons l'électricité, le téléphone, utilisons des ordinateurs, sommes connectés à Internet, avons des voitures et des vélos (mais pas de télévision)." cf. http://beauchamp24.wordpress.com

et : *"Terres Communes* est une forme inédite de propriété du foncier, collective, éthique, elle garantit une utilisation des terres respectueuse de valeurs écologiques et sociales. C'est un outil concret pour défendre l'agriculture paysanne, pérenniser nos projets en les protégeant à long terme de la spéculation immobilière." cf www.cravirola.com

[14] Gilles Clément, *Toujours la vie invente – Réflexions d'un écologiste humaniste*, éd. de l'Aube, 2008, p47

[15] Ivan Illich, *La Convivialité*, éd. du Seuil, 1973, p28

[16] Les nouveaux modèles économiques sont souvent spontanés et bricolés, au moins au départ, d'autant qu'ils sont rares et difficiles à maintenir. Fasciné par les premiers hackers qui, comme Richard Stallman, sont attachés profondément à une éthique du partage et ont créé le concept de logiciel libre et de copyleft (en ouvrant ainsi la voie à Linux et Wikipedia), Gorz trouve dans leur mode de travail et collaboration une approche pour laquelle "le travail n'apparaît plus comme travail mais comme plein développement de l'activité [personnelle] elle-même.(…) Le hacker est la figure emblématique de cette appropriation/suppression du travail.(…) C'est le hacker qui a inventé cette anti-économie que sont les Linux et le copyleft (…). Les hackers (…) font partie de la nébuleuse des <dissidents du capitalisme numérique>, comme le disait Peter Glotz.(…) des jobbers et des downshifters qui préferent gagner peu et avoir beaucoup de temps à eux." cf. André Gorz, *Écologica*, éd. Galilée, 2008, pp21-23

[17] Arjen Mulder, *TransUrbanism*, in *TransUrbanism*, V2_NAI publishers, 2002, p8

[18] Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari, *Capitalisme et schizophrénie 2 – Mille plateaux*, éd. de Minuit, 1980, p20

[19] Bruno Latour, *FAKTURA de la notion de réseaux à celle d'attachement*, cf. http://www.bruno-latour.fr/articles/article/076.html

[20] Jacques Rancière, *Aux bords du politique*, éd. La fabrique, 1998, p91 e.s.

[21] Maurizio Lazzarato, *Le gouvernement des inégalités – Critique de l'insécurité néolibérale*, éd. Amsterdam, 2008, p12

[22] Ulf Hannerz, *Explorer la ville – Éléments d'anthropologie urbaine*, éd. de Minuit, 1983 (1980), p298

[23] Gabriel Tarde, *Monadologie et sociologie*, éd. Les Empêcheurs de penser en rond, 2001, p85, citation par Maurizio Lazzarato, *Puissance de l'invention – La Psychologie économique de Gabriel Tarde contre l'économie politique*, éd. Les Empêcheurs de penser en rond, 2002, p353

[24] cf. le travail de Bruno Latour autour des <réseaux d'attachements> et de Maurizzio Lazzarato sur la pensée de Gabriel Tarde

[25] Anne Cauquelin, *Le site et le paysage*, éd. Quadrige/PUF, 2002, p80

[26] Félix Guattari, *La révolution moléculaire*, éd. Encres/Recherches, 1977, p172

[27] Richard Sennett, *Democratic Spaces*, in Hunch, n°9/2005, éd. Berlage, p46

[28] *ibid.*, p45

[29] cf. Jacques Rancière, *Aux bords du politique*, éd. La Fabrique, 1998, p.80 : «l'analyse de Lyotard retourne en positivité les différentes figures de supçon sur la démocratie. C'est ainsi qu'il lit à l'envers la condamnation platonicienne de l'indétermination, de l'apeiron démocratique. Il donne valeur positive au thème de la démocratie comme bazar.»

ISOLA
Milano, Italia

WHO artists and inhabitants
WHAT an experimentation platform, combining international-level contemporary art, emerging young art an theoretical research, with the needs and desires of a mixed, working-class neighborhood's inhabitants, affecting such neighborhood's transformation
WEB http://www.isolartcenter.org/
KEYWORDS *culture - alternative institution - activism - urban struggles*

Isola Art Center ha scelto di non ripetere modelli istituzionali prestabiliti, sull'esempio di New York, Berlino o Parigi, ma di creare un nuovo modello di Centro d'Arte per una situazione di crisi culturale, sociale, economica e politica prolungata. Isola Art Center è tuttora un progetto "no budget" che funziona solo con energia, entusiasmo e solidarietà.
Per capire la natura del Centro bisogna considerare che la sua struttura organizzativa è tutt'altro che monolitica o piramidale, non esiste, infatti, un direttore o curatore che decide il programma e i progetti. Non si tratta neanche di un "artist run space", dove un gruppo di artisti realizza le sue mostre ed invita artisti amici ad esporre. Il centro si caratterizza piuttosto per la sua struttura flessibile, aperta, senza gerarchia prestabilita, rizomatica. Gli abitanti partecipano all'attività di Isola Art Center a diversi livelli, contribuendo alla realizzazione di opere, ospitando artisti internazionali nelle famiglie del quartiere, facendo parte di azioni, performance e laboratori, proponendo nuovi progetti in spazi del quartiere. Questa partecipazione si è avviata in modo naturale, perché il campo di azione del Centro è stato sin dall'inizio lo spazio pubblico e sociale del quartiere e non uno spazio espositivo chiuso. La richiesta di un Centro per l'Arte e il Quartiere è così stata formulata in origine dagli abitanti stessi.

ISPARA
Berlin, Germany

WHO Mathias Heyden
WHAT an office and lab for strategies of participative architecture and spatial appropriation
KEYWORDS *culture - activism - alternative institution - participation*

Along projects like the artistic and political driven, and community based (ex-squat) project K77, the event and publication *Under Construction. Strategies of Participative Architecture and Spatial Appropriation*, the civic-action concept Forum K 82 - center for cooperative, self-determined education and work and the research into Community Design in US, ISPARA develops activist architectural practice and research into political and legal, economical and ecological conditions of architecture and urban planning, as well as educational work.

RHIZOMATIC AND TRANS-LOCAL CULTURE

CONSTANTIN PETCOU

GLOBAL CRISES / LOCAL CRISES

Over the 20th century, cultural life became strongly concentrated in certain major cities. Artists have preferred to live and work there due to greater individual freedom and financial support that was less available in small towns and rural areas. On top of which, artistic 'communities' – favourable to intense exchanges and development of shared values – progressively sprung up. Artistic 'internationals' (Dadaist, Lettrist, Situationist, and so on) also contributed to this cultural concentration in urban areas and had the effect of raising visibility. But this international visibility – installed simultaneously in the economy, the social sphere and politics (largely in parallel with the evolution of the means of long-distance travel and mass media) – became, through its communicational power, a vector for large-scale domination. The local scale was progressively emptied of its diverse values and cultural reference points and replaced by others that then interacted on a global scale. Through similar phenomena, economic and political local life is now profoundly weakened by the domination of large-scale phenomena. The local scale no longer has an active and creative role to play, while local culture is simply a spectator of global culture. The global has pushed the local into a consumerist position; currently, the local has become a consumer of the global. As Marc Augé recently noted, 'The global colour erases the local colour. The local transformed into image and décor, it is the local in the global's colours, the expression of the system.'[1]

The recent economic crisis, which is far from over, only created a further reduction in the individual possibilities of finding a social role and a future on the local scale. The local is increasingly being

MULTIMEDIA INSTITUTE (MAMA)
Zagreb, Croatia

WHO media activists and cultural workers
WHAT Multimedia Institute's [mi2] activities range from informal education and training in technology and digital media, free software development, archiving and publishing of digital and print media, cultural management and content curation, and policy and advocacy work
WEB http://www.mi2.hr/
KEYWORDS *media art - critical theory - political activism - hacking - free software - civic struggles - anti gentrification*

Multimedia Institute emerged in 1999 as a non-governmental spin-off from the Open Society Institute Croatia.
In the public eye, the work of mi2 is mostly seen through the activities of its public space and cultural centre - MaMa. Ever since it opened, MaMa has been a meeting point for different communities ranging from political activists, media artists, electronic music makers, theorists, hackers and free software developers, gay and lesbian support groups, to the anime community.
Guided by the ideals of sharing, it immediately offered young creators, independent cultural actors and civil initiatives, free access to both its facilities and its web infrastructure.
MaMa's facilities have been important for the local independent and alternative scene to emerge, but its activities were also very much shaped by the building of national and trans-national networks [like Clubture-network, a.network, iCommons etc.].
In the last couple of years Multimedia Institute and MaMa got prominently involved into the anti-gentrification struggle in Zagreb and Croatia

emptied of its economic and social potentialities. In this context of globalised issues, the reactivation of local dimensions and values would appear fundamental to the process of allowing individuals to imagine and construct their future and their identity. And it is urgent that the economic crisis is solved before it provokes a major social crisis. Alain Touraine clearly notes a certain incapacity of action regarding this subject: 'In the face of the impressive (and menacing) mass of the globalised economy the world of social institutions no longer has any internal function or coherence.'[2]

GLOBAL REMAKES LOCAL

Thanks to a series of cultural and social phenomena that have taken place over the past few decades, I can put forward a quick analysis of the evolution of local cultural phenomena. Firstly, there has been an increase in free time on a mass scale, a phenomenon related to changes in working practices (industrialisation, union organisations, and so on), an increase in life expectancy and in the economic imbalances that temporarily favour the populations of certain countries.
In parallel, there has been a cultural homogenisation due to certain aspects of globalisation: for example, the role of 'global teachers' attributed to stars promoted by TV networks such as MTV, the impact of fast-food and clothing brands and other types of low-priced mass products such as those sold by McDonald's on the behaviour of young people, the explosion of social networks on the Internet, an addiction to video games and movies based on special effects. The effect of the spatial deterritorialization produced by this cultural homogenisation is extremely well described by Marc Augé in his analyses of the working and impact of a series of spaces, identical from one continent to another, spaces he defines as 'non-lieux' (non-places). This deterritorialization and weakening of local cultures is, in part, provoked by the disappearance of the active role normally held by economic activity in the definition of local identity.[3]

Through a 'renewal' and replacement of extinct local identities and a targeting of the commercial potential represented by mass free time, an industry of 'ex nihilo' production of 'identity' poles appeared. Beginning with the first Disneyland in 1955, and by stressing the spectacular and sensational, theme parks appeared firstly in the USA, one of the first countries to have benefited from this free time for the masses and one, through its recent history, lacking spaces and regions with commercialisable cultural identities.[4]
The continuation and spread of these phenomena, intimately linked to the unequal relationship between the local and the global, has today become systematic. Hannah Arendt noted in 1954 the deviance of the social and the political impact of this cultural crisis: 'The entertainment industry is confronted with gargantuan appetites, and since its wares disappear in consumption, it must constantly offer new commodities. In this predicament those who produce for the mass media ransack the entire range of past and present culture in the hope of finding suitable material. This material, moreover, cannot be offered as it is; it must be altered in order to become entertaining, it must be prepared to be easily consumed.'[5]

The height of absurdity in terms of 'local and cultural strategy' is countries 'lacking' any tourism potential due to cultural tradition (nomadism in the case of Dubai) that are currently making gigantic efforts to construct a contemporary cultural 'identity' – despite the artificiality, the consumerist superficiality and the non-sustainability of the enterprise. This strategy is for the moment succeeding in capturing a newly rich, uprooted local population from a country undergoing huge political and economic transformations. The newly rich are attracted by fake local identities and 'attractions' for a population having more and more 'free time', and are looking for lightly worn, even disposable,

identities, even more so if they are seasonal and renewable from one year to the next.
Popular culture has been replaced by consumerist 'entertainment'.[6] This 'local' is no longer about identity construction and experience, but spectacle, consumption and entertainment – a prefabricated consumerist local 'for free time'. In her pioneering analysis, Hannah Arendt wrote, 'Perhaps the chief difference between society and mass society is that society wanted culture, evaluated and devalued cultural things into social commodities, used and abused them for its own selfish purposes, but did not 'consume' them. […] Mass society, on the contrary, does not want culture but entertainment […].'[7]

GLOBAL BIOPOWER AND BEYOND

What is the role and function of local cultures in this globalised context? What are the necessary conditions for new cultural forms to emerge from these territories homogenised by lifestyles and values propagated by the mass media? What level of visibility must certain local phenomena keep so as not to alter their specific social and cultural forms? Is there an intermediate, trans-local scale that could be progressively created through different types of networks, such as a balance between the local and global scales? And, in this case, how could it work through trans-local networks while retaining an important level of local autonomy? What is culturally and politically at stake and how could it be targeted though collective action on a trans-local level?

These questions have motivated us throughout the Rhyzom project and, through a variety of field trips, observation, discussions and other actions organised for the project, we have been able to explore a number of local projects, generally founded upon radical changes in the lifestyles of their founders and sometimes developed in difficult economic and political contexts. We have been able to meet activists and collectives involved in the development of innovative, but marginal projects and to discuss with groups who resist to the juggernaut of mass culture transformed into entertainment.

In contrast, the different Rhyzom trips allowed us to notice once again the similarities between different airports and the goods sold in them, the outskirts of large cities with their warehouses and almost-identical advertising hoardings, hypermarkets and the centres of historic European cities partially transformed into décor for large brands.
Carried along by financial and media flows, globalisation leaves deep and similar marks in most large cities, but also in a number of other remote places on the planet, such as ports, holiday villages, business districts, industrial platforms, theme parks and housing estates. Not forgetting the cinema, video games and Internet portals.

Whence this omnipresence of globalisation's marks? The strategic role of globalisation's phenomena means that controlling them has become a priority aim for centres of geopolitical and financial power. One of the examples in this sense is noted by Paul Virilio: 'Since the early 1990s, the Pentagon considers that geostrategy is turning the world inside out like a glove! Indeed, for American military chiefs, the GLOBAL is the inside of a finished world whose finiteness even causes a number of logistical problems. And the LOCAL is the exterior, the periphery, the outer suburb of the world.'[8] Following this logic the local no longer has a strategic value. Yet this is a vision strictly limited to money and power, a vision of the world that has been completely emptied of all cultural and social dimensions. It is a vision that serves a few private interests while forgetting common, shared values, the only ones that can assure long-term vitality, both locally and globally.[9]

THE CRISIS OF CULTURAL BIODIVERSITY

The environmental and economic crises are globalised. Nevertheless, in an indirect fashion, the local has been 'caught up' in global crises, the two levels being connected. They are linked through methods of production, types of energy use, the depletion of natural resources, the effects of pollution, etc. In what ways can these global-level crises be overcome on a local level?
The strengthening of the local through economic means implies the use of other production methods that stress the identity and subjectivity of the manufacturer. Whence the importance of provoking a renewal and diversification of local means of production (more artisanal, guaranteeing a sustainable quality, allowing a subjective appropriation of work). The reconstruction of local economies should include from the outset environmental criteria and interact, in the medium term, with the global dimension. Based on analyses focussing on the political and economic dimensions of society, Lefebvre noted back in 1974 the importance of the environmental vision, in nature's fundamental capacity to source itself. We should envisage, Lefebvre suggested, another development, after the modernist version, a development more closely linked to nature, with its permanent processes and re-balancing: 'Nature according to Marx was among the productive forces. Today, a distinction is being established, which Marx did not introduce, between a *domination* and *appropriation* of nature. Domination by technology tends towards non-appropriation: destruction. […] Nature today appears as a source and resource: an energy source (vital, immense but not unlimited).'[10]
Despite the analyses and diagnoses such as Lefebvre's, the Club of Rome's and the first reports by the IPCC, public political power, under pressure from large multinationals, has acknowledged the reality of the environmental crisis and its link to human and economic actions only with much reticence and delay. It is, for example, only recently that the 'source and resource' of nature has been recognised as fundamental in both economic and environmental approaches.[11]

Hustadt Project is a process … and a series of projects taking place in Hustadt, Bochum (Ruhr Area, Germany). As a process it is composed of several parts: the research of the existing situation that includes many formal and informal meetings, discussions, and workshops with people living in Hustadt. Out of this research the aim is to create the conditions for public participation (parallel to an official participatory urban planning process) and together with a group of inhabitants make a suggestion that can influence and definitely shift the official planning proposal for Hustadt.
UmBAU_stelle_ HUstadt / Temporary Pavilion The project was done together with a social-activist Matthias Köllmann, member of the Aktionsteam. Together we developed the idea of building a temporary Pavilion, which would be a try-out for the Community Pavilion proposed within the urban re-design plan of the 'Innere Hustadt'. However the idea isn't only to build a 'try-out' for the future public platform but to utilise the building process but to also establish communication with people living at Brunnenplatz and its close vicinity. Besides, we were able to observe very closely how people – different age groups – use the place itself and what could be the potentials and problems of planning the future situation there

Recognising the fundamental importance of nature's capacity to source itself and its crucial role in economic activity also implies admitting its importance in the reception and preservation of biodiversity. Excluding large nature reserves, this capacity for reception and sourcing has been in part preserved by escaping the utilitarian and reductive management of land for the interstices and edges not controlled by an administrative logic that reduces nature to immediately useful plants. The interstices and edges that welcome biodiversity are defined by Gilles Clément as 'Third Landscapes': 'A territory of refuge for diversity. Everywhere else it is driven out.'[12] In a similar way, through different events, the local can ensure a sustainable reception to cultural 'biodiversity', the starting point towards a balance between economic and environmental criteria. It is this cultural biodiversity that will be capable of ensuring the sourcing of local life in all its diversity.[13]

LOCAL PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

It is this quality of 'refuge' for a biodiversity of projects, collectives and lifestyles that, in the long term, could regenerate the economic and environmental balance on a local level, before later interacting on a global level. On the basis of an environmental comprehension of reality, Gilles Clément has noted 'that we are moving […] towards a 'deglobalisation,' that is to say a localised consumption and production of goods. This will not prevent the existence of an economy on a global scale, but it should be organised on a local scale.'[14] It would be about reinitiating the cycles of local production and consumption, while taking into account environmental and economic cycles on different levels.

And it remains at a local level that the qualities that have disappeared from local lifestyles (friendliness, sharing, exchange, solidarity) can (re)appear, for example, by including these qualities in the methods of production. As Ivan Illich has stated: 'I understand by conviviality the opposite of industrial productivity. Each of us is defined by his or her relation to those around us and our social milieu and by the deep structure of the tools that he or she uses. […] In the two extremes, the dominant tool and the convivial tool.'[15] This type of work has the capacity to be reintroduced on a local level and is not competitive or accumulative, but co-operative, based on exchange and sharing.[16]

By trying to explore the different forms of resistance to homogenisation brought about by globalisation, we visited a series of projects in different European regions that had in common lifestyles questioning stereotypes and a sharing of authentic values anchored in the local. We saw, firstly, that the local is not a quality forcibly linked to isolation. Projects with a strong local dimension can appear in urban contexts by resisting or escaping the control and planning of government and urban planners. The existence of these spaces was sometimes able to benefit from a political will sensitive to this type of project.

Nevertheless, we observed that the majority of these local cultural phenomena appeared in marginal, far-flung and rural areas, for the simple reason that these areas are more economically accessible, with the price of renting or buying still affordable, and have escaped, for different reasons, property speculation that has spread as far as the last remaining pieces of agricultural land.

We also noticed that there was sometimes a certain exhaustion among these pioneering collectives in their work, conflictual situations due to the reduced numbers of most of the teams, and the fragility of their micro-social structures (in comparison with contemporary Western norms, such as access to healthcare, social security, etc.). It was even more remarkable to see groups that had been in existence for more than 15 years and which had succeeded in establishing a resumption of projects through a new core group of stakeholders or which genuinely managed to develop their project vis-à-vis new arrivals and new initiatives. Certain groups found new energy in developing local and regional co-operative networks.

TRANS-LOCAL NETWORKS AND TRANSVERSAL COMMUNITIES

It must be underlined that economy, environmentalism and cultural phenomena cannot be reduced or limited to strictly local forms or expressions. By founding networks that rely on identities that

HACKITECTURA
Sevilla, Spain

WHO a group of architects and programmers
WHAT to develop projects and theoretical research in the intersecting field of space, electronic flows and social networks
WEBHTTP http://hackitectura.net/blog/
KEYWORDS *culture - activism - physical and digital spaces - electonical flows - social networks*

Hackitectura is a group of architects, artists, computer specialists and activists founded in 1999. Their practice uses new technologies to create temporary spaces that can escape the formal structures of control and surveillance which are regulated by technological and political means in contemporary society. Inspired by hacker culture, they use free software and communication technologies to subvert established power structures through bottom-up organisation and by creating alternative connections between disparate spaces. The group often works collaboratively, carrying out research into the effects of communication and technology on physical spaces, the formation of social networks and how these can be put to work for an activist agenda.

URBAN ACCIÓN
Madrid, Spain

WHO Ana Méndez de Andés (malas hierbas), Pablo Saiz (in-constant) y Michael Moradiellos (ecosistemaurbano)
WHAT urban acción set out to combine research, debate, training, exhibition, intervention and action in an attempt to facilitate the participatory use of vacant plots
WEB http://urbanaccion.org/
KEYWORDS *culture - activism - urban struggles - public space - interstice*

Urban acción es un espacio de encuentro que fomenta las oportunidades de que ocurran acciones urbanas a través de varios soportes. Como reflexión/acción sobre posibles (o, lamentablemente, improbables) intervenciones en el espacio urbano, surgió hace dos años con la idea de introducir, en el muy tectónico y estereotómico panorama madrileño, discursos y prácticas que desarrollan propuestas a la vez situadas – reflexionando sobre el territorio que se habita – y en perspectiva – teniendo en cuenta el lugar desde el que se interviene. Proyectos que, premeditadamente, se sitúan en un ámbito de trabajo fronterizo, a medio camino entre la reflexión teórica y la práctica constructiva, el paisajismo y la performance, la filosofía y la acción política, la arquitectura y la instalación artística

keep a strong basis in the local and which remain, in part, autonomous, different forms of rhizomatic organisation build the trans-local as an intermediate level between local and global, as a polymorphous and heterogeneous network. It is a scale that favours the *multitude and the subjectification, exchanges and heterogeneity, which should be fundamental for the emergence and development of authentic cultural phenomena.*

On the other hand, even with an extremely localised lifestyle, we are all today living a reality with a potentially trans-local dimension. As Mulder has noted: 'The average school today caters for children of 26 different nationalities. Any city around the globe has residents of 95 different nationalities, some of them concentrated in particular neighbourhoods but mostly dispersed around the urban area. All those nationalities, and all kinds of subgroups within each which are not always distinguishable to outsiders, "play" their own culture. […] Nobody has a single culture any longer; everyone participates in a multiplicity of "cultures."'[17]

This affiliation to a number of areas and levels (through multiculturalism, juxtaposed temporalities, etc.) can create a loam for the appearance of new cultures at the crossroads of territorial levels. This multiple anchoring also constitutes the conditions for the emergence of new societies at the crossroads of different contemporary cultures: diaspora-like societies, communities and networks of artists, etc.

The local begins to be marked and slowly changed by the emergence of trans-local networks: heterogeneous rhizomes that make possible the appearance of multiple identities. As Deleuze and Guattari noted, 'It is perhaps one of the most important characteristics of the rhizome to always have multiple entry points.'[18] *These multiple entries are essential for rhizomatic subjectivity; a multiple subject made up of diverse identities and also by a diversity of distances. As Latour makes clear,* 'Networks – or rhizomes – allow not only the distribution of action, but also operate detachments and extractions of proximity and, conversely, those joining from afar.'[19]

Distances and proximity play a principle role in the definition of rhizomatic networks. Holders of a specific identity, even if it is multiple, the collectives I was able to meet in specific cultural and local contexts, often function through networks made up of similar, but geographically far-flung groups. Distance no longer constitutes a handicap in the creation of a network, when compared to the affinity and sharing of values and similar processes. In practical terms, these networks emerge more easily on a regional, national and international level than on a strictly local level.

The rhizome therefore constructs an identity that is in equal measure a community of heterogeneous subjectivities and 'community of in-betweens'.[20] The rhizome is a community of different identities and distances linked by tranversalities; the rhizome is built like a 'tranversal community', a hybrid weave of multiple identities anchored in heterogeneous contexts, linked by exchanges, cooperation and spaces between these identities.

AFFILIATION AND BECOMING RHIZOMATIC

What types of arrangements make possible the establishment and functioning, in the long term, of these transversal communities? How can the heterogeneous identities that make up these types of links be brought together? By drawing a distinction between the concept of the molar and the molecular, Lazzarato notes that, 'Molar agencement was originally what Deleuze and Guattari called a 'hard segmentarity,' a dichotomous segmentarity. The molecular, on the other hand […] constitutes what Deleuze and Guattari call a "supple segmentarity," a differential segmentarity. The molar – or major – consists of states that reproduce a situation by establishing the possible in dualities: the molecular – or minor – consists of becomings that pluralise the possible."[21] *This supple segmentarity, which allows a plurality of futures, is necessary for the constitution of transversal communities and implicitly for the exploration of possibilities of the reconstruction of the local.*

Thanks to their greater social and cultural diversity, cities retain a local potential that can be also be increased if they are crossed by rhizomatic cultures and collectivities. The complexity and richness of the city allows us to enrich social relations continuously, to have the unforeseen, to keep the potential of an open and non-linear becoming. As Ulf Hannerz has noted, 'In cities, some of the most important relations are those we have not yet made.'[22] *Rhizomatic cultures and collectivities can amplify even further this 'potential becoming'.*

In a society marked by the difficulty of achieving an individualised identity (due to a social system that confines us in transitory, intermittent and precarious situations), the porosity and opening of certain rhizomatic projects opens the door to possible existence of subjectivities defined by affiliation, whether to a collective, a project, or a lifestyle.

Depuis une quinzaine d'années, le Réseau d'échanges et de pratiques alternatives et solidaires regroupe une trentaine d'entreprises dans toute la France. Celles-ci ont concrètement mis en œuvre des pratiques économiques qui ont d'autres objectifs que le profit, la course à la consommation ou le tout à l'économie et qui inscrivent leur sens dans le concret de pratiques libres et solidaires. Elles se reconnaissent d'une culture commune bien qu'elles aient des métiers différents : lorsqu'elles sont dans l'agriculture, elles créent une structure collective regroupant des partenaires autour d'une production diversifiée et une commercialisation associant les consommateurs. Lorsqu'elles sont dans la transformation d'une ressource locale, elles adoptent des structures coopératives et stimulent le développement économique et social dans leur environnement en générant ou participant à un foisonnement d'activités. Lorsqu'elles sont dans le culturel ou le social, elles mettent en œuvre des modes de management déhiérarchisés où chacun est une personne avant d'être une performance. Le réseau est ouvert et s'enrichit régulièrement de nouvelles rencontres

This transversal community structured upon a rhizomatic and collaborative basis corresponds to what Tarde considers to be a fundamental dimension of the social: 'Society, indeed, is the reciprocal possession under extremely varied forms of all by each.'[23] *Against the direction of certain contemporary mentalities, emotional social relations, made up of transversal communities, could restructure society, without weakening individual freedom.*[24]

HETEROGENOUS SPEECH

How to communicate inside trans-local rhizomes? How to represent transversal communities without homogenising them? To describe the rhizome and trans-local we have to make a radical discursive change in the relationship between the represented parties and the description of the whole process. We might be inspired by geographers, who attempted to restructure their discipline by aiming to no longer represent the Earth globally and instead work on a 'chorography [that] aims to study partial realities.'[25] *We could thus move from a global representation of local projects to a 'chorographic' representation that pays more attention to the specificities of each party.*

In a similar way, for the whole of a rhizome, we must balance the representation of the network and its participating collectives. We would be close to those collective, transversal and mutualised modalities of discourse that were recently developed in Wikipedia-style collective and evolutive writings, but this time with real collaboration and exchanges. Over and above these local motivations and aims, the rhizomatic discourse constitutes a discursive 'creative commons'. To make it a reality, we must articulate different elements, even if they are contradictory. Guattari underlines the importance of an emotional background to a successful heterogeneous discourse, of a method close to that created by Deligny who, for his teaching experiences (with autistic children), 'constructed a collective economy of desire connecting people, actions, economic and relational circuits, etc.'[26]

Over and above its 'a-centricity', the rhizome is characterised by an absence of limits. The presence of cultural rhizomes in urban contexts can contribute to democratic life by their very structure and functioning. As Richard Sennett has pointed out, 'Most urban plans currently used in teaching favour the notion of boundary, both in their legal and social definition. […] I wish to argue that this situation is not democratic. It pushes energy out of cities by locking in the differences of each part. How can we replace these boundaries by borders?' *For Sennett, borders, unlike boundaries, have thickness and welcome diversity.*[27] *He continues his analysis by discussing an interest in* 'the conditions of borders between communities. […] Borders can take two forms. In one it is a border; in the other it is a boundary. A border is an interactive zone in which things meet and pass each other. The problem is to know how to act to transform these spaces into living borders. […] It is the difference between a cell wall and cell membrane, the cell wall's function being that of a container holding things in, the membrane being at once porous and resistant.'[28] *Rhizomes can allow us to learn this resistance and porosity; it is a constitutive learning process that allows for the construction of rhizomes. And, in time, these rhizomatic collectives can strengthen democracy as permanent negotiation* [29] *through their daily functioning. And it is perhaps this rhizomatic democracy that will create the conditions for the discovery of directions to move out of the one crisis that is behind all our most recent crises: the political crisis. The rhizome can thus become a space of political (re)learning.*

[1] *Marc Augé,* Où est passé l'avenir?, *éd. du Panama, 2008, p.57*

[2] *Alain Touraine,* Après la crise, *éd. Du Seuil, 2010, pp.92-93. Ten pages earlier, Touraine says that,* 'Economic and social life can only be saved together' *(p.82). Yet all the measures undertaken by the different governments and international organisations have until now been about saving the banking system, while hardly touching the economy, and featuring no measures at all for the social crisis. On top of which, this social crisis cannot be resolved from on high, based upon the global. Economic and environmental crises are global and solutions for resolving them have to be based upon new global balances; the social crisis could provoke, on the other hand, a recasting of society based in the local.*

[3] *Anne Raulin notes in this respect that 'following the economic crisis which has affected turn by thurn the coal, texile and steel industry, that where at their time the very support of a whole culture – belonging to both the burgeois and working class- and the proud of a whole region, the necesary redéfinition of identity is reorganised now around the remaining bulildings : their patrimony value serves the tourism development.', cf. Anne Raulin,* Anthropologie urbaine, *éd. Armand Colin, 2001, p.146*

[4] *Accelerated by the development of the railways, mass tourism appeared first in the UK and the USA, followed by all 'developed' countries. And, with tourism, the theme-park industry then exported Disneylands and other 'Thingy-lands' to other countries and continents.*

[5] *Hannah Arendt,* La crise de la culture, *éd. Galimard, 1972 (1954), pp.262-265*

[6] *A telling detail: for many years, the French news pages of Google included a "culture" section; those in English had the same pages under the title "entertainment." Recently, the French page has changed: the "culture" section has been "re-translated" as "divertissement" (French for entertainment). At first glance, it could be deduced that it is simply a translation of an English term into its French equivalent, from the global language into a local language. But, upon closer inspection, the recent change can be seen to be about a strategic choice that favours certain types of goods, produced by certain capital, and devoted to a certain level of profit: a global strategy imposed on the heart of the local, language itself.*

[7] *H. Arendt,* op. cit., *pp.262-265*

[8] *Paul Virilio,* La Bombe informatique : essai sur les conséquences du développement de l'informatique, *éd. Galilée, 1998, p19-23*

[9] *cf. Constantin Petcou,* La ville - Construction du Commun, *in Rue Descartes, éd. Collège International de Philosophie/PUF, n° 63/2009*

[10] *Henri Lefebvre,* La production de l'espace, *éd. Anthropos, 2000 (1974), p396*

[11] *See notably the book* Cradle to cradle *de Michael Braungart et William McDonough, ed. Vintage, 2009*

[12] *Gilles Clément,* Manifeste du Tiers paysage, *éd. Sujet/Objet, 2004, p.13*

[13] *See short presentations on the web of experiments that allow the establishment of new lifestyles, new daily temporalities, new ways of working and socializing, etc. "We collect, filter and use rainwater from the roof. There are no toilets that flush with drinking water and no sewer system. We have electricity, telephone, use computers, are connected to the Internet, have cars and bikes (but not television)." cf. http://beauchamp24.wordpress.com and : "Terres Communes is a brand new form of property; collective and ethical, it guarantees landuse that respects environmental and social values. It is a concrete tool in the defence of small-scale agriculture and makes our projects durable by protecting them from property speculation in the long term." cf www.cravirola.com*

[14] *Gilles Clément,* Toujours la vie invente – Réflexions d'un écologiste humaniste, *éd. de l'Aube, 2008, p47*

[15] *Ivan Illich,* La Convivialité, *éd. du Seuil, 1973, p28*

[16] *New economic models are often spontaneous and handmade, at least to begin with, all the more so as in that they are rare and difficult to maintain. Fascinated by the first hackers who, like Richard Stallman, are deeply attached to an ethic of sharing and created the concept of free software and copyleft (in the process opening up the way for Linux and Wikipedia), Gorz finds their way of working and collaborating to be an approach in which "work no longer appears as work but as a full development of [personal] activity itself. […] The hacker is the emblematic figure of this appropriation/suppression of work. […] It is the hacker who invented this anti-economy of Linux and copyleft. […] Hackers […] are part of the amorphous grouping of 'digital capitalism's dissidents,' as Peter Glotz has termed them; […] jobbers and downshifters who prefer to earn little and have a lot of time for themselves." Gorz, 2008,* Écologia, *pp.21-23*

[17] *Arjen Mulder,* TransUrbanism, *in* TransUrbanism, *V2_NAI publishers, 2002, p8*

[18] *Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari,* Capitalisme et schizophrénie 2 – Mille plateaux, *éd. de Minuit, 1980, p20*

[19] *Bruno Latour,* FAKTURA de la notion de réseaux à celle d'attachement, *cf. http://www.bruno-latour.fr/articles/article/076.html*

[20] *Jacques Rancière,* Aux bords du politique, *éd. La fabrique, 1998, p91*

[21] *Maurizio Lazzarato,* Le gouvernement des inégalités – Critique de l'insécurité néolibérale, *éd. Amsterdam, 2008, p12*

[22] *Ulf Hannerz,* Explorer la ville – Éléments d'anthropologie urbaine, *éd. de Minuit, 1983 (1980), p298*

[23] *Gabriel Tarde,* Monadologie et sociologie, *éd. Les Empêcheurs de penser en rond, 2001, p85, citation par Maurizio Lazzarato,* Puissance de l'invention – La Psychologie économique de Gabriel Tarde contre l'économie politique, *éd. Les Empêcheurs de penser en rond, 2002, p353*

[24] *cf. le travail de Bruno Latour autour des <réseaux d'attachements> et de Maurizzio*

[25] *Anne Cauquelin,* Le site et le paysage, *éd. Quadrige/PUF, 2002,*

[26] *Félix Guattari,* La révolution moléculaire, *éd. Encres/Recherches, 1977, p172*

[27] *Richard Sennett,* Democratic Spaces, *in Hunch, n°9/2005, éd. Berlage, p46*

[28] bid., *p.45*

[29] *cf. Jacques Rancière,* Aux bords du politique, *éd. La Fabrique, 1998, p.80*

ECOLOGY AND POLITICS OF THE LOCAL

FERNANDO GARCIA DORY

Global vs. local

Globalisation is a phenomenon of the world's modern development; the term itself started to be widely used in scientific circles in the 1990s (NB. although some date the first steps of globalisation back to the time of the discovery of America!), with the American sociologist R. Robertson among the first to address globalisation problems, introducing the word 'globality'.[1] The descriptions of globalisation, as a rule, centre around 1) its economical aspects; 2) creating a united information sphere; 3) development of general standards of manufacturing, everyday and social life (using the metaphor 'Macdonaldization of the world').

The understanding of the modern world as a uniform space has began to spread everywhere. On the one hand, it is defined by the structured diverse and interdependent transnational networks of social interactions, representing preconditions for the process of gradual formation of a global civil community. But does globalisation mean unification and standardisation? Aren't the processes connected with the integration of the global community, within the limits of the existing national-state formations excluded? After all, the latest measurement of globalisation, based on B. Badie's concept of the 'washing out' of the state frontiers,[2] is shown in the intensification in all areas of trans-boundary interactions or trans-boundary processes. Having opened interstate borders, globalisation has facilitated the activity of new, non-state actors on the world scene: multinational corporations, interstate regions, non-governmental organisations, and other social movements thereby stimulating their activity and growth. But here there is a return influence: non-state actors themselves stimulate the development of globalisation and the transparency of frontiers.

This growing flow of information, capitals and - in a very unequal way - people, has been mostly for the advantage of a solo-player since the fall of the Soviet block. Triumphant Neo-liberalism boosted by new technologies of information and communication, the establishment of new economic powers in other latitudes (the BRIC group for example), became the clear target of diverse groups of civil society willing to reverse the adverse effects of this project, in economic, social as well as environmental aspects. At the same time, also in the mid 1990's, a time of rapid mergers and new market consolidations, the first global NGO's came to be called the 4th sector and forged the slogan 'Think global, act local'. The so-called anti-globalisation movement, was clearly not even a reaction but a consequence of globalisation, an off-spring we could say. The same technologies that made possible the financial speculative flows that made up 90% of all flows, also made possible the activist networks that knew everything about world leaders' summits and gathered there, from Cologne 1999 to Genoa 2001, and others. This tactic, that was ironically named summit-hopping, soon showed its weaknesses, but not before it had shown the world both the power and plans of global entities as transnational corporations: the World Trade Organisation and the World Bank.

The automatic protests accompanying any important date (G7, Davos etc.) after some initial surprise (Prague 2000 was probably the best example), were responded to with more invisible and inaccessible meetings, increasing state violence repressing those movements, together with a certain institutionalisation of them (World Social Forum of Porto Alegre, for example). The stark motto, 'Shut Them Down!', brought together groups, that had shown their differences in the demos (from reformists Oxfam members, to Marxist trade unions, to autonomous Black Block anarchists) and were finally silenced with the roaring crash of the 11th September 2007 attacks. Other global networks, such as the radical Islamic ones, appeared on stage showing their willingness to use weapons as a way to change the world. Maybe this development managed to avoid an involution of some sectors within the - mainly western - anti-capitalist social movements, preventing them from slipping into armed struggle and mirroring the bloody outcome of the '68 protests (Brigadi Rossi, Baader-Meinhof …).

What happened to the millions of people who gathered at any summit, who also marched in the streets of NATO countries against the wars on Iraq and Afghanistan? One possible answer would be the fact of a shift in attention. All those global networks, apart from still being active in cyberspace, have somehow rooted themselves in specific places. In most cases, in places where the activists were already living - the space proximate to oneself *is* the local. Probably the latest and more interesting initiative of this new sensibility are the Transition Towns. We will come back to this later.

We can roughly summarise the evolution of these phenomena as following:

Social Movements Flows	Avant-gardist	Anti-globalisation	Re-localisation
Approx. Era	1900 to 1970	1996 to 2007	2008….
Focus	To unite	To claim	To do
Orientation	Revolution to take power to install a new regime, short/long term	Event oriented, short term	Process oriented, medium term
Scope	Different nations	Global	Local
Rhythm emphasis	Speed	Speed	Slow

De-localised economies, non-places and global players. The new nomadism in the Liquid Era

The world we live in now is one of expanding urban populations, rapid adoption of Bluetooth mobile devices, tiny ad-hoc sensor networks, and the widespread influence of wireless technologies across our growing urban landscapes. The United Nations recently reported that 51 percent of the world's population currently lives in urban areas and in developed nations the number of urban dwellers is even more dramatic - expected to exceed to 75%. Current studies project the Bluetooth-enabled devices to reach near to 10 billion units by 2010 - five times the number of mobile phones or Internet connections. Mobile phone penetration already exceeds 80% of the population in places like the European Union (EU) and parts of Asia. WiFi hardware is being deployed at an astonishing rate of one every 4 seconds globally. The growing flows of capital and merchandises, despite the temporal recession of the Subprime Crisis, create new sorts of nomadism. As Jacques Attali depicted: *'Unfortunately, the world now seems divided between the rich and poor nomads: the nomadic elite who travel at will, expanding their world, and the disenfranchised poor who travel because they are desperate to improve their conditions'.*[3]

Rich nomads or global players have been also defined as 'liquid moderns'. This term was coined in 2000 by the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman in *Liquid Modernity*,[4] his account of globalising modernity and its liquefying effect on older unities such as family and class. Bauman stresses that improved communications and flexible labour markets work against durable personal and professional arrangements. While workers remain largely place-bound, capital is more and more mobile as it seeks new markets and cheaper labour, re-localising the productive fabric; power, which was once directed at controlling territory, now works to dismantle the obstacles to its own mobility. Under 'heavy modernity', nomads had a marginal place in society. Today the most powerful are nomadic. They travel light, mobile in hand, their ties becoming increasingly provisional as they remain alert to new opportunities elsewhere. In fact, Bauman's analysis applies as well to the art world and to other economic spheres.

The promises of the local

An ever growing economy, a production that always increases, is the myth of neo-liberal capitalism.

However, in the past, thinkers advocated opposite models. Aristotle claimed for restraint and considered the polis to be self-limited to a certain scale, in order to keep the true dimension of a local government.[5]

Much later Rousseau argued for the same principle when writing *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality Among Men*:

> If I had to make choice of the place of my birth, I should have preferred a society which had an extent proportionate to the limits of the human faculties; that is, to the possibility of being well governed: in which every person being equal to his occupation, no one should be obliged to commit to others the functions with which he was entrusted: a State, in which all the individuals being well known to one another, neither the secret machinations of vice, nor the modesty of virtue should be able to escape the notice and judgment of the public; and in which the pleasant custom of seeing and knowing one another should make the love of country rather a love of the citizens than of its soil.

> I should have wished to be born in a country in which the interest of the Sovereign and that of the people must be single and identical; to the end that all the movements of the machine might tend always to the general happiness. And as this could not be the case, unless the Sovereign and the people were one and the same person, it follows that I should have wished to be born under a democratic government, wisely tempered.

> I should have wished to live and die free: that is, so far subject to the laws that neither I, nor anybody else, should be able to cast off their honourable yoke: the easy and salutary yoke which the haughtiest necks bear with the greater docility, as they are made to bear no other.[6]

Utopian architect, Yona Friedman also defined, in his 'Realisable Utopias',[7] the essential features of an organic community, in which the influences one member has over the others are equal to the ones the others have over oneself. This results in a kind of equation: Local place + right size + socialisation mechanism + horizontal relations = organic community
Nevertheless, we have to bear in mind that usually this ideal formula doesn't take place: there are local environments without a community, and we could even consider communities linked virtually through the

internet, and no shared local, except a blog or a website. If the 'territory' regarded with a cultural gaze becomes 'landscape', we could think that a 'place' would become 'local' under a cultural and emotional reading. But in fact, 'local' has a dimension beyond the fact of just being inhabited.
Local, is overall in the realm of politics.

Local as power's arena : realpolitik vs. ideal narrations

It is not strange that a new attention of the local was drawn by the environmental movement. The necessary re-calibrating of our model of production became clear with the scale of energy demands and their diverse environmental impact, the closeness of Peak Oil and with climate change still ongoing. Philosophically, there is also a stress on building up other ways of living, simpler and more satisfying. To extend and apply this program, local governments are being challenged in diverse ways. One of them is through Bioregionalism.

Bioregionalism has been called the 'politics of place'. It has a number of characteristics, which include a belief in the natural, as opposed to the political or administrative regions as organising units for human activity, an emphasis on a practical land ethic to be applied at a local and regional scale and the favouring of locally and regionally diverse cultures as guarantors of environmental adaptation, in opposition to the trend towards global monoculture. Jim Dodge, bioregional author and activist, defined it with a different set of characteristics. They are: natural systems as the source of physical and spiritual sustenance; anarchy, or the decentralisation of political institutions to a scale where face-to-face interaction and self-management become possible; and spirituality, a belief in the sacredness of the web of life.[8]

Bioregionalism emerged in the early 1970s as the product of an intermingling between biogeography and the Californian counter-culture, by authors such as Peter Berg. In an article published in 'The Ecologist' in 1977, Berg states that the term bioregion ,*'refers both to a geographical terrain and a terrain of consciousness - to a place and the ideas that have developed about how to live in that place. Within a bioregion the conditions that influence life are similar and these in turn have influenced human occupancy.'*[9] This expands the more shallow definition of 'bioregion' as an area constituting a natural ecological community with characteristic flora, fauna, and environmental conditions and bounded by natural rather than artificial borders, including cultural and even spiritual parameters.

This approach reveals the concept to be intimately related to the principles of Deep Ecology as defined by Norwegian philosopher, Arne Næss. Other famous deep ecologists such as Edward Goldsmith and Helena Norberg-Hodge, both funders of the International Society for Ecology and Culture (ISEC), applied the bioregional focus within their theories and actions. Arne Næss coined the term Deep Ecology as a contrast with shallow environmentalism, which he criticised for its utilitarian and anthropocentric attitude to nature and for its materialist and consumer-oriented outlook. The ethics of Deep Ecology hold that a whole system is superior to any of its parts. They offer an eight-tier platform to elucidate their claims, the first of them being:

The well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman life on Earth have value in themselves. These values are independent of the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes.[10]

However, Deep Ecology is difficult to define. It encourages subjective intuition as a means of understanding its principles. The basic idea is the belief that nature does not exist to serve humans. Biodiversity is a value

in itself and is essential for the flourishing of both human and non-human life. Deep Ecology locates the origin of the ecological crisis in human belief systems, be they religious or philosophical. Deep ecologists identify ancient Near Eastern religions, Christianity, and the scientific worldview as fostering a mindset that seeks to dominate nature. It is by 'asking deeper questions' that these origins of the ecological crisis are identified and social causes are dismissed as being part of a 'shallow' analysis.

Deep Ecology gained both publicity and controversy in the 1980s when it was adopted as a philosophy by the Earth First! wilderness movement that had begun to take spectacular direct action against the logging of old-growth forests. Its most controversial figure was the founder David Foreman, who welcomed famine as a means of limiting the population. This is something that Deep Ecologists believed to be necessary to restore ecological balance on the planet. Similar statements about the AIDS epidemic were issued by a fellow Earth First!er. The implications are that if human beings are no better intrinsically than animals, then their premature death is morally acceptable. Population control goes beyond contraception to calculated neglect, fostering a 'permissible' degree of famine. This development of deep ecology has led to some links with far right movements, or eco-fascism. Deep ecologists repudiate the right-wing accusations of the population issue, saying,

We, contrary to some social ecology slanders, seek population reduction, or perhaps controls on immigration from a maintenance of biodiversity perspective, and this has nothing to do with fascists who seek controls on immigration or want to deport 'foreigners' in the name of maintaining some so-called ethnic/cultural or racial purity or national identity.[11]

Not so far from his reasoning is the cry of the National Front in Britain: 'Racial preservation is Green!' while in the United States, white supremacist, Monique Wolfing, remarks that animals and the environment, *'are in*

WHO The Shepherds Council, with support from different local agencies, promoted by Fernando García-Dory
WHAT Cultural strategy on the rural, relational art, landscape ecology, pedagogy of citizenship in common land
KEYWORDS *neo pastoral art - cultural strategies*

The Shepherds School project was an idea to try to solve twin needs: the need of veteran shepherds to not be alone in the mountains, and the need of young interested people to learn to become one.
In 2005 I carried out research on how a shepherds school could be created. I visited those with similar experiences in France, and different regions of the country. The research involved interviews, the design of a course, contacting of experts and shepherds, and staying with one for the summer period. The first course started in 2007 with three pupils and three shepherd teachers.
Since then there has been a yearly Course on Initiation to Mountain Pastoralism with an open call for applications in February and after a weekend of interviews and tests the shepherds select the pupils for the course. They have a €600 monthly grant and the course itself is free of charge. In May they start the theory part, for the whole month, with subjects including Mountain Ecology, European Farming Policies, Cheese making, Veterinary, Shepherds' Culture, Zootechnics and Animal Physiology. In June they go up to the mountains to stay with their shepherd-teachers for 4 months, living their everyday life and learning their practice. The project also rebuilds mountain huts (3), cheesemaking ateliers (4) and milking rooms (2), as common property open to newcomers. Once a pupil finishes the course, if they are interested in starting their own flock and farm, they will get advice and support in every aspect.
In the 4 years that the Shepherds School has been running, more than 20 youngsters have been trained as shepherds, courses have been organised for active shepherds according to their needs and one pupil has stayed and lives in the mountains

the same position as we are. Why would we want something created for ourselves and yet watch nature be destroyed? We work hand in hand with nature and we should save nature along with trying to save our race.[12]

The key question is whether supporters of Deep Ecology are vulnerable to absorption by far-right groups. The main fear for this happening lies in Deep Ecology's demonisation of reason. This biocentric approach has been criticised by key figures of anthropocentric radical environmentalism, such as Murray Bookchin, the main architect of Social Ecologism. Social Ecology claims that Deep Ecology fails to link environmental crises with authoritarianism and hierarchy. Social ecologists believe that environmental problems are firmly rooted in the manner of human social interaction, and protest that an ecologically sustainable society could still be socially exploitative. Deep ecologists reject the argument that ecological behaviour is rooted in the social paradigm (according to their view, that is an anthropocentric fallacy), and they maintain that the converse of the social ecologists' objection is also true in that it is equally possible for a socially egalitarian society to continue to exploit the Earth.

Bookchin goes further in detail when he explains the implementation of Social Ecologism through the political form of Commonalism:

It is my contention that Communalism is the overarching political category most suitable to encompass the fully thought out and systematic views of social ecology, including libertarian municipalism and dialectical naturalism. As an ideology, Communalism draws on the best of the older Left ideologies— Marxism and anarchism, more properly the libertarian socialist tradition—while offering a wider and more relevant scope for our time … Communalism seeks to recapture the meaning of politics in its broadest, most emancipatory sense, indeed, to fulfil the historic potential of the municipality as the developmental arena of mind and discourse. It conceptualises the municipality, potentially at least, as a transformative development beyond organic evolution into the domain of social evolution.
Looking beyond these historical functions, the municipality constitutes the only domain for an association based on the free exchange of ideas and a creative endeavour to bring the capacities of consciousness to the service of freedom.[13]

This is not to say that Communalism accepts the municipality as it is today. For Communalism, the modern municipality is infused with many statist features and often functions as an agent of the bourgeois nation-state. It seeks to radically restructure cities' governing institutions into popular democratic assemblies based on neighbourhoods, towns, and villages. In these popular assemblies, citizens—including the middle classes as well as the working classes—deal with community affairs on a face-to-face basis, making policy decisions in a direct democracy, and giving reality to the ideal of a humanistic, rational society.

Minimally, if we are to have the kind of free social life to which we aspire, democracy should be our form of a shared political life. To address problems and issues that transcend the boundaries of a single municipality, in turn, the democratised municipalities should join together to form a broader confederation.[14]

Bookchin also explains other aspects of local politics:

Libertarian municipalism (…) seeks to reclaim the public sphere for the exercise of authentic citizenship while breaking away from the bleak cycle of parliamentarism and its mystification of the 'party' mechanism as a means for public representation. In these respects, libertarian municipalism is not merely a 'political strategy.' It is an effort to work from latent or incipient democratic possibilities

toward a radically new configuration of society itself—a communitarian society oriented toward meeting human needs, responding to ecological imperatives, and developing a new ethics based on sharing and cooperation. That it involves a consistently independent form of politics is a truism. More important, it involves a redefinition of politics, a return to the word's original Greek meaning as the management of the community or polis by means of direct face-to-face assemblies of the people in the formulation of public policy and based on an ethics of complementarity and solidarity.[15]

For Aristotle, and we may assume also for the ancient Athenians, the municipality's proper functions were thus not strictly instrumental or even economic. As the locale of human consociation, the municipality, and the social and political arrangements that people living there constructed, was humanity's telos, the arena par excellence where human beings, over the course of history, could actualise their potentiality for reason, self-consciousness, and creativity. Thus for the ancient Athenians, politics denoted not only the handling of the practical affairs of a polity but civic activities that were charged with moral obligation to one's community. All citizens of a city were expected to participate in civic activities as ethical beings.[16]

Libertarian municipalism proposes a radically different form of economy - one that is neither nationalised *nor* collectivised according to syndicalist precepts. It proposes that land and enterprises be placed increasingly in the custody of the community - more precisely, the custody of citizens in free assemblies and their deputies in confederal councils. How work should be planned, what technologies should be used, how goods should be distributed, are questions that can only be resolved in practice.

At the basis of libertarian municipalism, there is a distinction between policy-making and administration. This distinction is fundamental to libertarian municipalism and must always be kept in mind. *Policy* is made by a community or neighbourhood assembly of free citizens; *administration* is performed by confederal councils composed of mandated, recallable deputies of wards, towns, and villages. If particular communities or neighbourhoods - or minority groupings of them - choose to go their own way to a point where human rights are violated or where ecological mayhem is permitted, the majority in a local or regional confederation has every right to prevent such malfeasances through its confederal council. This is not a denial of democracy but the assertion of a shared agreement by all to recognise civil rights and maintain the ecological integrity of a region. These rights and needs are not asserted so much by a confederal council as by the majority of the popular assemblies conceived as one large community that expresses its wishes through its confederal deputies. Thus policy-making still remains local, but its administration is vested in the confederal network *as a whole.* The confederation in effect is a Community of communities based on distinct human rights and ecological imperatives.

The explanations below would show the conflictive relation between radical politics and concepts of local, as well as the differences between policy and administration. An example of an elusive debate on the local would be the concept of 'food sovereignty' coined by the international farmer's movement, Via Campesina. Food sovereignty is the right of any community to define the policies that will sustain a food system. Is this sovereignty or autarchy?

New localisms and trans-local initiatives

There have been many examples throughout history of social change models aiming to have a large scale impact, which were envisioned to be implemented just by means of local initiatives. This is closer to our current perception of social change rather than the 'modern' approach of a vast mass movement guided by a committed avant-garde, usually intelligentsia, that would bring a new consciousness, a 'new man', with the subsequent ideal social order. The importance of locally rooting any of those attempts can be seen

in Gandhi's starting point of creating Ashrams (we shouldn't forget that his ultimate political vision was the Gram Swaraj, a confederation of villages-republics), the EZLN (Zapatista Freedom Army) proposed the Aguascalientes, as a kind of commune space. Today we see the springing up of new branches of the Slow Movement, either SlowFood canteens or conviviums, or even Slow Towns.

They will be nurtured through short circuit economics that avoid a large energetic footprint and strengthen the local productive tissue. There are also growing numbers of CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) or Radical Design mobility systems. An international network of Transition Towns, going further into the public imagination than Ecovillages, and willing to *'form groups to look at all the key areas of life (food, energy, transport, health, heart & soul, economics & livelihoods, etc.)'*[17] and often promoting Local Exchange Trade Systems (LETS) as locally initiated, democratically organised, not-for-profit community enterprises that provide a community information service and records transactions of members exchanging goods and services by using the currency of locally created credit. The LETS Credit currency does not involve coins, paper money or tokens of any kind but rather acts as a scoring system, keeping track of the value of individual members' transactions within the system. It is simply a community information system attached to its own market-place.

All these diverse and open initiatives show new shapes of the resistance of the local in a globalised world. These process oriented initiatives are preparing the world for a slow but unavoidable transformation in which the trans-local becomes the new paradigm in thinking the global scale.

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[1]   See, Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture,* (London: Sage, 1992).

[2]   See, Bertrand Badie, *La Fin des Territoires,* (Paris: Fayard, 2003).

[3]   Jacques Attali, Millennium: Winners and Losers in the Coming World Order, (New York: Random House, 1991).

[4]   Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).

[5]   See Aristotle, *Politics*, (New York: Cosimo, 2008).

[6]   Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Orgin of Inequality Among Men*, trans. by G. D. H. Cole (1974); [http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Discourse_on_the_Origin_of_Inequality_Among_Men].

[7]   Yona Friedman, *Utopies Réalisables*, (Paris: Union Générale d'éditions, 1976).

[8]   See, Jim Dodge, 'Living by Life: Some Bioregional Theory and Practice',. *CoEvolution Quarterly*, 32 (winter)(1981): 6-12.

[9]   Peter Berg and Raymond Dasmann, 'Reinhabiting California', *The Ecologist*, 7 (10)(1977): 399-401.

[10] The Eight Tenets of Deep Ecology', *Deep Ecology Hub*; [http://www.deep-ecology-hub.com/eight-tenets-of-deep-ecology.html].

[11] David Orton quoted in, Kev Smith, 'Ecofascism: Deep Ecology and Right-wing Co-optation'; [http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Ecofascism%3A+deep+ecology+and+right-wing+co-optation.-a0109266917].

[12] Monique Wolfing quoted in, ibid.

[13] Murray Bookchin, 'The Communalist Project', *Communalism: A Social Ecology Journal*, 2 (2002): [http://www.communalism.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=179:the-communalist-project&catid=84:movement&Itemid=2].

[14] Ibid.

[15] Murray Bookchin, 'Libertarian Municipalism: An Overview', *Society & Nature*, 1 (1)(1992): [http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/dn/vol1/bookchin_libertarian.htm].

[16] Murray Bookchin, 'The Communalist Project'.

[17] Transition Network.org; [http://www.transitionnetwork.org/].

READING, PERFORMING AND IMAGINING PLACE: CAN CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY SPEAK TO VISUAL ART?

BRYONIE REID

I came to cultural geography by way of visual art. Making work about landscape led to research on the significance of place to human communities and the use of place-based imagery to underpin collective identity. My own interest in geographical belonging is inseparable from my upbringing in Northern Ireland, where politico-religious conflict is literally and firmly grounded, *'locality and history [being] welded together'.*[1] Given the ongoing imperative to define place in terms of exclusion, the importance of thinking critically and creatively about place in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland is clear, and has infused my research for more than a decade. Geographical concerns arise in diverse fields of study and practice, and I believe there is a particular and productive resonance between cultural geography and visual art dealing with place, where both wish to avoid slippage into nostalgia, romanticism or simple rehearsal of sectarian territorialities. I suggest that the intersection of geographical subjects and methodologies with art practice is (at its best) mutually challenging and fruitful.

Rhyzom's fieldtrips and workshops have taken place in geographically varied contexts, and I consider careful reflection on place to be fundamental to the project. Where interests in space, place and landscape have remained unspoken or vague, it seems to me that cultural geography has a role in making them explicit and in contributing to a detailed and sensitive interdisciplinary analysis of space's significance. Here I make a start on this process in relation to the geography of the PS² fieldtrip. I introduce theory on space, place and landscape and why they matter, going on to discuss dominant place-based imaginaries on the island of Ireland. In order to identify ways in which visual art critique, destabilises and depicts or enacts alternatives to these, I make geographical readings of two artworks by Alice Lyons and Sarah Browne and Gareth Kennedy (Kennedy Browne), dealing respectively with Leitrim and Roscommon, and Belfast. To conclude, I expand on my contention that reciprocal benefits exist for artists and cultural geographers engaging together in interpreting space, place and landscape.

Geographical definitions and interpretations

Gerry Smyth provides a very simple reason for human fascination with space, suggesting that *'[space is] one of the two existential coordinates (the other being time) regulating human experience in and of*

the natural world'.[2] However, while history, or time, traditionally stands together with flux, progress and activity, geography, or space, is seen as static, regressive and passive. This has led in the past to the neglect of spatial context as a dynamic force in human communities, what Edward Soja calls *'the space-blinkering effects of historicism'*.[3] Much cultural geography entails in stating the significance of space alongside that of time.

In geography, space is distinguished from place. Space has been conceptualised as abstract and featureless, and place as concrete and homely. Yi-Fu Tuan frames the terms as opposites, explaining: *'if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place.'*[4]

Feminist geographers such as Gillian Rose and Doreen Massey have challenged these definitions, indicating their gendered and limiting nature, but however space and place are defined, the act almost always involves exclusion.[5] Brian Graham theorises that *'place is inseparable from concepts such as empowerment, nationalism and cultural hegemony'*.[6] There is a crucial advantage in imagining the social and political construct of the nation in terms of the physical environment; *'roots, soil, landscape and natural beauty,'* Paul Gilroy explains, *'were used so that nation and citizenship appeared to be natural rather than social phenomena'*.[7] When geography is imagined as history's inert backdrop, it seems to provide continuity, and is transformed into a durable container for the past by becoming landscape. As *'simplifying synecdoches of particularity'*, the ability of landscapes to evoke an aura of straightforward continuity and visual distinctiveness makes them ideal material for national iconography.[8] In order to distill what are actually complex and fragmented topographies, landscape becomes less about the material processes that created it than about its visual appearance, as Jonathan Smith argues: it is precisely the ability of landscape to outlive the past, its tenacious durability, which causes its objects to pile up in front of it, shielding it from our view and substituting a seemingly greater reality of spotless innocence for its guilty and gritty process.[9]

Imagining place in Ireland

The role played by space, place and landscape in shaping nation and national identity has been crucial in Ireland as elsewhere. For Brian Graham, nationalist depictions of Irish place constitute *'traditional myths…erected to justify independence from Britain and provide an origin-legend for the twentieth-century nation-state'*.[10] The landscapes of the Irish West, imagined in both planter and indigenous discourses as the pure site of Irish Otherness, came to be the island's iconic representation, at home and abroad. This image is dependent on ignoring the fluid, heterogeneous and geographically interconnected nature of the West, yet it retains power, with conventional cultural representations of Ireland and Irishness still based on rural idylls ranging from the cosy to the sublime. Superficially seamless and harmless, place imagery conceals fractures and limits what and who can be included in discourses of Irishness. Northern Ireland exists in troubled relationship to it: the six counties are in no way unified in their identity, and present no rival iconography of landscape; nonetheless, though they are part of the same island and geographically indistinct from the twenty-six counties of the Republic, in many ways they give the lie to notions of a timeless, homogeneous and authentically Irish rural.

In the early part of the twentieth century, when Irishness was being recuperated and revitalised in preparation for independence, the relative urbanisation and industrialisation of the North was a problem for *'the romanticised rural basis of southern nationalism'*; this was dealt with rhetorically by denying

Northern (predominantly Protestant or unionist) cities and towns any Irish identity, while affirming that of the countryside.[11] The power of nationalist landscape imagery led unionists in the North to fear that *'explor[ing] their environment would…admit a political mystique of Irishness'*, as Edna Longley puts it.[12] She argues that as a result, unionists still refuse to *'notice the ground under their feet, the very territory they claim'*.[13] John Dunlop also points out that appreciation of archetypally Irish landscapes is problematic given the North's history of political conflict, noting that *'to the northern Protestant mind the romantic mythological Ireland of dreams can manifest itself in nightmares of burnings-out and shootings; of neighbours who maybe cannot be trusted'*.[14] To introduce another synonym for place, in Northern Ireland *territory* supersedes landscape, and has become a 'sectarian symbol' because of its associations with religious identities and the historical links between land and power.[15] Sectarian discourses of territory are no more able than iconic landscapes to engage with social, cultural, political and geographical diversity in Ireland.

Reading the artworks

In 2008 an 'artist-led public art event' took place in Counties Leitrim and Roscommon in the Republic of Ireland. Called AFTER, it evolved from the TRADE programme set up by the counties' respective Arts Offices.[16] The five artists involved in AFTER point to a shared interest in the environment; utilising *'specific knowledge of their respective locales'*, their work deals with *'the unprecedented effects of Ireland's recent economic boom on the rural landscape'*.[17] The project resonates strongly with geographical theory, and here I make a reading of one of its works, Alice Lyons's *Viewfinder*, in order to unfold both the existing complexity of landscapes in the west of Ireland and the eloquent way in which visual art brings that to the fore, often against the dominant imagery and rhetoric.

Viewfinder may be described as a landscape intervention, in which Lyons inserts a poem into the fabric of the village of Cootehall. The poem too is entitled *Viewfinder*, and I reproduce it here in full:

AFTER culminated in five artist-led interventions developed out of a one year engagement, facilitated by Alfredo Jaar. This exchange matched Jaar with five artists located in this region through Leitrim and Roscommon Arts Offices TRADE Programme. At specific locations and sites across the predominantly rural landscapes of Counties Leitrim and Roscommon, the artists developed diverse projects that addressed the unprecedented effects of Ireland's recent economic boom on the rural landscape. The project was prescient as it took place just as the Irish financial system was being urgently recapitalised by the Irish Government and the construction boom, which had represented over 20% of the National economy only the year before was imploding. Artists involved included Carol Anne Connolly, Gareth Kennedy, Alice Lyons, Anna Macleod and Christine Mackey.

In the shed beside the Barracks,
In the shade of it, damp
and February cool I feel
I am standing in a camera.
The shed walls frame a picture
of the river and across it –
sunlit luxury bungalows
all lined up to face The View.

Here, where a boy squatted,
overheard the father's plot
(this was in *Korea*)
to sell his son downriver.[18]

This was printed backwards on a large mirror, which was installed in the shed beside the Barracks (originally a military barracks protecting the persons and interests of local landlords, subsequently a police barracks in the Free State). In front of this mirror and at an angle to it, another mirror, free-standing, was placed. The second mirror thus reflected the poem, making it readable, and also the shed which framed it, part of the Barracks, the Boyle River (around which Cootehall is built), and a new luxury bungalow overlooking the river and the Barracks. The poem also references the work of the late John McGahern, a writer who lived for a time at the Barracks with his policeman father and siblings. His short story, *Korea*, is set there.

Lyons privileges the notion of the view, or the gaze, through the work's title and the eponymous poem. The term 'landscape' encompasses a range of meanings, from mere natural scenery to a heavily inflected geographical representation of power, but the importance of the gaze, or ways of seeing, is paramount in most definitions. Mercedes Camino points to the use of the word 'view' in Edmund Spenser's *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, what Bernhard Klein calls *'the textual adoption of cartographic logic'*, where the surveying look is promoted as a means to further England's knowledge of, and power over, seventeenth-century Ireland.[19] The fact that the Barracks was built for the exercise of military power over a downtrodden peasantry resonates with this colonial interpretation of the word 'view'.

However, *Viewfinder* does not end with the historical notion of a colonised or planted landscape (no longer tenable in any case), but draws it into relationship with multiple subsequent landscapes in the same geographical area. The mention of McGahern's short story brings into focus the era of the Irish Free State and the early Republic; his depictions of rural Leitrim at this time bypass romanticism and nostalgia, foregrounding instead the endemic nature of poverty (both economic and intellectual) and loneliness. In his novels, attention to the beauty of rural surroundings often is couched in terms of material minutiae and not that generalised view which lends itself to political and cultural manipulation.[20] The image of 'downriver' and reference to Korea in *Viewfinder*, derived from McGahern, also insist on the area as part of a far-reaching and fluctuating geographical network, contrary to its fond imagining as insular and unchanging.

This then is set in ironic counterpoint to the contemporary development of new housing, through which Cootehall is altered significantly, but sold on the basis of its 'historic' character.[21] Another view imagined in the poem, 'The View' of the luxury bungalows, points to the commodification of Irish rural landscapes.

The cynicism implicit in this practice may appear less palatable than the co-option of landscapes into discourses of identity, history, politics and culture, but they partake of the same view, in which, as Jonathan Smith indicates, *'landscapes are believed to possess a reality surpassing that of the process by which they were created'*.[22]

To avoid treating this work as a poem only, a final word is necessary on the physicality of Lyons's piece. Having established a rich tissue of meaning through the poem and its siting in the Barracks at Cootehall, she ensures it speaks with further clarity and power by her use of mirrors. Thus, layered behind their *textual* reference points are the *visual* images of the river, the shed and Barracks and a bungalow. Added to this is the metaphorical potency of the mirrors themselves, in which notions of doubling and multiplicity are inherent.

Episode 306: Dallas, Belfast was made by Kennedy Browne in 2006, part of a project initiated by PS² called *Space Shuttle*. Envisaged as a satellite space to PS², this small steel container housed six 'missions' by artists, artist partnerships and 'multidisciplinary groups' in different parts of Belfast.[23] *Episode* 306 is of particular interest to me for its re-reading of the Titanic Quarter, in Belfast's erstwhile industrial heartland. The sectarian history of this landscape, and Belfast as a whole, is not ignored in the piece, but the artists also avoid reducing the city to its sectarian history and geography alone. Kennedy Browne converted the Space Shuttle into a set, in which they filmed a series of re-enactments with a cast of volunteer actors. The portion of script chosen by the artists was from the television programme *Dallas*. Like *Viewfinder*, *Episode 306* is layered and thoughtful, and again I confine my interpretation to its relationship to space, place and landscape. Since the establishment of a peace process, regeneration of Belfast's disintegrated physical, economic and social fabric has become a priority. At the time *Episode 306: Dallas, Belfast* was made the Titanic Quarter was the geographical focus for a discourse of consumerism which aspired to transcend and thereby supersede the city's deep-rooted sectarian conflict, and sectarian and fragmented geography. This is problematic for a number of reasons, not least the ability of landscapes to function as vessels of memory. Sites of violence in the city centre proliferate largely uncommemorated and often are built over; perhaps thoughtlessly, perhaps deliberately and strategically in order to defuse their power to invoke grief, pain and tribal loyalties. Daniel Jewesbury finds serious fault with the co-option of public art, as *'an aesthetic commodity, in the process of covering over the fault lines in Belfast's public spaces'*.[24]

Episode 306: Dallas, Belfast sidesteps this trap. It engages intelligently, critically and with humour with the notion of capitalist consumerism as panacea for Belfast's ills, but like *Viewfinder*, does so allusively and thus all the more effectively. The artists perform a geographical doubling, visually referencing present-day Belfast and verbally referencing 1980s Texas; this displacement prevents the piece from being crudely disparaging, yet allows its explicit content to reflect implicitly and perceptively on the regeneration of the Titanic Quarter. The script excerpt contains the key lines:

I don't know if it's patriotism, or call it Texas pride or whatever the hell you want, but I don't want any foreigners running my state;
and;
Like it or not, JR, there are no more borders, there are no more countries…There is just one world, there's just one country, there's just one language. That language is power.[25]

The hostility expressed here to the figure of the Other is immediately resonant in the context of Belfast.

Additionally, these words suggest that 'conspicuous consumption' interacts in complex and not always predictable ways with older allegiances; while borders (also a potent word in Northern Ireland) may be irrelevant to global flows of capital, those flows do not in themselves dissolve suspicion of Otherness.[26] Perhaps most importantly, the script reminds us that when capitalist consumerism is endorsed as a means of overcoming sectarianism, far from offering neutral and accessible spaces in which all communities in Belfast can meet and shop together, it merely replaces one form of spatial and social exclusion with another, based on wealth.

The foregrounding of economics and trade is resonant also in terms of the siting of the work, and the Space Shuttle itself, which the artists describe as an *'insulated microenvironment'*.[27] This enclosed space sits within the open spaces of Belfast's former docklands, and while the shuttle may be imagined temporarily as the office of an Texan oil tycoon, its views (clearly visible in the film) are of Northern Irish post-industrial wasteland; visually it is unclear whether these are definitively abandoned or on the point of being redeveloped, but they point simultaneously to the past and to a time and space yet to come. Thus the layering of imaginary and actual, historic and future spaces evokes a city in a state of flux, in a constant process of becoming; it refutes the idea that Belfast is defined by politico-religious conflict alone, but represents the city as spatially and temporally inflected by global economies. Further, by invoking the industrial (and inherently partisan) history of the so-called Titanic Quarter, the work performs remembrance, and grounds it geographically – difficult but crucial in a place increasingly characterised by *'cynical, selective forgetting'*.[28]

Conclusion

I hope that the subtle astuteness with which these two artworks engage with rural and urban landscapes is clear from my reading. Of course, they signify in wider fields than cultural geography, and this kind of interdisciplinary appropriation of theoretical frameworks and sources risks reifying and reducing what is borrowed. Marc Brosseau warns geographers against *'assimilat[ing] literature as the transcription of perception'*, and a similar injunction applies in relation to visual art.[29] When using art to talk about place, it should not be assumed that the artwork is transparent in meaning, or that the only or most valid reading is a geographical one. Having noted this, Brosseau recognises that geographical understandings of place are enriched by responses to place which may include the bodily and emotional, expressed through cultural practices.[30] Stephen Daniels points out that any place's significance is an 'interwoven' combination of physical and imagined attributes and experiences, and that place as represented in art and literature should not and cannot be separated from its corporeal reality.[31]

More recently, Andrew Thacker, citing Fredric Jameson, has attributed a spatial turn to postmodernism in general, as opposed to the supposedly temporal turn of modernism. Thacker foregrounds the centrality of understandings of space to cultural and political analysis, for example in postcolonial theory.[32] If, as Thacker proposes, geography underpins discourses of power, then perhaps cultural products, including visual art, ought to be as concerned with geography as geography with them. Indeed, he goes on to intimate that the two are difficult to understand in isolation, stating, '*literary texts represent social spaces, but social space shapes literary forms*'.[33] I suggest that the vast body of thoughtful and critical research on space, place, landscape and territory amassed by cultural geographers could be of interest and use to artists with related concerns, offering theoretical rigour. Reciprocally, I have found visual art engaging with place to be sensitive, critical and occasionally radical in its interpretations and representations, as well as being able to hold in tension multiple (complementary and contradictory) meanings. In my own research and practice the relationship between visual art and cultural geography has been satisfying, and its possibilities are not yet exhausted.

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1   A.T.Q. Stewart, *The Narrow Ground: Aspects of Ulster 1609-1969*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1977), p. 182.

2   Gerry Smyth, *Space and the Irish Cultural Imagination*, (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave, 2001), p. 2.

3   Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*, (Oxford and Cambridge (MA): Blackwell, 1996), p. 14.

4   Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: the Perspective of Experience*, (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), p. 6.

5   See, Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994) and Gillian Rose, *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographic Knowledge*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993).

6   Brian Graham, 'Preface' in, Brian Graham (ed.), *In Search of Ireland: a Cultural Geography*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. xi.

7   Paul Gilroy, 'Diaspora and the Detours of Identity' in, Kathryn Woodward (ed.), *Identity and Difference*, (London and New Delhi: Thousand Oaks and Sage Publications, in association with Open University, 1997), p. 331.

8   Brian Graham, 'Ireland and Irishness: Place, Culture and Identity' in, Graham (ed.) *In Search of Ireland*, p. 3.

9   Jonathan Smith, 'The Lie that Blinds: Destabilizing the Text of Landscape' in, James Duncan and David Ley (eds.) *Place/Culture/Representation*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 80-81.

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13 Edna Longley, *The Living Stream: Literature and Revisionism in Ireland*, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Bloodaxe Books, 1994), p. 194.

14 John Dunlop, *A Precarious Belonging: Presbyterians and the Conflict in Ireland*, (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1995), p. 110.

15 James Anderson and Ian Shuttleworth, 'Sectarian Demography, Territoriality and Political Development in Northern Ireland', *Political Geography*, 17 (2)(1998): p. 198.

16 TRADE specifically addresses making art in rural areas, aiming to show that far from being insular and backward, rural settings offer artists opportunities to make critically aware and globally connected work. All information about TRADE and AFTER is from [www.after.ie] (accessed 1st September 2010).

17 Carol Anne Connolly, Gareth Kennedy, Alice Lyons, Christine Mackey and Anna Macleod worked with Alfredo Jaar on the TRADE programme in 2007-2008, and developed AFTER from this process.

18 Poem and details of installation taken from [www.after.ie/alice.htm] (accessed 3rd September 2010).

19 Klein quoted in, Mercedes Camino, '(Un)folding the Map of Early Modern Ireland: Spenser, Moryson, Bartlett, and Ortelius', *Cartographica*, 34 (4)(1997): 7.

20 John McGahern, *Memoir*, London, Faber and Faber, 2006, and *That They May Face the Rising Sun*, London, Faber and Faber, 2003.

21 AFTER, [www.after.ie/alice.htm] (accessed 3rd September 2010).

22 Smith, *The Lie that Blinds*, p81.

23 Peter Mutschler, introduction, pp5-6 in Peter Mutschler and Ruth Morrow (eds.) *Space Shuttle*, Belfast, PS², 2007, p5.

24 Daniel Jewesbury, 'Blurred Vision', pp18-20 in *Circa*, no. 93, 2000, p19.

25 Sarah Browne and Gareth Kennedy, '*Episode 306: Dallas, Belfast*', pp16-21 in Mutschler and Morrow (eds.), *Space Shuttle*, pp18 and 21.

26 Ibid., p19.

27 Ibid., p16.

28 Edna Longley, 'Northern Ireland: Commemoration, Elegy, Forgetting', pp223-253 in Ian McBride (ed.) *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p253.

29 Marc Brosseau, 'Geography's Literature', pp333-353 in *Progress in Human Geography*, vol.18 no.2, 1994, p338.

30 Ibid., p337.

31 Stephen Daniels, 'Place and the Geographical Imagination', pp310-322 in *Geography*, vol. 77 no.2, 1992, p314.

32 Andrew Thacker, 'The Idea of a Critical Literary Geography', pp56-73 in *New Formations*, vol. 57 no.1, 2005, p58.

33 Ibid., p63 (Thacker's emphasis).

SOME PRACTICES OF IN-BETWEEN

FIONA WOODS

On 1st April 2010, the British Army launched a Defence Cultural Specialist Unit, which deploys military specialists in Afghan culture and language to advise commanders on the ground in Afghanistan.

British Army presentation to Rhyzom research group, Ballykinler, Co. Down, Northern Ireland, June 2010.

'The specialists will help build a picture of Helmandi society for commanders in Task Force Helmand and battlegroups across the province to help them identify and understand issues relating to the local cultural, political, economic, social and historical environment to help commanders make better and more informed decisions.' Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Operations) Air Vice-Marshal Andy Pulford said that a focus on cultural issues is essential to success in Afghanistan. He said: *'Cultural awareness has been a weakness in the past. The unit is essential to equipping the military with a better understanding and appreciation of the region, its people and how to do business there.'*[1]

A *Rhyzom* research trip to a long-term art project[2] in Ballykinler, Co. Down, Northern Ireland included a guided tour of the British Army base which dominates the village. Whilst there we were treated to a formal presentation by a Lt.Col. of the 2nd Battalion Rifles. He spoke in broad terms about the deployment of the battalion in Afghanistan, and the extent to which they engage with 'the human terrain'. His account of their work engaging with complex local cultures in order to operate (similar to that outlined in the extract above), bore a striking resemblance to the contemporary discourse on socially engaged art and architectural practice. Perhaps this should come as no surprise. While the methods, tools and forms of knowledge inherited from 'community arts' were developed to support culturally marginalised people in their demands for cultural democracy, knowledge can be adapted for any purpose. That those tools are now being used by military strategists seeking tactical advantage in a situation of occupation is only to be expected. Every cultural production has the capacity to double as a Trojan Horse.

Global relations are largely based on the flows of capital, backed by military force as required. Hardt and Negri call this 'Empire', *'a system of power so deep and complex that we can no longer determine specific difference or measure'.*[3] By operating beyond any detectable horizon, this system of power leaves virtually no outside from which an alternative might be constructed.[4] The example of the British Army above demonstrates how even 'alternatives' can be co-opted and put to use by hegemonic forces for coercive purposes. Under these circumstances, how is the relentless march of Capital to be non-violently or creatively opposed?

In seeking change which is not just a subversion or negation of what already exists, Brian Massumi points to the need to engage *'with the unfounded and unmediated in-between of becoming'.*[5] In-between is a condition under which the properties of becoming can develop and from which properties of resistance can emerge. The idea of a 'resistant in-between' is one that I want to consider, particularly how it constitutes and is constituted by a number of architectural and art-related practices operating at the current moment.[6] These practices are not defined in relation to any central point or ideology – they are themselves immanent experiments, with their own internal theoretical positions. They are not empty experimental forms, but incorporate skillful approaches to living and when viewed in combination they seem to describe a pragmatics of transformation.

Art's privileged position within the symbolic order has long been used (and abused) to lend enhanced visibility to all kinds of social and political processes. The status of art demands a distinction between art and the real that secures the symbolic and exchange value of art, but at the cost of reducing its political effectiveness. This segregation of art from the real has a limited value for current practices engaging with the in-between as a site of production: they reject such binaries, shifting between action and representation without anxiety, generating use value or symbolic value as needed. These practices construct situations, events and images in response to selected local conditions, producing or mobilising spaces in-between where people can identify, and sometimes act upon, points of possible transformation in their own lived realities. They share an orientation towards a social, which is part of a complex system of relations that includes the non-human – the virtual, the spatial, the biological, the agricultural, the technological, the terrestrial, the animal etc.

This is Not a Trojan Horse[7] is a recent work by Futurefarmers, a group of artists and designers who have been working together since 1995. The work takes the form of a large, human-powered, wooden horse, designed with architect Lode Vranken and built at Pollinaria (an organic farm and artist residency programme in Italy). On a ten-day tour through the region of Abruzzo in Italy, this nomadic architectural

form became *'a physical space with moving edges … a vehicle for social and material exchange at a pivotal moment in this region.'*[8] En route, it collected *'traces of rural practices; seeds, tools and products to enliven the imaginations of farmers through discourse, artistic production and to parade their truths to power.'*[9] The project specifically alludes to the in-between as a place of connection between people and places, not presupposing any existing community but creating space for new forms of social interaction. By drawing on 'the network' rather than 'the community' as a model, *This is Not a Trojan Horse* avoids stereotypical accounts of the rural as fixed places of tradition and stability, emphasising creative, knowledge-based practices of working land and producing food.

The work moves beyond an increasingly common tendency towards romantic documentation of 'the rural' through its sub-title – *'Incarnating Nomadic Resistance Against Biopolitics (the discourse of traditional power)'.* The three registers of ecology – environment, social system and human subjectivity – which Felix Guattari articulated[10] are addressed through biopolitics. By calling upon this discourse, the work of Futurefamers introduces a non-anthropocentric dimension into their considerations of environmental realities.

Futurefarmers is a hybrid network drawing people together from a number of fields and disciplines in the construction of spaces and events, which respond to the local conditions of a given context or situation. Its productions are collective assemblages that work towards the creation of commonality and/or commons. In opposition to current economic and political structures, which render the natural world and all of its inhabitants as resources from which profit can be extracted, practices that engage with the in-between operate contrary to forms of enclosure. In some cases this involves documenting and understanding mechanisms of enclosure, in others it is about developing counter-strategies, carrying out or documenting contrary actions. It can be a way of modelling or producing commons, or opening a space for discussions of what is common, including whether or not the commons is restricted to humans. The in-between is what is not (yet) owned, or what can still be made common.

A creative and intellectual commons movement is already well developed: the concept of information sharing and open source predates computer technology, and its principles extend well beyond the free

software movement. There is talk of an 'emerging commons paradigm',[11] manifesting as local resistance to the politics of water, to the corporatisation of natural resources, to the enclosure of public space, the privatisation of the internet etc. However, anti-commons is a powerful force. The internationally influential US Patent system, which issues 3,500 patents a week, generally favours the rights of property over those of common interest, with little non-patentee input into policy or decisions.[12] In the 1980s, when the patenting of biological matter was legalised in the US, the huge economic potential of biodiversity and related traditional knowledge led to rampant bio-prospecting (or biopiracy as it's known to its opponents), with patents on living matter extending to thousands. The simple act of seed-saving is now a potential criminal act in many parts of the world. Even for those who are not interested in biodiversity, these developments shed light on the knowledge economy as a mechanism of enclosure. Anti-commons exposes Capital at its most voracious.

HURL (Home University Roscommon Leitrim) is 'Ireland's newest university', formed in 2009 in rural north-west Ireland by a multidisciplinary group of individuals committed to the 'exchange of soft knowledge'.[13] HURL does not commodify knowledge, but seeks to facilitate its transfer from person-to-person, placing an equal value on abstract knowledge and know-how. The model of education proposed by HURL identifies every private or public space as a potential place of dynamic knowledge exchange. This transmedial practice operates both inside and outside the space of art, using forms of assembly that are real and virtual.

HURL invites others to create their own version of Home University, working towards the establishment of a Home University network. By acting in common with others, this and other practices in-between find ways of generating and sharing knowledge, ideas and productions across time and space, involving fluid sets of actors and incorporating lived and sensed experiences. They engage with issues, sites and groups of people that are 'local', but they operate within a trans-local condition so that there is no fixing of place or community identity but an opening up to *displacement*. Arising from the productive tension of local/global, displacement allows new narratives and thought forms to be assembled from previously limiting binaries such as local/global, rural/urban, tradition/innovation, knowledge/imagination, human/non-human etc.

The Herbologies/Foraging Networks recently emerged from the Baltic region, initially from Finland and the Kurzeme region of Latvia. Composed of a transnational group of practitioners, operating across multiple platforms, it explores the cultural traditions and knowledge of herbs, edible and medicinal plants through events and workshops, placing that information within the context of online networks, open information-sharing and biological technologies.

Herbologies refers to the different ways of knowing about plants and their extracts (as well as sometimes fungus and bee products), as wild and cultivated food, medicine and related crafts. Foraging Networks raises awareness of organised behaviours and practices in gathering wild food, potential networked actions in micro to macro ecosystems or socio-political levels. The slash in the project name indicates the uneasily-reduced connection between cultural knowledge, social practice and extended resources in these subjects. Combining with the fields of social/visual arts, craft, cultural heritage, media, network cultures and technology, the programme has directed attention to the different ways of sharing knowledge, especially within the Baltic Sea region and between different generations. Furthermore, it has also been initiated from the position of 'not-knowing', and being an immigrant to a landscape and environmental habitat.[14]

Situating knowledge of the edible qualities and useful properties of wild plants within a cultural commons, along with aesthetically inclined ways of knowing, or know-how; *'how to gather, how to prepare, how to use, reflections on use and how such knowledge is learned'*,[15] Herbologies/ Foraging Networks responds to a developing interest in sustainable food production, and forges a trans-generational link between traditional knowledge and innovation that can be reproduced in multiple localities.

Practices engaging with the in-between as a site of production, including many not mentioned in this text, might be described as forms of action-research in the way that they combine deceptively simple actions with multifaceted inquiries into the working of things. They are collective productions; they are

HERBOLOGIES/FORAGING NETWORK
Helsinki, Tampere (FI), Aizpute, Alsunga, Riga (LV)

WHO artists, organisers, wild food and plant experts, activists, cultural producers, heritage workers, and online community developers based in Baltic Sea region and beyond
WHAT transdisciplinary cultural programme including workshops, seminars, rural expeditions and publishing
WEB http://www.herbologies-foraging.net
NETWORKS Pixelache (http://pixelache.ac), SERDE (http://serde.lv), Hirvitalo (http://hirvikatu10.net), Kultivator (http://kultivator.org)
KEYWORDS *cultural heritage - activism - wild plants - foraging - biotechnologies - information sharing*

Herbologies/Foraging Networks programme, focused in Helsinki (Finland) and Kurzeme region of Latvia, now extends beyond the Baltic Sea region. In a series of events during 2010, it has explored cultural traditions & knowledge of herbs, edible and medicinal plants, within the contemporary context of online networks, open information-sharing, and biological technologies. The coordinators produced a seminar presentation, discussion and workshop events at Pixelache Helsinki Festival in March 2010, and a midsummer rural expedition to Aizpute & Alsunga was hosted by SERDE in June 2010, with herb-related fieldwork excursions and ethnographic interviews including an international and interdisciplinary group of guests.

HOME UNIVERSITY OF ROSCOMMON AND LEITRIM
Based in Leitrim and Roscommon but will practice anywhere invited

WHO Natalia Beylis, Carol-Anne Connoly, Stephen Rennicks, Willie Stewart and Dominic Stevens
WHAT Soft Knowledge Exchange
WEB www.hurllearning.wordpress.com
KEYWORDS *H.U.R.L. HURL Learning - Home University - learning - knowledge exchange*

Finding ways for people to share primarily their soft knowledge, in any format they desire, but expert knowledge is welcome too. The point is to share it in an informal way. So far we have done this through lectures, speed exchanges, quizzes and facilitation

neighbourhood events. They are assemblages of human, non-human, material and immaterial forms; they are art and farming projects. They are hybrid networks of culture, nature, science, discourse and technology; they are communal gardens and discussion groups.

Forms of attention lie at the heart of aesthetics, and these practices employ the embodied inquiry of aesthetics to consider both what is, and what is emerging. In so far as they place an emphasis on skillful living, as opposed to competitive advantage, they function as nodes for the emergence of possible change.

1   British Army website, [http://www.army.mod.uk/news/20420.aspx] (accessed August 2010).

2   The artist Anne-Marie Dillon has spent a number of years working with micro-communities of interest in the village of Ballykinler, which owes its existence to, but has a complicated relationship with, the local British Arrmy base.

3   Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire,* (New York: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 210 – 211.

4   This is of course debatable, particularly in relation to the question of whether the challenge to 'Western Capitalism' posed by Islamic Fundamentalism constitutes an 'outside' or only an inversion.

5   Brian Massumi, 'The Autonomy of Affect', in Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation,* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), p. 31.

6   The reference to practices located 'in-between' first came to my attention in relation to the work of aaa in, Doina Petrescu, 'How to make a community as well as the space for it' in, Peter Mutschler and Ruth Morrow (eds.), *Space Shuttle: Six Projects of Urban Creativity and Social Interaction,* (Belfast: PS² 2007). Also available on [http://www.re-public.gr/en/?p=60] (accessed August 2010).

7   Futurefarmers, *This is Not a Trojan Horse,* [htttp://www.futurefarmers.com/thisisnotatrojanhorse/about.html] (accessed August 2010).

8   Ibid.

9   Ibid.

10 Felix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies,* trans. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton, (London: The Athlone Press, 2000).

11 On the Commons website - 'About the Commons' [http://onthecommons.org/about-commons] (accessed August 2010).

12 For further details see, The Public Patent Foundation website [http://www.pubpat.org/About.htm] (accessed August 2010).

13 Home University of Roscommon and Leitrim website, [http://hurllearning.wordpress.com/] (accessed August 2010).

14 Andrew Gryf Paterson, 'Introduction in English', Herbologies/Foraging Networks website [http://herbologies-foraging.net/about/introduction-english] (accessed August 2010).

15 Gryf Paterson, Introduction, [http: /herbologies-foraging.net]

PLACE IS NOW, TIME IS EVERYWHERE

VALERIA GRAZIANO

When a new wave of interest in local cultural practices arose during the 1990s, it was immediately accompanied by a number of critical contradictions, many of which had to do with what retrospectively could be called the 'creative city frenzy' that constituted the focus of many economic and urban policies in post-industrial territories (and later worldwide). Such policies recognised the potential to make a profit out of the distinctive traits of specific cultures and landscapes, and proactively aimed at stimulating such conditions where there were none. Territorial marketing and cultural management strategies were readily identified by a consistent group of critical practitioners (artists, architects, activists, researchers, etc.) as problematic. Such policies often assumed culture and community in general, as holistic and a-historical entities; their aims often ambiguously oscillated between market dogma and social justice jargon. Moreover, public cultural initiatives were at times used to replace more expensive social interventions; and, even more problematically from the point of view of practitioners, successful projects contributed to a new attractivity of localities that would often quickly turn into exclusive areas, thus expelling the very protagonists of the local re-vitalisation.

Despite this picture, however, the desire around 'locally engaged practices' has remained consistent and substantial. It has mobilised expectations to exit the professional enclaves of discipline-specific institutions, conjuring up rare opportunities to practice in a politically relevant context - that of the public. It has promoted an understanding of creativity, participation and community, to cite just three of the key terms in this debate that is far more sophisticated than what is often meant by the commissioners. In a globalised world, the local started to assume a new importance as the place for democracy, self-organisation and accountability. This sense of possibility and excitement has extended, during the same period, to spaces that have been called trans-local, trans-localities defining those spaces of agency that are created through the selective connection of actors distributed in different physical locations, and made possible by digital communication platforms and global transportation infrastructures.

A butterfly flapping its wings…

What has changed since then?
The present moment is confronting us with two main 'crises' of global proportions (hence impacting all locales), almost too well-known to mention: the financial crisis and the environmental crisis. A great deal of oversimplification has gone into describing these two phenomena, often producing the effect of 'hiding the purloined letter on the shelf': both crises have to do with the way people relate to the production cycle. They are crises with very deep roots in history; they are almost traceable back to the moment in

which the word '*oikonomia*' ceased to describe the good care of the household (and thus of the people and the resources that belonged to it) to signify a paradigm of constant accumulation of symbolic wealth. Corporations provide most of the items of our sensory, intellectual and emotional surrounding: food, health care, clothing, transport, shelter, education, the list is endless. Except that these are not simply goods or services to be purchased, they also constitute the basic human activities that are the vectors of other cultural and social practices. Which brings us to a third dimension of crisis that is becoming acute in the present moment: the crisis of subjectivation, a psychic and existential weakening that is accompanied by a surge of psychotic and depressive forms of behaviour. As described by the late Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, as well as Virno and Lazzarato amongst many others, subject has become the locus of governance to the point that 'subjectivity is forged through multiple mediations, whereas individuals has [sic] tended to become rare'[1]. The precarisation of labour has played a major role in shaping this situation, blocking thought and promoting stupidity and conformity. Despite the fact that contemporary scientific and technical knowledges could solve most of the material needs of humanity, work has been assumed as the prerequisite for social inclusion and self-recognition. The condition of the subject is often paralleled by a homogenisation of territories, which are pressed to become specialised productive units able to assume a determined role within global scale economies.

Many of us will recognise all of this. Many of the issues outlined above were already present, although in less urgent form, in the preoccupations of local cultural interventions of the past two decades. However, the coordinates and reference points that have been used until recently to imagine generative, joyful, and powerful interventions do not seem sufficient any more. It may not be enough to act in the local avoiding both the repetition of modernity or the citation of the past; although these two conditions remain necessary, they are no longer sufficient. On top of this, cultural producers are under more pressure to justify their existence and strongly invited to side with private interests in order to carry out their activities. Will this mean the end of locally attentive initiatives, public art and participatory urban projects? Not necessarily, but it probably means that the lines of contradiction that have traversed the field for some decades now will become more crucial for the definition of a sustainable ethic for the future. In order to understand the possibilities of locality now, we may have to turn our attention to the global scale and see how the contradictions that organise the sensible, which could be once trusted as guidelines for our practices, seem to behave like the Cheshire Cat (Disney version, of course). Tapping into local resources and knowledges, even in the name of 'greener' communal living, needs to be reinterpreted in the light of new trends in governance on many levels. I would like to outline a few of them departing from the punctual account written by the CrimethInc. Collective.

To participate in the creation of a subculture was once a great break from the normative prescription of the nuclear family, its values and the predicament of the mass consumerist society, its fixed career path and life scripts. Now, subcultures are the core of cognitive capital accumulation cycle. They are monitored, studied, and then sold as brands or fashionable lifestyles.

To self-organise was once a strategy of resistance in the face of the omnipresent bureaucratisation of workplaces and public institutions alike. Now, self-organisation is encouraged within new productive units that nevertheless fit perfectly well in the outsourcing model of global scale corporations, feeding the precarisation and deregulation of labour.

To dedicate oneself to a process of common creation, such as peer-to-peer software production, was once the guarantee of a knowledge that would stay common, valorising the communities that fuelled its

generation. Now, new managerial paradigms such as 'crowdsourcing' and 'crowdcreation' are turning the willingness of people to co-operate into a free labour that leaves creators poorer and isolated, while saving enormous amounts of money for companies.

To engage in volunteer initiatives was once a way to refuse a life dedicated purely to a professional career. Now, forced voluntarism (such as internships and enforced community service) is the new predicament of a workfare state that is left to manage the spiralling crisis of a jobless society.

To produce one's own media was once an act of rebellion in the face of the passivity of media consumption and the monopoly of attention detained by state controlled and, later, privately owned broadcasting conglomerates. Now, even the most conservative journal has a bloggers' section on its webpage; spectators can decide what programmes to watch on their on-demand satellite TVs; and kids are playing interactive videogames that they can customise in almost every aspect.

To give away things for free was once a radical proposal against a total economy that interprets everything as private property and demands profit to be maximised at every opportunity. Now, free distribution is one of the most widespread commercial strategies on the street.

To communicate personal ideas and news on the internet was once a mark of the growing decentralisation of informational outputs, a tendency towards greater democratisation in a virtual world where all, big and small, could have the same voice volume. Now, Compete (a society that performs web analysis in the USA) reports that the ten most visited webpages account for 75% of internet traffic (in 2001 they held 31%).[2]

To squat a building or a piece of land, to organise a concert or a party there, was once the unequivocal birth of a temporary autonomous zone. Now, landlords are happy to invite artists to use and decorate their vacant properties as a protection against abusive occupiers and as a measure to maintain the property value.

To put it in CrimethInc.'s own words, the key issue seems to be that many of our wishes *'have been granted in form, but not in content'* and that *'perhaps the central contradiction of our age is that the new technologies and social forms horizontalise production and distribution of information, yet make us more dependent on corporate products'*.[3]

The next craftman's secrets

The picture sketched above implies a slippery position for cultural organisers. Their gestures can easily produce the same affects and effects of management, reinforcing dominant modalities of subjectivation and landing value to the same politics they wish to discredit. In the midst of such a hostile and slippery environment, it is hard to make grand claims about possibilities. However, I believe that there are at least two trends, two areas of ferment that seem to be coming forward refracted in the intuitions of a myriad local practices, out of the collective intelligence that we all participate in. One, so to speak, is situated more towards the 'internal', the other close to the external outlines of what we commonly consider situated practices. The first one has to do with a budding sensitivity towards the composition of co-presence in collective situations; the second one concerns a rising more mature understanding of the mechanisms of valorisation disseminated through the interplay of dominant economic relations.

The composition of co-presence

In an essay on the idea of a local economy, Wendell Berry suggested that one of the marks of the event of locality from a cultural standpoint is the recuperation of the vocational principle as part of economic and political life.[4] To speak of vocation in this context means to retain the principle of justice that it implies, echoing the slogan popularised by Marx *'from each according to his ability, to each according to his need'*,[5] but also to problematise its assumptions. Less transcendental (not something God would call us to do) and less natural, this understanding of vocation appears as a kind of attention paid to individual specificities without psychologising them. It entails the invention (or adoption) of expedients that allow all actors to shift their positionality within a process, to occupy different roles, according to expertise, commitment, energy levels and desires, and to be able to negotiate them reciprocally. In fact, as Isabelle Stengers suggested, it is important to understand subjectivity as a becoming that we never carry out alone, but always with and through others, with and through the networks of relations that we manage to create and sustain.[6] The local is a prime scale for the facilitation of these micropolitical mutualities. According to the formulations of George H. Mead and Axel Honneth,[7] the formatting of socialisation through games, which presuppose a number of set procedures usually aimed at engaging a presumed subject, should shrink in favour of a sociability of play able to foster modes of reciprocal perception and sympathetic recognition.[8]

A number of practices are signalling a growing interest in this sense.
For instance, some activists connected with the Euromayday network in Germany have been experimenting with a peculiar 'welcoming' session for precarious people approaching their group. Newcomers are invited to get drunk in the company of the collective while narrating their experience of unstable working conditions and personal frustrations to the others. The convivial atmosphere is a way to bypass the performance of coherency and self-sufficiency that is often conjured up in self-presentations of this kind.

With the Micropolitics Research Group, of which I am also part, we have tried a similar approach during the years 2008/09. During a number of months the group held regular meetings that were led in turns by one or two participants. Each person would propose an issue for the session that related to her or his current preoccupations. The group would then read and discuss together trying to unpack the various questions raised by the issue, in an effort to provide a space for thinking together and for using theory in a pragmatic sense.

During his residency at the Centre for Possible Studies, the artist Hiwa K. recently assembled a revival band playing music that was popular in the Middle East region during the 1970s. The members of the band are residents of the Edgware Road neighbourhood in London, many of whom come from Iran, Iraq, Lebanon and Afghanistan. Their performances are followed by open discussion around the history and current situation of the region.

Many more examples come to mind that cannot be listed here. In re-actualising the legacy of feminism, alternative therapy and informal pedagogy, similar approaches are important because they invite a closer look towards the 'common' from the perspective of subjectivity.

Thresholds of valorisation

As we have seen, today we are facing a situation where the possibility of failing lies more with the appropriation of certain vital and productive energies, rather than in their suppression. This may be true, but capital's flexibility is always only up to a point. The core of its mechanism is completely sclerotised into a fixed set of axioms: at a certain point within any given process, valorisation needs to occur; and at some other point, this value needs to become profitable, that is, turned into hard cash. These two events do not necessarily coincide in the production cycle, but to map and be aware of where and how they take place is a necessary step to understanding how our individual and collective actions participate in a greater power dynamics. The second trajectory that I see emerging is a new carefulness towards the different thresholds of valorisation that frame all kinds of possible contexts of intervention. They become discernible if we

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Micropolitics, or the study of power relations at the level of individuals and groups, and related processes of subjectivation, provides an important approach for understanding the connections between art and social change. The term, first developed in the writings of Félix Guattari, Suely Rolnik and Gilles Deleuze in the 1970s, brings together psychoanalysis, politics, and philosophy, and demands a mode of immanent research that does not separate practice-based and theoretical approaches.
Researching genealogies of micropolitical practices – such as the Mass Observation Movement of the 1930s 'anthropologies of themselves', 1970s feminist and workers inquiries in the factories of Italy, and modes of Participatory Action Research across the third world in the 1950s – the Micropolitics Research Group builds other histories and other possibilities for the relationship between art and politics; opening up new modes of research and art as a space for composing other relationships between the subject, knowledge and social change.

The band plays popular music from Iran, Iraq, Bangladesh, England and Lebanon from the 1970s. Each performance of a song is followed by presentations by members of the band as well as participants in the band's global research team (including the artist's mother). Researchers discuss the shaping of the Middle East and other parts of the world by neo-liberal policies through personal anecdotes and youtube clips. The band is comprised of musicians and thinkers who are residents and visitors to the Edgware Road, London, a neighbourhood that has many historical and contemporary ties with the region. The band was created in response to conversations about freedom and neo-liberalisation in neighbourhood cafés but travels to other places from time to time to extend its research.

consider such contexts as ecosystems. This does not mean a return to ideas of the organic community, but a concrete translation of ecosophical principles into practice. Félix Guattari proposed 'ecosophy' as a framework to grasp the interconnections between social, environmental and mental systems, all of which are entangled with the system of capital accumulation. Following this framework, some cultural practices have been developing which I like to call 'antibodies functions', that is to say, devices that prevent a locality from behaving according to logics that will destroy it.

A classical example of what I mean by this would be the 'share-alike' clause in Creative Commons licences, which prevents the incorporation of cc material within copyrighted work. Its basic mechanism has recently been expanded by other initiatives, such as gComm(o)ns, an online platform for open-process cooperation among academics or OpenWear (a collaborative clothing network and copyleft meta-brand).[9] Another classic but less oft-quoted instance is the sixth principle of the International Co-operative Alliance's review of the original Rochdale principles of cooperation of 1937:

All co-operative organisations, in order to best serve the interests of their members and their communities should actively co-operate in every practical way with other co-operatives at local, national and international levels.[10]

This rather simple tenet in fact plays a great function in maintaining the co-operative movement's health. Its implementation not only involves a proactive approach to the formation of new relationships at multiple levels, but it also actively subtracts potential trade partners to profit driven units of production. These not only exist as a 'dominant alternative' to co-operatives, but they constitute a context that by its own rules needs continuous expansion; it constitutes an aggressive context. And trading is precisely the plane where contacts between the two systems occur, leaving the weaker party, well, even weaker.

More recently, the Movement for Justice in El Barrio has put forward another 'antibody' praxis. This is a resident's movement based in East Harlem, New York struggling against eviction and gentrification. As a major practice of the movement had to do with raising public awareness through media interventions and presentations around their experience, the group identified as a point of valorisation the visibility of some of its members. Those who could speak fluent English, had better communicative skills and a valid passport to travel risked becoming identified as spokespersons of an otherwise collective process. In order to contrast the outside tendency to look for heroes, El Barrio citizens decided to operate according to rotation: each member of the movement in turn has to release interviews or give presentations. Those who did not have the skills to confidently do so, are supported by others in developing their rhetoric and communicational abilities. In this way, valorisation is given back to the entire collective through a learning process that engages all, rather then replicating the stardom model required by mediatised and academic valorisation.

Feel good finale

The above are just a few examples inspired by recent encounters and conversations, anecdotes listened to and stories told. Without any pretension to constitute a research or a reasoned list of recommendations, they wish to trace on paper the contour of an emerging awareness around co-presence and valorisation, which appear as the most urgent challenges in the current hostile climate. It is hard to tell whether they sketch a tendency that will become actualised, or they are symptoms of the desires and preoccupation of myself and the people with whom I am in conversation. The one presented here wishes to be taken as local knowledge in the best way. From where I stand, the most generative input that cultural initiatives can contribute to (trans)localities are models to think about the local as

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ontogenesis (self-organisation, proliferation of desire, construction of war machines – all are necessary components of this). They offer a different kind of experience from other forms of engagement provided by arts, viral marketing, experience economy, or state propagandas or even traditional left culture.

They implicate a three-fold process:
A reflection on how the behaviours of those participating in a common project can replicate the beliefs and assumptions that such community stands against.
A reflection around the ways in which the community produces values that can be re-appropriated into capitalist governance and around the devices to make this appropriation impossible or at least more difficult.
A reflection on the limits of the localised activity and the implementation of a choice process around which issues may need to scale up to full confrontations and which solidarity lines may exist with the elsewhere. What they have to teach us is not teachable through the other formats, as the experience will be about a different way of desiring, even before a different desire. As desires can be sold back to you; different ways of desiring belong to subjects and the relationships between them alone. As ElicioPantaleo writes, the multitude changes the present.[11] The place is now, the time is everywhere.

1   Felix Guattari, 'Remaking Social Practices', (Oct 1997), [http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-l-9710/msg00015.html]

2   Data reported by Michael Wolff in, Chris Anderson and Michael Wolff, 'The Web Is Dead. Long Live the Internet', *Wired*, (September 2010). Available, [http://www.wired.com/magazine/2010/08/ff_webrip/all/1].

3   CrimethInc., 'Fighting in a New Terrain', (Aug 2010), [http://www.crimethinc.com/blog/2010/08/23/fighting-in-the-new-terrain/].

4   Wendell Berry, Norman Wirzba, *The Art of the Common-Place. The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry*, (Berkeley: Counterpoint Press, 2002), p. 257.

5   Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, (Rockville MD: Wildside Press, 2008), p. 27.

6   Isabelle Stengers, cited by David Vercauteren during the workshop 'Micropolitics of Groups', Summer Drafts, (Bolzano, July 2010).

7   George H. Mead, 'Play, the Game and Generalised Other' (1934) in, Michael Hechter, Christine Horne (eds.),*Theories of Social Order: A Reader*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009, pp. 60-66; Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996).

8   In many European languages the Greek-Latin concept of simpathia still carries the idea of personal value when it is stripped from functional value.

9   gComm(o)ns. Platform for open-source cooperation, [http://gcommons.org/; Openwear/collaborative clothing], [http://openwear.org/].

10 International Co-operative Alliance's review of the original Rochdale principles of cooperation of 1966. Available, [http://www.ica.coop/coop/principles-revisions.html]

11 Elicio Pantaleo, 'Accélérations Vertigineuses', (21 Aug 2005), [http://seminaire.samizdat.net/Accelerations-vertigineuses.html?var_recherche=Elicio%20Pantaleo&lang=fr]

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN RURAL AND ONLINE COOPERATION IN FINLAND

ANDREW GRYF PATERSON

I write reflecting upon connections which emerged from planning the Alternative Economy Cultures *(Alt. Econ.Cult)* programme of Pixelache Festival, during winter 2008-2009 and, in particular, the seminar event on 3rd April 2009 in Helsinki. To give some contextual background to this event, *Pixelache* is both a cultural festival and an organised network.[1] It brings together people interested in topics such as electronic arts; participatory cultures and subcultures, including the exploration of grassroots organising and networks; politics and economics of media/technology; media literacy and engaging environmental issues. Social, intellectual, financial and institutional capital at *Pixelache* has gathered over the years since 2002, but it is still based mostly on volunteer or underpaid work.

As initiator and producer of the *Alt.Econ.Cult* programme, my intention, in the spirit of open-minded research, was to create a 'gathering-forum' to 'See-hear-glean' intuitions, curiosities, overlaps, agendas, connections, and antagonisms in/between alternative economics, creative practice, activism, entrepreneurship and network cultures. Similar to that ambition, this paper sets out to foster and develop conversation between rural, network-culture, and co-operative studies researchers, organisers, activists, and cultural practitioners of different generations. The *Alt.Econ.Cult* programme emerged on the basis of social connections and what Pierre Bourdieu describes as 'social capital'.[2] I mean by this that it was built on the wealth of social relations I had accumulated during my organisational practice over several years based in Helsinki, and travels to elsewhere.

Towards this aim, I set up an encounter between the Finnish tradition of *talkoot* (known among Swedish-speaking Finns as *talko*) and the information communication technology (ICT) society which is common in Northern Europe, and particularly identified with in contemporary Finland.

Rural co-operation

Tapani Köppä identifies all of the following characteristics of talkoot cooperation: '*People getting together for joint work efforts, based on voluntary participation, and collective reward through hospitality and enjoying of the shared work performance*'. As neighbourly assistance, work is unpaid, and hospitality would normally mean food and drinks, maybe music, singing and dancing at the end, provided by the one who has called for the talkoot. Interestingly, the term is almost always referred to in plural form.

'Temporary or occasional needs of united action', writes Köppä, is another characteristic, including regular seasonal events such as spring tidying of common yards, autumn harvests, or *'assistance in constructing houses, roads, bridges, community festivals'* and later also *'material resources or fundraising campaigns'.* Supporting weaker neighbours or those in need, for example, *'in case of burnt house, lost crop, illness or death of spouse',*[3] would be a shared responsibility in the community.

Köppä calls these basic elements combining to form a 'win-win' situation, including shared benefits which increase the prosperity of the community and its members, making participation rewarding socially, emotionally and economically. He argues that it makes co-operation *'profitable in the long-run'*, easy to learn and flexible in application.[4]

However, individual deviance to this common practice might prove to be costly. Reference is made in the English-language *Wikipedia* entry for *talkoot*, of peer-pressure to participate: *'one's honour and reputation may be severely damaged if one doesn't show up, or proves to be a poor worker'* and being stingy in rewarding the work may *'result in a person being persecuted for the rest of his or her life'.*[5] Whether this is true or not, when traditionally many rural families lived in isolated farms, many kilometres from the nearest village, the positive benefits of participating are easy to imagine; and the negative consequences of not contributing one's share likewise.

In explaining the historical roots of *talkoot*, Köppä made reference to the combination of extreme climate in Finland long winters, short summers and tough agro-ecological conditions which have encouraged co-operative energies in the country's rural communities. Similar conditions prevail in other northern climates, and not surprisingly, if one looks to other cultures and languages of Northern and Eastern Europe, the Finnish word *Talkoot* can be translated.[6] In this text, I use the phrase 'work-party' as the English translation of 'talkoot' which is clear in describing the activities involved.

Historical durability of mutual aid

Talkoot, and other words for voluntarily working together, adding efficiency though sharing in kin and village community structures, are synonymous with what Peter Kropotkin described in the 1890s as 'mutual aid'.[7]

Kropotkin published a series of papers, collated under the title *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*, in 1902. Within them, he argued against then-current social Darwinist thinking, countering that mutual aid was just as important a factor in human evolution as self-assertion, common to people all over Europe, and other parts of the world. It was his understanding that this practice had been knowingly suppressed in recent centuries by various State-based institutions. As Kropotkin wrote:

> *The village communities were bereft of their folkmotes, their courts and independent administration; their lands were confiscated. Political education, science, and law were rendered subservient to the idea of State centralisation. It was taught in the Universities and from the pulpit that the institutions in which men formally used to embody their needs of mutual support could not be tolerated in a properly organised State; that the State alone could represent the bonds of union between its subjects; that federalism and 'particularism' were the enemies of progress, and the State was the only proper initiator of further development.*[8]

Kropotkin was a firm believer in the durability of rural life-ways, *'honeycombed with habits and customs of mutual aid and support; that important vestiges of the communal possession of soil are still retained'.*[9] He saw these social and mutually-beneficial ways of doing things, as being reconstituted also in the industrial societies. Writing as an anarchist-communist activist, in a period of emerging modern European nationalism and state capitalism, he was inspired and encouraged by the labour and counter-movement of his time, which included socialism, unionism, free association and co-operativism. These were movements he heard of and witnessed in Germany, Holland, Denmark, France, Switzerland and England. Beyond the labour movements, he was also inspired by a similar energy among all different aspects of people's lives:

> *I ought perhaps to mention also the friendly societies, the unities of oddfellows, the village and town clubs organised for meeting the doctors' bills, the dress and burial clubs, the small clubs very common among factory girls, to which they contribute a few pence every week, and afterwards draw by lot the sum of one pound, which can at least be used for some substantial purchase, and many others. A not inconsiderable amount of sociable or jovial spirit is alive in all such societies and clubs, though the 'credit and debit' of each member are closely watched over. But there are so many associations based on the readiness to sacrifice time, health, and life if required, that we can produce numbers of illustrations of the best forms of mutual support.*[10]

Co-operative development in Finland

At the time when Kropotkin's theory on mutual aid was being published, Finland, as a restless autonomous grand duchy of the Russian Empire, was still largely an agrarian country. Of a population of three million, four-fifths lived and worked in the forests and fields. However, it was also the time when the organised co-operative movement arrived in Finland. Following travels in Germany and Austria, Hannes and Hedvig Gebhard were inspired by the farm economics which they witnessed there, and decided to pioneer co-operatives in Finland. Formalised in 1899, they set up the '*Pellervo Society*'. Markku Kuisma, writing in the introductory chapter of The Pellervo Story, reminds the reader: '*Emerging industries, particularly the forest industry, depended on rural resources and labour. The distress of the landless masses was one of the most serious social problems of the age*'.[11] The organised co-operative movement, based on social capital and its economics, was an attempt to tackle such issues, and this form of enterprise was encouraged as a way of developing political consciousness among farmers.

Modern forms of *talkoot* developed during the Winter War (1939-40) and the Continuation War (1941-45) with the Soviet Union. Köppä writes that people of the 'home front' mostly women filling roles in productive work as farm-heads, industrial workers and other professionals became involved in less-traditional forms of volunteerism: gathering raw materials, scrap metal, foraged food, paper, rags and other energy forms. In other words, they were '*keeping the infrastructure alive*' both in the city, and in the countryside.[12] Köppä describes how during the war period *Suomen talkoot* (Finland's-bee) was established as an organisation, and later, *Suurtalkoot* (Great-bee), a coalition of 58 national civil society associations. As a consequence, a great amount was done despite the hardships facing a country at war. In 1942 work made by *talkoot* volunteers, Köppä continues, was counted to exceed 3 million hours in ploughing and seeding *(toukotyöt)*, and 12 million hours in harvesting.[13]

The reconstruction period following the war strengthened and consolidated the *talkoot cooperatives*. They eventually formed into small financial institutions, supporting the mechanisation of farms, and market

providers of farm goods. For women, the war-time experience led to their advocacy for sustained presence within several new professions in the labour market. Finland also witnessed rapid industrialisation and urbanisation during the 1950-70s. Many families gave up farming, moving from the countryside to the Southern cities of Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa, Tampere, and Turku, or emigrating to Sweden, to gain new employment. In the 1970s, as explained by Köppä, rural development policies were decisively influenced by the local and national voluntary associations. The rural exodus and centralising bureaucratic trends of the period, furthermore, encouraged those still active in the countryside to set up village committees. These committees duplicated around the nation, also in part thanks to action research by groups of university students and researchers, such as Köppä and his colleagues.[14] The village committees organised *talkoot* events, inviting local inhabitants to work together towards their common needs, such as fighting for the maintenance of threatened local services, repairing the village house, or introducing entrepreneurship projects to the village.

Social capital in the urban context

Research studies in social capital, inspired by the concepts proposed by Pierre Bourdieu's notion of 'social capital' referred to above, developed rapidly from the mid-1980s onwards, gathering momentum in the late 1990s and early 2000s. As noted in Laura Iisakka and Aku Alanen's introduction to *Social Capital in Finland*, the concept of social capital '*has its roots in the notion that a proper understanding of welfare and the economic situation of a society can only be achieved if the social dimension is also taken into account, i.e. society's capacity for collective action and the networks that support collective action*'.[15]

Research on social capital connects well with reflections on *talkoot* (voluntary and neighbourly help). The concept of social capital has also been applied to understand better workplace communities, health and well-being, regional economies, and communication media. Jouni Häkli and Claudio Minca, making case-studies of Finland and Italy in their most current book, *Social Capital and Urban Networks of Trust,*

acknowledged both nations hold ample amounts of social capital. However, in the case of Finland, in some contrast with the Italian case, there are many highly formalised and institutionalised forms of social capital, both planned in the Nordic welfare-state model and promoted through membership of civil associations.[16]

Despite this, in contemporary Finland with just over 60% of the population living in urbanised areas,[17], informal volunteering and support are still important factors in everyday life. According to Hannu Pääkkönen, in his article 'Volunteering, neighbourly help and socializing', containing analysis of a statistical survey made between 1999-2000, '*people spend almost 1 hour a day in social capital activities such as socialising, neighbourly help and volunteering; and almost one-third of the population engage in volunteering each month. Each month 60 per cent of the population offer neighbourly help'.* Making international comparisons with fourteen other countries in Europe, Pääkkönen finds that '*people in Germany, Finland and Poland as well as in France and Estonia spend the most amount of time on organisational activities and neighbourly help*'.[18]

The information society

From the late 1980s onwards, Finland's contribution to the international telecommunications and information technology revolution has been significant for a small nation between 4.9 to 5.3 million people. For example, Finnish computer science students and researchers have been pioneers in open-source software development. Famously, the *Linux* operating system was initiated by Linus Torvalds in 1991, and maybe less famous, the Swedish-Finnish-grown MySQL server architecture, which allows multi-user access to databases online, was co-developed by Michael 'Monty' Widenius beginning in 1994. Furthermore, peer-based online communications, in the form of Internet Relay Chat (IRC) was initiated by Jakko Oikarinen in 1988. In each of these cases the work (of programming) was never done alone, and calls for support were made to develop them.

In 1999, Finnish futurologists, technologists and social researchers gathered in a symposium called 'Life Beyond the Information Society'.[19] As a keynote speaker, the organisers invited Manual Castells, the Catalan sociologist who led the discourse at the end of the 20th century concerning the relationships between information technology, economy, society and culture. He was fascinated by Finland as a case-study, and wrote a few years later in a book called *The Information Society and the Welfare State: The Finnish Model*, co-authored with Finnish philosopher Pekka Himanen:

> *Finland shows that a fully fledged welfare state is not incompatible with technological innovation, with the development of the information society, and with a dynamic, competitive new economy. It provides the human foundation for labour productivity necessary for the informational model of development, and it also brings institutional and social stability, which smoothes the damage to the economy and to people during periods of sharp downturns.*[20]

This contemporary context of the last 20 years, has, not surprisingly, raised research questions about social capital. Does the use of communication media add to social capital?

Connections between social capital and institutional, and organisational support for ICT development, are not surprising. National characteristics, such as strong engineering and computer science education, a Protestant work ethic which emphasises self-reliance, and State welfare support are credited by Castells

and Himanen with the strength of the information society in Finland, in addition to practices such as transborder hackerism. The networks in Finland and its borders were, are still, spreading wide and fast separate from state control. What might be the implications of all this social capital growth? Who is benefiting from it? Is the growth actually co-operative, for mutual benefit and aid, or part of the continued commodification of the networked society?

Collaborative Platforms: Example of Wiki

To consider these questions, it is necessary to shift attention to a place where social capital is being both stored *and* distributed, in the case of online Wiki platforms. A key aggregator of both volunteer and corporate energy and investment, was the entrepreneurial honey-pot of Silicon Valley, USA, attracting both open-source and commercially driven software developers. As part of this process, participatory online interfaces on the World Wide Web were re-branded by Tim O'Reilly as a 'platform' and 'Web 2.0'[21] but what O'Reilly claimed was new in Web 2.0 was for Berner-Lee, *'what the Web was meant to be all along'*.[22]

It may be argued that the best case of continuity of the old in these so-called 'new' Web 2.0 platforms is that of wiki, originally conceived and initiated as WikiWikiWeb by Ward Cunningham in 1994. As a summary, *WikiWikiWeb* is still described on the front page of the site as *'a composition system; it's a discussion medium; it's a repository; it's a mail system; it's a tool for collaboration. Really, we don't know quite what it is, but it's a fun way of communicating asynchronously across the network'*.[23] Dramatically opening up the ability to edit content at first text, and in later versions of such software, multi-media content and accessible through any Internet browser, *WikiWikiWeb* dispensed with the problem of logging in to servers to put or edit online. Emphasis of ease was reflected in the choice of name: wiki is the Polynesian Hawaiian word for 'quick', hence translated it meant, 'QuickQuickWeb'.

WikiWikiWeb was shortened to Wiki in other developments of the software, and has over the years become a popular tool and platform for collaborative and accumulative information sharing.[24] The non-profit Wikimedia Foundation, based in San Francisco and founded by Jimmy Wales, emerged a few years later, in 2003. It focuses upon free, open content wiki-based internet projects, the most well-known being Wikipedia (encyclopedia), Wiktionary (dictionary), Wikimedia Commons (media repository), Wikispecies (directory of species), Wikinews (news) and Wikiversity (pedagogical materials), as well as several others.

Furthermore, *Wikimedia Foundation* also provide the same wiki software platform for individuals or organisations, to freely install on their own servers and use for their own purposes. A people's movement using Wikipedia, according to Erik Möller, deputy director of Wikipedia Foundation, would be 'to motivate every 10th reader to become an active participant'.

The suggestion I would like to make here is that the *Wikimedia Foundation* are organising an '*maailman tietotalkoot*' (an international knowledge work-party), as might be said in the Finnish language, a vast project of voluntary information sharing and knowledge construction on a global scale. However, this global ambition, as the imagined dedication in the future to physical spaces suggests, is really happening at a local level. In her article 'Forms: On Platforms and Creativity', Goryunova, defines the term 'platform' as:

A platform differentiates itself from other websites by the relations of creative, social, instrumental, educational and historical character it establishes and is involved into. A platform is aimed at supporting and stimulating creative initiatives and work, and it provides a possibility for continuous exhibition of the artefacts, often accompanied by reactions to them, various discussions. … Most platforms organise (ir)regular 'real-life' gatherings such as festivals, concerts, workshops or those of a less formal nature.[25]

When platforms such as *Wikimedia* software are set up on a server it first begins as a localised affair. Another self-constructed phrase in Finnish that attempts to conceptualise this platform situatedness might be: '*Paikalliset tietotalkoot'* (local knowledge work-party). Such a *tietotalkoot* may be installed and 'called' for many specialised purposes, including creative processes, as Goryunova's paper's title suggests. Moreover, wiki platforms can, and often are, used to gather, organise, activate, and nourish *offline* activities. This activity also produces locally-specific knowledge, which is valuable and shared in the process of collaborating. In the contemporary information and networked society, where knowledge connects power and opportunity, the practice of *tietotalkoot* has social, political and economical implications.

Neo-traditional forms of talkoot

The P2P theorist and researcher Michel Bauwens, on the Foundation for Peer-to-Peer Alternatives wiki website (also using *Wikimedia* software installation) asks, *'Can the transmodern peer to peer ethos be mixed with neotraditional approaches?'* In other-words, can the distributed computer networks, with *living labour* sitting behind them—as exemplified in peer-to-peer media-sharing, open-source software development, and peer-production of value seen in wiki platforms—share similar, if wider reaching potential to affect pre-modern social networks of help and support?[26]

In Finland, where rural-based co-operative support is, for the majority of the population, only one or two generations separated, the connection between contemporary ICT-based and traditional forms of co-operation perhaps comes to mind easier than in some other places. In late October 2008, one of Finland's well-known technology bloggers, Tuija Aalto, researcher and journalist for YLE national broadcast corporation, wrote an entry titled 'Crowdsourcing = Talkoot?' She qualified this by commenting that 'Finns always knew how to get a big project done. Be it building a new sauna or an operating system: invite the whole community to do the job'.[27] Aalto was particularly making the connection with a new business and organisational model called *Crowdsourcing*, described by Jeff Howe, culture and technology journalist based in Brooklyn, as *'the act of taking a job traditionally performed by a designated agent (usually an employee) and outsourcing it to an undefined, generally large group of people in the form of an open call'*.[28]

To support her inquiry, Aalto further included a short interview with Finnish film entrepreneur Peter Vesterbacka, who was inspired by one of the first large online crowdsourcing projects in his sci-fi parody feature film series Star Wreck (1992-). Vesterbacka is now marketing and PR person for such a *talkoot* model to others, via the Wreck-a-movie project, which facilitates collaborative feature film-making. In this case, open-source thinking and online networks are used to distribute, and divvy up labour among many persons in different locations for the production of animation and feature-films. For

Vesterbacka, the Finnish word *talkoot* is just waiting to expand beyond Finland, entering into the world's crowdsourcing vocabulary.

In principle, I agree with Aalto's and Vesterbacka's claim: The word *talkoot* is being used in contemporary Finland in a wider context than its usual rural and urban/domestic uses, and that new associations with online networks are already being made. While the new adaptations of the *talkoot* concept are indeed full of collaborative promise for a new form of online and offline co-operativism for our times, they raise for me a critical question. When *talkoot* is referred to as a positive force today, who is benefiting? Private organisations or public bodies? If these are not open and co-operative or voluntary forms of labour ventures, is it an appropriate use of the word?

Reflections and responsibilities

Following the *Alternative Economy Cultures* programme of *Pixelache 2009*, with its long processes of production, promotion, and post-production, I reflected upon how we introduced the connection between older co-operative traditions and newer trends in co-operation in digital culture. I now believe, after the 2009 programme, that we do not need an 'upgrade' or a '2.0' of something which has a long and living history such as *talkoot*. We do need, however, to reflect more upon what we are doing in these new digital and networked terrains, and whom is benefitting from them—individually and, especially, collectively.

I am thankful, as an immigrant to Finnish society, that their language has a specific word for 'community effort' which is still in everyday use. The highly networked society in the contemporary global North, dominated by information technology and communications, has been closely positioned in this text with older, traditional ones.

This early exploration indicates the potential for trans-disciplinary connections, which can be of interest to researchers of peer-to-peer theories, rural and co-operative studies, social capital and history; as well as cultural practitioners and activists promoting collaboration, social and environmental change.

Hence in conclusion, this article is a call for *Paikalliset tietotalkoot* – a local knowledge work-party – to collectively learn more.

Note. A previous version of this article has been punblished in *Affinities: A Journal of Radical Theory, Culture, and Action,* 4 (1) (2010).

1 For more about *Pixelache Festival and Network* see, [http://www.pixelache.ac] (accessed 15 March 2010).

2 Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital' in, John G. Richardson (ed), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, (New York: Greenwood, 1986), pp. 241-258.

3 Tapani Köppä, 'Remarks on Rural Co-operation in Finland'. *Alternative Economy Cultures seminar*, Pixelache Helsinki Festival, 2009.

4 Ibid.

5 This more stigmatic aspect of Talkoot is referenced from Wikipedia entry in English, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talkoot] (accessed 15 March 2010).

6 Curiously, the Finnish-language entry for *Talkoot* in Wikipedia has a lesser description than the English language version of the same page. Other languages cross-referenced on Wikipedia include Estonian, Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, German, Norwegian and English - languages consulted and translated. Lithuanian and Latvian sites did not have entries for word *Talka*.

7 Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: a factor of evolution*, (Charleston, South Carolina: Forgotten Books, 2008, original work published 1902).

8 Ibid., pp. 138-39.

9 Ibid., p. 159.

10 Ibid., p. 166.

11 Annastiina Henttinen et. al., T*he Pellervo Story: A Century of Finnish Cooperation, 1899-1999*, (Helsinki: Pellervo-Seura/ Kirjayhtymä, 1999), p. 10.

12 Tapani Köppä, 'Remarks on Rural Co-operation in Finland'.

13 Ibid.

14 For example, Torsti Hyyryläinen, also now researcher at Ruralia Institute, wrote his PhD research on Village cooperation. See, [http://www.helsinki.fi/ruralia/henkilo.asp?sukunimi=Hyyryl%E4inen] (15 March 2010).

15 Laura Iisakka and Aku Alanen, 'Social Capital in Finland: domestic and international background' in, Laura Iisakka (ed.), *Social capital in Finland: Statistical review*,. (Helsinki: Tilastokeskus (Statistics Finland), 2006), p. 7

16 Jouni Häkli and Claudio Minca (eds), *Social Capital and Urban Networks of Trust*, (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2009).

17 Global Virtual University. Globalis: *Finland urban population statistics* (2009), [http://globalis.gvu.unu.edu/indicator_detail.cfm?IndicatorID=30&Country=FI] (accessed 15 March 2010).

18 Hannu Pääkkönen, 'Volunteering, neighbourly help and socialising' in, Laura Iisakka (ed.), *Social capital in Finland*, pp. 43-53 (52).

19 Finland Futures Research Centre, *Life beyond the information society Conference*, Turku, Finland (16-17 August 1999): [http://www.futuresconference.fi/1999.htm] (March 15, 2010).

20 Manuel Castells and Pekka Himanen, *The Information Society and the Welfare State: The Finnish model*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 166.

21 Tim O'Reilly, 'What is web 2.0: Design patterns and business models for the next generation of software' (2005); [http://oreilly.com/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html]

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ESECUL INTREPRINDERII COMUNE INTR-UN ORASEL DIN ROMANIA POST-COMUNISTA

MIHAELA EFRIM

Adusa la esenta, intreprinderea comuna pleaca de la dorinta oamenilor de a face ceva impreuna pentru un bine comun superior celui existent, de a-si alatura fortele pentru un rezultat comun superior si astfel un plus pentru fiecare in parte.

In istoria rurala a Romaniei au existat multe forme traditionale de asociatie bazate pe relatii familiale sau relatii de vecinatate si de intr-ajutorare: *claci* (lucru in commun de intr-ajutorare, ce revine rind pe rind, celor din group), *intovarasiri* (asocieri bazate pe reciprocitate si peoprietate colectiva) *imprumutari* (imprumuturi reciproce si schimb de obiecte si unelte).
Obstile sint una din cele mai complexe forme traditionale de associere taraneasca in Romania care sa lucreze in acelasi timp la nivel formal si informal.
In Tara Lovistei, unde locuiesc, asociatia "informala" in Obste se produce intre proprietarii de "odai" (mici locuinte montane), izolati cea mai mare parte a anului de sat, aceste mici gospodarii montane fiind situate la 10-12 km de sat, in munte. Proprietarii se intrajutoreaza in lucrul pamantului pentru culturi mici, de subzistenta. In jurul odailor sunt gradini de legume, cartofi si porumb, livezi de pomi fructiferi, in special pruni sau soiuri vechi de meri adaptati la clima zonei. Majoritatea au una sau doua vaci, cai pentru carat si arat pamantul, cativa au mici turme de capre sau oi. Proprietarii "odailor", asociati "informal" pentru a face fata nevoilor sunt asociati si "formal" in Obsti ale Mosnenilor, ei fiind urmasii celor care au detinut, din vechime, dreptul asupra muntilor, apelor, padurilor. Proprietatea era si este in devalmasie (adica indivizibila), nimeni nu are un loc anume, totul e bun comun, proprietate comuna.

Drepturile in Obste se mostenesc dupa "dreptul familiei". De aceea dreptul initial s-a faramitat prin impartirea lui la *n* mostenitori... Cum aceste drepturile nu s-au pierdut prin plecarea din sat, astazi sunt o multime de astfel de „actionari" numiti mosneni.
In prezent, aceste asociatii au statut juridic, se numesc "Obsti ale Mosnenilor" si administreaza doar paduri si pasuni alpine, nu si apele sau vanatul. Se exploateaza lemnul conform amenajamentului silvic de catre diverse inteprinderi care au utilajele necesare si care cumpara de la Obste dreptul de exploatare. Banii castigati sunt folositi in parte pentru diferite lucrari de intretinere si paza, in parte se dau dividente la oameni in functie de cate "drepturi" are fiecare. Aceste "drepturi" sunt un fel de actiuni.

Inainte de perioada comunista, castigul, in marea lui parte, era investit tot in "binele comun": asa au fost construite scoli, sosele. Dar nu fara dezbateri aprinse si multe nemultumiri; dorinte si presiuni asupra castigului imediat au fost dintotdeauna. Din pacate in prezent, problemele economice si fiscale sunt si mai pregnante cu Obstile care functioneaza acum in acelasi timp ca ONG-uri si ca societati pe actiuni. Oamenii au semnalat de asemenea fenomene de coruptie, datorita faptului ca multe verigi ce tin de exploatarea lemnului din padure, mediu, amenajament silvic, necesita aprobari ale institutiilor respective, deci intalnirea cu diversi functioari ai acestor administratii care profita de cele mai multe ori de pozitia lor peuntru a lua mita.

In plus, sunt probleme de proprietate derivate din nerespectarea intocmai a fostelor amplasamente. Veniturile membrilor sunt nesemnificative, deci oamenii sunt nemultumiti, se considera proprietari ai padurilor doar cu numele, iar reprezentantii lor sunt in general lipsiti de viziune. Toate acestea duc la conflicte pentru accesul la resurse in interiorul "obstii", conflicte care ingreuneaza mersul lucrurilor si, prin haosul creat, scad eficienta acestei forme asociative. Lipsa de intelegere si viziune a ansamblului face ca majoritatea oamenilor sa aiba o reticenta fata de activitatea in comun si o neincredere fata de ceilalti exprimata prin incetinirea sau chiar neimplicarea in ceea ce e de facut.
Astfel, in mod paradoxal, se poate observa ca activitatile de intreprindere comuna cu cel mai mare succes au fost cele "dictatoriale", in care cineva cu putere informala sau formala impunea miscarea lucrurilor, dand indicatii precise si necomentabile tuturor celor implicati.

Un exemplu elocvent este cel al manastirilor, unde lucrul in comun este coordonat de catre staret, care, prin autoritatea sa, impune respectarea planului. In interiorul manastirii, calugarii muncesc in comun pentru ca intregul sistem sa se autogereze. Acestia au pamanturi, animale si culturi pe care le ingrijesc/administreaza singuri. Diferenta fata de o intreprindere comuna obisnuita, laica, este data de modul de ierarhizare vertical. Astfel, superiorul in ierarhia bisericeasca este singurul cu viziunea de ansamblu si el deleaga pe fiecare subordonat sa faca o bucatica precisa din planul de dezvoltare. Munca in interiorul manastirii este asfel mai eficienta si are rezultate pozitive mai rapide, celor care lucreaza "in comun" fiindu-le mai usor sa primeasca ceva definit de facut, in lipsa raspunderii de a intreprinde singuri actiuni si a avea solutii.

Problema asumarii responsabilitatii si a initiativei collective este o tema recurenta in plan local (si nu numai). Personal, in 1996 am intrat in lumea celor putini care, dupa '90, nu incercau sa faca bani, afaceri sau politica; vroiau sa faca "altceva". Si pentru ca eram cat de cat educata, alfabetizata informatic si, in plus, calatorisem in Vestul Europei, am incercat sa demonstrez practic, in urbea mea, ca "participarea comunitara" e o valoare europeana si trebuie abordata cu spirit pragmatic, deci cu programe si proiecte! Temei cu "mentalitatea romaneasca" care explica tot ce e rau si care induce o atitudine fatalista, i-am opus imediat niste "solutii active" formularilor de oracol.

De ce sunt dezamagita dupa 14 ani de lucru in "societatea civila"? Pentru ca n-am inteles de la inceput ca trecerea de la o atitudine la alta este o cursa lunga, ce trece prin socializare, educatie, institutii si, mai ales, prin "modele". Nu poti transforma peste noapte un cetatean care merge din cand in cand la vot intr-unul care sa infiinteze (sau sa participe in) un ONG!

Oamenii nu au din nastere cultura colectivului si nu inteleg ca daca este bine colectivului le va fi bine si lor, ca parte a colectivului. Cu atat mai putin locuitorii unei tari ce a trait intr-un secol schimbarea radicala a doua regimuri: radacinile au fost taiate de doua ori, de catre comunisti si apoi dupa '90. Comunismul a creat din pacate "turme de oi", oameni obisnuiti sa primeasca ceva de facut, apoi sa primeasca imediat minima recompensa. Cu orice proiect exista inerenta problema de preluare a responsabilitatii. Finantate sau nu, proiectele pe care le-am propus de-a lungul vremii la Brezoi aveau in final o componenta de preluare a savoir-faire-ului realizat. S-a intamplat in mica masura.

Brezoi e un orasel de 12000 de locuitori in Carpati. Este un model tipic de oras mono-industrial care a fost dezvoltat exclusiv in jurul unei fabirci de prelucrarea lemnului. In ultimii 10 ani industria de stat a lemnului a dat faliment si fabrica din Brezoi si-a inchis portile, marind cifra de somaj la 80% din populatia actica a orasului. In 1996, am infiintat Fundatia Comunitara de Dezvoltare Locala, un ONG care dorea sa intareasca viata si productia colectiva si sa participe la regenerarea orasului.

Intre 1996-1997, Fundatia Comunitatea pentru Dezvoltare Locala Brezoi a implementat un Program de masuri active de combatere a somajului in zona (PAEM), program in cadrul caruia s-au pus bazele unui Parc al Traditiilor, cu ateliere de instruire pentru prelucrarea lemnului, producerea de mobilier de rachita, tesut covoare si broderii traditionale. Mai mult, in urma programului PAEM au fost instruite peste 150 de persoane, cu scopul de a crea microintreprinderi particulare commune. De ce nu a a fost un success rasunator? Tocmai

OBSTE
Brezoi, Romania

WHO commoners of the village of Calinesti organised in Obstea Mosnenilor
WHAT traditional organisation of residents who own collectively and manage the commons of the village since the 18th century
KEYWORDS *traditional collective organisation - commons - self-management*

The members of the *Obste* are descendents of those villagers communities who had historical rights on the mountains, waters and forests around the village of Calinesti, Brezoi. The property in the *Obste* is common (and indivisible) and the commons are owned and managed collectively. The rights of the *mosneni* are inherited in the family. The initial rights have been fragmented through division between the numerous inheritors. Because many of the descendents were entitled to keep the rights even if they left the village, today there are many *mosneni* who act more like 'share holders' than commoners.

WHO 12 Orthodox monks
WHAT Monastic community living in isolated settlement since the 18th century
KEYWORDS *self-organisation, spirituality, self-subsistence*

This monastery is a self-organised community in terms of material management and self-subsistence. The monks hold land, animals and cultures that are maintained and managed collectively. In contrast to other self-organised communities, the monastery community is also organised vertically, according to spiritual hierarchy. The highest authority in the spiritual hierarchy (the staret) controls the development of the community and delegates tasks to his subordinates.

problema de preluare a responsabilitatii. Atata timp cat primeau ceva exact de facut, care sa nu implice cautarea de solutii pentru identificarea si exploatarea eventualelor piete(de desfacere) si care sa-l remunereze imediat, oamenii erau multmiti. In fapt, acestia cautau un RESPOSABIL, cineva care sa LE gaseasca piata, sa le spuna ce sa faca si cat sa faca si care sa gaseasca finantare pentru platirea salariilor.Trebuia ca Altcineva sa se zbata pentru ei.

Urmatorul proiect Phare –FIDEL –dezvoltarea initiativelor economice locale a adus intreprinzatorilor din domeniul lemnului din zona primul uscator de cherestea modern si un brichetator de rumegus , incercandu-se incurajarea prelucrarii superioare si totale a lemnului taiat. In atelierele fundatiei au activat, pe rand, cativa intreprinzatori care au fost instruiti in abordarea tehnicilor de marketing. Participarea la un targ international (BIFE -TIMB) a relevat cererea pentru produsele din lemn si lana propuse.

Ideea proiectului era ca startul promitator sa fie continuat de un grup de producatori care sa utilizeze investitiile in comun. Din pacate conceptul de parc de activitati traditionale propus atunci nu a fost continuat ulterior asa cum s-a dorit , intreprinzatorii din domeniul lemnului alegand calea mai usoara a vanzarii cherestelei neprelucrate.

Dificultatea intreprinderii comune in Brezoi a venit si din specificul locului. La urma urmei, mica localitate era un sat cu fabrica la inceputul anilor '90, cand clivajul regional urban-rural era foarte evident. Aparitia panourilor informative cu privire la existenta proiectelor europene in localitate a starnit dintre cele mai hilare reactii. Imi amintesc ca eram mai tot timpul intrebata de sanatatea „domnului Phare", iar o bunicuta chiar m-a rugat sa-i transmit multumiri domnului Phare deoarece i-a trimis nepotul la un curs…

Acum, dupa 14 ani, cred ca FCDL isi are importanta ei prin ceea ce a transmis brezoienilor: o educatie care sa

Between 1996-1997 the Community Foundation for Local Development, Brezoi implemented a first Program of Active Measures to alleviate unemployment in the area (PAEM). The foundation set up a 'Traditional Crafts Park' and built two school workshops for wood processing, wickerwork furniture, carpet weaving and traditional embroideries. As a result of the PAEM Program, over 150 persons were trained, and some of them continued the activity as individual entrepreneurs in the area or started to work in other European countries.
Other projects include:
Starting in 1997, the Foundation has developed another project co-financed by EU, the FIDEL program for local economic development. The foundation adopted sustainable policies in developing the production of wood and wool products without pollution and purchasing ecological equipment for timber drying, wool spinning, sawdust briqueting. The low-tech approach of traditional crafts was supplemented with new technological additions. A 'business incubator' was opened for small emerging enterprises and local craftsmen .
Another step in ensuring conditions for local development was to set up a core of touristic infrastructure in the area, by starting with a 'a workshop for historical building renovation and apprenticeship of traditional crafts' open to international students, which is another PHARE project. This periodical event was supposed to draw attention and generate new dynamics in the area which has a high potential for tourism.

le permita intelegerea implicarii si in altceva decat in sustinerea echipei locale de fotbal. Imi doresc ca odata cu intarirea Obstilor, noi forme de gestiune collectiva sa apara si noi forme de proiecte si de spatii comunitare sa fie inventate de generatiile tinere.

THE FAILURE OF COMMON UNDERTAKING IN A POST-COMMUNIST ROMANIAN TOWN

MIHAELA EFRIM

The basic principle of a collective undertaking is that it starts with a group of people who desire to do something together for common interest and unify forces together for a better result and a plus for each one.

In Romanian rural history there were many traditional forms of informal association based on family and neighbourhood relations of mutual help: claci *(collective labour in the benefit of all the members of the group, turn by turn),* intovarasiri *(associations based on reciprocity and collective ownership)* imprumutari *(lending of tools and bartering), etc. The* Obste *is one of the most complex traditional form of peasant association in Romania, which acts on both a formal and informal level.*

In the Loviste region, where I live, such an informal association takes place between the owners of odai, *one room mountain dwellings in which the peasants live for the summer, at 10-12 km distance from their home village. Each household has an economy of subsistence and helps each other for agricultural works. Adjacent to dwellings, people cultivate vegetable gardens and plantations of corn, potatoes and fruit trees, especially apple trees and plum trees. They keep animals (one or two cows each, sheep and goats) and horses for transportation and earth labour. The owners of* odai *are also formally organised as* Obsti ale mosnenilor *('Assemblies of free people'). The members of the* Obste *are descendents of those villagers who had historical rights on the mountains, waters and forests around the village of Calinesti, Brezoi. The property in the* Obste *is common (and indivisible) and the commons are owned and managed collectively. The rights of the* mosneni *are inherited in the family. The initial rights have been fragmented through division between the numerous inheritors. Because many of the descendents were entitled to keep the rights even if they have left the village, today there are many* mosneni *who act more like 'share holders' than commoners.*

Nowadays, these organisations manage only the forests and the grazing fields, but not the waters, the fish and the wildfowl. They log wood in the Obste's *forests according to regulations issued by the national forest management authority or issue exploitation permissions to specialist companies who have the appropriate technology to pursue the necessary works and wood processing. This money can*
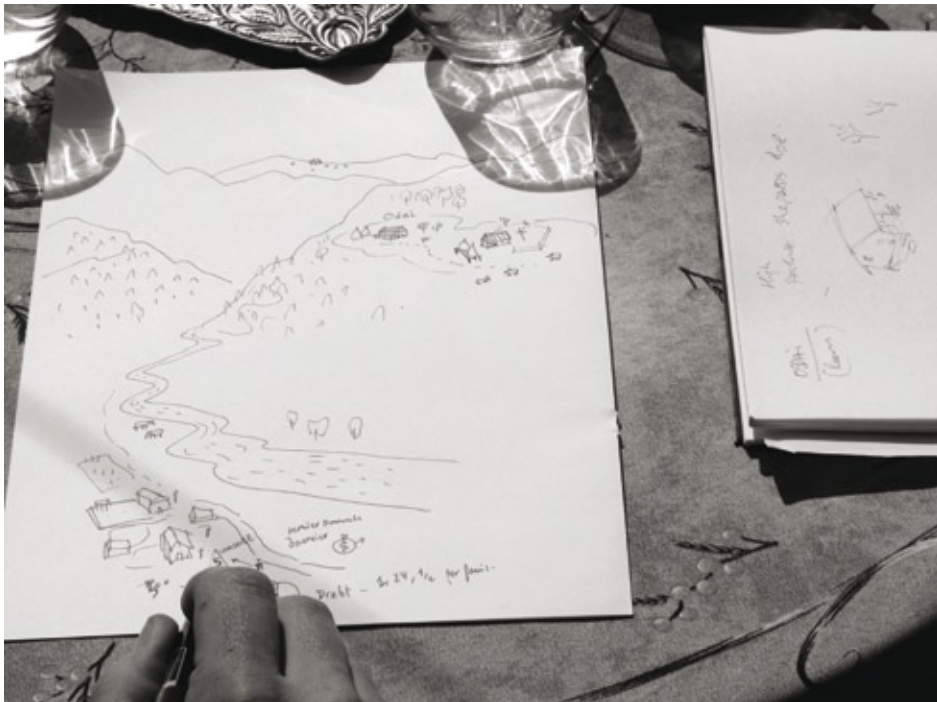
Obste and Odai - relational drawing by Fernado Garcia Dory

be used for collective maintenance and for organising the security of the property; what remains is distributed annually as 'benefits' to all members, according to their 'rights', which in the end is a form of share holding.

Before the communist period, the benefits were invested for 'common interest', for example to construct communal schools, roads, etc. These undertakings were always provoking debates and contestations and the unsatisfaction, conflict and pressure on how to invest the benefits have been current issues in the Obste ever since.

Today the economic and financial problems are even more pregnant: The Obste functions today as an NGO but also like a company stock. People have complained about corruption within the different components of the management process: all decisions involving wood exploitation, environment and forest management need approval from public institutions. Though, it is well known in Romania that the majority of the personnel working in these institutions are corrupted.

In addition, there are specific conflicts related to property management. The benefits to the members have become, in most of cases, ridiculously small and this situation generates frustration and suspicion within the members of the Obste, who feel betrayed by their dishonest representatives and consider themselves owners only in name. All these situations generate conflicts and considerably slow down the management process within this form of collective association.
The lack of understanding of all the intricacies of the communal undertakings results in a general feeling of

suspicion and reticence within such forms of collective association and management. Most of the people who are participating in the Obste are there just on paper (because they inherit the rights) and do not see the point of investing time in something that generates only problems and brings no benefits; they gradually become passive and even obstructive.

Paradoxically, the most successful forms of 'collective undertaking' were those during the communist period, when the authorities in place imposed an organisation and a development, giving directions, which were never discussed or contested by those who were directly involved.
A quite striking example is that of the monasteries, in which the collective undertaking is coordinated by a staret (the monk with the highest position in the monastic hierarchy) who exerts his authority over the other monks.

Inside the monastery, the monks work collectively and the monasteries are self-organised. The monastery holds the land, the animals and the cultures which are maintained and managed collectively by monks. In contrast to other self-organised communities, the monastery community is organised vertically. The highest authority in the spiritual hierarchy is also the one who controls the development of the community and delegates tasks to its subordinates. In this way, the work in the monastery is more efficient and has quick and positive results; for those who work in such a community it is easier to feel happy within their collective undertaking than if they had to do it all by themselves in isolation.

The failure of being responsible and initiating collective undertakings is a recurrent topic in Romania. Nevertheless, unlike those who immediately after the 1990s, were eager to start a business, to make money and politics, I had the desire to do 'something else'. Because I was well-educated, digitally literate and well traveled, I have tried to demonstrate in my own town that 'community participation' is a European value that needs to be challenged through local projects and programmes. I was always critical of what we used to call a 'Romanian mentality', which inclines towards a fatalistic attitude towards difficulties and I wanted to oppose it with immediate active solutions. Am I disappointed after 14 years of civic activism? One of my failures has been that I didn't understand in the beginning that passing from one attitude to another takes a long time and a lot of patience, as well as long term socialisation, education, institutions and 'models'. You can't transform a person who goes only to vote from time-to-time into an active civic citizen overnight, who will be able to enroll in a collective undertaking.

Collective practice is not innate – most people do not understand that collective well being directly affects individual well being. It is even more difficult for those living in a country that has passed through radical transformations in recent history – where the routes of civic society were cut several times in the last decades, first by the communists in the 50's and than by the neo-capitalists in the '90s. Communism has created 'sheep flocks', people who are used to be told what they have to do and to receive an immediate reward for it. A true responsible attitude has never existed in recent culture. Funded or not, all projects that I have tried to develop in Brezoi had the ambition of generating responsible attitudes and transmitting further the knowledge accumulated through the project. But this has happened only partially.

Brezoi is a town of 12,000 inhabitants located in the middle of the Carpaths. It is a typical mono-industrial town whose development in the communist period was based exclusively on the timber industry. In the last ten years the timber industry has collapsed and the unemployment rate in town has increased tremendously (at 80%). In 1996 I founded the Community Foundation for Local Development (FCDL), an NGO which aimed at stirring collective activity of social, cultural and economic regeneration in Brezoi.

Between 1996-1997 the FCDL in Brezoi implemented a first Program of Active Measures to alleviate unemployment in the area (PAEM). The foundation set up a 'Traditional Crafts Park' and built two workshops spaces for training in wood processing, wickerwork furniture, carpet weaving and traditional embroideries. During the PAEM programme, 150 persons have been trained to develop individual or collective micro businesses. Why have only a very few of them succeeded?

Because of the reluctance to assume collective responsibility: as long as they were told what to do and their work was paid immediately, people were happy. They were always looking for somebody else to find jobs for them and fund their undertakings. They were expecting somebody else to do the managerial work for their business.

During a PHARE project for the development of local initiatives we built the first ecological wood drying facility, equipped with modern technology that was meant to use wood more efficiently and to recycle wood and wool waste, two of the most abundant local materials. A number of local artisans were trained in how to use the technology and how to sell the products. The project was meant to encourage those people to organise themselves to use the resources collectively. Nevertheless, my idea of creating a cluster of facilities for traditional activities around wood manufacturing didn't succeed. Most of those involved preferred to sell the wood directly from the forest, without any processing.

The difficulties of a collective undertaking in Brezoi are deeply embedded in local mentalities. This small locality was nothing more than a village with a factory in the beginning of the '90s when Romania faced radical political transformations after 40 years of communist regime. At that time rural mentalities were still very strong. When the European funded projects that I have conducted were advertised in the town for the first time, this generated the most bizarre reactions—people wanted me to transmit thanks to Mr. Phare etc. For them the European institution had to be embodied by a paternal figure, as it always used to be in the communist period and after.

After 14 years I believe that FCDL was, nevertheless, important in transmitting to the inhabitants of Brezoi an education in collective undertaking, and made them think about other possible collective projects than the supporting of the local football team. I wish that along with the reinvigorating of the traditional Obste, new forms of collective management and new kinds of commons would be invented by the new generations.

MUTUALLY, COMMONLY

CRISTINA CERULLI

Conflict and competition are no longer considered to be the basic human relationships; instead they are being replaced by alternative visions of the foundation of human society derived from nurturance, caring attachment, and mutual interestedness.[1]

This essay sets out to sketch the conceptual landscape around issues of mutuality and commons, with a focus on mutual and community organisational structures and forms of ownership (including customary and common, community, co-operative and mutual, charitable), governance and economics. Mutual relationships are often the engine of local production and, with regards to local cultural production, as explored throughout the Rhyzom project and this book, the story of the social, political and economic relations that support it needs to be told.

There is a sense of urgency in reclaiming the territory of mutuality and commonality because it is increasingly being appropriated by party politics as a sort panacea to social and economic problems. In UK the concept and benefits of mutual organisations have been appropriated by mainstream political discourse as part of an argument to support the neo-liberalist positions of both the main political parties. The Blairite *Third Way* rested on the concept of *New Mutualism*, as formulated by Peter Kellner,[2] whilst the more recent Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government is promoting the rise of a Big Society, where the government is keen '*to put more power and opportunity into people's hands'*,[3] under the mantra of 'we're in this together'. The promotion of and willingness to support mutual models of production by UK politics in the past fifteen years can be easily seen as an opportunistic and astute move to conceal the offloading of state provision onto varyingly configured community groupings and the substantial reduction in public spending that goes with it. Using the rhetoric of equality and community empowerment, politicians have been making claims over a territory of common and mutual practices, with its rich history dating back centuries, reframing those experiences as precedents to corroborate their political agenda.

What makes people engage in mutual activities? What mobilises people to go beyond the self-interest?

Some have argued that mutuality can promote trust, affording a community to tackle shared problems more effectively and that mutual responsibility, as opposite to consumer choice, is the ethical foundation of a strong democratic community.[4] The case for mutuality has also been made from a number of disciplinary perspectives: from evolutionary biology,[5] social psychology[6] and game theory,[7] demonstrating how often co-operative and mutually beneficial (win win) approaches are more efficient and effective than competitive ones (win lose). Even mainstream business theorists have highlighted how successful companies promote collaboration as a way to obtain mutual gains.[8]

For some mutuality is attractive because it seems to reconcile a market economy with the promise of social cohesion and self-organisation, whilst rejecting the individualism and consumerism of the market and being an alternative to both the 'paternalism of the public services' and the 'privatism of the market'. [9]

The constitution of mutual organisations is an act of agency, a proactive response to systemic inadequacies or injustices, as is evident throughout their history. Ian Hargreaves picked up on the collective agency of mutual organisation when he described the co-operative spirit as *'men and women taking charge of a situation, answerable to each other, working through democratic structures of accountability'* on the premise that the solution to work, housing and finance lay within people's grasp and *'that the only solutions to trust are those you design yourself and for which you take responsibility'.* [10]

Mutual models often imply choice, voluntary embarking, opting in etc. In her book, *What are friends for?,* [11] Marilyn Friedman stresses the importance of voluntary communities, where we choose to become part of and engage with, in contrast to those we belong to involuntarily, due to contingencies beyond our control. As a subset of voluntary relationships Friedman talks of friendship as something that can promote personal growth and sustain groups that seek social change. Friendship, [12] and the benefits deriving from it, is also used by Uhlaner as a prime example of a relational good, i.e. something that requires reciprocity and cannot be pursued independent of the situation and preferences of others. [13]

Forms of Mutual organisations and ownership

But what is the spectrum of mutual and common production and agency?

Forms of community and mutual ownership and mutual organisations have existed for centuries and evolved in response to and with the changing political, social and economical context. In a report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation [14] community and mutual types of organisations and ownership are classified into five overarching models: customary and common, community, co-operative and mutual, charitable, and municipal and state.

Common and customary ownership – dating from early societies with the purpose of providing access to land to facilitate subsistence and wider social networks, common land and rights in common were evident in feudal times and still exist today, in the form of village greens, public parks and 'right to roam'. Community Land Trusts and Community Right to Buy in Scotland, more recently, represent an attempt to afford communities to take control of land and assets. Community ownership includes a wide range of initiatives, often highly experimental and innovative. These include various communal living experiments, from religious groups like early Christian sects, or the Benedectine Order to the Digger communities in the XVII century and the Owenites 'villages of co-operations' of the XIX century. There is a rich history of claiming the land to pursue collective and mutual projects, like the land colonies, which initially grew out of allotment schemes, including the one in Sheffield recalled by Edward Carpenter, [15] or the informal self-built settlements and community land occupation of the plotlanders, [16] or land occupations for subsistence like the Plaistow Land Grabbers, [17] who where one of the inspirations for the 'What will the harvest be?' project at Abbey Gardens in Stratford, by Nina Pope and Karen Guthrie of Somewhere. [18] Other forms of community ownership are related to the sites of cultural production, like the nascent Portland Works Industrial Provident Society for the Benefit of the Community, [19] essentially a co-operative whose beneficiaries are not just the members but the wider community, whose story is an example of local resilience, ingenuity and passion, of a community coming together. At Portland Works an eclectic and informal group of 'makers' has become empowered to take on the organisation/ financing/ management of their workspace, to avoid eviction, but also to test if and how this hotbed of unique local skills could survive creating its own economy. Co-operative models and mutual ownership are now long established throughout Europe and provide services across all sectors in a competitive way with larger, conventional, business and organisations. [20] Organisations with charitable status are also very well established in the UK [21] and European [22] context and, despite growing threats to their sustainability posed by shrinking incomes during the economic downturn, tax exemptions make charitable ownership still viable. Besides, as is the case in UK, with the shrinking role of the state in welfare services, it is likely that charities will expand their function of contracting welfare services.

Leadbeater and Christie distinguish between 'strong' and 'weak' mutuals. Strong mutuals are owned and governed by members, who can be its producers, consumers, suppliers or employees. Weak mutuals are other organisations, such as public sector, public-private partnerships and charities, that are run with a mutual ethos and embody a 'weaker' form of mutuality. They also argue that *'the strongest form of mutuality – based on ownership – is sometimes the narrowest and not necessarily the most potent. "Weaker" or less formal models of mutuality – which promotes a culture of co-operative self help – may be more flexible and dynamic'.* [23]

Mutuality and Alternative economies

Historically when groups of people have come together to form mutual organisations, it has often been as an attempt to address the shortcomings of the economic system they were living in, be it a concern about access to unadulterated affordable food, as in the case of the Rochdale Pioneers, [24] access to unsecured credit for the rural poor, like in many peer-to-peer lending schemes, or simply a tactical response to a widespread economic crisis, like, for instance, in the case of the first alternative currencies. Mutual relationships have been a powerful force in establishing alternative economies more concerned with welfare, wellbeing, social justice and sustainable behaviour. Economic theory [25] has

picked up on this and embraced a more holistic approach to looking at economic systems, valuing non-monetary, local, reciprocal services and interactions. Even disciplines like accountancy have developed a body of work that deals with issues of reciprocity, mutuality and their value.[26]

In 2008 a shortfall of liquidity in the US Banking system rippled to cause a financial collapse of global scale, exposing the fragility and unsustainability of a capitalist system fuelled by greed and self interest. This global economic crisis brought issues of sustainable consumption and social and environmental justice to the fore, making more mainstream economic arguments against relentless growth, which have been discussed since the 1970s. In 1971 the Meadows Report,[27] warned against the dangers and long-term consequences of growth in population, and industrial production/consumption. In the same year Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen presented his bioeconomic program,[28] and facing the limitations on the material output of the economic system, he emphasised the importance of the enjoyment of life as the real output of the economic process. This emphasis on enjoyment of life has become central to the French Decroissance project/ movement,[29] encapsulated in the strap-line of French magazine, *La Decroissance: le journal de la joie de vivre,* and is at the core of the growing field of happiness economics. La Decroissance project is making a case for sustainable[30] degrowth, defined as an *'equitable downscaling of production and consumption that increases human well-being and enhances ecological conditions at the local and global level, in the short and long term.'* [31] Because of a substantial shift in the models, modes and patterns of production-consumption, towards smaller scale and less resource intensive activities, not measured in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), a sustainable degrowth is likely to involve a contraction in GDP as it is currently defined and calculated. Structural and qualitative changes in a socio-environmental system would not necessarily be reflected in the GDP and it is possible to conceive socio-environmental improvements alongside a fall in GDP. A society rich in *relational goods*[32] and services, essentially funded on mutual relationships, would have a lower GDP than a hypothetical society where personal relations would be solely mediated by the market. GDP as a measurement of progress has become an embodiment of the disconnection between prevailing growth-based capitalist economic models and wellbeing, happiness and environmental sustainability.

Maximising the growth of GDP still underpins the economy and the financial planning of developed and developing countries, despite it being a rather crude indicator of the real welfare of a country. In

1974 Richard Easterlin, with his 'paradox',[33] was critical of the GDP as the default measure of societies' welfare, highlighting how GDP per capita and wage levels do not correlate with happiness, once basic level needs are satisfied. More than a decade later, feminist economist Marilyn Waring, in her book, *If Women Counted: A New Feminist Economics,*[34] made clear that GDP does not value what is not exchanged in the market, like unpaid domestic work and voluntary work;[35] her work has influenced and inspired many others. Whilst still somewhat marginal, holistic economic theories that place an emphasis on the non-monetary value of local, reciprocal services and interactions are gaining strength. A number of alternative ways of measuring[36] economic activity have been developed and tested and projects on alternative budgeting[37] are being implemented around the world.

Despite the blindness of GDP towards reciprocal exchange, or gift exchange, mutual exchange systems like barter or gifts remain a common means of obtaining goods and services. Rachel Kranton looked at the dynamics of the interactions between reciprocal exchange systems and markets, to explain the *'incidence and persistence of reciprocal exchange'.*[38] Kranton studied the personalised nature of reciprocal exchanges against the anonymous nature of market transactions. She found that when more people engage in reciprocal exchanges, the cost of sourcing something in the market increases and reciprocity is easier to enforce and yields higher utility; this is true even when the reciprocal, personalised, exchange is inefficient. On the other hand, large markets can destroy reciprocity even when reciprocal exchange is efficient, as is the case, for instance of tribes entering formal market systems.

This suggests the importance of critical mass and positive feedback mechanisms in creating a shift from a marked based economy to a more personalised, relational one. The multiplying of small initiatives, episodes, projects that bypass the monetary market creating an alternative economy does have an effect and does play an important role that goes beyond the their immediate purpose or sphere of influence.

The current economic crisis is acting as a catalyst, an intensifier and a trigger for the emergence of bottom-up initiatives and projects based on mutual relationships that foster environmental, social and economic sustainability and justice. Projects and initiatives that could arguably be placed under

ROCHDALE PIONEERS (ROCHDALE EQUITABLE PIONEERS SOCIETY), 1844

WHO 28 working men
WHAT co-operative shop on Toad Lane, Rochdale; widely recognised as marking the beginning of the modern Co-operative Movement
WEB http://www.members.coop/rochdale_pioneers.asp/
KEYWORDS *cooperative - members - mutual - food market - collective response*

'Every customer of the shop was a member and so had a true stake in the business. This way of doing business was revolutionary. These businessmen didn't adulterate products, putting leaves in tea or chalk in flour. They didn't simply see customers as the way to make profit at the expense of others. They believed that pooling resources and ensuring everyone benefited, was the way to do business. … The Rochdale Pioneers made no secret of the principles that underpinned their business. They were what set them apart from all the other traders - they were the key to their sucess. The principles were: Open and voluntary membership; Democratic control (one member, one vote); Fixed and limited interest on share capital; A surplus allocated in proportion to members' purchases (the dividend); Provision for education; Co-operation amongst co-operatives; Political and religious neutrality; No credit; Quality goods and services'. These principles have now evolved into the Seven Cooperative Principles, having lost the political neutrality and aversion to credit (http://www.cda.coop/coopprinciples.htm).

WOMEN'S WORLD BANKING (WWB), FROM 1979

WHO WWB's global team consists of 40 experts in microfinance who work closely with network members
WHAT improves the economic assets, participation and power of low-income women and their households by helping them access financial services, knowledge and markets
WEB http://www.swwb.org/
KEYWORDS *microfinance - poverty alleviation - women - solidarity - mutual*

'Our vision is to improve the economic status of poor families in developing countries by unleashing the power inherent in women. We believe that when a woman is given the tools to develop a small business, build assets, and protect against catastrophic loss, she is empowered to change her life and that of her family. Drawing on our global diversity, resources and experience, WWB helps to strengthen our network of microfinance organisations and banks, all of whom share our commitment to helping poor women access financial services and information. Women's World Banking was established in 1979 to be a voice and change agent for poor women entrepreneurs. Our goal is to continue to build a network of strong financial institutions around the world and ensure that the rapidly changing field of microfinance focuses on women as clients, innovators and leaders.'

the theoretical canopy of degrowth have been springing up for a number of years and, since the concomitance of environmental and financial crises, in the last couple of years, there has been a ballooning of those projects: from the Transition Towns movement in UK, the eco-villages movement and the rise of the social economy in general. Mutuality seems to be a common thread running through those initiatives, projects and experiments where self-interest is aligned with common purposes and collective benefit and it might be identified as a key premise of sustainable degrowth.[39]

Frameworks and Tools for Mutual Economies

While alternative economies rely heavily on non-monetary exchanges and mutual relationships, there are also alternative and complementary monetary systems that support the emergence of alternative economies. Local currencies are a powerful tool to establish such alternative or complementary money systems, based on mutual relationships at a local level. Evolved from the idea of free (unregulated) banking, community-level currency dates back to the German Credit Unions in the nineteenth century.

Often conceived as an emergency measure to tackle an economic crisis, the first local currencies took the form of company scrip issued to pay workers, to be traded locally and with the plan of being exchanged for national currency at a later date. Amongst the advocates of local currencies was Jane Jacobs who saw them as a way of enabling depressed regions to pull themselves up.[40] More recently there has been a huge increase in local currency initiatives, aimed at improving the resilience of local economies by promoting the consumption of local produce and services. The Transition Town initiative, originated in Totnes, gave particular momentum to local currencies through its Totnes Pound (TP), established in 2007. *'Economic localisation is considered to be a key aspect of the transition process, and local currency systems provide the opportunity to strengthen the local economy whilst preventing money from leaking out'.*[41] Three years after the launch of the TP and after it became the inspiration for a number of similar projects, we visited Totnes in July 2010 as part of our Totnes field trip;[42] the TP project, albeit still running, seemed to have lost some of the initial energy and momentum that inspired many to set up similar initiatives. TP are still accepted in some shops in the high street, but a number of businesses are opting out of the scheme. The exchange rate between the TP and Sterling is one-to-one and perhaps this is at the root of its decline. A different approach was adopted by the Toronto Dollar (TD),[43] dating back to 1998 and still thriving today. Each TD is worth one Canadian Dollar, and for each one sold 90 cents go into a reserve fund to be used when TDs are traded in, whilst 10 cents go into a community projects fund. People are thus encouraged to keep their TDs circulating within their community as they would 'lose' money by trading them In addition, TD gift certificates are distributed to local community agencies, which in turn give them to volunteers in recognition of their contribution; when these volunteers spend their certificates at local businesses the cycle starts over again. The TD project has been running for 12 years, the number of businesses supporting it is growing and the community fund has given grants to 35 projects, including a number of initiatives around homelessness, a food sharing project, youth engagement and literacy projects.[44]

Another alternative trading system based on mutual exchanges and relationships is the Local Exchange Trading System (LETS);[45] unlike alternative currencies, LETS are completely divorced from the monetary system and no money at all is required. Essentially LETS are community wide bartering frameworks, enabling members to exchange services and goods amongst themselves, recognising the skills and potential of all community members. To support bartering on a large scale LETS currencies are created

and activities are assigned price/value in such currencies. Similarly time-banking is a non-monetary exchange system, but crucially, the currency of exchange is time. Two hours spent baking a cake has the same value as two hours spent filling tax return forms, walking a dog or picking children up from school.

This is a powerfully simple way of establishing new relationships on an egalitarian basis, bypassing the traditional stratification determined by background, age, life story etc. One hour of your time really is worth as much as one hour of my time.[46]

Finance

Mutuality is not new in the provision of financial services; there is a long history, dating back to the 19th Century, of mutual organisations that provided loans, insurance and banking services to their members; these include friendly societies to building societies, trade unions and credit unions. More recently, from the 1970s, many of these mutual forms have been appropriated by women coming together to develop programmes and frameworks that would enable them to overcome their lack of access to economic means and opportunities. One of these organisations is the Women's World Banking (WWB), founded in 1975, after the First World Conference on Women in Mexico City with the aim of providing access to capital for low-income women entrepreneurs worldwide. Through its affiliates WWB increases women's capacity to take care of themselves, partially addressing gender discriminations inherent in some economic and cultural system. For instance in Kenya women generally don't inherit land, which would give them a collateral, i.e. a guarantee against a loan. Female entrepreneurs, for this reason are traditionally excluded from borrowing money through normal banking channels and often resort to loan sharks; through the Kenyan Women's Finance Trust, a WWB affiliate, a woman needing to borrow money to buy equipment, say, for instance, a juicing machine, would be able to access a loan without collateral (unsecured loan); the sale of the juice would then enable her to pay back the loan. Another financial mechanism that women have successfully appropriated to compensate for gender inequalities in financial systems are Trade Unions. Although these are traditionally associations of paid employees of a certain company or in a specific trade, in some countries women are coming together and developing trade unions for the informal sector. One of the best known is, the Self-Employed Women's Organization (SEWA) founded by Ela Bhatt in Gujarat, India in 1972. SEWA works towards the 'Full Employment and Self-Reliance' of poor women in India,[47] trying to bridge the gap in opportunities available to women working in the informal economy ('unorganised sector') and hence invisible to any welfare system.[48] SEWA has grown into a movement, with a large number of sister organisations and programmes, from childcare to training.

A hybrid model, in terms of mutuality and reciprocity in financial services to alleviate poverty, is that of micro-credit where NGOs, external agencies or organisations provide collateral-free loans and compulsory savings schemes. It is a hybrid model because it usually requires an 'external' agent, with which the relationship would not be mutual, but it also operates on the basis of small neighbourhood networks, credit groups, who will develop mutual relationships. The best known example of microcredit is the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Grameen Bank. The project started in Bangladesh in 1976, when Muhammad Yunus, a Professor at University of Chittagong, researched the possibility of designing a credit system to provide banking services for the rural poor. The system, whose vast majority (95%) of borrowers are women, hinges on the idea of a trust and group-based credit approach, using peer-

pressure to ensure that borrowers are financially cautious and keep up with the repayments. Grameen Bank has often been criticised[49] for co-opting women into the capitalist system, trapping them in the informal economy, for its high interest rates and for its role as an alternative to state welfare for the poor, but, despite these criticisms, it has become the international model for microcredit as a poverty alleviation strategy. Despite the perhaps contentious achievements of the Grameen Bank in terms of actual poverty alleviation, the social and political side-effects of the microcredit model can outweigh or surpass their immediate financial results. The coming together of often socially isolated women through peer-groups around an economic purpose, like access to credit, can have an effect on the women's collective social behaviour. Paromita Sanyal argues that microfinance groups have the potential to promote women's social capital and to promote the adoption of certain behaviours in order to be accepted and liked by the group ('normative influence'), catalysing women's collective empowerment.

Working with 400 women from 59 microfinance groups in West Bengal, India, Sanyal found that one third of these groups undertook various collective actions, such as mobilising in response to domestic violence against women, annulling underage marriage or joining forces to acquire public or shared goods.[50]

Mutual lending models, with their long history at the level of local communities, take a different dimension when scaled up and adapted to web based organisations with platforms to facilitate and support a type of peer-to-peer lending.[51] Also known as altruistic peer-to-peer lending or crowd-sourced internet microfinance, internet based credit models lend to borrowers by aggregating a number of smaller loans into one, often with very low or null interest rates. The models expose a unique environment in which to observe co-operative behaviour that is only beginning to be studied.[52]

Housing

The provision of good housing has been part of the remit of a wide number of mutual organisations and initiatives, from the Garden Cities, co-partnership and new town movements to Community Land Trusts, Community land occupation (plotlanders) and housing coops. Another of such models is Cohousing, an alternative living arrangement whose principles, it could be argued, are largely aligned with the principles of degrowth. Cohousing can be seen as *'neighbourhood developments that mix private and common dwellings to recreate a sense of community, while preserving a high degree of individual privacy'*.[53] Whilst cohousing is well established in Scandinavian countries[54] and United States,[55] it is still its infancy in UK,[56] but there are signs of a growing trend with increasing numbers of aspiring *co-housers* forming groups, spurred on by wide coverage of cohousing projects in the popular broadsheets.

At a recent conference, Economic Degrowth for Ecological Sustainability and Social Equity, in Barcelona, Dick Vestbro presented a 'Stirring Paper' where he posed Collective Housing, cohousing, as a basis for sustainable lifestyles through the benefits of 'saving by sharing' and its role in changing lifestyles and patterns of consumption in the context of United States of America and Scandinavia.[57] Matthew Lietaert also picks up on the benefits of sharing within co-housing as a practice that *'takes care of material needs avoiding creating additional material flows. It simultaneously brings more time for family and friends in new spaces where people can interact and build alternatives. Resource use is also likely to decline as a result of economies of scale by sharing.'*[58] The economies of scale and the efficiencies resulting from the

sharing of living spaces, vehicles and household appliances can be seen as an instance of degrowth in practice.

Mutual models of association and production have been emerging for centuries, adapting to changing cultural, economic and political contexts and essentially affording communities a way to step outside the prevailing production system, sometimes bypassing some of its limitations, other times counterbalancing injustices, shortcomings and crises. Mutual organisations and initiatives come from the bottom up and for this reason they can be more responsive, sensitive, sophisticated and powerful than their non-mutual counterparts. Because of the alignment between individual and collective benefits mutual models have the potential to reconcile political and economical tensions, which makes them very attractive to all political parties, who see mutuality as universal remedy. Despite the attempts of governments to claim the territory of mutual models, mutual organisations tend to remain well rooted on the ground, banding together, responding, reacting, finding ways round and making things better. And small initiatives do matter. Critical mass and positive feedback mechanisms create a shift towards more personalised, relational, economies that can be parallel, complementary or contrasting with the prevailing models. The Rhyzom project set out to explore local cultural production in the context of a trans-local, relational, framework. Mutual models are at the root of substantial portions of cultural production and it is important to acknowledge the reciprocal, mutual, ethos that underpins such cultural productio

1   Marilyn Friedman, 'Feminism and Modern Friendship: Dislocating the Community', *Ethics,* 99 (2)(January 1989): 275-290 (276).

2   Peter Kellner, *New Mutualism: The Third* Way, (London: Co-operative Party, 1998), [http://new-mutualism.poptel.org.uk/pamphlets/mutual2.pdf].

3   *Building the Big Society.* Policy Briefing, (London: Cabinet Office, October 2010), p. 1; [http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/407789/building-big-society.pdf].

4   See, for instance, Geoff Mulgan, *Connexity: How to Live in a Connected World,* 1st ed., (London: Chatto & Windus, 1997); Amitai Etzioni, *The Moral Dimension: Toward a New Economics,* (New York: The Free Press, 1990).

5   Matt Ridley, *The Origins of* Virtue, (New York: Viking, 1996).

6   Sebastian Kraemer and Jane Roberts, *The Politics of Attachment: Towards a Secure Society*, (London: Free Association Books, 1996).

7   Adam M Brandenburger and Barry J Nalebuff, *Co-Opetition*, 2nd ed. (London: Profile Business, 1997).

8   John Kay, *Foundations of Corporate Success: How Business Strategies Add Value,* New Ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press,1995); Thomas A. Kochan and Paul Osterman, *Mutual Gains Enterprise: Forging a Winning Partnership Among Labor, Management and Government*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1994); Frederick F. Reichheld, *The Loyalty Effect: The Hidden Force Behind Growth, Profits, and Lasting Value,* New edition, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2001).

9   Charles Leadbeater and Ian Christie, *To Our Mutual Advantage*, (London: Demos, 1999), p. 10.

10 Ian Hargreaves, *New mutualism: In From the Cold: The Co-operative Revival and Social Exclusion*, (Co-operative Party in conjunction with the United Kingdom Co-operative Council, 1999).

11 Marilyn Friedman, *What are Friends for?: Feminist Perspectives on Personal Relationships and Moral* Theory, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994).

12 See also chapter Common Talking

13 Carole Jean Uhlaner, '"Relational Goods" and Participation: Incorporating Sociability into a Theory of Rational Action', *Public Choice*, 62 (3)(1989): 253-285. Uhlaner explains how relational goods can take many forms, including solidarity, the desire to obtain social approval, to be recognised or accepted by others and to maintain identity, the fulfilment of a duty or moral norm and, crucially, friendship.

14 Tom Woodin, David Crook and Vincent Carpentier, *Community and Mutual Ownership: A Historical Review*, (York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, July 2010).

15 Edward Carpenter quoted in Ibid., p. 27. Carpenter is reported to have described a project in Sheffield where a dozen men 'calling themselves Communists, mostly great talkers, had joined together with the idea of establishing themselves on the land'.

16 See, 'Plotlanders' entry on *Spatial Agency* database at: [http://www.spatialagency.net/database/the.plotlanders] and link to *A Circle of Happiness* Atlas entry.

17 In July 1906 a group of unemployed men occupied some waste ground in St Mary's Road, Plaistow, Newham. They cleared the site and laid it out in four triangle shapes and planted vegetables. It became known as Triangle Camp. The men had two aims: to show that waste ground could be put to good use and to show that the unemployed were willing to work. See, 'Plaistow Landgrabbers', *The Newham Story*. [http://www.newhamstory.com/node/403].

18 See also chapter International Village Shop

19 At Portland Works, Sheffield, tenants and supporters have come together to save the building from speculative development and formed an Industrial Provident Society for the Benefit of the Community, issuing shares to purchase the building. See, [http://www.portlandworks.co.uk/]; link to Julia Udall's essay.

20 See Cooperatives UK, [http://www.uk.coop/] and Employee Owners Associations, [http://www.employeeownership.co.uk/], whose members range from large retail operations like the John Lewis group [http://www.johnlewis.com/] to Engineers/Architects like Arup [www.arup.com]; for cooperative models at a large scale see the Basque Mondragon [http://www.mondragon-corporation.com/], which has the seventh biggest turnover in Spain.

21 See, Charity Commission, [http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/].

22 See, for instance, Association of European Charity Foundations, [http://www.nefic.org/].

23 Leadbeater and Christie, *To Our Mutual Advantage*.

24 Link to Rochdale Pioneers Atlas Entry

25 See for instance, E. F. Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered*, New edition, (New York: Vintage, 1993); the growing field of happiness economics such as, Bruno S. Frey, *Happiness: A Revolution in* Economics, Vol. 1, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008); the movements of Green Economics, see for example the journal, *International Journal of Green Economics*, (Inderscience); Pascal van Griethuysen, 'Why are we growth-addicted? The hard way towards degrowth in the involutionary western development path', *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 18 (6)(April 2010): 590-595; Serge Latouche, 'Degrowth Economics', *Le Monde Diplomatique (English Edition)*, (November 2004); Ernst Fehr and Simon Gächter, 'Reciprocity and Economics: The Economic Implications of Homo Reciprocans', *European Economic* Review, 42 (3)(31 May 1998): 845-859; M. Waring, *If Women Counted: A New Feminist* Economics, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988).

26 See, for instance, Anthony G.Hopwood and Peter Miller, *Accounting as social and institutional* practice, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Wai Fong Chua, 'Radical Developments in Accounting Thought', *The Accounting* Review, 61 (4)(October 1986): 601-632; Cabinet Office, 'New Guide for Social Return on Investment launched', [http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/news/news_stories/090512_sroi.aspx].

27 'The Meadows Report' (1971) resulting in the book, *The Limits to Growth*, was commissioned by The Club of Rome, 'an international group of businessmen, statesmen, and scientists … to investigate the long-term causes and consequences of growth in population, industrial capital, food production, resource consumption, and pollution'. See, Donella H. Meadows et al., *The Limits to Growth*, (New York: Universe Books, 1972).

28 N. Georgescu-Roegen, *The Entropy Law and the Economic Process*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971). He argued that understanding economics is much broader than simply looking at market exchanges and prices and that the sustainability of a sub-system needs to be assessed on the sustainability of the entire system that contains it.

29 Degrowth

30 The adjective sustainable here does not mean that degrowth should be sustained indefinitely (which would be absurd) but, rather, that the process of transition/transformation and the end-state should be sustainable in the sense of being environmentally and socially beneficial.

31 François Schneider, Giorgos Kallis and Joan Martinez-Alier, 'Crisis or opportunity? Economic degrowth for social equity and ecological sustainability. Introduction to this special issue', *Journal of Cleaner Production,* 18 (6)(April 2010): 511-518.

32 Uhlaner, '"Relational Goods" and Participation'. Carole Uhlaner introduced the concept of relational goods as, *'a set of objectives, which depend upon interactions among persons'.* Uhlaner's model is used to explain political mobilisation in terms of the perceptions and decisions of a rational individual and allows a description of the conditions under which coordination and information can increase political activity.

33 The Easterlin Paradox is a key concept in happiness economics. In 1974, Richard Easterlin discussed the factors contributing to happiness in his paper, 'Does Economic Growth Improve the Human Lot?' Easterlin found that, at least for countries with income sufficient to meet basic needs, the level of happiness does not vary much with national income per person. Also, in the United States, despite a steady rise in income per person between 1946 and 1970, the average reported happiness showed no long-term trend and actually declined between 1960 and 1970. See, R. A. Easterlin, 'Does economic growth improve the human lot?' in, P. A. David and Melvin W. Reder (eds), *Nations and Households in Economic Growth: Essays in Honor of Moses Abramovitz*, (New York: Academic Press, 1974).

34 M. Waring, *If Women Counted*.

35 Schneider et al., 'Crisis or Opportunity?'

36 A number of initiatives and experiments in defining and testing alternative measures of economic activity are discussed in, Scepelmann et al.,*Towards Sustainable Development: Alternatives to GDP for measuring progress*, (Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy, 2010), pp. 27-53. These include the Daly-Cobb Index of Sustainable Welfare (ISEW), the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI), the Green GDP, the Gross National Happiness and Ecological Footprint indexes.

37 Anna Scott and John Loxley, *Show Us the Money!: The Politics and Process of Alternative* Budgets, (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring, 1998).

38 Rachel E. Kranton, 'Reciprocal Exchange: A Self-Sustaining System', *The American Economic Review*, 86 (4)(September 1996): 830-851.

39 Some of these projects include the Transition Towns movement, originated in Totnes UK as a response to peak oil [http://www.transitionnetwork.org/]; urban and citywide agriculture projects, like Incredible Edible Todmorden [http://www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk/]; ecovillages like the Irish Cloughjordan Ecovillage [http://www.thevillage.ie/]; mutual housing projects like the co-housing scheme in Stroud [http://www.therightplace.net/coco/public/] built around a community land trust.

40 Jane Jacobs, *Cities and the Wealth of Nations: Principles of Economic Life*, 1st ed., (New York: Random House, 1988).

41 'Totnes Pound Project | Transition Town Totnes', [http://www.transitiontowntotnes.org/?q=totnespound/home].

42 See also Atlas page 130

43 Toronto Dollars - Money That Builds Community, [http://torontodollar.com/].

44 For more examples of contemporary local currency projects, see the extensive online database ComplementaryCurrency.org, [http://www.complementarycurrency.org/ccDatabase/les_public.html].

45 There are hundreds of LETS projects worldwide; see the database ComplementaryCurrency.org; see, for instance the French SEL (Systèmes d'Echange Locaux) SEL'idaire, [http://selidaire.org/spip/] or the UK network of LETS projects, Letslink UK, [http://www.letslinkuk.net/] which projects like the Sheffield LETS are part of, [http://www.sheffieldlets.org.uk/].

46 See, Time Banking UK, [http://www.timebanking.org/].

47 Self Employed Women's Association, [http://www.sewa.org/].

48 Women make 93% of the labour force in the unorganised sector and more than 94% of the total female workforce in India is in the informal sector. Source: [http://www.sewa.org/About_Us.asp].

49 For a summary of the critiques of the Grameen Bank's model see, A. Bernasek, 'Banking on social change: Grameen Bank lending to women', *International Journal of Politics,Culture, and Society*, 16 (3)(2003): 369-385 (374).

50 Paromita Sanyal, 'From Credit to Collective Action: The Role of Microfinance in Promoting Women's Social Capital and

Normative Influence', *American Sociological Review*, 74 (4)(2009): 529 -550.

51   Examples of these platforms linking (micro) lenders to micro-entrepreneurs across the globe are Kiva [http://www.kiva.org/], Zidisha [https://www.zidisha.org], and Lend for Peace [http://www.lendforpeace.org]; this platform was established to enable lending specifically to people based in the Palestinian West Bank). In 2009 the US non-profit Zidisha became the first peer-to-peer micro-lending platform to link lenders and borrowers directly, without the support of local intermediaries; this turns the hybrid nature of the microcredit model into a purely mutual arrangement.

52   Scott E. Hartley, 'Kiva.org: Crowd-Sourced Microfinance and Cooperation in Group Lending', *SSRN eLibrary*, (March 25, 2010): [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1572182].

53   Matthieu Lietaert, 'Cohousing's relevance to degrowth theories', *Journal of Cleaner Production* 18 (6)(April 2010): 576-580.

54   For Swedish examples see, [http://www.kollektivhus.nu/english/index_eng.html].

55   See the work of Architects Mc Camant and Durrett, http://cohousingco.com/.

56   UK Cohousing Network [http://www.cohousing.org.uk/]; Older Women Cohousing, London [http://www.owch.org.uk/owchpages/homepage.html] and Springhill co-housing, Stroud [http://www.therightplace.net/coco/public/].

57   Dick Urban Vestbro, '"STIRRING PAPER": Saving by Sharing – Collective Housing for Sustainable Lifestyles' in Working Group 11, *Economic Degrowth for Ecological Sustainability and Social Equity* conference, (Barcelona, 2010). *Reusing empty houses and co-housing How can we change future forms of housing to occupy empty houses and develop shared (communal) housing? How can we promote mutualisation of goods in general?*

58   Lietaert, 'Cohousing's relevance to degrowth theories'.

COMMON TALKING

CÉLINE CONDORELLI, KATHRIN BÖHM, ANDREAS LANG

The debate about 'Commons' seems to be growing by the day. It is a term that is close to what we do and how we think. This text is an attempt to look in more detail at our own commons, at what we have in common as colleagues and friends. The reason for starting from our own immediate, tangible situation is not to move the subject into the private sphere, but on the contrary to reflect on the wider implications of what 'to common' could mean starting from our own actions, within the public and private spheres we are part of.

For this purpose, a conversation, speaking amongst and with each other to try and think together, seems to be the most appropriate way to approach these questions; this both reflects the form of this essay and the process which generated it in the first place. We – Andreas, Céline and Kathrin - have done things in common for a long time already: education - both given and received, projects, friendships, holidays, studio space, dinners, etc. Rhyzom was also a sixteen months project during which many common things were shared, discussed and practiced. We want to use this conversation to explore some of the experiences and observations from those shared activities further - also in regards to each of our own practices and research. We wish to reflect on the genuine common spaces, subjects and activities that arose during this time of being and working together, and speculate on their potential.

Kathrin

What is our own 'self-interest' and the 'common interest'?

We try to balance this carefully in our projects, which allows us to work with others and invite others into our work, without feeling that we are being patronising or manipulative. If someone has enough self-interest (as in declared by themselves) in an idea or structure proposed by us, then this is the first step towards common ground.

Both motivations need to coexist, they seem complementary, and as reasons they bridge between the personal and the shared.

Andreas

I think that moment is crucial: self-interest or an understanding of personal motivations often gives meaning to an action, which is an important aspect for others to see and understand in order to relate.

In most of the projects we (public works) act as agents within a local context trying to implement self-managed or participatory processes. Acting as an agent immediately means being an outsider and being limited by funding resources that support the time for our involvement. As public works we collectively articulated a desire to work on larger projects. Larger in terms of physical scale, time scale or the networks of people involved. One way of starting a larger project

Céline

Why the commons?
Hannah Arendt has a clear reasoning towards providing us with an answer, she defines the public domain as
corresponding with the Commons, of the city and of politics, as opposed to the private. The domain of the private, on the other hand, relies on excluding others from claiming one's property, and by extension, where one is deprived of the possibility of being, acting and talking together, which defines the common world, the public domain, the world outside the door.

Thinking with commons should prevent us from creating (or hiding behind) redeeming 'common good' projects, good for all, for the public good etc… but it requires that we articulate our own motivations, our underlying interest in relationship to these. This is important because it clarifies our position (to ourselves, to others) but also contains the expectations we may have about projects we do, preventing latent expectations of gratitude, engagement, appreciation, and understanding that these are the (patronising) underbelly of so many participatory projects.

'*Commoning is embedded in a labour process*' says Peter Linebaugh;[2] the idea of entering a commons by working together, added to that beginning taking place in our own everyday life, resonates with larger concerns around feminist practices. Which existing commons do we feel the need to engage with and support further and why? Can we use this text to make commons and commoning more of a concrete activity for ourselves and the world at large? Could we work towards not only clarifying a terminology for this, but also a more propositional language or ideas that can filter back into our practice and projects, as well as the ongoing Rhyzom 'movement'?

While we know theoretically that togetherness is not based on similarity but on difference (Derrida would say this is the danger of fraternity, or ideas of brotherhood: if we are included and belong together because we are the same, that means anyone coming from an external, or different position would be automatically excluded) this is in fact what happens with us in our collaborations already. We work well together because we bring very different things to the table, or as Katherine Shonfield once put it,

Although it sounds very obvious to say, a collaboration is about difference, otherwise why bother? Acknowledging difference opens up a space to recognize what you don' t know, what you do know and what you didn't know you knew.[3]
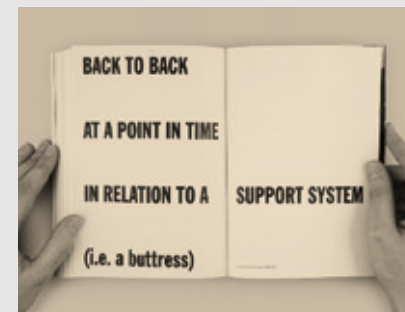
WHO Céline Condorelli
WHAT a book, manual, compendium, bibliography, reader
WEB www.supportstructures.org
KEYWORDS *support - display - exhibition - scaffold*

Support Structures is a manual for what bears, sustains, props, and holds up. It is a manual for those things that encourage, give comfort, and solace; for what stands behind, underpins, frames, maintains, and strengthens. Support Structures is a manual for those things that give, in short, support. While the work of supporting might traditionally appear as subsequent, unessential, and lacking value in itself, this manual is an attempt to restore attention to one of the neglected, yet crucial modes through which we apprehend and shape the world. *Support Structures* is a publication project for the creation of the missing bibliography of support structures.
While registering and collecting reference projects in a new archive of support structures alongside a ten-phase project, different writers, thinkers, and practitioners were invited from various fields
to elaborate on frameworks and work on texts, which form the theoretical backbone of the publication. A collection of contributions offers different possibilities for engaging in this unchartered territory, from theoretical frameworks to projects, existing systems to ones invented for specific creative processes

for me was Abbey Gardens* and I made a conscious decision of getting involved first a citizen and, if appropriate at a later stage, as a professional. This has also meant that my involvement is limited to my spare time and all my input is unpaid volunteer time.

I would even say that through this question we are talking and raising issues that are very similar to questions that were posed 500 years ago by people in different situations, but resembling needs and desires – this perhaps is another way of speaking in common. We are, in effect, taking sides in these struggles, and that is what is meaningful in friendship. I take friendship very seriously in these terms, as a political alliance and responsibility. To be friends in projects also means to rely on each other and work collectively towards productions that exceed individual authorships or appropriations. This leads very practically to sharing on different levels, sharing resources or conditions, but also to forming support structures for activities and practices, that are just simply to be inhabited by each of us. A lot of our commonality came through very pragmatic decisions to set things up together: our studio, networks, projects, ideas and resources, which in our case also include sharing mobility (it was Kathrin who realised that my constant travelling could be useful to things we did together rather than the opposite).

'People do reconstitute commons anew, and they do it all the time.'[4]

The larger issue of commons addresses the ridiculously big but very real question of how to live and work together. How can we find ways to survive beyond the systems that try to control and regulate life? Are there ways to exceed the market system? How can we engage in forms of collective production against the extreme fragmentation and individualisation that surrounds us?

Historically and in the UK context, a Common is a piece of land owned by one or several persons, but over which other people can exercise certain traditional rights, 'to take or use some portion of that which another man's soil naturally produces'.[5] Common land is not public, but has a legal status based on the rights of use: it is land to be used 'in common'. Here the Commons as a notion with its own history and lineage is a useful entry into these question, not just because it is old and precedes many of the systems we try to negotiate our existence with; it is also something that was revendicated and established to answer certain needs. In this way it provides a clue towards a future that is not utopian or speculative but grounded in the continuity of these very questions, historically, politically, socially.

New Commons should probably start with a recognition of needs, which leads to new concepts of common. They do not require definition, but more of a declaration. A declaration by many (or some) of a desire, followed by a claim (of land, of social space, of sustainability etc.). We can recall Freetown Christiania, where the right to watch stars at night was declared and fought for, with the result that the area has no street lights and remains dark at night. Or the way the open source concept happened online, because it was possible to create it within the realities of everyday life. New commons don't necessarily have to be negotiated within the limitations of current landownership issues, but rely on a more flexible idea of property; the

* Abbey Gardens is a public space, which is open daily for anyone. What was a neglected wasteland has been transformed into an open-access Harvest Garden where anyone can grow and harvest flowers, fruit and vegetables. Abbey Gardens was initiated by the Friends of Abbey Gardens, a group of local residents with the help of 'somewhere', a multi-disciplinary, non-profit creative company run by artists Nina Pope and Karen Guthrie and Newham Council.

I'd like to call upon Andrea Fraser's 'The critique of artistic autonomy'1 to reclaim some of the issues and their ancestry – where this all comes from. Whether we are totally conscious of this or not, I think the kind of work suggested and taking place with commons, is work against capitalistic modes of production – and by this I really mean against exploitation. This does not mean that exploitation does not or cannot take place, and there are a whole set of new problems that one has to deal with (exhaustion and repetition not being the least of these), but this is where this starts from.

Working on forms of commons and commonality means not working on the creation of objects, or commodities, and therefore not working on things that can be capitalised upon. This is really important in terms of what kind of artistic practice this proposes, and it comes straight from some of the important work that artists were doing in the 70s and 80s, including Andrea Fraser. But of course this is a position, and not a solution – we still have to deal with how to sustain a practice taking place in social labour when social labour in itself is rarely given value.

conditions for such a possibility to be activated requires a different understanding of space. Doreen Massey suggests three steps for this to occur: firstly, to recognise space as a product of interrelations, constituted through interactions on various scales. Secondly, understanding space as the sphere of possibility; space constitutes itself through the existence of multiplicity, which causes a sphere of coexisting heterogeneity. Lastly, she indicates that space is to be read as always under construction, which turns any space into a simultaneity of stories-so-far.[6]

Since discussing and talking about 'things in common' in our immediate surrounding these have also become more apparent, not only as social or physical places but as political spaces, in as much as they are self-determined and create systems of support and space for change. The recognition of a 'simultaneity of stories-so-far' (or happy overlaps or random meaning, which are terms closer to our language) allows for common pools to appear, such as requirements for collective workspace, shared economies, abilities, mobility, timetables and communication, common shared networks, books, talks… It is an agreement of sort, a social contract one enters into by working. We need to insist on this point by Linebaugh– it takes place in labour. So while things need to be discussed probably over and over again, one enters into commoning by working, as in working together.

Ökodorf Sieben Linden

WHO an intentional community/village of people who are committed to self-sustainable and low-emission living. Different organisational and legal relations are organised in various co-operatives
WHAT From the website: 'The Ecovillage of Sieben Linden is a social and ecological settlement in Altmark in the region of Sachsen-Anhalt (former East Germany). The concept for this Ecovillage came up around 1989. After 4 years, in 1993, a group of people bandied together to purchase a "project center" in order to more effectively search for land to settle on - and to promote the concept to politicians and others. In 1997 they found the land that we have (and continue to) built the Ecovillage of Sieben Linden on - located 25 km south of the project center.'
WEB http://www.siebenlinden.de/
KEYWORDS *shared - ommunal - ecological - rural development*

'At Sieben Linden we aim to provide a model for a future way of life in which work, leisure, economy, ecology, urban and rural culture can find a balance. We are searching for the answers to the pressing issues of our time; looking for human-centred solutions in a place of creativity and learning. This model intends to show how humans can live more responsibly with nature; that human communities need not exploit or destroy nature but can make a positive contribution towards the quality and diversity of the environment.'
The vast number of decisions which come with setting up a new community are organised on different levels, but always in common, either on the scale of the village or a house.

Within our practice, which over the years has become very involved in the making and shaping of small scale public realms and common spaces, we can describe quite clearly how we contribute:
- by getting involved on site
- by trying to connect and recognising issues, interests, conflicts, activities that exist (but might often not be very visible)
- by making suggestions towards new and often collective or collaborative interventions into the existing,
- by linking and facilitating connections between activities and groups/individuals through our projects/project activities

Again talking about Abbey Gardens I realised the importance to articulate ways to sharing and continuously discuss the things in common, in order for each individual to find his/her comfort zone, and also to keep the experiment open and dynamic. This has to include the negotiation of needs, especially where those needs and expectations conflict.
The culture of experts and consultants seems to patronise active citizenship and ushers residents into the role of bystanders rather than active producers. The process of establishing our common ground was also and exercise in claiming back this territory and with it a growing consciousness of the obligations that go with it. Abbey Gardens to me is not only an open public garden but also a space for collective production for individual and communal purposes.

This issue is very important to the work I have been doing with support structures for example, really crucial to it. On the one hand I realised that support structures were very much sites for the making of value, which is one reason why they are repressed, pushed to the margins, into invisibility and valuelessness. On the other hand, the constant reiteration of the need to open up support, to provide explicit supporting structures, to focus the site of a practice in the making of these, also creates a situation which is often at odds with the situation at hand – by which I mean that it is difficult to sustain.

Here is a good summary of what the issues at stake were – that we can still use today to remind ourselves and reclaim:

One of the earliest distinctions between goods production and service provision, made by Adam Smith, relates less to the tangible or intangible character of the product of labor than the social character of labor itself: whether or not that labor produces profit. For Smith, a service is a product that contains only use value and no exchange value: it adds 'to the value of nothing.' It may have been precisely this condition— which rendered services suspect for Smith—that the artists of the AWC aspired to in considering their work intellectual property: as Andre stated, that 'no owner may in any way enrich himself

CONNECTING COMMONS

We had several conversation about how those 'commons' could be connected, how they could grow into something bigger with more force and focus to change something on a larger scale. This interests us within the debate of architecture and spatial production; if we can recognise socio-spatial realities, such as the commons we described earlier, as spatial production, then we can also rethink where spatial production takes place and by whom, and what the role of architects, planners and spatial thinkers could be.

We have to conceive space not as a sum of defined places (…) but rather as a potential network of passages linking one open place to another. Space, thus, becomes important as a constitutive dimension of social action. Space indeed 'happens' as different social actions literally produce different spatial qualities. [8]

The Commons do not need to be choreographed or masterminded, but require collective ambition. It is important to us to relate this discussion back to architecture, because it addresses the kind of spatial production we contribute to through our practices. It is a spatial discussion that refers to acting within the everyday in common. Is there an architectural terminology for these type of spaces and connections? Do connected commons need passages or 'spaghetti junctions', like the famous Spaghetti Junction near Birmingham, where dual lane motorways from different directions cross each other on different levels? Is it possible to come from different places, go faster or slower, go somewhere else or get lost and end up somewhere new where it's also worth going to? Is the physical place the entry point into Commons?

How do we link?
Example:
We are trying to do it by getting involved in the International Village Shop, which is a collective ambition with many connections to specific local activities and forms of production. The shared space, the shop, doesn't force elements together, but creates a public interface, that allows us to recognise the things in common, both for the producers and those visiting the shops. The 'in common' is not prescribed, it is to be recognised or discovered.

We often talk about overlaps of interests that might lead to new links, actions and transformations in the public sphere we are part of.
I agree with and relate to that feeling of proposing a common purpose, which often is very abstract and hard for people / participants to join in at first view. It is also the framework of the projects themselves which happen for a (relatively) short period of time. The shift in roles between facilitator, agent and participant/ collaborator is often not so easy.

through the possession of the work of art'. It may be from this perspective one can understand how artists of the late 1960s saw in the condition of service products, relations, positions, and functions a means of protection from, and even resistance to, forms of exploitation (of themselves and others) consequent to the production and exchange of cultural commodities.7

A joint text resulting from an e-mail conversation between Kathrin Böhm, Céline Condorelli and Andreas Lang about common things and things in common.

1   Andrea Fraser, 'What's intangible, transitory, immediate, participatory and rendered in the public sphere? Part II: A Critique of Artistic Autonomy' (1996) See http://home.att.net/~artarchives/frasercritique.html).
2   Peter Linebaugh, *The Magna Carta Manifesto: Liberties and Commons for All*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008), p. 45.
3   Katherine Shonfield, 'The Lived and the Built' in, R. Ainley (ed), This Is What We Do: A Muf Manual, (London: Ellipsis, 2001), p. 29.
4   An Architektur, 'On the Commons: A Public Interview with Massimo De Angelis and Stavros Stavrides', e-flux Journal (06/2010): http://www.e-flux.com/journal/view/150
5   *Halsbury's Laws of England*, 4th ed., 6, p. 177.
6   Doreen Massey, *for space*, (London: SAGE, 2005).
7   Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, quoted in Delaunay and Gadrey, *Services in Economic Thought* in, Fraser, 'The Critique Of Artistic Autonomy'.
8   An Architektur, 'On the Commons'.

JARDINIÈRES DU COMMUN

DOINA PETRESCU

La question du commun est au cœur de la discussion sur la démocratie aujourd'hui. Dans des textes récents, Negri pose la question du commun comme une nouvelle manière de penser la production capitaliste. « La production est devenue " commune" - dit-il. Créer de la valeur aujourd'hui c'est mettre en réseaux des subjectivités et capter, détourner, s'approprier ce qu'elles font de ce commun qu'elles inaugurent ». [1]

Au cœur du projet révolutionnaire contemporain serait cette reprise du commun comme processus constituant. Cette entreprise nécessite des catégories et des institutions nouvelles, des formes de gestion et de gouvernance, des espaces et des "travailleurs du commun", toute une infrastructure matérielle et immatérielle. La constitution de cette infrastructure pour la reprise du commun, tout comme la production du « commun », est relationnelle: c'est une création de connections et de liens, une mise en réseau de concepts, d'outils, de subjectivités, etc… Cette mise en réseau devrait être elle même « commune » : accessible, équitable, soutenable etc… La reprise du commun nécessite ainsi de l'espace, du temps à partager, des actions, des objets, des désirs.[2]

J'en prendrai comme exemple une instance de notre expérience avec l'atelier d'architecture autogérée (aaa).

Nous avons développé une pratique collective qui encourage les habitants à participer à la réappropriation et l'usage autogéré de l'espace dans la ville. Pour nous, en tant qu'architectes, la reprise du commun passe par une réappropriation tactique et un investissement collectif des espaces immédiatement accessibles afin d'inventer de nouvelle formes de propriété et de vivre ensemble, plus éthiques et plus écologiques.

Nous avons identifié un type particulier d'espace - les interstices urbains - comme un possible territoire du commun et comme une nouvelle forme spécifiquement métropolitaine de ce qu'on appelle en anglais des «commons»[3]. Il y a du commun à reconquérir et à réinventer par des fragments, par des petits espaces délaissés ou non utilisés qui par leur nature temporaire et incertaine, ont résisté jusqu'à là à la spéculation foncière. Pour aaa, ces nouvelles formes de commun spatial réinventent un commun social et urbain mais aussi un commun écologique.

À travers nos projets, nous initions des processus (spatiaux, sociaux, culturels) qui conduisent à d'autres processus (politiques, affectifs etc) générés cette fois ci par les collectifs qui se forment dans ces espaces.

Nos projets proposent une compréhension plus large de l'architecture, au delà de bâtiments et de l'espace physique, affirmant des multiples formes de faire l'architecture, basées sur des relations et des nouvelles formes de collaboration qui valorisent la participation active des usagers.

Nous avons initié des espaces autogérés (comportant des jardins, etc), ou celles et ceux qui y participent

peuvent voir, tester, leur mise en relation avec les autres, les effets de leurs actions, l'usage plutôt que la possession, des manières de partager, la responsabilité vis a vis de ce qui est à partager, etc… Ce sont, comme dirait Guattari, "des foyers locaux de subjectivation collective".

Pour la plupart, des femmes

Nous avons eu plusieurs fois l'occasion d'écrire sur cette pratique[4], et nous le mentionnons encore une fois dans ce contexte pour parler du travail de certaines participantes dans nos projets, *pour la plupart, des femmes,* un travail que je n'identifierai pas en première instance comme féministe mais plutôt comme travail relationnel… Ces participantes actives, impliquées, ces agentes « pour la plupart des femmes » sont essentielles dans nos projets à la constitution du sujet collectif de ce processus de réinvention du commun.

Ces observations, fondées sur l'évidence concrète de l'expérience, sur des données et des faits, soutiennent l'hypothèse avancée ici: que la réinvention du commun est un travail relationnel et différencié dans lequel la subjectivité féminine a un rôle actif à jouer; que ce travail de reconquête, de réappropriation et de reconstruction a besoin à la fois d'espaces spécifiques où il puisse s'agencer, d'espaces actifs, mais aussi de personnes actives, d'agents, de sujets porteurs de cette réinvention.

Les agents de cette réinvention du commun qui, dans nos projets, sont *pour la plupart des femmes*, forment un sujet collectif elliptique, indéterminé et instable, qui n'appartient pas à un seul genre mais qui se trouve pourtant marquée par la différence sexuelle. Ce sujet peut avoir besoin d'une sorte d'«essentialisme réaliste»[5] pour être pensé, d'un essentialisme qui ne s'oppose pas à un certain constructivisme et à l'idée de « devenir » et de « performativité ».

Pour penser cette subjectivité collective qui réinvente le commun, il faut mobiliser aussi des savoirs féministes – comme par exemple le travail de Luce Irigaray sur l'être-en-relation (de la femme) et sur la différence sexuelle comme articulation fondamentale de notre relation à la nature et à la culture.[6] Pour lier ces positions féministes et la discussion contemporaine sur le relationnel, je vais prendre comme exemple un certain type d'agencement où cette relation nature-culture est doublée par une production de subjectivité et par des processus de devenir individuel et collectif. La production du commun est un processus qui en même temps qu'une infrastructure commune produit une nouvelle subjectivité collective qui est une production locale, relationnelle et différentielle.

Le « relationnel »

La notion de « relationnel » a pris essor dans les discussions de la fin des années 90, notamment dans l'art contemporain, à partir du livre de Nicolas Bourriaud sur l'« esthétique relationnelle ». Bourriaud se réfère dans ce livre à la manière d'évaluer certains œuvres d'art contemporain à partir des relations sociales que ces œuvres représentent ou suscitent. Il se focalise surtout sur la socialisation du public par ces œuvres, sans qu'il soit intéressé à la nature spatio-temporelle des relations créées et à la manière dont ces relations puissent évoluer, affecter et être affectées par l'espace. Il n'est pas intéressé non plus par les aspects éthiques et politiques de cette relationalité ou par comment une « œuvre relationnelle » peut transformer le contexte socio-spatial dans lequel elle se trouve.

Nous aussi, nous qualifions nos projets de « relationnels » parce qu'ils créent de la connectivité, ils stimulent

le désir et le plaisir mais ils permettent aussi une prise de conscience politique et de responsabilité civique à l'échelle de proximité, donnant la possibilité à des collectifs d'habitants de s'approprier de l'espace dans la ville à travers des activités quotidiennes (ie. jardinage, cuisine, jeux, bricolage, etc) .

Plus que des structures et des formes, nos dispositifs architecturaux génèrent des assemblages spatiaux, ou plutôt des *agencements,* dans le sens de Deleuze et Guattari. Les agencements sont caractérisés par les connections actives entre les éléments compris comme singularités. Ils constituent des puzzles de « processus » et de « relations » plutôt que des structures raisonnées et systématisées par des théories et des sciences.

l' « agencement jardinier »

Dans nos projets, nous avons initié un type d'agencement spécifique, un *agencement jardinier.* Nous avons construits avec des habitants des projets culturels, sociaux et écologiques qui incluent entre autres, des jardins partagés comme outils d'agencement démocratique de l'espace : un agencement par voisinage, favorable aux échanges, mobile et cyclique, ancré dans le quotidien[7]. L'attribut de « jardinier » de cet agencement est à la fois métaphorique et métonymique, plaçant tous les processus et les relations agencées dans un rapport direct à la nature et à la culture. Cet agencement s'approche des dynamiques écologiques tout en étant adapté aux petites échelles, aux usages et aux pratiques quotidiennes. Nos expériences nous ont montré que le mode d'action par « agencement jardinier » peut produire, dans le temps, un espace constituant pour des modes de fonctionnement collectifs et pour un agir politique local.

Comme nous l'avons mentionné déjà, les agents les plus actifs de ce type d'agencement dans nos projets on été *pour la plupart des femmes* … Non pas seulement parce qu'elles étaient porteuses de dynamiques de jardinage, qu'elles étaient des jardinières proprement dites, mais aussi parce qu'elles investissaient et maintenaient avec soin, parce qu'elles « jardinaient » l'infrastructure du projet commun, qu'elles labouraient l'espace et le temps partagé du projet.

Ce n'est pas parce qu'elles ont plus de temps que les autres, du temps pour des activités bénévoles, non rémunérée, mineures, mais surtout parce qu'elles voient une importance et une portée politique et éthique à ces activités, une portée écologique, ou même écosophique, dans le sens de Guattari. Le projet partagé ouvre un espace où la subjectivité féminine trouve son territoire d'invention: un projet duquel l'on prend soin, l'on s'y engage, l'on perçoit les résultats de ses engagements avec les autres. L'on apprend la patience, le silence, l'attention. Les *femmes (pour la plupart)* ont, comme Irigaray le remarque dans ses travaux récentes, une disponibilité et une motivation complexe à la fois ontologique et écologique pour développer des relations « durables » à plusieurs niveaux : à elles mêmes et entre elles mêmes, entre elles et les autres, entres elles, les autres et l'environnement construit et naturel à des échelles locales et globales, entre la nature et la culture en général, entre des espaces et des modes d'habitation.

« Etre-en-relation »

Irigaray a commencé à parler à partir des années '70 de la subjectivité féminine et de sa capacité d'être-en-relation. Cette pensée de la subjectivité féminine a pris de nouvelles tournures dans les années '90 avec le travail de Rosi Braidotti sur la subjectivité « nomade » et de Judith Buttler sur la subjectivité « performative ».

Malgré les grandes différences de positionnement, toutes les trois ont saisi une capacité particulière du sujet femme de se rendre « disponible », de s'affecter à et de se laisser affecter par plusieurs types de dispositions à la fois (ie. sociales, culturelles, politiques, sexuelles, affectives, etc…), de créer des relations et d'être transformée par ces relations.

Dans nos projets, la plus part des femmes sont venues d'abord pour jardiner et après quelques années d'investissement, ont commencé à prendre des responsabilités dans le groupe, en devenant parfois des militantes citoyennes et arrivant aux 'bords du politique', comme dirait Ranciere. Leur propre construction personnelle a participé à la fois de la construction du groupe et du processus constituant du projet. Ces trajectoires individuelles se rassemblant, elles ont induit des re-territorialisations douces de tout le projet, constituant des lignes de fuite vers certains types d'activités et d'usages qui sont devenus collectifs, vers des moments d'énonciation collective du projet.

La plupart des femmes faisaient partie de différents micro-réseaux (d'amitié, de temps partage, d'auto-construction, de production et de dissémination, etc), et leur participation a évolué dans le temps. Elles sont devenues des agents de différents agencements, des 'noeux' dans le réseau ramifié du projet. Par cette appartenance multiple et évolutive, elles on créé des différentiations, des shifts relationnels, influençant de manière décisive le devenir du projet collectif.

Rancière remarquait que le collectif permet l'apparition d'un sujet qui se pense par rapport aux autres, « la formation d'un un qui n'est pas un soi mais la relation d'un soi à un autre ».[8] Et, pour suivre Irigaray, je dirais même que avant que le collectif existe, il y aurait des sujets qui se situeraient déjà dans une position d'ouverture vers les autres, dans un rapport à l'autre qui n'est pas encore là, des "êtres-en-relation" qui initieraient en première instance un agencement collectif. La jardinière a ce savoir quand elle se trouve devant le champ pas encore labouré, le jardin pas encore planté. Elle sait ouvrir un espace de partage, un "troisième espace" comme dirait Irigaray, un espace dans lequel l'autre (personne, plante ou animal) peut venir avec son espace à lui, son espace à elle. La jardinière sait se laisser transformer par cette relation, sait labourer à la fois son espace de devenir personnel, son espace à elle, ainsi que l'espace qu'elle partage avec l'autre et les autres, « le troisième

espace», sillonnée par des relations et des réseaux.

C'est une forme spécifique de relationalité qui de-territorialise et re-territorialise à la fois. La plupart des femmes ont participé à l'invention des nouvelles activités et processus dans nos projets, des espaces et des dispositifs actifs, des nouveaux objets du commun (ie. des modules mobiles : bibliothèque, cuisine, un laboratoire urbain participatif, des débats, des brocantes et d'autres formes d'économie alternative à ECObox ou des dispositifs écologiques : toilettes sèches, collecteur d'eau de pluie, toiture verte, etc. au 56 rue Saint Blaise.)

« Faire rhizome »

Notre rôle a été de mettre en valeur, parfois d'initier, puis de soutenir, d'étayer ces réseaux émergeant autour des actions, des dispositifs spatiaux, des processus et des affects permettent à la fois des devenirs personnels et des devenirs collectifs afin de saisir cette entité socio spatiale en formation, qui bouge continuellement, qui forme de nouveaux réseaux. Dans le processus, notre rôle d'initiateurs et d'agents devait diminuer progressivement jusqu'à la disparition pendant que la capacité du réseau de se développer et de se reproduire s'accroissait. D'autres devaient prendre le rôle des jardiniers du réseau.

Ces réseaux d'actions et d'affects qui sont des mécanismes de construction spatiale démocratique, sont nécessairement rhizomatiques, jouant sur la proximité, le temporel et la multiplicité.

Ecobox, par exemple, a été déménagé et réinstallé plusieurs fois par des usager(e)s, et le système d'organisation et d'occupation a été reproduit par d'autres initiatives indépendantes (citoyennes ou professionnelles) dans le quartier et ailleurs. Nous appelons cela une transmission rhizomatique – où le prototype à la capacité de transmettre toute l'information nécessaires à sa reproduction, et où le produit de cette transmission, la reproduction du prototype devient elle même une nouvelle source de transmission de cette information indépendamment ou en relation choisie avec le prototype initial. Malgré l'existence temporaire des projets sur différents emplacements, l'accumulation de savoir par expérience se transmet et se reproduit dans des nouveaux projets qui, tout en étant nouveaux et singuliers, prennent aussi le relai et la continuation d'un même modèle, d'un même protocole et processus.

ECO-URBAN NETWORK/ ECOBOX

Paris, France

WHO atelier d'architecture autogeree and inhabitants of La Chapelle area
WHAT a series of self-managed projects in La Chapelle area in the North of Paris that encourage residents to get access to and transform temporary misused or underused spaces.
WEB http://www.urbantactics.org/
KEYWORDS *micropolitics - self-organisation - participation - urban tactics - urban interstice - collective practice - relational architecture*
This ongoing strategy initiated in 2001 valorises a flexible and reversible use of space and aims to preserve urban 'biodiversity' by encouraging the co-existence of a wide range of life-styles and living practices. The starting point was the realisation of a temporary garden, made out of recycled materials on a derelict site located in the La Chapelle area in the North of Paris. This garden, called ECObox, has been progressively extended into a platform for urban creativity, curated by aaa members, residents and external collaborators, catalysing activities at the level of the whole neighbourhood. Until now the platform has moved three times in the area, taking different forms in different locations and involving new users.

PASSAGE 56

Paris 20e, France

WHO atelier d'architecture autogeree and inhabitants of St. Blaise area
WHAT transformation of a former passageway into a cultural and ecological space managed by residents of the area
WEB http://56stblaise.wordpress.com/
KEYWORDS *micropolitics - self-organisation - urban tactics - urban interstice - collective practice - participative architecture - popular ecology - construction as social and cultural act - resilience*

Passage 56 takes a strong position on the idea that everyday life ecological practices could transform current spatial and urban relations in dense and culturally diverse metropolitan contexts. The plot was designed as an ecological interstice hosting a wooden construction (with a green roof and powered by solar panels) compost toilets, rain water collector, cultivation plots, seed catchers and wild birds' corridor. Ecological cycles are closed on site in such a way that the space produces or recycles most of what it needs to consume: electricity, water, compost, food. The project catalyses different ecological practices in the area (ie. organic food delivery, compost exchange, plant swap, seed banks, construction and repair of domestic eco-devices) and hosts debates, workshops and educational activities which all take the form of public activities.

« Faire rhizome » est une manière de construire l'infrastructure du commun. Là encore une fois, ce sont *des femmes pour la plupart* qui ce sont impliquées à lancer et entretenir les lignes actives, les tiges du rhizome. Anne Querrien remarquait, dans un article sur les cartographies schizoanalytiques de Guattari, que 'le rhizome' —notion centrale à la pensée de Deleuze et Guattari— est "une notion qui ajoute à celle de réseau, outre celles d'horizontalité et de construction de proche en proche, une dimension souterraine, et de réémergence qui peut faire illusion, faire croire à la tige unique, alors qu'il s'agit de tout un ensemble. *Faire rhizome*,—dit Anne— c'est aller vers l'autre, non pas en ennemi ou en concurrent dans une perspective de destruction, mais dans une perspective d'alliance et de construction d'une micro-territorialité temporaire à bientôt partager avec d'autres, par de nouvelles ramifications du rhizome.'[9]

Dans les processus de nos projets, le rôle de jardinier du rhizome passe horizontalement de l'un(e) à l'autre, des architectes aux usager(e)s et des usagères aux autres usagers.

Convivialité et résilience

Ainsi, dans ce *faire rhizome* de nos projets, nous avons collaboré avec ceux et celles qui savaient et voulaient faire du travail d'alliance invisible et souterraine, de la propagation « de proche en proche », qui savaient prendre en compte le temps et la cyclicité, qui avaient la patience d'attendre que ca pousse et ca se développe, qui avaient à la fois le savoir de transmission et d'apprentissage.

Ivan Ilitch, parle de « convivialité » comme d'une alternative à la productivité capitaliste: « la convivialité

s'oppose à la productivité (…) la productivité se conjugue en termes d' "avoir", la convivialité en termes d' "être"».[10]

Une pratique relationnelle et coopérative, comme celle que nous avons développée, a une temporalité différente et un but différent de ceux d'une pratique libérale: plutôt que de chercher une valeur matérielle de profit, elle crée les conditions pour une expérience émancipatoire qui change à la fois l'espace et les sujets. Dans son analyse du 'social' a travers sa théorie des réseaux d'acteurs (Actor Network Theory - ANT), Latour mentionne les éléments actifs qui appartiennent à des réseaux d'acteurs humains et non-humains, qui assument le rôle de « médiateurs » : ils transportent, traduisent et transforment le contenu et la nature des liens dans le réseau[11]. De même que les « jardinières (personnes) », nos dispositifs socio-spatiaux et écologiques on joué le rôle de « médiateurs », de « jardiniers (objets) » dans le « faire rhyzome » du projet.

Par exemple, le dispositif de la cuisine urbaine qui était un objet transportable qui pouvait déployer un espace fonctionnel de cuisine dans des endroits choisis, a amené dans le projet les usagers les plus divers, leurs savoirs et leurs motivations et a connecté le jardin avec d'autres lieux du quartier et avec d'autre lieux imaginaires suggérés par les recettes et les ingrédients de la cuisine. Certains usagers, *pour la plupart des femmes,* ont inventé, elles aussi, des « médiateurs » : une bibliothèque, des brocantes, des marches artisanaux etc… Ces médiateurs ont influencé et différentié la nature du projet. On a passé ainsi d'une dominante jardinage et d'activité de temps libre vers une production et une diffusion culturelle, politique et poétique. Ces usagères agentes ont proposé de nouvelles formes économiques, qui valorisent l'échange personnel, la réciprocité et le don (ie des « zones de gratuité », des brocantes et échangés de savoirs « féminines » à ECObox ou des pique-niques, des thés collectifs et des projections au 56 etc…).

Latour mentionne aussi les « plug-ins » comme outils pour créer et révéler des agencements. Il utilise l'analogie avec ces logiciels qui, une foi installés dans le système, rendent actif ce qu'on ne pouvait voir avant. Les plug-ins rendent visible ce qui était là seulement de façon virtuelle. Ils peuvent aussi déterminer quelqu'un de faire quelque chose.[12] Ensemble avec d'autres dispositifs tactiques, nous avons initié une cartographie des processus relationnels du projet qui a été comme un *plug-in d*ans le projet ; une activité qui s'est rajoutée au projet afin de nous aider à faire visible et discuter avec les autres les faits et les choses qui seraient autrement restés invisibles et non-articulés (ie. les rôles évolutifs d 'une personne où d'un dispositif, les changements dans les motivations de certains usagers, les transformations dans les usages, etc…). En apprenant l'importance de ces choses, nous avons commencé à travailler avec elles et à les considérer comme des éléments actifs du projet. C'est cette même cartographie qui a révélé le rôle structurel et agençant *de la plupart des femmes* dans le projet… Cette cartographie nous a fait comprendre la totalité des relations comme une écologie sociale et politique du projet.

Les réseaux d'acteurs et d'activités générés dans nos projets forment aussi des cycles écologiques dans le sens de Guattari[13] : sociaux, environnementaux, mentaux. Ces activités (de jardinage, d'auto construction, de recyclage, etc) se développent à partir de cycles quotidiens qui relient dans le temps des personnes, des enjeux et des espaces à travers des intérêts partagés et des relations d'amitié. L'espace est lié ainsi à ses réseaux d'usagers par des cycles quotidiens, qui le transforme pour le rendre plus dynamique et plus réactif à des changements. Ces réseaux sont en effet des formes de résilience dans le projet.

Ces agentes conviviales, *des femmes pour la plupart,* sont porteuses d'une révolution douce et résiliente, ce sont « celles qui font rhizome » et (re)conquièrent les territoires de la ville par des alliances et non pas par des guerres, en les transformant en des nouvelles formes de commun, en des espaces et des temporalités

partagés. Ce sont celles qui initient parfois et maintiennent sans aucune revendication et besoin de reconnaissance le travail infrastructurel et écologique du commun.

Note : Ce texte a été publié initialement en français en *Multitude 42* (Paris: Exils, 2010).

[1]   J. Ravel et T. Negri, « Inventer le Commun des Hommes » in *Multitudes* 31, Paris : Exils, 2008, p.7

[2]   Voir aussi notre discussion avec T. Negri publiée en *Mul*titudes 31, ps 17-30.

[3]   Les "commons" définissaient traditionnellement ces éléments de l'espace environnemental et des ressources naturelles "les forets , l'atmosphère, les rivières, les pâturages, etc." dont la gestion et l'usage étaient partagés par les membres d'une communauté. C'étaient des entités que personne ne pouvait détenir mais que tout le monde pouvait utiliser. Actuellement le sens du terme de commons s'est élargi pour inclure toutes les ressources (matérielles ou immatérielles) qui sont collectivement partagées par toute une population.

[4]   Voir par exemple les articles publiés par Constantin Petcou et Doina Petrescu in Multitude 20 et 31

[5]   Je reprends ici le terme « realist essentialism » que Alison Stone utilise pour analyser le tant discuté essentialime de Irigaray. "Par réalisme je veux dire que nous pouvons avoir un savoir du monde tel qu'il est, indépendamment de nos pratiques et de modes de représentation. Je veux dire par cela qu'une forme réaliste d'essentialisme consiste en une position qui affirme que les corps des femmes et des homes sont connus avoir des natures essentiellement différentes qui existent réellement, indépendamment de comment nous representons ou habitons culturellement ces corps. L'essentialisme réaliste dit aussi que les différences naturelles existent avant nos activités culturelles".

[6]   Alison Stone, *Luce Irigaray and the Philosophy of Sexual Difference* (Cambridge: New York, Cambridge University Press) 18-19 Dans sa preface à la publication anglaise à ses *Key Writings* (2004), Irigaray affirme que la différence sexuelle marque d une manière fondamentale notre rapport à la nature et à la culture. A partir de cette signification ontologique de la relation entre les sexes, la nature et la culture, elle remarque que « sans considérer cette relation comme fondamentale, nous ne pourrions développer de relation ni avec un autre, ni avec soi même ». Dans ces écrits plus récents, elle analyse des expressions spécifiques de cette relation qui marque nos vies personnelles, professionnelles, historiques, poétiques, imaginaires. L'expression de la différence sexuelle dans les relations entre les femmes et les homes, devrait marquer aussi la pensée critique des environnements durables, la gestion des ressources naturelles et l'aménagement de l'espace.

[7]   Voir aussi l'article de C. Petcou et D. Petrescu « Agir Urbain : Notes transversales, observations de terrain et questions concrètes pour chacun de nous » in Multitudes 31, ps 100-124

[8]   Jacques Rancière, Aux bords du politique, éd. La Fabrique, Paris, 1998, p.87.

[9]   Anne Querrien, "es cartes et les ritournelles d'une panthère arc en ciel" in Multitudes 34, Paris : Exils, 2008

[10] Ivan Ilitch, *La* convivialité, Paris: Seuil, 1973, p.43

[11] Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor Network Theory,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005,

[12] Ibid, p.207 and passim

[13] cf. Felix Guattari, Les Trois Ecologies, Paris : Galilée, Paris 1989

GARDENERS OF THE COMMONS

DOINA PETRESCU

The question of the commons *is at the heart of discussions about democracy today. In recent texts, Antonio Negri has asked if the commons can be a new way of thinking about capitalist production.* 'Production has become "common",' *he writes.* 'Creating value today is about networking subjectivities and capturing, diverting, appropriating what they do with the commons that they began'.[1]

At the heart of the contemporary revolutionary project is this reclaiming of the commons as a constituent process. It is at the same time a re-appropriation and a reinvention. This undertaking needs new categories and institutions, forms of management and governance, space and 'commons workers' – an entire infrastructure that is both material and virtual. Setting up this infrastructure for the reclaiming of the commons, just as in 'common' production, is relational: it is the creation of connections and links, a networking of concepts, tools, subjectivities, and so on. This networking should itself be 'common': accessible, fair, sustainable, and so on. The reclaiming of the commons thus needs space, and the time to share, actions, objects and desires..[2]

I'll take as example, a moment in our experience with the atelier d'architecture autogérée (aaa). We have developed a collective practice that encourages local residents to participate in the re-appropriation and self-managed use of space in the city. For us, as architects, the revival of the commons passes through a tactical re-appropriation and a collective investment of immediately accessible spaces in order to invent new forms of property and shared living that are more ethical and more ecological. We have identified a particular type of space – urban gaps – as a possible common territory and as a new, specifically urban form of commons.[3] These are commons that are to be reclaimed and reinvented in fragments, through small abandoned or unused spaces that by their temporary and uncertain nature have, until now, resisted development speculation. For aaa, these new forms of spatial commons reinvent social and urban commons, as well as environmental commons.

Through our projects, we initiate processes (spatial, social, cultural) that lead to other processes (political, emotional) generated this time by the collectives that form around these spaces. Our projects propose a wider understanding of architecture, above and beyond buildings and physical space, affirming its multiple forms based on relationships and new forms of collaboration that develop the active participation of users.

We have initiated self-managed spaces (made up of gardens, etc.) where those who take part can see and test the creation of their relationships with others, the effects of their actions, where they can use rather than possess, explore ways of sharing, and the responsibility towards what is shared. They are, as Félix Guattari puts it, 'local hotbeds of collective subjectification'.[4]

For the most part, women

We have written about this practice on a number of occasions,[5] and we mention it in this context to discuss the work of certain participants in our projects, for the most part, women, *work I would not identify immediately as feminist, but more as relational. These active, involved participants, these agents – 'for the most part, women' – are essential to our projects' creation of a collective subject within the process of reinventing the commons. These observations, based on the concrete evidence of experience, as well as*

data and facts, support the hypothesis here advanced: that a reinvention of the commons is a work of the relational and is different in that feminine subjectivity has an active role to play; that this work of re-conquest, re-appropriation and reconstruction needs both active spaces in which it can work and active people, agents, stakeholders in this reinvention.

The agents of this reinvention of the commons who, in our projects, are for the most part women *form a collective, elliptic subject, one that is indeterminate and unstable and does not belong to a single gender but is nevertheless found in sexual difference. To be considered, this subject can need a sort of 'realist essentialism',[6] an essentialism that is neither placed in opposition to a certain form of constructivism nor to the idea of the 'future' and 'performativeness'.*

This imagining of a collective subjectivity that reinvents the commons requires the mobilisation of feminist knowledge, such as Luce Irigaray's work on l'être-en-relation *(of women) and on sexual difference as a fundamental articulation of our relation with nature and culture.[7] To link these feminist positions and the contemporary discussion of the relational, I am going to take the example of a certain type of agency in which this nature-culture relation stands in for a production of subjectivity and the processes of individual and collective futures. The production of the commons is a process that, at the same time as a common infrastructure, produces a new collective subjectivity that is a local, relational and differential production.*

The 'relational'

The idea of the 'relational; took off in discussions in the late 1990s, notably in contemporary art after the publication of Nicolas Bourriaud's book on 'relational aesthetics'.[8] In it he discusses a way of evaluating certain works of contemporary art based on the social relations that they represent or create. He focussed above all on the socialisation of the public by these works, while ignoring the spatial-temporal relations so created and the way that these relations can evolve, affect and be affected by space. He also ignored the ethical and political aspects of this relationality and how a 'relational work' can transform its socio-spatial context.

We qualify our projects as 'relational' because they create connectivity; they stimulate desire and pleasure but also prompt political and civic responsibility on the local level, giving collectives of local residents the possibility of appropriating space in the city through daily activities (say, gardening, cooking, games or DIY).

More than the structures and forms, our architectural systems generate spatial collections, or rather agencements *(assemblage) in the sense proposed by Deleuze and Guattari. The* agencements *are characterised by the active connections between the elements understood as singularities. They constitute jigsaws of 'processes' and 'relations', rather than structures measured and systematised by theories and science.*

The 'gardening agency'

In our projects, we have initiated a specific type of agencement, *a 'gardening agency'. We have constructed with local residents cultural, social and environmental projects that include among other things, shared gardens as tools of a democratic agency of space: an agency by proximity, favourable to exchanges, mobile and cyclical, anchored in the everyday.[9] The 'gardening' characteristic of this* agency *is both metaphoric and metonymic, placing all the processes and relations constructed in a direct relation with nature and culture.*

This agency approaches environmental processes while also being adapted to small-scale, quotidian uses and practices. Our experiences have shown us that the method of action through 'gardening agency' can produce, over time, a constituent space for collective modes of functioning and local political action.

As I have already mentioned, the most active agents of this type of agencement *in our projects have been* for the most part, women. *Not only because they have been stakeholders in the gardening processes – that they were gardeners in the strict sense of the word – but also because they invested and maintained with care; they 'gardened' the infrastructure of the shared project and worked the project's shared space and time.*

This is not because they have more time than others – time for unpaid minor volunteer activities – but above all because they see an importance in these activities, as well as their political and ethical impact, an environmental or even a Guattarian 'ecosophical' impact. This shared impact opens a space in which feminine subjectivity finds its area of invention: a project that is cared for, engaged in and in which you see the results of your engagements with others. A project that teaches patience, silence and attention. As Irigaray has noted in her recent work,[10] women, for the most part, *have complex availability and motivations, both ontological and ecological, in developing 'sustainable' relations on a number of levels: with themselves and among themselves, between them and others, between them, others and the built and natural environment on local and global levels, between nature and culture in general, between spaces and ways of living.*

'Being-in-relation'

Irigaray began talking about feminine subjectivity and its capacity to be-in-relation in the 1970s. This idea of feminine subjectivity took a new twist in the 1990s with Rosi Braidotti's work on 'nomadic' subjectivity and Judith Butler's on 'performative' subjectivity.[11] Despite the large differences in position, all three have understood a particular capacity of the female subject to make herself 'available', to devote herself to and allow herself to be affected by different agencies at once (say, social, cultural, political, sexual and emotional) to create relations and be transformed by relations.

In our projects, most of the women came first to garden and after a number of years of investment began to take on responsibilities in the group, sometimes becoming engaged citizens and arriving on the 'edges of politics', as Jacques Rancière has put it.[12] Their personal construction was part of both the construction of the group and the processes that made up the project. These individual trajectories coming together led to gentle 're-territorialisations' of each project, made up of lines of flight headed towards certain types of activities and uses that have become collective, towards moments of the project's collective enunciation.

Most of the women were part of different micro-networks (friendship, shared time, self-construction, production, dissemination, and so on) and their involvement evolved over time. They became agents of different agencies, 'nodes' in the projects' branches of networks. Through this multiple and evolutive affiliation, they created differentiations, relational shifts – and decisively influenced the future of the collective project.

Rancière has remarked that the collective allows a subject that thinks of itself in relation to others to appear: 'The formation of a one that is not a self, but the relation of a self to another'.[13] *And, to follow Irigaray, I would say that even before the collective exists, these are subjects already in a position of opening towards others, in a relation with the other not yet there – 'beings-in-relation' who will initiate in the first place a collective* agencement. *The gardener has this knowledge when she finds herself faced with a field that has not yet been*

tilled, or a garden that not yet been planted. She knows how to open a shared space – a 'third space', as Irigaray would say – a space in which the other (person, plant or animal) can come with his or her own space. The gardener knows how to let herself be transformed by this relation, knows how to work both the space she shares with the other and others, the 'third space', crisscrossed by relations and networks.

It is a specific form of relationality that both de-territorialises and re-territorialises. Most women have taken part in the invention of new activities and processes in our projects, spaces and active processes, new objects of the commons (portable units, such as a library, kitchen or a participatory urban laboratory, debates, flea markets and other forms of alternative economy in ECObox or ecological processes, such as dry toilets, water butts and green roofing at 56 rue Saint-Blaise).

'Making rhizome'

Our role as architects has been to develop, sometimes initiate, then support and prop up the networks that emerge around the actions, spatial systems, processes and effects that allow both personal and collective futures, so as to seize the socio-spatial entity that arises, moves continuously, and forms new networks. In this process, our role of initiators and agents has to diminish progressively until its eventual disappearance, while at the same time the network's capacity to develop and reproduce grows. Others have then to take on the role of network gardeners.

These networks of action and affection – mechanisms of democratic spatial construction – are necessarily rhizomatic, playing on proximity, the temporal and multiplicity.

ECObox, for example, has been moved and reinstalled several times by users, and the organisational and occupational systems have been reproduced in other independent initiatives (whether citizen-based or professional) in the neighbourhood and elsewhere. We call this a rhizomatic transmission – in which the prototype has the capacity to transmit all the information necessary for its reproduction, and where the product of this transmission – the reproduction of the prototype – becomes itself a new transmission source of the information, whether independently or in a chosen relation to the original prototype. These projects' existence in different sites may only be temporary, yet the accumulation of knowledge through experience is nevertheless passed on and is reproduced in new projects that, while being new and original, carry the torch and the continuation of a same model, a similar protocol and process.

'Making rhizome' is a way of constructing the infrastructure of the commons. And, once again, it is for the most part, women, who are involved in launching and maintaining these active lines, these rhizome stalks.

As Anne Querrien has pointed out in her article about Guattari's schizoanalytical mapping, 'the rhizome' – a central idea in Deleuze and Guattari's thinking – is an 'idea that adds to that of the network – on top of those of horizontality and gradual construction – an underground dimension and a re-emergence that can be an illusion, a make-believe of a single stalk, while it is about a whole, an ensemble. Making a rhizome is about going towards the other, not as an enemy or a competitor with the idea of destruction, but in the perspective of an alliance and the construction of a temporary micro-territoriality that will soon after be shared with others, by the new offshoots of the rhizome'.[14]
In the process behind our projects, the role of rhizome gardener moves horizontally from one to another, from architects to users and users to other users.

Conviviality and resilience

So, in this making rhizome of our projects, we have worked with those who have knowledge and want to work in an invisible and underground alliance of 'little by little' propagation, that knows how to take into account time and cyclical nature, that has the patience to wait for it to grow and develop, that has both the knowledge of transmission and apprenticeship.

Ivan Ilitch talks of conviviality as an alternative to capitalist production: 'Conviviality is opposed to productivity […] productivity is conjugated with "to have"; conviviality with "to be"'.[15]

A relational and co-operative practice, such as the one we have developed, has a different temporality and a different aim to those of a neo-liberal practice: rather than looking for a material value of profit, it creates the conditions for a liberating experience that changes both the space and the subjects.

Bruno Latour's analysis of the 'social' in his Actor Network Theory (ANT) mentions the active elements that human and non-human actors share and that take on the role of 'mediators': they transport, translate and transform the content and the nature of the network's links.[16] Just as the 'gardeners', our socio-spatial and ecological systems have played the role of 'mediators' in the 'making a rhizome' of the project. For example, the system for a portable urban kitchen that could open out into a functional kitchen space in chosen places attracted the most diverse cross-section of users to the project, with their individual knowledge and motivations; it also connected the garden with other spaces in the neighbourhood and imagined spaces suggested by the recipes and ingredients that were used. Certain users, for the most part, women also invented other 'mediators': a library, flea markets, artisan markets, and so on. These mediators influenced and differentiated the nature of the project. We thus moved from gardening dominant activities and the free-use of time towards cultural, political and poetic production and distribution. These agent-users suggested new economic forms, which stressed personal exchange, reciprocity and giving (for example, 'free zones', flea markets and 'feminine' knowledge exchanges at ECObox and communal picnics, teas and film projections at Le 56).

Latour also mentions 'plug-ins' as tools that can help create and reveal agencies. He uses the analogy of these bits of software that, once installed in the system, make active what could not be seen before – plug-ins make visible what was before simply virtual. They can also make someone do something.[17] Together with other tactical systems, we began mapping the project's relational processes that had acted like plug-ins; an activity that was added to the project to help us make visible to and discuss with others the facts and things that would have otherwise remained invisible and non-articulated (for example, the evolutive roles of a person or a system, the changes in the motivations of certain users, transformation in use, and so on.) By learning the importance of these aspects, we began to work with them and consider them active elements in the project. It was this mapping that revealed the structural role of for the most part, women in the project. This mapping also allowed us to understand the entirety of the relations as the project's social and political ecology.

The network of actors and general activities in our projects also forms ecological cycles in Guattari's sense: social, environmental and mental. These activities (such as gardening, DIY construction and recycling) were developed from daily cycles that link in time people, the things at stake and spaces through shared interests and friendships. The space was thus linked to a network of users by daily cycles, which transformed it and made it more dynamic and reactive to changes. Indeed, these networks are forms of resilience within the project.

These convivial agents, women, for the most part *are carriers of a soft and resilient revolution; they are 'those who make rhizome' and re-conquer the city's territories by alliances and not by war, by transforming them into new forms of the commons, into shared spaces and temporalities. They are those who sometimes initiate and maintain – without any demands or need of gratitude – the infrastructure and ecological work of the commons.*

Translation Tom Ridgway

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1   *J. Ravel and A. Negri, 'Inventer le Commun des Hommes',* Multitudes, *31 (2008): 7.*

2   *See our discussion with Antonio Negri in* Multitudes *31, pp.17-30.*

3   *The 'commons' traditionally defined the elements in an environmental space and natural resources – say, forests, atmosphere, rivers, pasture – of which the management and use was shared by the members of a community. They were spaces that no one could own but everyone could use. The term has now been enlarged to include all resources (whether material or virtual) that are collectively shared by a population.*

4   *See F. Guattari,* La révolution moléculaire *(Paris: Edition Recherches, 1977, 1980)*

5   *See, for example, articles published by Constantin Petcou and Doina Petrescu in* Multitudes, *issues 20 and 31.*

6   *I use the term 'realist essentialism' in the sense that Alison Stone uses to analyse the much-discussed essentialism of Luce Irigaray:* 'By "realism,,, I mean the view that we can know about the world as it is independently of our practices and modes of representation. I therefore understand a realist form of essentialism to consist of the view that male and female bodies can be known to have essentially different characters, different characters which really exist, independently of how we represent and culturally inhabit these bodies. Realist essentialism, then, can equally be expressed as the view that natural differences exist, prior to our cultural activities.' *Alison Stone,* Luce Irigaray and the Philosophy of Sexual Difference, *(Cambridge: New York, Cambridge University Press), pp. 18-19.*

7   *In her Preface to* Key Writings *(2004) Irigaray writes that sexuate difference* 'first articulates nature and culture'. *Based on the ontological significance of the relationship between sex, nature and culture, she argues that* 'without working through this relation from the very beginning, we cannot succeed in entering into relation with all kinds of other, not even with the same as ourselves'. *In her more recent writings, she analyses specific expressions of this relation, which marks our personal, professional, historical, poetic and imaginary lives. The expression of sexual difference in the relations between women and men should also mark the critical thinking of sustainable environments, the management of natural resources and the development of space.*

8   *See Nicolas Bouriaud,* Relational Aesthetics *(Dijon: Les presses du réel, 2002)*

9   *See the article by Petcou and Petrescu, 'Agir Urbain: Notes transversales, observations de terrain et questions concrètes pour chacun de nous',* Multitudes, *31, pp.100-124.*

10 *See notably* To Be Two *(1997),* The Way of Love *(2002),* Sharing the World *(2008)*

11 *See Rosi Braidotti,* Nomadic Subjects *(New York: Columbia University Press,1994) Judith Buttler,* Gendre Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity, *London: Routledge 1990)*

12 *Jacques Rancière,* Aux Bords du Politique, *(Paris: La Fabrique, 1988),*

13 *ibid. p. 87.*

14 *Anne Querrien, 'Les Cartes et les ritournelles d'une panthère en ciel,* Multitudes, *34 (2008).*

15 *Ivan Ilitch,* La Convivialité, *(Paris: Seuil, 1973), p. 43.*

16 *Bruno Latour,* Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor Network Theory, *(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 204-205.*

17 *Ibid, p. 207 and passim.*

LE RHIZOME CONTRE LA DÉSERTIFICATION

ANNE QUERRIEN

A Ballykinler le village est coincé dans l'arrière cour d'un camp militaire anglais, qui occupe les plus belles portions de terrain côtier, riche en poisson et opportunités de baignades. Les villageois sont parqués dans ce qu'on pourrait appeler, en pensant aux fermes et aux châteaux d'autrefois, des *communs*, un espace pour les agents de service. Dans ces *communs*, il n'y a pas de commun au sens politique du terme, pas d'organisation collective du vivre ensemble. Tout le monde ne pense qu'à s'employer au camp, dans les multiples emplois peu qualifiés qu'il réserve, l'armée devenue de métier soudant ses membres par la perspective d'une promotion. En dehors du camp, le « landlord », propriétaire foncier et fermier, maire de la commune, veille à ce que tout reste en l'état et que lui-même puisse à l'occasion trouver dans le village les ouvriers agricoles dont il a besoin.

Deux forces de changement: la guerre et les femmes

Deux forces, qui n'ont rien à voir entre elles, travaillent ce paysage assoupi, que nous avons eu la chance de voir sous un très beau soleil. L'armée britannique parquée ici pour surveiller les allées et venues entre les deux Irlandes, n'a plus beaucoup de travail local, maintenant que la paix est signée. Pourtant des incidents sporadiques rappellent que la mission n'est peut-être pas complètement terminée. En tout cas elle ne fait plus l'essentiel : les yeux sont fixés sur l'Afghanistan, et le camp, comme la plupart des camps militaires anglais, entraîne les soldats à partir là-bas, à aller y porter la démocratie dans le respect de la culture locale. Du coup ce camp en Irlande prend un nouvel intérêt ; son face à face avec le village ne doit plus se borner à une aspiration fonctionnelle de ses forces vives ; il doit se servir des différences culturelles présentes, si minimes soit-elle, pour s'exercer à les supporter et à les transformer en facteurs positifs de son action. La réception de la « mission européenne Culture 2007» de Rhyzom est l'occasion pour le commandant du camp d'exposer ces nouvelles responsabilités culturelles mondiales, tandis qu'un de ses adjoints insiste sur le bienfait de la video et des différentes techniques d'auto-enregistrement pour mieux analyser les conduites interculturelles aujourd'hui de rigueur.

L'autre force, autrement plus puissante culturellement, même si moins dotée en moyens financiers, c'est l'émancipation des femmes. Anne-Marie est une mère de sept enfants, issue du village, qui a fait des études d'arts plastiques une fois ses enfants suffisamment grands, et qui par ailleurs a été femme de ménage dans ce camp, et a pu en apprécier toutes les potentialités notamment paysagères. Elle a envie d'en reconquérir le territoire par la douceur, et l'art, et espère bien que le gouvernement anglais trouvera la différence culturelle suffisamment dérisoire pour ne pas maintenir ce camp dans son arsenal de lieux de formation

anthropologiques. Tel Ulysse à Troie elle entend se servir de l'art visuel avec ruse pour retourner le village comme un gant et transformer le camp en un espace collectif et gratuit de plages et de loisirs.

Le quotidien féminin est-il de l'art ?

Ce mouvement artistique féministe à l'état naissant fascine par son originalité, mais il laisse aussi dubitatif sur son caractère réellement artistique. Une longue discussion a eu lieu dans les locaux de PS2 sur une autre initiative de femmes, jugée culturellement ratée : pour un festival de rue à Belfast, des jeunes artistes ont été recrutés à l'Ecole d'Art locale ; quatre femmes se sont présentées, pas d'hommes ; elles ont bien étudié la rue et travaillé avec les commerçants ; le jour du festival, les boutiques de cette rue, connue pour être arpentée par des hommes un peu alcoolisés, avaient été transformées pour la plupart en salons de massage, de coiffure, de manucure, bref tout pour le bien être des femmes. Une belle affiche aux couleurs violette et rose annonçait cette transformation temporaire de la rue en salons pour les femmes. Cette action était-elle de l'art ou du même niveau de vulgarité que les journaux féminins ? Bonne question. L'art visuel ne consiste-t-il pas à transformer l'image d'une réalité en une autre, et à rendre visible l'invisible, ici la secrète présence des femmes dans cette rue ? Une attitude assez proche de celle des ONG féministes en Afghanistan.

Création culturelle d'un espace politique local

Cet art visuel féminin est-il politique ? Dans son brillant exposé sur l'action de l'armée anglaise en Afghanistan, le commandant du camp nous a glissé que les officiers devenaient « mayors » des villages où ils intervenaient, tant ils se sentaient seuls en capacité d'organiser le vivre ensemble local compte tenu des différentes factions tribales et religieuses. Je lui ai fait remarquer gentiment qu'en France en tout cas les maires étaient élus. Mais qu'en est-il à Ballylinkler ? Le maire landlord invité au déjeuner donné par les femmes sur le terrain de jeu prêté pour l'occasion ne semble guère soucieux de transformation culturelle locale. Après avoir déjeuné et conversé poliment avec les personnes assises près de lui, il s'est éclipsé poliment. La double domination de l'espace local par le camp et par sa ferme ne lui pose pas problème.

Anne-Marie doit donc créer un espace politique local par d'autres moyens, hors de son espace domestique puisque le soutien de son mari n'est que partiel. Utilisant des caravanes comme chambres d'appoint dans son jardin, elle a acheté une caravane sur laquelle elle a inscrit « Centre culturel communautaire de Ballykinler », qu'elle tire sur différents terrains du village selon les occasions. Plusieurs femmes du village l'ont aidée à la décorer avec des fleurs et des oiseaux en céramique ou des décalcomanies. La caravane est meublée comme un salon pour tenir le rôle d'espace public à gestion privée dans la meilleure tradition des analyses de l'espace public bourgeois d'Habermas à nos jours. Le jour de la visite de la « mission européenne

Culture 2007», la caravane a été placée au bord du terrain de foot, signe visible d'une emprise temporaire de l'espace des femmes sur un de ceux qui est le plus pratiqué par les hommes. Le positionnement en bord de terrain signale qu'il ne s'agit pas d'hostilités mais de cohabitation. Anne-Marie a loué aussi pour la circonstance le Space Shuttle produit par PS2 dans lequel est rangé tout ce que le village a jugé nécessaire de sortir pour le repas. Des drapeaux rouge, jaune, bleu et rose ont été plantés sur le conteneur, pas de vert car c'est la couleur de l'Irlande.

Le désir de culture et les moyens locaux

Un déjeuner fastueux est offert à la « mission européenne » par Anne Marie et des femmes du village qui participent à son projet. Toutes se disent retraitées, et à la différence du maire, assistent aux présentations des travaux des artistes présents dans la mission. L'exposé de Public Works sur la recherche d'objets pouvant s'inscrire dans l'histoire du village, avec la présentation d'une cuiller moderne en faïence, incite l'une d'entre elles à aller dans le Space Shuttle et à en ressortir avec ses propres œuvres : des tapisseries sur canevas à dessins préformés dans les magasins. Une autre femme nous entraîne dans son jardin non loin de là : le devant de la maison est occupé par toute une histoire de charrette et de personnages peu compréhensibles pour les étrangers, et l'arrière montre des recherches sur la gestion de l'eau et les plantes de lointaines origines. Le désir de culture est déjà là, agi avec les moyens du bord, ceux des magasins locaux, qui ne mobilisent pas de savoir-faire artistiques et pratiques.
Ces femmes sont assez âgées. Mais Anne-Marie a un autre projet pour attirer les jeunes vers la culture, et là, à sa manière d'en parler, il s'agira d'abord de garçons. Elle a acheté une autre caravane pour faire une salle de cinéma et des anciens sièges de voiture pour la garnir. Elle pense que monter quasiment en voiture pour voir des films va donner envie. Elle va d'abord retaper la caravane avec certains d'entre eux. Et puis elle espère petit à petit donner ainsi un lieu de reconnaissance à tous ceux qui traînent par là.

Le devenir du camp et du villlage

Après le *déjeuner sur l'herbe,* nous discutons tous — femmes du village, mission européenne, PS2 — sur ce que nous pourrions faire de ce camp anglais, comment le récupérer pour le village. Faut-il l'observer attentivement, savoir ce qu'il y a dedans précisément, évaluer ce qu'il peut nous offrir, ou faut-il y faire entrer progressivement des caravanes qui y introduiront des éléments culturels nouveaux ? Forts de l'expérience de Park Fiction, nos amis de Hambourg proposent de créer un espace où les villageois pourraient exposer leurs désirs comme eux l'ont fait ? Mais faut-il attendre l'hypothétique départ de l'armée pour récupérer l'espace et l'occuper ? Comment s'opposer à la vente à des promoteurs qui feront de cet espace en bord de mer un espace de loisirs et maintiendront le village dans sa subordination ? Quels types d'action correspondent aux capacités de ces vieilles femmes et de ces jeunes que nous n'avons pas vus, et comment pouvons-nous contribuer à ce que ces femmes, et d'abord Anne-Marie, accroissent leur puissance d'agir ?

L'enjeu n'est pas de se faire reconnaître chacune comme artiste à sa manière, comme il pourrait paraître au premier abord. Il est beaucoup plus important : la fermeture probable du camp militaire non seulement privera la plupart des adultes du camp de leur emploi, surtout elle entraînera la fermeture des réseaux urbains d'eau, de gaz, d'électricité qui permettent la vie confortable de tout un chacun. Souhaitez le remplacement du camp par un village de vacances pour étrangers est une option dont la faisabilité n'est pas évidente. Elle entraînerait le maintien du village dans l'aliénation politique qui le caractérise. Mais le

village peut-il vivre de manière autonome, alors qu'il a été construit en adjacence au camp, qu'il ne dispose d'aucun patrimoine historique, qu'il est fait de pavillons sans aucun intérêt architectural ? Qu'il s'agisse d'un camp militaire ou d'un établissement de monoproduction industrielle, la problématique est à peu près là même. Les personnes qui se sont établies là avec leur famille, dans la dépendance spatiale et salariale, sont condamnées à inventer une nouvelle vie, ou à ne rien transmettre, se sentent coupables d'avoir induit leur descendance en erreur pour le mirage d'un salaire minable. La problématique de Ballykinler est celle des familles prolétaires rurales de tous les vieux pays industrialisés. Des trésors d'imagination sont à rassembler pour tenter d'y proposer des réponses.

Les limites d'une reconstruction autarchique

Bien sûr on pourra recueillir l'eau de pluie, produire de l'énergie solaire et de l'énergie éolienne, recycler les déchets et les matériaux de construction comme le propose le projet R-urban de aaa, membre aussi de ce réseau européen Rhyzom qui remue le désir de ceux qui y ont adhéré. Bien sûr on pourra vivre de manière quasiment autonome sur ce territoire rural qui jouxte la mer et on pourra profiter de ses poissons, de ses coquillages, comme au Moyen Age. Mais on ne pourra pas faire l'impasse d'une culture à laquelle toutes les familles ont participé et dont il reste des traces dans toutes les maisons : cartes postales, gravures, dentelles, tissus, poupées, plantes exotiques. Le monde est présent à Ballykinler et parle à ses habitants, les fait rêver. La paix revenue en Irlande, le camp militaire commence à être une aubaine, un branchement direct sinon sur le monde, du moins sur l'Afghanistan, une contrée lointaine qui tire les frontières de Ballyklinker bien au delà de ce qu'elles sont actuellement.

Le devenir culture-monde de Ballylinker

Pour l'heure, ce dont il s'agit c'est d'inscrire Ballykinler en Europe, de le dé-localiser non pas au sens d'envoyer sa production ailleurs – c'est déjà plus ou moins programmé- mais d'ouvrir sa réalité à l'ensemble des localités qui s'y croisent de fait ou en imagination, à faire de sa singularité le sujet d'une histoire collective, jouable comme telle à plusieurs. Seules les institutions culturelles ont la liberté de le faire, le droit de reconnaître entre pairs une pratique comme artiste, sans recourir à des procédures formelles, et de lui donner des moyens de continuer. Anne-Marie, résidente Ballynkinler avec sa famille, n'est sans doute pas dans une résidente d'artiste en cet endroit. Sa présence tient du coup de la bonne volonté, et sa présence dans le réseau Rhyzom du miracle. Il s'agirait de la conforter et de la mettre en relation avec d'autres histoires avec lesquelles elle peut s'associer. Non seulement la production d'objets locaux proposée par Public Works, ou la production de désirs sur l'espace du camp proposée par Park Fiction, ou le travail de mémoire des lieux désertés proposé par Fiona Wood, non seulement l'échange avec des expériences déjà en cours, mais aussi l'offre de résidences d'artistes aux écoles européennes en adjacence auxquelles s'est développé Rhyzom, mais aussi le lien avec le programme canadien de recherches sur les « villes résilientes » qui s'est développé dans les villes désertées par la pêche et la mono-industrie, mais aussi le lien avec des films, documentaires ou de fiction, comme « Local Hero », où Dustin Hoffmann joue le représentant d'une industrie pétrolière qui veut révolutionner la vie locale, et a la fin, le lien avec le monde, afin de devenir aussi peut-être un lieu d'accueil pour les Afghans.

Ce que montre l'expérience de Ballykinler, comme celle dans laquelle se débat Dustin Hoffmann, c'est que le local est en fait la terre commune d'un palimpseste d'histoires qui s'y superposent ou qui s'y heurtent.

Un camp militaire n'a rien de local, il est un point dans un réseau impérial. Et pourtant il affecte le local au point d'y créer une dépendance quasi totale. C'est en superposant plein d'histoires d'envergures équivalentes qu'on peut créer un nouveau bras de levier pour soulever le territoire pacifiquement et lui trouver des nouvelles significations. Le mouvement d'émancipation des femmes, quel que soit leur âge, ne peut y suffire, et pour lui trouver des alliés il faut des ressources qui viennent du dehors, du milieu de la culture et de l'art notamment dans sa capacité à construire des ressources propres à mobiliser l'imaginaire.

Les images venues du passé, ou d'autres territoires parcourus, sorties de leurs réserves par les vieilles femmes, sont l'amorce d'un tel travail. Mais elles sont autant de fragments, les signes de pratiques obsolètes ou dévalorisées, elles ne forment pas un commun qui exige pour être produit de nouvelles pratiques, de nouvelles alliances.

Rhyzom, une proposition venue de Deleuze et Guattari

L'équipe animatrice du réseau Rhyzom hésite aujourd'hui à garder ce titre, qui évoque les plantes à résurgence et non à racine, et renvoie à un monde rural que nous ne trouvons plus sur notre passage. L'hypothèse que des savoirs-faire ruraux anciens pourraient être réinvestis dans l'urbain s'estompe au fil des études de cas. A Ballykinler aussi les savoir-faire ruraux sont gardés secrets dans le domaine du landlord et la population met en œuvre des savoir-faire artisanaux et de services, qu'on peut trouver dans toutes les zones pavillonnaires attenant aux villes. Et pourtant avec son camp militaire et son village d'agents de service, Ballykinler a une dimension terrienne très forte : son ciel, ses constructions basses, son herbe, le sens de la mer non visible au delà. On se rappelle la peinture de Rothko dans toute son abstraction : la terre, le ciel, les hommes comme une croûte plus ou moins épaisse, une croûte à laquelle nous appartenons et dont nous devons faire quelque chose, et qu'il magnifie par la couleur. Les conditions de l'art sont là, mais il n'y en a encore aucun. Ce n'est pas que Ballykinler ne soit pas saturé par l'artifice. Au contraire le préfabriqué s'étale partout. Mais ce préfabriqué est sans art, sans ligne de fuite par rapport à la fonction, sans élévation. Il y a tout à faire pour la conscience artistique émergente, celle d'un mouvement de femmes par exemple.

Qu'est-ce qu'un rhizome pour les philosophes Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari :

> « n'importe quel point d'un rhizome peut être connecté avec n'importe quel autre et doit l'être ». J'ajouterais : peut-être connecté avec n'importe quel point du monde. Le rhizome dans lequel surgit Anne-Marie se ramifie bien au delà de l'Irlande: les exemples sont convoqués d'Allemagne, de Turquie, et pourraient l'être demain du Canada, d'Inde ou d'Afrique pour examiner les solutions institutionnelles propres à combattre la désertification annoncée. A l'inverse les solutions ici trouvées ici peuvent se propager par le réseau et ses multiples segments. De petites solutions gérables par peu de personnes. Un réseau de micro-entreprises contre la faillite de la grande entreprise en réseau.

> C'est une multiplicité qui se met en place, agencée par une actrice principale et quelques accompagnatrices, une multiplicité qui ne peut être rabattue sur ce qu'elle semble au départ, l'émancipation tardive de quelques femmes plus ou moins âgées, mais qui englobe tout ceux qu'elle touche dans la recherche de solutions alternatives à la production du désert, à la concentration. Le désert est beau s'il s'observe de haut et de loin, s'il se traverse, il se vit mal au quotidien. Ballylinker est-il pris dans un devenir oasis ? Serait-ce là son plan de consistance, une boutonnière dans la normalité irlandaise, attachée en feston d'un camp militaire ?

Le rhizome peut être rompu, il reprend plus loin, il est déterritorialisé, il cherche sur toute la surface de la terre, et il resurgit là, porteur de toutes les informations qu'il a captées dans sa course, et parmi lesquelles l'agencement collectif local sélectionne ce qui lui plaît.

Ce rhizome n'obéit à aucun modèle prédéterminé et ne prend pas la même figure dans aucun de ses points d'émergence. Il n'est pas à recopier. Il trace des lignes d'intensité, il fait vibrer les valeurs qui l'animent. Mais il n'a pas de stades successifs, de plan de développement. Il prélève des opportunités sur l'environnement. Le rhizome est comme l'herbe qu'on trouve partout à la surface de la terre, toujours pareille vu massivement, toujours différente observée en chacun de ses brins, milliard d'individus dressés par une même passion de vivre, se redressant autant qu'on les coupe et les écrase. L'Irlande est un pays d'herbe et de mer, de bocage et d'élevage, parsemé de villes et de villages, travaillé par la démocratie, les processus de paix, les programmes culturels du vivre ensemble. Un pays plein de ressources pour aborder notre nouvelle période de désertification organisée, pour lui résister.

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THE RHIZOME AGAINST DESERTIFICATION

ANNE QUERRIEN

The village of Ballykinler is wedged behind the rear parade ground of a British military base that occupies the most beautiful portions of the coastal land, rich in fish and swimming opportunities. The villagers are penned in what could be called – thinking of the farms and castles of yesteryear – commons, a space for the service workers. In these commons, there is nothing common in the political sense of the term, no collective organisation of communal living. Everybody thinks only of working in the base, in the multiple low-skilled jobs inside, the army having become a trade binding together its members through the hope of a promotion. Outside the camp, the local landlord – property owner, farmer, and mayor – makes sure that everything remains as it should and that he too can find agricultural workers in the village when needs be.

Two forces of change: war and women

Two forces, with nothing in common, worked this sleepy landscape, which we had the chance to see under a beautiful sun. The British army, penned in here to keep an eye on the comings and goings between the two Irelands, no longer has much local work now that the peace deal has been signed. Nevertheless, sporadic incidents remind it that the mission is perhaps not completely over. In any case, it now only does the bare minimum; all eyes are fixed on Afghanistan, and the camp, like most British army bases, trains soldiers who are going over there to bring democracy while respecting the local culture. So this base in Northern Ireland has a new relevance; its face-off with the village is no longer limited to the functional aspirations of its forces; it has to use the current cultural differences, however minimal they are, and practice putting up with them and transforming them into positive factors for its work. The visit of the 'European Mission Culture 2007' by Rhyzom was the occasion for the base commander to show these new global cultural responsibilities, while one of his officers insisted on the benefits of video and the different self-recording techniques used to better analyse the intercultural conduits so de rigueur today.

The other force, far more culturally powerful, even if less well financed, was the liberation of women. Anne-Marie is the mother of seven children, born in the village, who studied fine art once her children were sufficiently grown up (and who, by the way, was a cleaning lady on the base) and was able to appreciate all its potential, notably the landscape. She wants to reconquer the territory, softly and through art, and hopes that the British government will find the cultural difference here sufficiently derisory so as not to keep the base in its arsenal of anthropological training spaces. Like Ulysses at Troy, she means to combine visual art and cunning and turn the village inside out like a glove by transforming the base into a free collective space of beaches and leisure.

Is the female quotidian art?

This newborn feminist artistic movement is fascinating in its originality, but rather more doubtful in its genuinely artistic character. A long discussion takes place in the PS² space about the initiative of certain women, which is seen as having been a cultural failure: for a street festival in Belfast, young artists were recruited at the local art school; four women showed up, no men; they carefully studied the street and worked with local business owners; on the day of the festival almost all the shops in the street, which was known as a hangout for inebriated men, were transformed into massage parlours, hair and nail salons; in other words, everything for a woman's well-being. A pretty poster in violet and pink announced the street's temporary transformation into spaces for women. Was this day art, or simply as vulgar as most women's magazines? Good question. Isn't visual art about transforming the image of one reality into another, making the invisible visible, in this case the secret presence of women in this street? An attitude not far from that of feminist NGOs in Afghanistan.

Cultural creation of a local political space

Is this feminine visual art political? In his brilliant exposé of the work of the British army in Afghanistan, the camp commander confided that the officers became 'mayors' of the villages in which they intervened, and they felt alone in their capacity as organisers of local life who had to take into account the different tribal and religious factions. I gently remarked to him that in France in any case mayors were elected. But what about Ballykinler? The mayor-landlord – invited to a lunch given by the women held on the playground lent for the occasion – hardly seemed worried by this local cultural transformation. After having eaten and talked politely with the people seated near to him, he politely took his leave. The double domination of the local space by the base and his farm posed him no problem.

Anne-Marie thus had to create a local political space through other means, outside her domestic space, as her husband's support is not total. She was already using caravans as extra bedrooms in her garden, so she bought another on which she wrote, 'Ballykinler Cultural Community Centre', which she pitches on different bits of land around the village according to the occasion. Other women in the village helped her decorate it with ceramic flowers and birds and transfers. The caravan is furnished like a salon in order to play the role of a privately managed public space, as in the best traditions of analysis of bourgeois public space from Habermas to today. The day of the visit by European Culture Mission 2007, the caravan was parked next to a football pitch, a visible sign of the influence of women's space over one more used to men. The position on the edge of the pitch, however, signalled that it was not a hostile gesture but a cohabitation. For the occasion Anne-Marie also rented PS²'s Space Shuttle in which were arranged everything that the village judged necessary to get out for the meal. Red, yellow, blue and pink flags had been planted on the container; no green, though. That's the colour of Ireland.

The desire for culture and the local means

A sumptuous lunch was offered to the 'European mission' by Anne-Marie and the women of the village taking part in the project. All said they were retired, and unlike the mayor, listened to the presentations of the work by the artists present in the mission. The public works talk on the search for objects that could become part of the village's history, with the presentation of a modern china spoon, encouraged one of the women to go to the Space Shuttle and come back with one of her own works: a tapestry work of pre-drawn pictures. Another woman took us to her garden not far away: the front garden had been taken over by a sort of story of a cart and characters difficult to understand for foreigners, and the back garden showed a certain research into the management of water and plants from far-off climes. The desire for culture is already there, acting with the means at hand, those of the local shops, which do not rally artistic or practical savoir-faire.

These women were of a certain age. But Anne-Marie had another project to attract the young to culture and, hearing her speak about it, it was mainly about the boys. She had bought another caravan to create a cinema and old car seats to fill it. Her idea: they might come and see films if they felt like they were climbing into a car. So she started by renovating the caravan with some of them and was hoping little by little to give all those who hung about there a place they could identify with.

The future of the base and the village

After lunch, we all discussed – women of the village, European mission, PS² – what we could do with this British base, how to recover the village. Was it necessary to watch it attentively, know what was inside precisely, evaluate what it could offer us, or simply progressively enter with the caravans that would introduce new cultural elements? After their experience with Park Fiction, our friends from Hamburg suggested creating a space in which the villagers could expose their desires, as they had done.[1] But was it necessary to wait for the hypothetical departure of the army to recover the space and occupy it? How could a sale to developers be opposed, which would maintain the village in its subordination, by those people who would make this space by the sea one of leisure? What types of action could correspond to these old women and the young people we had not seen, and how could we help these women – particularly Anne-Marie – and increase their power to act?

What was at stake was not only being recognised as an artist, each in his or her own way, as it might have appeared at first glance. It was far more important: the probable closure of the military base would not only deprive most of the adults in the base of their jobs, but above all would lead to the closure of urban networks of water, gas and electricity that allow everyone to live comfortably. Wishing for the base's replacement by a holiday village for foreigners was an option whose feasibility was not immediately obvious. It would continue the political alienation of the village, which had always so characterised it. But could the village survive in an autonomous way, even if it had been built as an adjunct of the base, even if it had no historical heritage, even if it is made up of houses of absolutely no architectural interest? Whether it is a military base or an industrial facility for monoproduction, the problematic is pretty much the same. The people who have settled there with their families, in spatial and salarial dependence, are condemned to invent a new life or transmit nothing and feel guilty about having misled their offspring with the mirage of a pitiful salary. Ballykinler's problematic is the same as working-class rural families in all the old industrialised countries. Treasures of the imagination needed to be collected in an attempt to offer some answers.

The limits of self-sustaining reconstruction

Of course rainwater could be collected, solar and wind energy be produced, waste and construction material recycled, as in the R-urban project proposed by aaa, another member of the Rhyzom European network, which stirs up the desire of those who have joined it. Of course, it could be possible to live almost completely autonomously on this rural land that adjoins the sea and benefits from fish and seafood, just as in the Middle Ages. But a culture shared by all the families can't be ignored, not when there are traces of it in all the houses: lace, fabric, dolls, exotic plants. The rest of the world is already present in Ballykinler and speaks to its inhabitants, makes them dream. Peace has returned to Northern Ireland; the military base is beginning to be a godsend, a direct link to, if not the world, then at least Afghanistan, a faraway country that stretches the borders of Ballykinler far away from where they now are.

Ballykinler's future-culture world

So for the moment, it is about enrolling Ballykinler in Europe, to de-localise it, not in the sense of sending its production elsewhere – that is pretty much already planned – but opening its reality to all the localities that cross it in fact or imagination, to make its singularity the subject of a collective history, feasible at least for a few people. Only cultural institutions have the freedom to do this, the right to acknowledge art practice between equals without falling back on formal procedures, and giving each other the means to continue. Anne-Marie, a resident of Ballykinler with her family, is probably not in an artists' residence in this place. Her presence is about good will, and her presence in the Rhyzom network a miracle. It is about comforting her and putting her in touch with other stories with which she can associate. Not only in the production of local objects suggested by public works, or the production of desires on the base as suggested by Park Fiction, or the commemorative work on abandoned spaces suggested by Fiona Woods, not only the exchange with experiments already running, but also the offers of artists' residences in European schools in parallel with which Rhyzom has developed, but also the link with the Canadian research programme on 'resilient cities' that has developed in towns abandoned by fishing and mono-industry, but also the link to films, documentaries and fiction, such as Local Hero, in which Peter Riegert plays the representative of an oil baron who wants to revolutionise local life and, in the end, the link to the world, so as to become perhaps a guest centre for Afghans.[2]

What the Ballykinler experiment shows, just like the one in which Peter Riegert debates, is that the local is in fact the common ground of a palimpsest of stories that lie one on top of another and crash into each other. A military base has nothing local about it; it is one point in an imperial network. And yet, it affects the local to the point of creating an almost total dependence. It is in the layering of lots of stories of equivalent scales that it is possible to create a new bar to lift the territory peacefully and find new significations for it. The movement of women's liberation, whatever their age, is not enough, and for it to find allies it must have resources that come from outside, from culture and art, notably in their capacity to construct their own resources to inspire the imagination.

Images from the past or from other territories visited, released from their cages by the old women, are the primer for such work. But they are also fragments, signs of obsolete and devalued practices; they do not form a commons that demands new practices and new alliances be produced.

Rhyzom, a proposition from Deleuze and Guattari

The coordinating team behind Rhyzom is unsure today whether it wants to keep the name, which brings to mind emergent plants rather than roots, and reflects a rural world we no longer find on our travels. The hypothesis that ancient rural savoir-faire could be reintroduced to the urban environment faded with each case study. In Ballykinler, too. Rural savoir-faire is kept secret on the landlord's estate and the local population implements the kind of artisanal and service-based savoir-faire that can be found in any suburban tract next to cities. And yet, with its military base and its village of service workers, Ballykinler has a strong land-based dimension: its sky, its low buildings, its grass, the feeling of the invisible sea over there. It is reminiscent of a Rothko painting in all its abstraction: the earth, the sky, humans as a more or less thick crust, a crust we all belong to and with which we have to do something, one magnified by colour. The conditions for art are in place, but there is not yet any art. It is not simply that Ballykinler is not saturated by artifice. On the contrary, the prefabricated is everywhere. But this prefabricated is without art, without perspective in relation to its function, without elevation. Everything to do to form an emerging artistic conscience, that of a women's movement, for example, is yet to be done.

What is a rhizome for the philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari?

'Any point of a rhizome can be connected to any other part, and has to be.'[3] I would add: perhaps connected with any point in the world. The rhizome in which Anne-Marie has sprung up could branch out far beyond Ireland: examples can be found in Germany, Turkey, and could perhaps be found tomorrow in Canada, India or Africa, to examine the institutional solutions to fight the foretold desertification. The solutions found here, however, can spread through the network and its multiple parts. Small manageable solutions involving a few people. A network of micro-businesses against the failure of networked big business.

It is a multiplicity that is implemented, organised by a principle actor and a number of accomplices, a multiplicity that can make do with what it seems to be at first – the belated liberation of some women of a certain age – but which includes all those it touches in the search for alternative solutions to the production of the desert and the military camp. The desert is beautiful if it is seen from on high and afar, but if crossed it is difficult to survive on a daily basis. Does Ballykinler have a future as an oasis? Would its plan for substance lie there? As a bright spot in Northern Irish normality, attached like a

festoon to a military base?

A rhizome can be broken, but it regrows further along. It is deterritorialised; it searches in the earth and re-emerges elsewhere, a carrier of all the information that it has captured on its journey, and among which the local collective agencement *selects what it likes.*

This rhizome follows no predetermined model and does not look the same at any two emergence points. It is not to be copied. It traces intense lines; it rouses the values it brings to life. But it does not have successive stages, a development plan. It takes samples of the opportunities in its environment. The rhizome is like the grass we find everywhere on the surface of the Earth, always the same when viewed as a whole, always different when each one of its blades is observed, billions of individuals trained with the same passion to live, getting back up no matter how much they are cut down or crushed. Northern Ireland is a country of grass and sea, bogs and farms, dotted with cities and villages, worked by democracy, the peace process, cultural programmes on living together. A country full of resources to tackle our new period of organised desertification, to resist it.

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[1] See, [http://www.parkfiction.org/]

[2] EF for Canadian research programme; Bill Forsyth (dir), Local Hero, (UK: 20th Century Fox, 1983).

AGGRESSIVE COSINESS EMBEDDED ARTISTS VS. INTERVENTIONIST RESIDENTS

CHRISTOPH SCHÄFER

It was in the early 1990s that I discussed the term 'interventionist' for the first time. Curator Sabine B. Vogel had used the term to describe the work of artists who she had invited to a group show in the Vienna Secession, Oppositionen & Schwesternfelder. Dan Peterman, Joe Scanlan and the minimal club were part of the exhibition, as was I. The Wochenklausur was working next door on their very first project. In contrast to them, we, the artists in the group show, were strongly opposed to the term 'intervention', and pointed at the history of the word in Futurist circles, who distinguished the anti-war Futurists from the pro-war Futurists - the interventionists.
Later, with the war in Yugoslavia building up, the term became part of the green new-speak, rhetorically camouflaging the NATO bombings. At the same time it made a career in the lingo of NGOs, along with a banalised handbook breed of systems theory, to adapt social work to the neoliberal reality of decreasing financial support. 'Crisis intervention' is the word favoured in this milieu, and I believe it is not by chance, that the languages of the military, of politicians, NGOs, artists and management consultants become alike.
Now we, a group of artists and architects connected to the EU-funded Rhyzom project, is driving through a military camp in Ballykinler, a small village near Belfast, and home of the British Army regiment '2 Rifles'. Here, in Northern Ireland, cities and communities are still divided in the year 2010. In Belfast so called 'peace walls', 4 to 6 meters high, separate Loyalist from Catholic areas.

Feeling hundred years of history

With us in the minibus is artist Anne Marie Dillon, who lives and works in Ballykinler - and was never before allowed to enter the army base . But today we are treated in a different manner, as our group of international artists is operating under the identity of EU culture.
A 2-Rifles-Regiment officer with communicative skills welcomes us with tea, biscuits and an introduction, emphasising the changed role soldiers have today. The troops just returned from operations in Afghanistan. In a few weeks they will go for training in Kenya.
The officer has prepared a slide show for us EU culture guys, stressing the cultural competences of his troops. A slide entitled 'What did we do?' informed us about the extended concept of a soldiers task - 'Soldier First' it said, 'but also: Spokesman, Policeman, Humanitarian, Diplomat, Mayor'. While slides of kneeling Soldiers discussing with Afghans were shown, the officer explained:

It is something you normally don't think about doing as a soldier. Discuss questions like: where the school should be, where local care should be delivered - within a local community… When you go to a place where there isn't a structure in place - although you are not making the decisions - you are the one corralling this together. To say: Where are we? How are we going to do this? Getting them to make the decisions. But actually providing that forum, and the resource, to make these things happen.

Picture of soldier speaking with Afghan children

Apparently, the Rifles had been transformed into a regiment of armed social workers, a kind of Wochenklausur in uniform - equipped with soft skills to make the locals participate.
Cultural Training is really important. And it's something we put an awful lot of effort into, to understand the local culture, to understand the way you are perceived, and that everything you do influences other people. It is being able to be in a completely different culture, and being able to understand, what you are doing. And also - not all of this culture is the same - people have different viewpoints locally. We're calling it The Human Terrain, in lack of a better phrase. When you arrive in a new area, in Afghanistan - and the same is true in Iraq - trying to get a feel for hundreds of years of history. Different bits - why so-and-so isn't talking to so-and-so, and never put these two people into one room together… - all of that - we're asking an awful lot of our people, to get that right. It's a key thing of what we do - because one wrong meeting, one wrong thing that you say can put you back a long way. Feeling, cultural sensitivity, accepting difference, self-reflexivity - not much and the officer and us would have gotten deeper into an open exchange about tools and methods between interventionist practitioners…
And this is not by chance: There is an instrumentalising spirit going through a certain breed of public art projects. After shaking off the restrictions of the white cube exhibition space, there seems to be an irresistible urge to re-oedipalise oneself by emulating the style, perspective and scale of values of a social service provider, or, even more problematic, that of a provider of economic solutions. 'Art in context', 'mediation', 'target groups', 'empowerment', 'success control', a clean separation between us and them, the normal people, the locals - this is the terminology used in the proposal prose of NGOs and New Genre Public artists alike. I hate all this. I think, these words represent a totally corrupt attitude to the world. So

when I wrote my first flyer for Park Fiction back in 1995, I used the phrase, 'Interventionist Residents', to describe the activities of our group. And an interventionist resident group is who we met in Ballykinler.

Join the Caravan of Love (Stand up! Stand up! Stand up!)

I refuse to think about Anne Marie Dillon and The Forever Young Pensioner's work in 'effective' terms. Yes, they have created a tool, a weapon, a machine. Yes, they are a group explicitly integrating Catholics and Protestants. Yes, their work does escape given categories of artwork. And yet, that is nothing less than the classic task of art since the Renaissance - to redefine, with each work, what the boundaries of art are. To test the limits and go over the border, when the need arises. Exactly that is what the work manages to achieve.

A.M. Dillon and the Forever Young Pensioners demand a community centre for Ballykinler. Instead of complaining about the lack of building, they started the community centre already - in a used caravan. They park it in different places in town, place chairs around it when the weather is fine, make tea. And discuss. Maybe this began for practical or propagandistic reasons. But it has gone far beyond this - the Forever Young Pensioner's caravan speaks a symbolic language that tackles the big social and political issues and the deep cultural frictions at stake. The caravan is decorated with an exuberant collection of ornaments: sculpted flowers and birds, porcelain animals and angels. Inside, the seats are padded in rose pattern, and the roses have also found their way to the outside of the caravan. The sweet ornaments and heavy bouquets don't just stay snug in the secure privacy of the interior - they're winding vine-like to the outside, they cover and decorate the hub cap, the coachwork. Groups of delicate ceramic birds congregate on the rooftop, peep around corners. The flowery CI covers chairs and tables placed outside the caravan. Yes, this work is more a rhizome - than a 'work'.

All this would be remarkable, even in a different, less politically contested context, as a work of art in its own right, transgressing the border between the private and public (a quality, which, in the humble view of the author, is a sign of greatness in an artwork, be it David's 'Marat', Gordon Matta Clarke's 'Bingo' House).

The Ballykinler Community Centre Caravan, thus, turns the intimate, the feminine, outside. The ornament - which, according to Adolf Loos' modernist patriarchal doctrine - is a crime.[2]

But the meaning of the caravan goes even deeper. What do you do in a country, where the classical routes of political self-organisation and militant collectivity have gone so far, for such a long time, that they have lost their integrity, their emancipatory potential has been all used up?

A.M. Dillon and the Forever Young Pensioners suggest new ways, how to voice dissent, without treading down the same old beaten track. They constitute a parallel space of exchange, a centre on the move.

The Pensioner's style of 'aggressive cosiness' renders unspoilt forms of collectivity - the private tea party - accessible - as a source for political action. A winding rose - that has thorns.

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[1] See, [http://www.parkfiction.org/]

[2] See Adolf Loos's 'Ornament and Crime' essay published originally in 1908.

KENT MÜCADELESİ HAKKI VE BAŞKA OLASİLİKLAR

ERDOĞAN YİLDİZ

1.Bölüm

ERDOĞAN YİLDİZ, BIZE İSTANBUL'DAKİ GECEKONDULAŞMA SÜRECİNİ ANLATİR MİSİN?

Aslında İstanbul'da gecekondulaşma süreci 1950'li, 60'lı yıllarda başlıyor. O dönemlerde ciddi anlamda hem Anadolu'da tarımda işsizlik oranının artması, hem de İstanbul'un bir sanayi kenti olması bu gecekondu mahallelerinin oluşmasındaki en önemli etkenler. En azından Anadolu yakasında E5 Karayolu'nun altında büyük sanayi havzalarının olması, büyük fabrikaların olması ve E5 Karayolu'nun üst tarafında da dağ başlarının, kamu arazilerinin gecekondulaşmaya elverişli olması nedeniyle, ciddi anlamıyla fabrikalarda çalışan işçilerin E5'in üstünde gecekondu yapmaları süreci yaşandı. Bu aslında İstanbul'un Kağıthane, Okmeydanı gibi bölgelerinde de aynı süreç yaşandı denilebilir. Biraz da devletle ortak bir mutabakat oluştu. Kamu otoriteleri bu işe ses çıkarmadı, sonuçta kamunun çözmesi gereken bir problemdi konut problemi. Onlar bu işi çözmedi. Burada yaşayan mahalleliler, işçiler de bunu enformel yollardan kendileri çözdüler. Ve 1970'li yılların sonuna doğru büyük şehirlere göçle, gecekondulaşma süreci en üst noktasına ulaştı. Bizim mahallemiz Gülsuyu-Gülensu Mahallesi de bunlardan bir tanesi. Mahallemiz Türkiye'de göçün dramatik bir olgu haline geldiği 1950 - 80 arası şekillendi ve o yılların politik ortamından fazlasıyla etkilendi. Bütün o politik tartışmalardan ve süreçten de beslendiği için, daha çok muhalif hareketlerde yer alan bir mahalle oldu ve kendini soldan ifade etti. Özellikle 1978 - 80 arasındaki süreçte mahallede devrimcilerin ciddi bir ağırlığı oldu diyebiliriz.

HEP DENİLİYOR YA, 'BURALAR DAĞ TAŞTİ, BİZ BURALARİ MAHALLE YAPTİK' DIYE. ONU BİR ANLATABİLİR MİSİN?

Mahallelerin oluştuğu süreçte altyapı problemleri vardı. Ciddi anlamda kanalizasyon problemi, elektrik, su gibi problemler vardı ve bunlara ulaşılamıyordu. Gülsuyu'nda örneğin, bütün bu altyapı hizmetleri tamamıyla mücadele sonucunda elde edildi. Kanalizasyon sorununu mahalleli kendi çözdü. Elektriğini kendi çözmeye çalıştı. Dönem dönem de belediyelerle birlikte ortak mücadelelerle buraların altyapıları oluşturuldu. Ama dediğim gibi o zamanlar bütün bu E5 üstündeki mahalleler kentin dışında görünüyordu, kente tam entegre olamamış bölgelerdi. Dolayısıyla belediye hizmetleri de buralara çok zor ulaştı. Ama dediğim gibi mahallelerin oluşum süreci tamamıyla mücadelelerle geçti. 90'lı 2000'li yıllara kadar altyapı problemleri yeni yeni çözülen bir haldeydi.

SONRA ÜLKENİN EKONOMİ POLİTİĞİ DEĞİŞMEYE BAŞLADI. NEO-LİBERALLEŞME SÜREÇLERİ, '80 SONRASI, ÖZELLİKLE '90 SONLARİYLA BİRLİKTE KENT POLİTİKALARINA YANSIDI VE NEO-LİBERAL KENTLEŞMENİN MAHALLELER ÜZERİNDEKİ BASKISI ORTAYA ÇIKTI. BU NEDİR, BUNU BİRAZ AÇABİLİR MİSİN?

1950'li ve 60'lı yıllarda İstanbul bir sanayi kentiydi ve büyük bir iş gücüne ihtiyaç vardı. Oysa 90'lı, 2000'li yıllarda artık neo-liberal politikaların da baskısıyla İstanbul sanayi kenti olmaktan vazgeçip ciddi anlamda finans ağırlıklı, servis ağırlıklı, hizmet ağırlıklı bir kent vizyonu anlayışına geçti. Dolayısıyla da bundan kaynaklı, emeği ile geçinen, fabrikalarda çalışan işçilere ihtiyaç kalmadı. Bütün fabrikalar desantralize edildi, kent dışına kaydırıldı. Ama bir taraftan da bizim yaşadığımız mahalleler kentin merkezinde kaldı. Tabii bu ciddi bir baskılanmayı da beraberinde getirdi. Bir taraftan Gebze-Harem raylı sistemin oluşması, diğer taraftan üniversitelerin artık orman arazileri içersinde yer alması (Maltepe Üniv.Doğuş Üniv. Acıbadem Üniv.) . İşte gördüğünüz arka tarafta NarCity Konutları, KipTaş Blokları' nın olması. Bütün bunlar neo-liberal kentlerin baskısı ve buradaki mahallelelerdeki sıkışmışlığın bir yansıması.

SİZİN İÇİN KENTSEL DÖNÜŞÜM NE İFADE EDİYOR?

Kentsel Dönüşüm bizim mahalleye ilk geldiğinde örneğin şöyle bir yansıması olmuştu: Bu mahallelerde yoğun konutlaşma var, biz bu alanlara donatı alanları koyacağız. Yalnız buraya donatı alanları konulması, sanki burada hiç insan yaşamıyormuş gibi, burada hiç yerleşim yerleri yokmuş gibi tamamıyla masa başında hazırlanmış bir pландı. Biz buna itiraz ettik. Bizim evlerimiz yeşil alan altında görünüyor, park alanı veya ticari konut alanı olarak görünüyor. Böyle bir planlama süreci yaşanacaksa, bu mahallenin de içinde olduğu, burada yaşayanların da dikkate alındığı bir süreçte olmalı diye itiraz ettik. Bütün bu itiraz süreçlerine, plan iptal davalarına bakıldığında, kentsel dönüşüm iki türlü irdelenebilir. Bir pozitif anlamda, iki negatif anlamda. Kentsel dönüşüm, mahallede yasayan insanların, oralarda tutunabilmelerini, onların ekonomik ihtiyaçlarını giderebilecek bir planlama sürecini de öngörüyorsa, elbette kentsel dönüşüm olumludur. Ama diğer taraftan, İstanbul'daki uygulamalara bakıldığında pek de öyle dönüşüm yapılacak bölgenin lehine, orada yaşayan insanları da dikkate alan bir dönüşüm süreci yaşanmıyor. Bunu Ayazma'da, Sulukule'de, Başıbüyük'te gördük. Orada yaşayan insanlara rağmen bir kentsel dönüşüm çalışması dayatılıyor. Bizim ısrarla karşı çıkışımız da bu dayatmadan. Yani orda yaşayan insanların, orda yaşayan mahallelinin o süreç hakkında söz ve karar hakkı sahibi olmamasından geçiyor. Bizim itirazımız bu noktadaydı.

İSTANBUL GENELİNE BAKTIĞIMIZDA KENTE YAYILMIŞ OLAN BU ÖZEL PROJE ALANLARİNİN KENTSEL DÖNÜŞÜME TÂBİ TUTULAN MAHALLELERLE NASIL BİR İLİŞKİSİ VAR?

İstanbul'da iki türlü dönüşüm yaşanıyor. Bir tanesi, bizim mahallelerimize, işte Gülsuyu-Gülensu, Başıbüyük'e, Hürriyet Mahallesi'ne, Avrupa yakasında Sarıyer bölgesindeki Kazımkarabekir, Maden Mahallesi, Beşiktaş'da Karanfilköy, Küçük Çekmece'de İç-Dış Kumsal … Bir bu yerlere uygulanan bir kentsel dönüşüm süreci var. Bir de kentte yaşanan Galataport gibi, Dubai Kuleleri gibi, işte Çamlıca'daki kamu arazileri gibi, Pendik'deki büyük marina ve orada yaşayan büyük dönüşümler gibi ikili bir süreç yaşanıyor. Bütün bu süreçlere bakıldığında şöyle bir ortak operasyon izlenimi var. Bir taraftan kentte sermaye lehine, varsıllar lehine yeni bir kent projesi yaratılmaya çalışılırken, diğer taraftan yoksul ve işsiz insanların yer aldığı mahallelerde ciddi anlamda bir sürgün ve o mahalleleri ordan atacak projeler eşgüdümlü ilerliyor. Bu açıdan ben açıkçası hem kentte yaşanan o devasa dönüşümlerin hem de mahallelere yapılan operasyonların, kentsel dönüşüm süreçlerinin birbirleri ile organik ilişkileri olduğunu düşünüyorum.

BU MAHALLENİN KENTSEL DÖNÜŞÜMLE TANIŞMASI NASIL OLDU? BİR MAHALLE KENTSEL DÖNÜŞÜM KAPSAMİ İÇERİSİNDE OLDUĞU BİLGİSİNE NASIL ERİŞİYOR?

Gülsuyu'nda 2004 yılında Maltepe E-5'in Kuzeyi Nazım İmar Planı diye bir planlama süreci yaşandı. 5000 ölçekli planlar askıya çıkıyor, bir aylık bir itiraz süreci var. İstanbul'da ilk defa biz böyle bir süreci yaşadık. Planın askıdan inmesine 10 gün kala haberimiz oldu. Muhtarlığa belediyeden bir yazı geldi, Maltepe Belediyesi'nden. Sizin mahalleniz 5000 ölçekli planlama kapsamı içinde, bununla ilgili görüş bildirin diye. Muhtar ilk defa böyle bir yazıyla karşılaştığı için durumun farkında değildi. Dernekle diğer mimar, mühendis çevrelerle bu süreci anlamaya çalıştık. Ve gördük ki Maltepe E5 Kuzeyi Nazım İmar Planı, Maltepe'deki E5'in kuzeyinde yer alan 7 tane mahallenin, yaklaşık 70 - 80 bin kişilik bir nüfusu, buradan başka bir yere kaydırmayı öngörüyor. Üstelik de işte bizim Gülsuyu-Gülensu mahallelerinde, mahallenin % 60'ı-70'i kentsel donatı alanı olarak ayrılmış ve bizim evlerimizin çoğu yeşil alan, park alanı, ticari konut alanı, ibadethane, kültür merkezi gibi donatı alanlarıyla kapatılmış. Biz hızla mahalleliyle örgütlenip 6.000 - 7.000'e yakın itiraz dilekçesi verdik. 32 adet plan iptal davası açtık Büyükşehir Belediyesi Şehir Bölge Planlama bölümüne. 11 - 12 bin imza kampanyası ile imzalarımızı teslim ettik. Bizim istediğimiz tek şey şuydu, bir planlama masa başında hazırlanmamalı, orda yaşayan insanlarında görüşleri dikkate alınmalı. Burada 30.000 - 40.000 insan yaşıyor ve bu insanlar böyle bir planı istemiyor diye itiraz ettik. İdari mahkeme bizim davamızı haklı buldu. İki bölge de kentsel yenileme kapsamı altına alındı. Kentsel yenilemede E5 Kuzeyi Nazım İmar Planındaki bütün o lekelemeler kaldırıldı ve planlar mahalleliyle birlikte hazırlanır diye bir plan notu eklendi.

BİR MAHALLE KENDİ İÇERİSİNDE NASIL BİRLİK OLUYOR? MAHALLELERDE FARKLI HUKUKİ DURUMLAR, FARKLİ SİYASİ GÖRÜŞLER OLABİLİYOR, BUNLAR NASIL BİRARAYA GELEBİLİYORLAR?

Tabii şimdi kentsel dönüşüme karşı mahalleler tarafından verilen mücadelelerde bir sürü farklılıklar var. Örneğin politik geleneği güçlü olan mahallelerde itiraz süreçleri, örgütlenme süreçleri daha rahat olmasına rağmen, işte Ayazma gibi Kürt nüfusunun yoğun olduğu mahallelerde, Sulukule gibi Romanların yoğun olduğu mahallelerde ya da Tarlabaşı gibi çok geniş bir popülasyonu olan mahallelerde, Başıbüyük gibi Hürriyet Mahallesi gibi muhafazakâr özellikleri olan mahallelerde süreç çok farklılıklar arz ediyor. Ben Gülsuyu-Gülensu Mahallesinden örnek vereyim. Hani burada bizim geleneksel örgütlenme sürecimiz vardı, örneğin dernek bunun önemli bir noktasıydı. Bütün bu kentsel dönüşüme karşı mücadele, muhtarlık, dernek ve mahalle komisyonu üçgeni üzerinden gelişti ve dernek bunun motor gücü oldu. Muhtarlıkla birleştik, çeşitli toplantılar düzenleyerek bütün mahallenin bu süreçten haberdar olmasını sağladık. Bu konuda çevremizde bulduğumuz, ilişki içine girdiğimiz mimarlarla, mühendislerle istişareler yaptık. Biz bunları yaşarken, Başıbüyük Mahallesi gibi örgütlenme geleneği daha zayıf olan mahallelerde durum daha sakin yaşandı. Örneğin onlar yüzlerini bize çevirdiler, yani biz ne yaparsak aynısını yapmaya çalıştılar. Bizimle ortak mücadele yürütmeye çalıştılar. Diğer taraftan Hürriyet Mahallesi, Yakacık Mahallesi, biz 2004 yılında bu süreci yaşarken, onlar 2007 yıllarında ancak bizimle ilişki içerisine girebildiler. Dediğim gibi Mahalleler Birliği bu sürecin bir parçasıydı. Diğer taraftan politik grupların da bu yıkım sürecine, planlama sürecine ilişkin örgütlenme ve mücadele deneyimleri önemli bir parçasını oluşturuyor. Pendik'deki yıkım sürecinde oradaki politik grupların mücadelesi, mahalleliyle birlikte yürüttükleri direnişler bunun başka bir boyutunu gösteriyor. Tabii dediğim gibi Sulukule epey özgün bir örnek. Orada Sulukule Platformu'nun mücadelesi, kendi içindeki ilişkileri, bütün bu kentsel dönüşüm süreci ile ilgili bambaşka bir örnek teşkil ediyor. Ama bütün bunları biraraya getirebilecek, ortak bir paydaya akıtabilecek bir süreci yaşamakta hâlâ bir eksiklik yaşanıyor. Yeterince biraraya gelemiyoruz.

MAHALLELER ARASİNDA ORTAK BİR GÜNDEM VAR DİYEBİLİR MİYİZ?

Tabii ben size İstanbul Mahalle Dernekleri Platformu deneyimini de aktarayım. 2006-2007 yıllarında Dayanışmacı Planlama Atölyesinin de, orada çalışan arkadaşların, plancıların da yardımıyla sekiz-dokuz mahalle biraraya gelmişti. Dönem dönem basın açıklamaları, Mahalleler Konuşuyor Sempozyumu gibi etkinliklerle, İstanbul'daki mahalle dernekleri biraraya gelmeye çalıştı. Onun sonucunda 2007'nin sonlarında 22 mahalle derneği ile Karanfilköy'de İstanbul Mahalle Dernekleri Platformu oluşumuna girdik. Ama dediğim gibi İstanbul'un büyük bir kent olması, iletişim ilişkilerinin zayıf olması, bizi ister istemez farklı örgütlenme yollarına sevk etti. Karanfilköy'ün önerisiyle İstanbul'u üç seçim bölgesine ayırdık. 1. bölge, 2. bölge, 3. bölge diye. İşte 1. bölge Anadolu yakasıydı, burda Gülensu, Gülsuyu, Başıbüyük ve Hürriyet Mahallesi ve Yakacık Güzelleştirme Derneği ile. 2. bölge olarak Sarıyer bölgesi, Karanfilköy, Boçev'in Kazımkarabekir Mahallesinin, Maden Mahallesinin, FSM Baltalimanın yer aldığı. 3. bölge olarak da dediğim gibi Ayazma'nın Küçükçekmece İç-Dış Kumsal'ın yer aldığı bir İMDP, İstanbul Mahalle Dernekleri Platformu süreci yaşadık. Diğer taraftan dediğim gibi kentsel dönüşümün bir parçası mahallelere müdahale etse, diğer parçası da 3. Köprüye Karşı Yaşam Platformu, Corner Oteli'ne Hayır Platformu, İMECE grubunun faaliyetleri, Dayanışmacı Planlama Atölyesinin yürüttüğü çalışmalar ... Bütün bunları organize edebilecek, bunlarla biraraya gelebilecek ortak bir sinerji oluşturabilecek bir çalışmayı da önüne koymuş durumda İstanbul Mahalleler Platformu. Böyle bir gündemi de var.

BURADA BAHSETTİĞİN BU FARKLI GRUPLARLA İMDP'NİN İLİŞKİSİNİ NASIL GÖRÜYORSUN?

Herkesin ayrı ayrı durduğu ama ortak bir mücadeleye aktığı bir süreci öngörmek lazım. Ama her çalışmanın kendi özgünlüğünü de görmek lazım. O özgünlük nedeniyle her mücadelenin, her platformun kendi içerisindeki mücadelesini sürdürmesi ama bunları yürütürken ortak bir paydaya akıtmak, ortak bir mücadele içine akıtmanın da gerekliliği söz konusu. Böyle bir mücadele içinde bulunmak gerekiyor.

BU KENTSEL MUHALEFET ÇERÇEVESİNDE MAHALLELER NASIL BİRARAYA GELECEK, NASIL BİR HAYALİN VAR? MAHALLELERİN BİRLİKTELİĞİNİN BİR SONRAKİ ADIMI NE OLMALI?

Bir mahalle kendi içinde ne kadar örgütlü olursa olsun, bunu diğer mahallelere paylaştırmadığı, diğer mücadele alanlarıyla birleştirmediği sürece bir tarafı eksik kalacaktır. Buradan çıkışla Mahalle Dernekleri Platformunu oluşturduk. 2007 yılının başlarında yaklaşık sekiz-on kuruma çağrı yapmıştık. Orada biraraya geldik ama bunu nasıl ortaya koyacağımıza, hangi ilişkilerin bunu oluşturacağına karar veremedik. Orada bir tartışma süreci yaşanmasına ihtiyaç vardı. Bugün bu tartışma süreçleri hemen hemen netleşecek bir duruma geldi. İşte en son TMMOB il koordinasyon kurumu bir kent çalışma grubu oluşturdu. Bu kent çalışma grubu, bütün kentteki muhalefet eden kurumlara çağrı yaptı ve orada tekrar biraraya geldik. Bizim kafamızda şöyle bir şey var: Sadece mahalle dernekleri üzerinden değil, bunu kentteki muhalefet eden diğer gruplarla birleştirip, diğer taraftan bu süreci yaşayan İzmir'deki Ankara'daki kentsel dönüşüm mağdurlarıyla biraraya getirip, tamamıyla yaşadığımız kentlere artık bizim de müdahale edebileceğimiz, artık o kentin sadece barınma hakkı üzerinden değil, orta sınıfın kentin diğer sakinleriyle müdahil olduğu bir kent hakkı. Yani bütün kentteki aktörleri biraraya getirebilecek. Bunun için de sadece mağdurların değil, ezenlerin de olduğu bir kent hakkı mücadele sürecini oluşturamazsak, bir tarafı eksik kalacak.

PEKİ KENT HAKKI MÜCADELESİ İÇERİSİNDE OLAN GRUPLARIN YÖNETİMLE OLAN İLİŞKİLERİ NASIL OLMALI?

Dediğim gibi esas gerilim, belediyelerin ve TOKİ'nin tamamıyla kendi isteklerini dayatmak istemesi üzerinden doğuyor. Diyalog yöntemi seçmeyen ya da müzakere süreci öngörmeyen, bunu birlikte yapmayı hedeflemeyen her müdahale o gerilimi doğuran ana kaynaklardan bir tanesi haline dönüşüyor. Gülsuyu-Gülensuyu'na geliyorsun, burada 25.000 - 26.000 insan yaşıyor. Sen bu insanlarla diyalog yöntemi seçmeyip, onlarla birlikte iş yapmayı tercih etmeyip, onlar adına, onlar için plan yapmayı tercih ediyorsun. Yani dünyanın başka yerlerinde insanlar katılım mekanizmasını kurmak için ellerinden geleni yapıyorlar. Bizim burada da tam tersi, bu sürece katılımcıları katmamak için ellerinden geleni yapıyorlar.

PEKİ DÜNYANIN FARKLİ YERLERİNDEKİ KENT MÜCADELELERİ İLE İLETİŞİM İÇERİSİNDE MİSİNİZ?

İstanbul Mahalle Dernekleri olarak 2007 yılında Barselona'ya kentsel dönüşüm süreçlerini de irdeleyen uluslararası bir toplantıya katıldık. Oraya Hindistan'dan, Şili' den, ABD'den Şili'den İspanya vd. ülkelerden dönüşüm mağduru mahalleler katıldı. 2008' de yine Avrupa Sosyal Forumu'na gitmiştik. Avrupa Sosyal Forumu'nda da kentsel dönüşüm süreci ile ilgili, diğer ülkelerdeki deneyimleri izledik. Oraya Paris'ten No-Vox hareketi de katılmıştı. Onlar daha sonra bizi Paris'e davet ettiler. Orada da bir uluslararası toplantılar süreci yaşadık. Oraya da Mali' den, Kanada'dan Quebec'ten , Brezilya'dan, Japonya'dan, Rusya'dan katılımcılar olmuştu. Bir şey fark ettik ki, dünyanın her yerinde kentsel dönüşüm süreçleri, bölgede yaşayan yoksulların, gelir düzeyi düşük olanların aleyhine işliyor. Yani hiçbir yerde bu kentsel dönüşüm süreçleri, orda yaşayan insanların ihtiyaçlarını öngörerek, o ihtiyaçlar üzerinden, ya da orada yaşayan insanları orada tutmak amacıyla yaşanmıyor. Tam tersine, tamamıyla orada uluslararası bir sermaye yarışmasının ya da uluslarası bir sermaye rekabetinin bir aracı olarak görülüyor. Biz bunu çok rahat gördük ve bunun üzerinden nasıl başa çıkılacağını, nasıl bir mücadele yöntemiyle bu sürece müdahale edeceğimizin yöntemlerini tartıştık.

SON OLARAK SÖYLEMEK İSTEDİĞİNİZ BİR ŞEY VAR MI?

Kent Muhalefeti yeni bir hareket: yani kentsel dönüşüm ya da kent hareketleri; en azından İstanbul'da, Ankara'da, İzmir'de henüz 5 - 6 yıllık bir süreç yaşıyor. Daha kendi içinde örgütlenme ilişkilerini tamamlamamış, ama buna rağmen çok ciddi potansiyelleri olan, ciddi anlamda müdahale etmeyi gerektiren bir ihtiyaç olarak kendisini gösteriyor. Beni bu mücadele süreci boyunca en çok motive eden durum, İstanbul Mahalle Derneklerinin bu kentsel dönüşüm sürecine müdahale edebilecek en iyi organ olduğu fikriydi. Eğer bu işe mahalleler müdahale etmezse, onlar adına hangi politik grup, hangi çalışma ya da hangi çevre müdahale ederse etsin bir tarafı eksik kalır. Biz bütün bu mücadele süreçleri içinde mahallelinin söz ve karar sahibi olduğu, mahallelinin kendi iç ilişkilerinden bir örgütlenme çıkarsa ancak bunun başarılı olabileceği fikri üzerinde durduk. Bugün hâlâ bu ihtiyaç üzerinden bir örgütlenme kendini dayatıyor.

2.Bölüm

MAHALLE GERÇEKLİĞİNİ DEĞİŞTİRMEDE KÜLTÜREL PROJELERİN POTANSİYELİNİ NASIL DEĞERLENDİRİYORSUN?

Güncel gelişmelerden örnekle cevap vereyim; mahallede şu anda iki önemli tartışma başlığı üzerinde duruluyor. Birincisi: Biz bu mahalleleri ancak direnişle, barikatla koruyabiliriz, bunun dışındaki her arayış mahalleye yıkım getirir. İkincisi: içinde yaşadığımız zamanlarda Kentsel Dönüşüm kaçınılmaz ve karşı konulmaz bir olguysa bizim bu süreci tersine çevirecek yöntemler, stratejiler icat etmemiz gerek. Kimsenin mağdur edilmediği, başka bölgelere sürgün gönderilmediği, bir planlama mümkün müdür? Barikatı başka

yöntemlerle de güçlendirmek mümkün müdür, ya da farklı direniş stratejileri oluşturulabilir mi? İşte tam da burada bu soruların cevaplarının biraz "kültürel projeler"de, sanatçı kolektiflerinin yaratıcı edimlerinde, mahalleli ile kurdukları sağlıklı ilişkilerde gizli olduğunu düşünüyorum. Bu bakış açısıyla rahatlıkla ifade edebilirim ki: 1970-1980'li yılların politik önermeleri, argümanları, ve örgütlenme formları ile günümüzdeki karşı saldırı arasında büyük çelişkiler yaşanıyor.

Bu kadar farklı saldırı dinamiklerine karşı muhalif hareketlerin güçsüzlüğü büyük oranda bu nedenlere dayanıyor. Bizim çok gelişkin koalisyonlara ihtiyacımız var ve bu koalisyonun önemli dinamiklerinden bir tanesi de "kültürel projeler"dir diye düşünüyorum.

BU POTANSİYELLER; DİRENİŞ STRATEJİLERİNDEN NASİL BAŞKALAŞIR YA DA BİRLİKTE HAREKET EDER?

Elbette ön şart olarak bu potansiyellerin, her mahallenin kendi özgünlüğüne göre hareket etme zorunluluğunu belirtmemiz gerekir. Örgütlenme potansiyeli gelişmiş mahallelerde, muhafazakâr mahallelerde ya da etnik farklılıkların yoğunlaştığı mahallelerde bunlara uygun hareket stratejileri geliştirmek gerekir. Bu diyalektiğin sağlanamadığı bir çalışmada orası ile birlikte hareket etmede ciddi farklılıklar yaşanır. Birlikte hareket etme olanağı ise ancak yoğun mesailerle, içselleşmiş bir yerel çalışma ile mümkündür. Mahallelerin epeyce kırılgan örgütlülükleri nedeniyle sonuçta çok yaratıcı bir kültürel çalışma ya da sanatsal aktivite, salt doku uyuşmazlığı nedeniyle kabul görmeyebiliyor. En önemli handikap ise bir süre sonra bitecek olan çalışmanın geleceğe ilişkin çalışma olanakları bırakamaması. Bu durum güven ilişkileri açısından olumsuzluğa yol açıyor, ve daha sonra çalışma yapacak etkinlikleri de doğrudan etkileyip mesafe koymaya yol açabiliyor.

KÜLTÜREL PROJELER DİRENİŞ STRATEJİLERİ OLARAK DEĞERLENDİRİLEBİLİRLER Mİ?

"Kültürel projeler" doğası itibariyle dışarıdan bir kavram. Bu kavramın yerellerde bir strateji oluşturabilmesi her şeyden önce bir "bütünleşmeye", "içselleşmeye" ihtiyaç duyması nedeniyle farklı bir donanımla mümkündür. Bugüne kadarki deneyimlerde böyle bir örnek yaşandığını düşünmüyorum. Politikleşmemiş ve taraf olmayan bir proje çalışmasının ancak kendine özgü bir direniş stratejisi olabilir, ki sanırım bir örnekle bu sorunu daha iyi kavrayabiliriz: 2010 yılı yaz aylarında Burak Delier isimli bir sanatçı Gülsuyu'nda yaşanan Kentsel Dönüşüm mücadelesine sanatsal bir aktivite ile farklı bir kurguyla da direniş olabileceğine dair çalışmalar yapmıştı. Ama gerek mahalle sakinlerinden, gerekse politik çevrelerinden çok sınırlı bir tepki alması, yine Kültürel Aracılar çalışması bağlamında Arjantin'den gelen sanatçı gurubuna karşı da mahalleden çok cılız tepki gelmesi buna örnek olarak gösterilebilir. Soruya tekrar dönersek kültürel projeleri tek başlarına bir direniş stratejisi olarak değerlendirmek yerine önemli bir müttefik olarak görmek daha doğru olur.

YEREL HALKİN KÜLTÜREL PROJELERE KARŞİ NE TÜR KORKULARİ VE ŞÜPHELERİ VAR, SENCE BUNLAR MEŞRU BİR ZEMİNE OTURUYOR MU?

Mahallede yaşayanların en temel problemi Barınma haklarının ellerinden alınması ve evsiz kalma riski. Uzun yılların sonucunda sürekli mücadelelerle yaptıkları evlerin bir gün yıkılacağı korkusu ciddi bir stres ve gerilime yol açıyor. Bunu açığa çıkaran, bu korku ile yüzleşme ve görünür kılma üzerinden bir mücadele, bir çalışma çok farklı tepkilere neden olabiliyor.
Örneğin bir fotoğraf çalışmasında estetik kaygılarla çekilen bir gecekondu resmi pekâlâ mahallenin çirkin gösterilme riski olarak değerlendirilebiliyor. Kültürel projelerin özellikle gündelik yaşamda sürekli bir yüzleşme çağrısı yapması, zaten yeterince sorunla (işsizlik, ulaşım, eğitim, vd.) boğuşan mahalle sakini

tarafından görmeme, tepki vermeme ile sonuçlanabiliyor.

Bu çalışmaların açık ve şeffaf olması güven ilişkileri açısından önemlidir. Özellikleri politik geleneği güçlü mahallelerde sponsor ilişkileri, fonlar ciddi sıkıntı kaynağıdır. Bağımsız bir çalışma olması, ya da bütçenin karşılıklı özkaynaklardan oluşmasına zorlanmalı, Bir sermaye gurubu rant değeri yüksek bir kentsel müdahaleye çok rahat girebilir, diğer taraftan toplumsal sorumluluk projesi olarak farklı bir alanda kültürel bir projeye fon sağlayabilir. Dünya Bankası, AB, ya da yerel bankalar bunu çok sık yapıyor. Bu nedenle biz mahallelerimizde artık daha seçici ve eleyici davranmak durumundayız…

Bu güne kadar mahallede çalışma yapan gruplar, özellikle öğrenci toplulukları mekânı bir tür saha çalışması olarak gördü. Yapılan çalışmaların, belli bir dönem ile sınırlı olmasının zorunluluğu nedeniyle kurulan ilişkiler ve araştırmalar da derinlikli olarak gerçekleşemiyor.
Ayrıca çalışma takvimi bitip, mahalle terk edildiğinde geride kalan sonuç sadece araştırmayı yapan grupta kalıyor. 'Oysa ki mahalleli ile kurulan ilişki, her iki tarafın da birbirinden öğrenebileceği, birbirini etkileyebileceği potansiyeller taşırken, bu süreci –her iki taraf için de-yüzeysel ve pragmatik bir sonuca götürmek pek akılcı değil.
Öte taraftan sürekli bir yoksulluk ve yoksunluk sarmalı içinde olan bir topluluğa kültürel, sanatsal aktiviteler lüks olarak görülebiliyor. İnsanların temel ihtiyaçlarını bile karşılayamadıkları koşullarda, kültürel projelerinin gerekli önem ve karşılığı almamasının altında bunlar da yatıyor.

KÜLTÜREL ARACİLAR PROJESİYLE ESAS OLARAK ELDE EDİLEN ŞEY NEDİR? AYNİ ZAMANDA PROJENİN BAŞARISIZLİĞİ NEDİR?

Mahallenin var olan yerel dinamikleri, dayanışma ilişkileri, enerjisi, taşıdığı potansiyel açısından bir ilgiyi hak ediyor. Kültürel Aracılar bu potansiyeli açığa çıkarmak için, gündelik yaşamın rutininden sıyrılıp bir farkındalık yaratmayı denedi, kısmen bunu başardı da.
Özellikle mekânın (Gülsuyu-Gülensu Dükkânı) çocukların ilgi odağında olması, sürekli bir okuma, resim yapma, 23 nisan etkinliği; bundan sonra mahallede çalışma yapacaklara önemli bir ihtiyacın ipucunu verdi. Cuma akşamları yapılan söyleşiler ve dönem dönem yapılan aktiviteleri de değerlendirdiğimizde mahallelerimizde uzun yıllardır sürdürdüğümüz mücadele ve örgütlenme çalışmalarının tekdüze ve dogmatik olduğunu, bunun orta ve uzun vadede mahallede çözüme yönelik ve kolektif bir sürece değil, bir kısır döngüye yol açtığını söyleyebiliriz. Kültürel Aracılar çalışmasının mahallenin bütününe yönelik bir hedef koyduğunu, çalışmalarda, bir bölgenin, mezhebin, etnisitenin ya da belirgin yaş kitlesinin hedef alınmadığını, bütüne yönelik bir çalışma yürüttüğünü söyleyebiliriz. Örneğin Kültürel Aracılar ile birlikte gerçekleştirdiğimiz "Gülensu Gülsuyu Sözlü Tarih Çalışması" deneyimi bu bütünselliğe tam oturan bir çalışmadır; Mahallenin bir dönemine, sürecine, kuruluşuna, olayına -katkıda bulunmuş, etkilemiş, örnek gösterilmiş- insanlarına görüşü ya da duruşuna bakılmaksızın (sağcı-solcu, alevi-sünni, türk-kürt vd.) "Sözlü Tarih Çalışmasına" davet edilmiş, çalışmanın içine alınmıştır. Oysa bu çalışmayı mahallenin dinamiklerinden herhangi birisi yapsa bu denli objektif kriterlere oturmazdı. Muhtemelen ağırlıkla kendi öznel tarihine dayanırdı.
Bütün bunlarla birlikte mahallenin kendine özgü dinamikleri, politik yapısı, gündelik yaşamı ile Kültürel Aracılar projesinin duruşu, önerileri ya da performansı arasında gerekli bütünsellik sağlanamadı. Bunun nedeni tek bir tarafa mal edilmemeli ama bununla birlikte çalışma talebi mahalleden değil, Kültürel Aracılar'dan geldiği için çubuğu bu yöne bükmek gerekir. Bana sanki çalışma önceden tasarlanıp, tahkim edilip değil de –yürürken– kendini bulmaya çalıştı gibi geliyor. Ve en önemli başarısızlığı kendine bir tür yerel kadro yaratamamasıdır. Ağırlıklı olarak "dışarıdan" (Proje Ekibi) bir ekip çalışmayı sırtladı ve buraya kadar taşıdı.

SÖZLÜ TARİHİN NASIL BİR ETKİSİ OLDU, OLACAK; BU ANLAMDA BİLGİLERİN TOPARLANMASI BİR DİRENME YOLU DEĞİL MİDİR?

Elbette. bu çalışmanın önemli bir tarafı da bir direniş stratejisi olarak mahallenin geçmişine bir yolculuk yapma fırsatı vermesi idi. Özellikle 2005 yılından bu yana mahallede olağanüstü gelişmeler yaşanıyor. Mahallenin 'Kentsel Dönüşüm' tehdidi altında bir mücadelesi söz konusu iken; mahalleliye bir tür hafıza tazelemesi yaşatarak, bu mahallelerin nasıl oluştuğu, dayanışma ilişkileri, kolektif bir yaşam deneyimi ve her şeyden önemlisi mahallelinin olası sorunlara karşı ortak karar alma yeteneği gibi bugün birçoğu kaybolan özellikleri, mahallenin geleceğine ilişkin tartışmalara bir perspektif oluşturmada önemli ipuçları ortaya çıkartacaktır.
Sözlü Tarih dair oluşan ihtiyaçlardan birisi de proje ekibiyle ortak bir gözlemimize dayanıyordu. Mahallenin yeni kuşak gençleri ile mahalle arasında bir aidiyet ilişkisi sorunu vardı. Çoğunlukla yaratıcı enerji mahallenin dışında harcanıyor ve aktiviteler kent merkezlerinde yoğunlaşıyor. Mahallede sanat, bilim, hukuk vb alanlarda yetenekli bir çok genç varken, bunun mahalleye yansıma genellikle hiç yok. Bu durumun bir nedeni devletin ısrarla bizim gibi mahalleleri bir suç yuvası gibi göstermesi ise, bir diğer nedeni de mahalledeki politik aktörlerin bu potansiyeli değerlendirmede öngörüsüzlüğü ve politikasızlığıdır. İşte buradan yola çıkarak Sözlü Tarih çalışması mahallenin potansiyellerini açığa çıkaran bir işlev görebilir. Bu çalışmaların mahalede bir heyecan yaratacığını düşünüyorum. Bizden sonrakilere de ciddi birikimler bırakacaktır.

BU DENEYİMLENEN STRATEJİ BAŞKA MAHALLELERE DE UYGULANABİLİR Mİ?

Bunun koşulları her zaman mümkündür. Ben iyi bir deneyim yaşadığımıza inanıyorum. Şimdi eksiklerimizi, hatalarımızı daha iyi görebiliyoruz. Bütün çalışmalar uzun süreli hata ve yanlışlarla olgunlaşır ve sonrasında oturur.
Şimdiden önümüzdeki sürecin kentlerimiz açısından çok yoğun geçeceğini öngörebiliyoruz. Bununla birlikte bir karşı strateji geliştirmede maalesef çok zayıf bir noktadayız. İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir gibi büyük şehirlerde çok hızlı bir müdahale yaşanıyor. Kentte yaşayanların yaşam alanlarına ilişkin tahayyülleri yok ediliyor, yoksulların yaşam alanlarının kısa ve orta vadede mutenalaştırılacağını söyleyebiliriz. Bu sorun salt politik çevrelere, platformlara, meslek odalarına bırakılacak gibi durmuyor. Bunun önemli bir diğer ayağında da sanatçı kolektiflerine, ya da "Kültürel Aracılar" gibi çalışmalara da önemli sorumluluklar düşüyor.
Bizim mahallelerde evlerimizi korumak üzere verdiğimiz mücadele aynı zamanda kent politiklarında da söz ve karar sahibi olma mücadelesini içerir. Bu nedenle 3. Köprüye karşı olmakda, Emek Sinemasına sahip çıkmakda, bu mücadelenin bir parçasıdır.
Açık söylemek gerekirse bizlerin kente dair ütopyalarımız kayboldu. İnsanı merkezine alan, kentin bütün sakinlerinin yönetimde bir biçimiyle söz sahibi olduğu kanalları açmanın, önemi ve sorumluluğu sanatçı kolektiflerinin yaratıcı çalışmalarıyla desteklenmeli. Şimdi yeniden nasıl bir mahallede, kentte yaşamak istiyoruzu kurmak gerekir. Yeni bir ,'Kent Hakkı' söylemi geliştirmeliyiz. Ben özellikle bu kentsel muhalefet çalışmalarında kültürel projelerin, sanatçı kolektiflerinin önemli bir mevzi olduğunu düşünüyorum.

Erdoğan Yıldız bir Gülsuyu-Gülensu sakinidir ve bir aktisttir.
Söyleşinin birinci bölümü yönetmen İmre Balanlı'nın değerli izni ile Ekümenopolis dokümanter filminden alıntılanmıştır. İkinci bölüm Kültürel Aracılar proje ekibi tarafından gerçekleştirilmiştir.

RIGHT TO THE CITY STRUGGLE AND THE OTHER POTENTIALS

ERDOĞAN YİLDİZ
INTERVIEWED BY CULTURAL AGENCIES

Part 1

ERDOĞAN YILDIZ, PLEASE EXPLAIN THE ORIGINS OF ISTANBUL'S GECEKONDUS (SHANTY TOWNS) IN ISTANBUL?

The gecekondus first appeared in Istanbul in the '50s and '60s when unemployment in rural Anatolia surged due to the mechanisation of agriculture. Because Istanbul is the biggest industrial city in Turkey, gecekondus initially formed there, especially in the Asian part of Istanbul that contained major industrial areas along the E5 highway. The factory workers in these areas built their own houses because the state wasn't providing for them. The same happened in Kağıthane and Okmeydanı. It would be fair to say that the state let them build the shanty towns. There was a kind of unofficial agreement between the squatters and the state. In the seventies, squatting reached its highest levels. Our neighbourhood, Gülsuyu-Gülensu, is one example. The neighbourhood was formed between the 1950s and the 1970s, when migration increased dramatically. Affected by the political environment of the seventies, our neighbourhood became an important part of leftist movements and declared itself a location for dissenters. Especially during 1978–80, revolutionaries were very powerful in this area.

THERE IS COMMON TURKISH SAYING AMONGST GECEKONDU RESIDENTS: 'THESE PLACES WERE NEVERLAND, AND WE CAME AND TURNED IT INTO A NEIGHBOURHOOD?' CAN YOU EXPLAIN THIS?

When the neighbourhoods were forming, there were huge infrastructure problems, like the lack of a sewer system, electrical connections, and water supply. We weren't able to get help from anywhere. In Gülsuyu, the neighbourhood struggled and built all this basic infrastructure by their very own efforts. Sometimes, they teamed up with the municipalities to build infrastructure. But, like I said before, these neighbourhoods around the E5 Highway weren't really integrated with the city. So, municipal services had a hard time reaching our neighbourhood. Until the 1990s and 2000s, infrastructure was still a big problem.

HOW DID THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES IN TURKEY SINCE THE 1980S IMPACT ON THE GECEKONDU NEIGHBOURHOODS?

In the 1950s and 1960s, Istanbul was an industrial city that needed a serious labour force. But in the last two decades, Istanbul has started to evolve into a financial centre due to neo-liberal transformations. So, the city has traded a production-based economy for a service-based one. So, the city's need for a labour force has decreased, and all the factories have been decentralised, moving away from the city. But the gecekondu neighbourhoods have stayed in the city centre. And this new situation puts great pressure on us and our neighbourhoods and has led to many urban renewal projects.

WHAT DOES 'URBAN RENEWAL' MEAN TO YOU?

The first news of an urban renewal project triggered very strong reactions. The municipality had announced:

'We will build some social infrastructure here.' They spoke and acted like no one was living here. We could not accept this. Moreover, our homes were being planned as parks or commercial districts. We opposed this, because the state must take us, the residents, into consideration if it wants to make a new plan for our neighbourhood. I think urban renewal can be considered in two ways: positively or negatively. If the urban renewal projects help inhabitants economically and socially, enabling them to stay in their neighbourhoods, then of course, it's a positive thing. On the other hand, when we examine urban renewal in Istanbul, we don't see this. In Ayazma, Sulukule, and Başıbüyük [located next to the Gülsuyu-Gülensu neighbourhood], the projects have been imposed without considering the inhabitants. It has been mostly against them, not for them. That's why we're vehemently opposed to these projects. The people must have a say in what's being planned for their neighbourhoods.

SO WHEN WE LOOK AT ISTANBUL IN GENERAL, WE SEE SPECIAL MEGA PROJECTS THAT ARE SPREAD OVER ALL OF ISTANBUL, HOW ARE THEY RELATED TO THE NEIGHBOURHOODS EXPERIENCING URBAN RENEWAL PROJECTS?

There are two kinds of urban renewal projects in Istanbul. One happens in our neighbourhoods like Gülsuyu-Gülensu, Başıbüyük, the district of Hürriyet, Kazım Karabekir district in Sariyer, Karanfilköy in Beşiktaş or Küçük Çekmece. The other happens within the inner city including projects like Galataport, Dubai Towers, the public land in Çamlıca or the big Marina Project in Pendik. I think all these situations are trying to create a new city for the benefit of capital and the rich, and, at the same time, trying to evict the poor from their neighbourhoods. They're related to each other. I think those special projects and the urban renewal projects have the same aims, and they're working together to achieve them.

HOW DID YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD ENCOUNTER THE URBAN RENEWAL? HOW DOES A NEIGHBOURHOOD BECOME AWARE OF AN URBAN RENEWAL PROJECT?

In 2004, Gülsuyu experienced a new planning process called the Maltepe Regulatory Reconstruction Plan of North of E5. New 1:5000-scaled plans appeared, and there was one month to appeal. When they first informed us, there were only ten days left. The municipality of Maltepe sent a declaration to our muhtar (village headman) saying, 'Your district is within the boundaries of the new 1:5000-scaled settlement plan. Deliver us your opinion about it'. Our muhtar had never seen anything like this, so he didn't know what was going on. We sat together with the architects and engineers in our association to try to understand. What we discovered was that they were trying to evict the 7 neighbourhoods located north of the E5 highway with a total population of 70,000–80,000. Furthermore, 60–70% of our neighbourhood (Gülsuyu-Gülensu) was planned as reinforcement areas like green lands, commercial areas, sanctuaries and cultural centres. We organised rapidly and delivered a petition signed by 7,000 people. We opened 32 court cases against the planning decision and delivered 12,000 petitions to the municipality. What we were asking was if there is a new plan for our neighbourhood, we should have some say in it. The 40,000-50,000 people living there won't accept a plan like that. The court decided we were right, all those problems on the plan were cancelled, and a new plan note added: 'all the plans must be arranged with the inhabitants.'

HOW DO NEIGHBOURHOODS COME TOGETHER? THERE CAN BE A LOT OF DIFFERENT POLITICAL VIEWS AND TENURE STATUSES IN A COMMUNITY, SO HOW DO THEY ORGANISE?

Well of course, there are many disparities. If a neighbourhood has a strong political tradition, the organising process is easier. But in districts like Ayazma, Sulukule, Tarlabaşı, or the district of Hurriyet or

Başıbüyük, certain factors can slow the process, like diverse ethnicities or conservatism. Like I said before, in Gülsuyu-Gülensu we have a strong tradition of political organisation, and the neighbourhood association plays an important role. The struggle against the urban renewal project improved due to the neighbourhood board, muhtar and association. Together with the muhtar, we arranged meetings that involved the whole neighbourhood to ensure that everyone was aware. We got in touch with architects and engineers to solicit their knowledge. Districts like Başıbüyük, where there is little tradition of political organisation, the resistance was much more silent but they tried to follow our path. The districts of Hurriyet and Yakacık contacted us recently, in 2007. As I mentioned, the unity of neighbourhoods and the organisation of the political groups played a huge part in this process. During the demolition and eviction process in Pendik, the local political groups met with the inhabitants, and their resistance was another dimension of the struggle. But Sulukule is an exceptional situation. The resistance of the Sulukule Platform, their relations within themselves constitutes a whole different type of resistance to the urban renewal projects. But still this demands a collective process of resistance and that's exactly what we're lacking. We don't get together enough.

IS THERE A COMMON AGENDA AMONGST THE NEIGHBOURHOODS?

Of course. Let me tell you about the experiences of the Istanbul Neighbourhood Associations Platform (IMDP). In July 2006, eight or nine neighbourhoods got together with the help of some friends at the Solidarity Workshop. We tried to get more attention with events like the symposium of 'Neighbourhoods Are Coming Together' and with some press statements. At the end of 2007, we formed the IMDP in Karanfilköy with 22 different neighbourhoods. We divided all the neighbourhoods into three subgroups according to the different voting regions of Istanbul. Region A included Gülsuyu-Gülensu, Başıbüyük, the district of Hürriyet and Yakacık. In the Sarıyer area, Karanfilköy, the district of Kazım Karabekir, the district of Maden and FSM Baltalimanı composed Region B, and Ayazma, Ic-Dis Kumsal and Küçükçekmece made Region C. IMDP is trying to create a synergy and organise groups confronting the urban renewal project: 'Life against the 3rd Bridge', 'Platform of "No„ to the Corner Hotel', 'Solidarity Workshop'.

HOW DO YOU SEE THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THESE GROUPS AND THE IMDP?

We should aim for a process where every group keeps its autonomy, but also fights for the same cause. We have to be able to see the unique conditions of each situation. Each resistance maintains its separate fights, but it must also find common ground.

UNDER THIS URBAN OPPOSITION HOW WILL THE NEIGHBOURHOODS ORGANISE THEMSELVES? WHAT SHOULD BE THE NEXT STEP FOR THE UNITY OF THE NEIGHBOURHOODS?

Unless neighbourhoods share their struggles and experiences with the other struggling areas, the resistance will be incomplete. This is why we created the IMDP. At the beginning of 2007, we called together 8–10 institutions to determine a strategic plan for the short and middle term. But we couldn't agree on anything. Recently, the Chamber of Architects and Engineers formed a city working group and called up all the opposition groups in Istanbul, so we met again. I think we should be able to unite all the opposition groups in the city. Then we can reach out to neighbourhoods suffering from urban renewal projects in Ankara and İzmir. Thus, we can intervene in our cities, and the struggle will be about not only the right to housing, but also the right to the city, not only for the working class, but also for the middle-class. Unless we unite all the actors in a city, victims and their foes, the struggle for the right to the city won't be complete.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GROUPS INVOLVED IN THE RIGHT TO THE CITY STRUGGLE AND PUBLIC AUTHORITIES?

The real tension arises from TOKI's (Toplu Konut İdaresi -Turkey's mass housing administration) and the municipality's strict attitude. Unless they choose dialogue and negotiation with the victims, this tension will continue to increase. There are 50,000 people living in Gülensu-Gülsuyu, They don't contact or co-operate with them, and instead plan and decide in their name. In other parts of the world, some institutions are trying their best to increase the participation of citizens. But in Turkey, they're doing their best to ignore the inhabitants.

ARE YOU IN TOUCH WITH THE OTHER URBAN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AROUND THE WORLD?

As the IMDP, we attended an international meeting in Barcelona that was examining different urban renewal processes. There were victims from India, the U.S.A and Chile. Last year, we also went to the European Social Forum, where we examined urban renewal in other countries. The No-Vox movement from Paris was there, and they invited us to Paris. In Paris, there were participants from Canada, Brazil, Japan, Russia. We noticed in every situation, urban renewal processes were affecting the victims negatively. Urban renewal processes don't care about the inhabitants' needs. These places are seen as part of an international capital contest. We saw this, and we discussed how to fight it.

However, urban social movements are still relatively new in Turkey. In Istanbul, Ankara and İzmir it's only been five or six years, and proper organisation is still lacking. However, there is need for a serious struggle that has great potentials. What motivated me most was the idea that the IMDP was the best place to intervene in the urban renewal project. If neighbourhoods don't intervene themselves, regardless of how many political groups act on their, it won't be enough. Throughout this process we always emphasised that the inhabitants must have the first word and that this is the only way the resistance would be successful. Today organising on behalf of this mission is a necessity.

Part 2:

HOW DO YOU SEE THE POTENTIAL OF CULTURAL PROJECTS IN THE CONTEXT OF ISTANBUL'S THREATENED NEIGHBOURHOODS?

Two main arguments prevail in the neighbourhoods. The first is: We can only protect our neighbourhoods through resistance and barricades. Any change to the reality of the neighbourhoods will eventually bring about the neighbourhood's demolition. The second argument is: Urban renewal is inevitable and also needed, so why don't we try to see it as a potential and control the process? Can we develop a plan where nobody is victimised or forced out? This argument is also more open to the potential of cultural projects in helping to strengthen local identities.

COULD CULTURAL PROJECTS ALSO BE CONSIDERED AS ALTERNATIVE RESISTANCE STRATEGIES?

Resistance is currently mainly focused on the first approach, which is one of the reasons why despite many positive dynamics, the resistance movement is still quite weak. In my view we need more diverse coalitions, and 'cultural projects' can play an important part, not as stand-alone resistance strategies but as important supporting allies of resistance.

WHERE DO YOU SEE THE MAIN RISKS OF CULTURAL PROJECTS AND WHY?

First of all we have to remember that the notion of 'cultural project' is quite new and unfamiliar to how we in the neighbourhoods think. It is an 'outsider' idea as it were. It is therefore crucial that they are conceived and realised as strategies from within, which are 'integrated' and 'internalised'. This is extremely difficult to achieve.

Up until today I don't think I've experienced this. An apolitical and unbiased project can only have its own specific resistance strategy. A good example of this is the artist Burak Delier's art project in summer 2010, which showed that there could be a different resistance to urban renewal. Yet, it received limited reaction from the neighbourhood or political circles. Another example is the artist collective from Argentina who had very little interest from the neighbourhood. To answer your question, cultural projects may not be considered as opposition strategies on their own but as important supporting allies of these strategies.

The biggest problem for the locals is the threat to their right to shelter, their homes being taken away and becoming homeless. The houses they built over years of hard work can be taken away in one day leading to great stress and tension. Sometimes a situation that brings this fear to daylight can lead to many different reactions. For instance a work that photographs a gecekondu (shanty house) with an artistic concern may easily be seen to risk depicting the neighborhood as 'ugly'. The work of cultural projects in addressing the problems of a public whose daily reality consists of those very problems and fears can sometimes fail in getting a reaction.

These types of projects have to be open and transparent in order to build trust in the localities. In neighbourhoods with strong political inclinations, getting sponsorships and funds becomes very complicated. We should always push for independent projects or at least try to create a budget with endorsements from various sources. An investment group could easily enter into a neighbourhood with an urban renewal project and at the same time be funding a social responsibility project. The World Bank, the EU and local banks often do this. This means that we have to be more selective in our neighbourhoods.

Another important factor is that because all sorts of attacks and negativity come from the outside (gecekondu demolitions, police operations, etc.) the locals see all types of such external intervention – be it from universities, trade associations or cultural institutions, even if they are genuinely seeking to strengthen the neighbourhood - as impositions from 'outside' leading the locals to assume a distance to them.

Until today, the groups that have worked in the neighbourhoods, especially student groups, have considered the projects as field work. Since the projects are restricted to a certain time period there is no opportunity to go deeper into research or relationships. When the project ends and it is time to leave the neighbourhood the final work stays with the group. While there is great potential for both sides to learn from and influence each other, finding a superficial or pragmatic solution in order to achieve this is not the best approach.

CAN YOU MORE SPECIFICALLY TALK ABOUT YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH CULTURAL AGENCIES? WHERE DO YOU SEE IT WORK POSITIVELY? WHERE DID IT FAIL?

The project had an impact on the local dynamics in the neighbourhood and potentially for forging stronger solidarity. Cultural Agencies attempted to disrupt the daily routine in the neighbourhood to create public awareness and it partly succeeded in doing so. Especially the project space, the Gülsuyu-Gülensu

Dükkan – became a centre of attention for children where they could read, paint, partake in activities and so forth. Cultural Agency could inspire reflecting upon and changing our ways in the neighbourhoods positively. Looking at the Friday Talks and activities we did from time-to-time in the Dükkan, we realised that the struggle and resistance movements we have been practicing for many years were also somewhat homogeneous and dogmatic, that in the long run, they might not provide a solution but only reproduce a vicious cycle. Cultural Agencies addressed the neighbourhood as a whole instead of a specific area, sect, ethnicity or age group. The 'Gülensu Gülsuyu Oral History Project' which is part of Cultural Agencies invited everyone who at some point contributed to the establishment of the neighbourhood, regardless of their opinions, positions (right wing-left wing, Alevi, Sunnite, Turkish-Kurdish etc.). This helped us to see different points of view. If it were the neighbourhood itself doing this project it wouldn't have been as objective and diverse.

Yet the project did not manage to bring us together, to change the sometimes negative dynamics in the neighbourhood completely. This is not anyone's fault in particular, but I think, as a community, we must first try to understand why we could not achieve this despite the open invitation of the project to all. As far as the project is concerned, one of the biggest failures was its inability to create a sort of local team. Most of the work was seen to be executed by 'outsiders' (the project team) and some of its activities did receive enough attention – like Burak Delier's project – despite the fact that they were showing us new possibilities to mobilise and resist. It is important that cultural projects are conceived and realised as strategies from within, which are fully 'integrated'and 'internalised'.

HOW DID THE ORAL HISTORY INFLUENCE THE PROCESS, ISN'T GATHERING INFORMATION THIS WAY A KIND OF RESISTANCE ON ITS OWN?

Yes, of course. Recalling local history was a strategy of resistance. The neighbourhood has gone through extreme makeovers especially since 2005. In a struggle against the 'urban renewal' threat, a process where local history is revisited, showing how the neighbourhood, solidarity and collective life in the neighbourhood were built and pinpointing the many characteristics that are lost today such as the authority of decision, guides the way in discussions about the neighbourhood's future. Our team observed that the young generation did not have a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood. Most of the creative energy was used outside of the neighbourhood and creative activities were mostly done in city centres. Although there are many talented young people in the arts, sciences and law, this is not reflected in the neighbourhood at all. This is because the government continues to show such neighbourhoods as crime-ridden and local political actors lack vision and ability to benefit from these artistic potentials. The Oral History work could bring these potentials into light and leave something behind for those to come.

CAN THIS STRATEGY BE APPLIED IN OTHER NEIGHBOURHOODS?

There is always a possibility. I do believe that we had a good experience with the project. We can now better see our own mistakes and shortcomings. We expect the future in Turkish cities to be very conflictual. But, unfortunately we are currently still weak in developing an effective opposition strategy. In big cities like Istanbul, Ankara and İzmir the urban renewal process is happening very fast. The residents' dreams and hopes about their living space are being destroyed, the living spaces of the poor are going through a fast process of gentrification. This problem can't only be left to the will of political circles and platforms. Artist collectives or projects such as 'Cultural Agencies' have a big responsibility in this process as well. We don't only struggle to keep our homes in the neighbourhood but also to have our say in decisions of urban politics.

Opposing the construction of the third bridge, and protecting the Emek Theater are manifestations of this struggle. To be honest our utopian idea of the city has been long destroyed. The responsibility of opening up channels - that locals are at the center of decision making, having their own voice - should be supported by the creative works of artist collectives.We need to think; where do we want to live now? In what kind of a neighbourhood and city? We need to develop a new 'City Rights' rhetoric. I think that cultural projects and artist collectives are especially important emplacements in resistance movements.

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[1] Erdoğan Yıldız is a community a ctivist and resident of Gülsuyu-Gülensu, Istanbul. Credits: Part 1 - interview adapted from the documentary 'Ekümenopolis' with kind permission of the director Imre Balanlı; part 2 - Cultural Agencies.

OPPOSING PRACTICES: MAKING CLAIMS TO THE 'WORKS' IN A POST-INDUSTRIALISED NORTHERN ENGLISH CITY

JULIA UDALL

Portland Works is a Grade II* Listed cutlery factory, in the mainly residential neighbourhood of Sharrow, situated just outside Sheffield City Centre. Known as an 'integrated works', it is a three-storey courtyard building with a series of small workshops surrounding a now derelict central shared engine house and chimney. Since it was built in the 1870s, it has been in continuous use for its intended purpose as a series of metalworking shops. Significantly, Portland was the first place in the world that Stainless Steel cutlery was manufactured, nearly a century ago. Current metalworking tenants include toolmakers, artisan knife makers, joiners, engravers, silver and nickel platers, steel-product manufacturers and even a men's chastity-belt maker. In the last forty years the works has diversified; there are now musicians'[1] and artists' studios, and a range of small businesses as well as the more traditional 'Little Mesters'. It is a 'rare survival'[2] of this type of building and one of the few places left in the city where a number of makers work under one roof.

The 'Alternative Futures for Portland Works' Campaign started in response to the landlords' decision in early 2009 to close the studios and workshops and convert the building into a small number of high-spec offices and 'luxury' bedsit flats. One of the key battle grounds for the campaign group was the assertion by both English Heritage and Sheffield City Council conservation officers that the 'heritage value'[3] to the city lay within the fabric of the building and therefore could be preserved by its conversion into flats. Maintaining the building as a place of business and light industry was seen as 'low-value'[4] and not sufficient motivation for the landlord to pay for repairs to the deteriorating fabric. However, many of the businesses based there would not survive a move, and with ttheir closure would be not only mean the loss of businesses and networks of people, but also the loss of specialist skills that are particular to Sheffield.[5] There was a need to claim Portland Works as more than an architecturally significant part of the built fabric of Sheffield.

I understood the claims on Portland Works as carriers of energy and knowledge that would enrich and sustain the project, but also as political gestures. They were assertions of a need for the public to reclaim space in the city. The majority of those making claims did not own the Works, and many did not even use it, yet they declared a relationship to it and with that, 'matters of concern' were brought into consideration and desires articulated. As Doina Petrescu suggests; *'Sometimes these claims are modest and informal, but what is important is how to transform them into a brief, a challenge, and sometimes a proposal that will give room to the multiplicity of desires and needs of diverse sets of users.'* [6] Claims are made by people not only verbally, but also through their actions, practices and the objects on which these claims bear. Crucial to this process is how these claims are made, and how the matter of concern is represented. Bruno Latour reminds us that with each representation come layers of *'...translation, transmissions, betrayals...assembly, delegation, proof, argumentation, negotiation and conclusion'* [7] that will all bear on what and whom are brought into the political process. Claims on Portland Works were made by showing (at exhibitions, through artwork created for the campaign, in magazines and posters), by telling (in public meetings, blogs, newspaper articles, planning objections and workshops) and by doing (through using the space, working practices and modifying the fabric of the building). Each of these brought with them a certain power, related to not only the content of the claim but the particular nature of its form, whether it took the very personal and temporal nature of 'telling', or the potential new meanings created by new forums and juxtapositions through which 'showing' occurs, or the propositional and performative nature of 'doing'. By understanding these together the potential for the development of a brief for the future of the works became richer and more democratic, bringing difference in meanings, words, visions and interpretations.

Making claims

A 'Little Mester' is a colloquial term used to describe a self-employed cutlery worker in the 19th Century. Individual crafts people would rent a unit around a shared furnace, each taking his or her specialist part in the process of making an item; this gave flexibility to the processes allowing the makers to respond to market demand. Prior to the creation of integrated works such as Portland, which brought people together in one place, Mesters would cart their goods between works in wheelbarrows. Portland Works is still comprised of these workshops and studios, each small business, collective, band or sole trader renting a space around the shared central courtyard.

Some of those based at Portland Works collaborate on what they make - either through commissions

that require a number of the trades, such as forging, grinding, engraving and plating, or less formally through joint art shows.[8] They also rely on one another to assist in the repairs of machinery, be it the replacement of an engine or the welding of an item. These informal interdependencies are not visible, yet they are vital both to the feasibility of their businesses and to the identity of the area. As the campaign developed, so did our collective understanding of the needs of individual tenants, groups, makers and activists and, crucially, those things which had become our shared desires. In order to achieve those aims a series of objects and modifications to the building were created, either to present identity, strengthen relationships, or to facilitate further actions necessary to the campaign. As Bruno Latour puts it when he calls for a politics of 'things';

There might be no continuity in our opinions, but there is a hidden continuity and a hidden coherence in what we are attached to. Each object gathers around itself a different assembly of relevant

The Distinctive Sharrow Action group formed to carry out a series of built environment projects in their neighbourhood, which responded to the desires of people living and working there. The Distinctive Sharrow Toolkit sets out a series of actions and suggests how they can be achieved through collective action; aiming to develop skills and relationships as they happen. Projects may be physical interventions at small or large scale, or temporary, making events to alter the way space is used or perceived. They can be carried out by the group or by influencing others' development projects. Current projects include signage, the development of a new public space, flags, a treasure hunt and a festival in empty shops. Those involved have commissioned artists, written briefs carried out research, created events and held workshops. Members of the group are also involved in the Portland Works project

parties. Each object triggers new occasions to passionately differ and dispute. Each object may also offer new ways of achieving closure without having to agree on much else… In other words, objects - taken as so many issues - binds us all in ways that map out a public space profoundly different from what is usually labelled under 'the political'.[9]

The meaning of an object is not rigidly defined; it is set in a network of relations and offers new possibilities when considered collaboratively and in the new context of other 'objects of concern'. They are not certain facts, they are open for debate and because of this, an object-based way of creating the constituency and issues for the campaign also brings with it the opportunity for transformation.

The first of these objects, made as an initial response to the Planning Application to convert the Works into flats was a series of display boards on the windows of Portland Works. 'Portland Works'[10] posters

had been designed featuring a number of tenants in their place of work with the things that they make. They were produced in order to present Portland as a thriving, working place defined by people, skills and practices.. The creation of the posters made those featured on them public representatives of the campaign, empowered to speak by virtue of them being named and visible, also then responsible for representing others, such as their neighbours. A Portland' tenant made a series of display boards so that the posters could be presented on the elevation, in the street, visible to passersby, telling people what was happening 'in here'.[11] Their location was chosen to address the issue that the activity in the courtyard building was hidden from the street; it was realised that the proximity of a residential population did not guarantee a united community based on physical adjacency. We hoped to communicate the significance of the proposed planning application to those living nearby, as the Planning Notice fixed to a lamppost might not have been addressing a public aware of the businesses based at Portland Works.

The second object produced in Portland Works was the communal noticeboard, made in answer to the question: 'If there is one immediate change to the building what should that be?' The next week it appeared

given without announcement by a maker from the works, each changing the communal spaces and relating to a significant point in the campaign. Future modifications are planned, now by collaborative groups of tenants; including a 'sculpture garden' on the roof, curated and created by the artists that work below and a mobile unit to function as a welcome desk on open days and an archive, designed collaboratively in response to the skills, machinery and materials available at the works.

The nature of these modifications was relational - they became active objects altering the relationships between people, both within the campaign group and, in the case of the posters, the wider public. They embody know-how and knowledge particular to those at Portland Works and because of this they are implicitly social products. Reckwitz defines these practices as comprised of;

...forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge... whose existence necessarily depends on the existence and specific interconnectedness of these elements, and which cannot be reduce to any one of these single elements" making an individual a *"carrier of a practice... and a certain routinized ways of understanding, knowing how and desiring... a practice is thus a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood.*[15]

These practicses brought to the forefront matters of concern in a tangible, yet understated manner. Questions were raised about what value these skills had to Sheffield, what possibilities collaborations offered for their businesses, how a relationship with a building develops over time, how a community is formed and what aspects of a city might be hidden from view yet make an important contribution to the way it works? The physical changes mark the development of priorities for the campaign, desires and relationships between people.

under the main entrance arch, courtesy of the coat hook maker. The noticeboard became the place where other objects were assembled; papers with requests for information, meetings promoted, business support offered, press cuttings placed and business cards pinned. This 'thing' was deemed crucial as a physical entity situated in the place that was the object of concern; it was the space that those involved had in common.[12] The third modification appeared in response to the artists' concern that the 7th step was unsafe and on Portland Works Open Days their 7th step was unsafe and it may be a risk forto public access; a shiny new bolt courtesy of the tool maker appeared.[13] This gesture, as the others before represented a practice, in this case that of the tool maker. This 'practice' consisted of his particular knowledge and know-how, the material 'objects' available to him, his care for the artists and the building and his commitment to the shared event of the open days.

The fourth modification was to a letter box, which was repainted and emblazoned with a hand engraved celebratory sign proclaiming 'The Portland Works Committee'[14]. It was made when the campaign group constituted and were able to accept donations and offers of services. Each of these small objects appeared,

BLACK DOGS

Leeds, UK

WHO artists Collective, with core membership and external collaborators
WHAT self organised art, workshops and public interventions
WEB http://www.black-dogs.org/
KEYWORDS *context - responsive - participation - collective action - intervention*

Black Dogs is an artist collective whose activity spans formal exhibitions, publications, events, interventions, workshops, social engagement and curatorial activity. Formed in Leeds in 2003 as a means to conduct artistic activity in the city at a self-organised level, Black Dogs subscribes to a DIY ethos of not-for-profit motivation and ideals of active participation. The group's activity is guided by a commitment to context-responsive, conversation and debate-led working methods and artistic experimentation with modes of life that contribute toward a working alternative to capital-driven society.

The free-sharing of information, knowledge, skills and experience underpins the actions of the collective as a method by which to encourage collaboration both within the group and with the audiences and public who experience Black Dogs' output. It is the group's aim, through its artistic activity, to understand and facilitate a transformation from a passive-consumer 'society of extras' through to a stronger, more participative form of social organisation

Making modifications to the building does not critique existing reality; it is more radical, it proposes alternative realities. This approach is asserting an alternate understanding of investment, where a close examination of the context and the giving of time and energy are valued most highly. This is in contrast to the terms set out in the planning application where the 'value' of this site is considered not to be enough to warrant any investment unless converted into a residential development and a large profit be obtained. As Jean-François Prost writes in his essay 'Adaptive Actions;

Resident's adaptive actions prolong the life of buildings by progressively adapting their environments in a number of small, sustainable moves, thus avoiding accelerated or premature degradation, as well as avoiding the need to resort to large, urban renewal projects.[16]

The adaptive actions carried out at Portland Works suggest a responsiveness to need, yet the care and skill with which they are carried out separates them from being utilitarian. The approach taken by the tenants of the works asserts a moral system which is similar to that found by Gilligan in her analysis of the development of moral judgement. She found two ways of considering a matter of concern, one of which follows rules and rights and the other, which I see as closer to that performed by the tenants that, '… *privileges the consideration of relations and responsibilities in making judgments... (and) emphasizes participants' empathy for others and their concern for the sustainability of relations'.*[17] By acting with care the tenants of Portland Works were asserting a value system other than that prescribed through ownership, legislation, statutory regulations and legal obligations and one which relies on knowledge of one another, and the place in a way that top-down regeneration could not; they were 'doing' their morality as part of their practices. Their modifications to took the object that was controversial, the conflicted 'thing' - the building itself - and began to mark onto it their practices, their care for one another and the place and the future which they were proposing. Though subtle as a means of representation, these were powerful acts of resistance; they acknowledge people, desires and knowledges which were informal, hidden or had not been articulated within the public sphere. Chantal Mouffe writes of her term 'agonism' as a recognition that;

… society is always politically instituted and never forgets that the terrain in which hegemonic interventions take place is always the outcome of previous hegemonic practices and never a neutral one. This is why it denies the possibility of non adversarial democratic politics and criticizes those who, by ignoring the dimension of the political reduce politics to a set of supposedly technical moves and neutral procedures.[18]

Despite the modifications being small they recognised, reinforced and developed the relational aspect of the Works and in so doing gave the community therein a greater impetus and confidence to act communally against external threat.[19] They embodied a desire to do things differently; to act in another way.

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[1] This area is home to the largest concentration of music studios in the North of England, where numerous bands, record labels and artists started out including Warp Records, The Arctic Monkeys, Def Leppard, Pink Grease, Reverend and the Makers and many others.

[2] Portland Works is in the top 6% of Listed Buildings in the UK and English Heritage considers the site to be 'a rare survival of the building type'. Source: [http://www.victoriansociety.org.uk/news/rare_industrial_building_under_threat_from_insensitive_development/]

[3] The decline of the heritage crafts in the city was mirrored by the conversion of a number of Sheffield Works buildings into residential accommodation over the past decade. This sits within a wider context of gentrification in a number of post-industrial northern cities, including Sheffield, Manchester, Leeds and Newcastle, of which Sheffield was perhaps the slowest to pursue these strategies. The development of residential units in city centres began around a decade before, partly in response to the national policy document 'Towards an Urban Renaissance', which was adopted in 1999. The government sought to promote the re-population of major city centres in the UK by promoting them as important sites of middle class consumption. This is discussed in more detail in, Max Rousseau, 'Re-imaging the City Centre for the Middle Classes: Regeneration, Gentrification and Symbolic Policies in "Loser Cities"', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, x (v)(date): pp.

[4] The Planning Application Sustainability Report, written by the applicant, claimed that the works housed '*a number of businesses which appear to be unsustainable, with occupancy falling over the past few years due to increased competition from the far east'*, and photographs included in the Design Statement omitted any people or signs of activity. The building, at this time was in fact fully occupied. In addition to this, the wider proposals for the Strategic Development Framework had given up on the idea that the John Street area had viable businesses and proposed instead an area of housing and offices. The John Street Triangle Conservation area is currently designated in the Unitary Development Plan as a flexible use area. The draft Sheffield Development Framework which is coming into force in 2011 proposes it becomes a 'Business and Housing' area. Noise regulations that accompany housing developments would threaten the future of the works and other businesses, particularly the music studios. In order to contest this, we developed an audit of the businesses and studios in the area. The intention of this document was to provide evidence that it should be designated as a Business and Light Industry area. The Audit was conducted through interviews and questionnaires and represented through summaries, transcripts, maps and statistics and submitted to Sheffield City Council Planning Department. This was information that people would provide anecdotally; creating an audit documents these relationships in a way which could possibly determine policy. In order to refute these claims, a business audit of those at Portland Works was compiled, and an additional audit of the businesses within the John Street Triangle. These documented the area both through mapping and questionnaires and through interviews with people based in the area. Over 30 businesses were shown to be tenants at Portland Works and the units within the John Street Triangle almost fully occupied, with waiting lists for some of the buildings and plans for expansion spoken of by a number of businesses. This conflict exposed the information submitted by planning as being incomplete, and anecdotal, yet it was perceived as being authoritative by certain parties due to the professional conventions and 'factual' style that it adopted.

WARDS' CORNER
London, UK

WHO The Wards Corner Community Coalition (WCC) of market holders
WHAT Resistance to redevelopment/ gentrification of market
WEB http://wardscorner.wikispaces.com
KEYWORDS *gentrification, Resistance, collaborative action, equality*

Collective resistance to imposed plans to close and demolish the market to be replaced by executive flats. 'Some of the market traders immediately mobilised to create an alternative vision of the site; to include preservation of the main Wards building, growth of the market and continuity for local businesses. At once, the possibility of a different future for Wards Corner emerged; one which resonated with local opinion. After nearly three years of relentless, focused and highly creative campaigning, the WCC recently won a landmark judgement in the High Court, and the developers had their planning permission for the Wards Corner site repealed in July 2010. The Council's planning processes in respect of this application were found not to have followed duties under Equalities legislation. They had failed to assess the impact of the proposed development on relations between different racial and ethnic groups and on equality of opportunity in this area of Haringey... The WCC campaigns for standards non-standardisation and the development of our local distinctiveness...'

[5] The most obvious of these is Wigfull Tools, who still forge using drop hammers installed when Portland Works was built and calculate relocation costs at £250,000, which would be prohibitive. It is also increasingly difficult to obtain 'hammer rights' anywhere in the city, a license which allows them to operate a drop forge.

The relationship between the different types of making and design has always been important in Sheffiled with strong links between industry and art practitioners, particularly since the development of the Sheffield College of Design in 1843. These issues were recently documented in a series of articles for the Guardian's G2 supplement: 'Disappearing Acts': http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/mar/22/heritage-crafts-at-risk

[6] Doina Petrescu, *Re-public*, special issue: Reclaiming democracy (DATE) http://www.re-public.gr/en/?p=60.

[7] BrunoLatour, 'From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik' in, Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (eds), *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005). p. xxx.

[8] Portland Works facilitates various collaborations such as that commissioned by Steven Cater a researcher at Sheffield University: *'I am currently undertaking a PhD at Sheffield University, studying the historical role of steel and developing new techniques for processing steel. Nowhere else, not even in the University or on the Advanced Manufacturing Park can I find the necessary skills required to help me in my work: I can find them at Portland Works. I can take metal ingots to be indelibly engraved with reference numbers, have the same ingots worked down to strip and then that strip made into tools and cutting edges; under the same roof.'* Or other unintentional collaborations: *'…and I got told by a band that rehearse and record here that a reviewer said there was this really great bass sound in their record… and they didn't know what it was - and then they realised it was my hammer- and they'd been playing along to it - the same rhythm without realising… so they left it in…'* Andrew Cole, Wigfull Tools.

[9] FULL REFERENCE

[10] The slogan, whilst also the name of the building uses the other implied meanings; Portland 'works'- it is successful in its own terms, 'Portland *works*'- it is a place where people are employed… designed and produced by Mark Parsons and Eric Winnert.

[11] Mark Jackson of Squarepegs made the displayboards and the presentation of the posters on the elevation of the building was in sharp contrast to the official Planning Application Notices pinned to the lamppost across the street, which detailed only the option to comment on or oppose the proposal for flats.

[12] This was in part because of the different times that the tenants occupied the building, which perhaps overlapped but were not in sync; musicians use the metalworking workshops to rehearse at night, other makers took a more traditional working day, the knife maker and the coat peg maker shaped their work to fit around looking after their sons, another, a hobbyist knife maker came to work during his spare time; the works was no longer a place where everyone's working day was the same.

[13] The Open Days, scheduled for late in 2010, will have demonstrations of forging, grinding, joinery, plating, engraving, print making, a sound system, drawing and the other industries based at Portland Works.The bolt was made by Andrew Cole of Wigfull Tools.

[14] Engraved by Mick Shaw of Mick Shaw Engraving.

[15] A. Reckwitz, 'Toward a Theory of Social Practices: A Development in Culturalist Theorizing', European Journal of Social Theory 5(2)(YEAR): 249-250.

[16] Jean-François Prost, 'Adaptive Actions', *field:* 2(1)(2008): xxx.
 Volume 2, issue 1 (October 2008)

[17] Kim Trogal, *Affective Urban Practices:* a feminist approach to the ethics of care and creativity in contemporary urban practice, (unpublished PhD upgrade paper, University of Sheffield, 2009), p. 34. Available: http://linesofflight.wordpress.com/texts-3/.

[18] REFERENCE

[19] The campaign group has now set up an Industrial and Provident Society (for the benefit of the Community) in order to purchase the building through the issue of community shares. It is intended that this will operate in a manner which continues to be relational, bring difference and see investment as more than just financial.

WHAT CULTURE WHERE?

PETER MUTSCHLER, RUTH MORROW

Inside the tent

I have to use up the apples that the kids collected yesterday under the trees in the garden. In the tradition of a Sunday, I bake an apple cake. Pretty much the same as in the image, 'No Selling of Produce in Tent', Manorhamilton Show, 2008; Sarah attached it to an email with the note *'Feel free to use it in the book… it may tie in well with the discussion of mobile cultural spaces and also relates to the myvillages link.*[1] Apple tarts are one of many categories in agricultural shows all over Ireland, alongside knitting, jam, flower arrangement, best sheep, bull, carrot, ploughing… The whole range of traditional crafts and agricultural products are on display at these popular shows, rural culture in a competitive form, a social event mixed with trade. And it seems, all the ingredients of our Rhyzom research is contained in the image: a cultural activity, a public presentation, a (temporary) venue, an audience, an economic exchange - outside the tent that is - and finally forms of transmission.

An apple tart is missing in Manet's '*Le déjeuner sur l'herbe*' from 1863, but with its shady trees and small lakes it represents a rural idyll: a place of recreation for the city dwellers. A famous painting that hangs in a prestigious museum, the architectural structure where all important works of visual culture are traditionally housed. It contains a utopian value, of people at ease with each other and with nature, the uninhibited naked woman dominant like an earth goddess. Aspects of utopia, of counter-cultures and (green) alternatives were and are inherent in many initiatives, organisations and people we visited as part of Rhyzom - us included. [2] From the apple tart to the tent, from the painted rural idyll to the museum, culture happens in many places, hidden or exposed, unrecognised or generally accepted. Yet the distinction between private and public culture, the intention to show (and compete) and the assigned status of a venue - kitchen, tent, publication, museum - mark significant criteria and values in the production and consumption of culture. As high culture occupies its dedicated place and recognised and recognisable form, subculture shifts and moves and is more a process than a singular, signature outcome.

The Rhyzom project set out to *'…map emerging cultural productions related to local contexts (i.e. eco-cultures, minorities' skills and alternative economies, traditional practices and cultures of resilience, rural/urban exchanges)…'.* [3] The aim behind this was to reinforce these marginal cultures by contributing to a greater visibility and debate through a European interdisciplinary network. The first practical tool for this cultural mapping were journeys and fieldtrips: from monasteries in Romania, to straw bale buildings in Germany, from office containers to gardens under polytunnels. The fieldtrips placed the artists, architects, geographers, the bunch of Rhyzomistas into the role of observer, anthropologist and analyst, distant or sympathetic, welcomed or just tolerated. In general, these trips were to locations where one would not expect high art or official

'No Selling of Produce in Tent, Manorhamilton Show, 2008. Image: Sarah Browne

Manet: Le déjeuner sur l'herbe (1863), Musée D'Orsay, Paris. Image: web

culture, but instead subcultures and cultural experiments, below the radar of wider attention and general recognition. In-between places, both geographically and mentally, producing as much real cultural products as creative drafts, energies of change and utopias. But the territory is fluid between high- and sub- culture, between hobby and profession, between traditional crafts and art, between museum and tent.

For over a decade now, there has been a renewed interest by artists in particular, to rediscover undervalued cultural forms and to integrate and transform elements into their art practice. From cooking to gardening, from

knitting to oral history, everyday cultural activities are a common subject in contemporary art. In a similar trend, the vernacular and elements of self-build are revalued and incorporated into architectural designs. The key words for such socially engaged practices are relational, collaborative, participatory, and – to a lesser degree - multidisciplinary. Their favourite medium is the intervention - small or large scale, but always well aware of the social and physical environment. What for? To stimulate change or to be shown in museums or publications like this? Alan Phelan addresses the same split and double function, when he writes of *'… the embedding*

Ballykinlar, Co. Down, Northern Ireland

Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim, Republic of Ireland

WHO 'Forever Young Pensioners' local residents, activists
WHAT pensioner initiative and catalyst for community self-organisation
WEB no connection
KEYWORDS *community work as happening - grassroots - creative resilience*

Initiated by artist and activist Anne-Marie Dillon, the 'Forever Young' group socialize, play bingo and organize cultural activities. Due to lack of a community centre they started with meetings in the open and later converted a caravan into a 'cultural centre'. Their activism within a small village context, dominated by a large British Army camp, has become a catalyst for other self-organized community projects- from toddler groups to youth cinema.

WHO artists, crafts people, curatorial projects, training
WHAT rural arts& crafts centre, workshops, residencies, education
WEB www.leitrimsculpturecentre.ie
KEYWORDS *rural and context specific - cultural production and dissemination*

The arts- and crafts centre in this small rural town provides residencies, workshops, commissions, training and exhibitions. The curated projects are placed around a social and environmental context and aim to connect and include local audiences through outreach and participatory actions.

PS² workshop, Ballykinler-presentations, June 2010. Image: PS²

of the artist within the social fabric only to emerge elsewhere as supreme auteur or signatory.[4] But does the outcome have to be confrontational, allocated to a close local context, participants, community and a wider but distant platform / audience? The most likely and desirable transmission is that to other, similar initiatives, the recognition of a common ground. It is not tent to museum, but tent to community centre, caravan or school hall. It also indicates a change in the understanding of a profession: not as signature artist like Manet, but as co-generator of social actions with cultural means – '*Le déjeuner sur l'herbe*' as community event?

In a caravan

I hand out a questionnaire (May 2010) to members of the 'Forever Young Pensioners'. They meet every Tuesday in a converted caravan, currently the only community centre in Ballykinler, a small coastal village in Co. Down. What do you understand as culture? Do you or people you know make culture? Two of many questions, which are answered with growing impatience - and in return for a game of Bingo. '*Culture is for the people up there*', is their reply, pointing upwards above their head. And no, except for Anne-Marie, who studied art, they don't know anyone who would produce culture, certainly not themselves. It happens elsewhere in bigger cities, it is in museums, not around here. No choir, I ask? Yes some do sing. Stitching? Of course, first prize in a Women's Institute competition. Baking, flower arrangement, gardening, local history… all covered, but that's not culture, is it?

Is my apple tart in the kitchen culture? Are the competition entries placed inside a tent at the agricultural show in Manorhamilton, culture? Is the image of the home-made products by artist Sarah Browne culture and on which terms?

Small town

'Cultural production in rural environments and small towns of the border region' is the overall title of PS²'s contribution to the Rhyzom project. We organise one live project, a fieldtrip and a workshop.[5] We visit regional and rural cultural institutions and initiatives North and South of Ireland and we neither encounter high art nor subculture, just different forms of culture. Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim, in the Republic of Ireland, close to the border with Northern Ireland. We are there not for the tent, but for the Leitrim Sculpture Centre, based in the town in a newly converted building. It provides '*… residencies, workshops, commissions, training and exhibitions and explores new ideas and processes within a range of community, educational and environmental contexts*'.[6] A place for arts and crafts production with a 'white cube' gallery at the front, it was unexpected at first in a town with less than 2,000 inhabitants. Not for the outdated presumption that the crowded urban is the place of culture (theatre, opera, museum, collections), and the environment for creative

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GROUND UP ARTIST COLLECTIVE

Co. Clare, Ireland

WHO Artists, writers, curators, cultural activists
WHAT Art mostly outside of urban situations. Interventions into rural public space
WEB www.groundupartists.com/artists.html
KEYWORDS *artist collective - experimental - non- urban - rural*

Ground Up facilitates a new type of engagement between public art practice and rural contexts. The projects, mostly placed at unusual, open locations, generate debate and discussion amongst practitioners and the rural constituency. Social engagement and community participation are important aspects in the work process as well as ways in which contemporary art can be relevant and accessible to rural audiences without compromising the art.

THE ORGANIC CENTRE

Rossinver, Co Leitrim, Republic of Ireland

WHO Agricultural workers, green sustainable activists
WHAT Rural centre for organic gardening and sustainable living
WEB www.theorganiccentre.ie
KEYWORDS *Organic gardening - green alternative - education - community outreach*

Founded in 1995 in a remote rural location, it was the first pioneering garden and education centre in Ireland for the promotion of organic gardening and sustainable living. From growing food to cooking to green building, it offers a wide range of alternative courses and knowledge base. Through its outreach programme, the centre coordinates and supports community and school gardens on both sides of the border.

production, and the rural for agriculture (land conservation, small industry and recreation). Contemporary art practice has firmly acclaimed and occupied the rural with programmes like 'Ground Up' in Co. Clare (2003-07); 'AFTER' and 'New Sites New Fields' in Co. Leitrim (2007/8), with outcomes as relevant, normal or outstanding as elsewhere.[7] The centre is unexpected simply due to its size and physical assertiveness.

Both agriculture and culture are not self-sustaining and depend on subsidies, the production of food more so than that of culture. More than €2 billion was spent by the European Union (EU) for farming in Ireland between 2007/08 and around €85 million for the arts by the Arts Council of Ireland; a correlation, which equates to €1 in the arts to €23.52 for agriculture.[8] Funding shapes, distorts and manipulates the a economies. The upgrading of the Leitrim Sculpture Centre in the last few years (before the economic downturn in 2008) and its diversification is a prime example of shifts in cultural policies in the Republic of Ireland towards stronger and more independent regions, combined with new funding. The list of funders of the centre is remarkable and revealing: the Arts Council of Ireland; the International Fund for Ireland (IFI); Irish National Training and Employment Authority (F.Á.S.); various local authorities; INTERREG and ADM/CPA under the EU Programme for Peace & Reconciliation (Peace I); Greenbox eco-tourism and the Department of Art, Sports and Tourism. A multitude and diversity of sources, each with separate objectives and target groups. A complicated mix, which combines the funding for a foundry with courses for eco-tourists, art interventions with outreach or (further education) training courses. The Sculpture Centre could compete with cultural institutions in a major city, certainly in its creative output, though perhaps not in its participants and audience numbers.
Does it matter? Does cultural status increase with the number of participants or visitors? More than quantities, this is a matter of legacy, of impact, both on a local level and within a wider network. There are fewer people in regional / rural areas and the number of contacts / audiences are often less. Yet one can argue that culture (cultural activities) in this environment impacts more profoundly, simply because there are fewer events compared to the many competing in a city. The same could be said about personal contacts within small neighbourhoods and tight-knit communities, which demand a higher degree of accountability and civic responsibility from engaged cultural practices and practitioners. Of course, a tighter formation of neighbourhoods can also be found – to a degree – in urban environments that are mostly bonded together by shared interests.

Istanbul, periphery

A day at the outskirts in Gülsuyu – Gülensu and the neighbourhood initiative by Cultural Agencies.[9] A small shop is converted into a neutral meeting place, venue and production centre. We meet with a local activist, artists and architects and review the work: a vitrine on wheels as a miniature community museum with a changing collection of donated memorabilia; the video archive of oral history; images of activities. The fieldtrip coincides with the Istanbul Biennale, as part of which Cultural Agencies give a presentation of their project. A cultural community initiative at the periphery is transmitted to a high art event in the city centre to a wide(r) audience. A shift in location and with it a change in semantics. The artist-architect leaves the site of production and becomes an interpreter and author. To enter a wider discussion, the messy process of creative engagement has to be edited into a shiny theorised product.
How the dissemination process affects and manipulates the cultural activity, can only be judged critically.

Village football pitch

Ballykinler, home of a British Army camp (since 1902) and a few hundred villagers plus the caravan community centre.[10] We listen to a talk by the commanding officer about 'cultural bridge building', community relations and military-peacekeeping interventions - in Afghanistan. Afterwards, outside the compound fence, members of the Rhyzom group and villagers present their own work to an audience of participants, guests, visitors, children and their mothers. At the edge of the football pitch, in front of a mobile office, a temporary addition to the community centre caravan, they explain and show what they do: cooking the best meatballs in Sweden, oral history in Istanbul, the making of a local souvenir - a spoon - in a small German village, knitting and stitching in Ballykinler. A (nearly) equal exchange, a give and take, the longer it lasts, the more familiar the participants and visitors become. The football pitch as an extension of a living room, a half private, half public meeting.
There is a point, where the debate and theorisation stops, taken over by personal stories, enjoyment and a sense of commonality. A workshop as a social event, shared between few, connected to a small place.

Rural landscape

The Organic Centre, Co. Leitrim, Republic of Ireland, is only a 20 minutes drive away from the Sculpture Centre in Manorhamilton. Like the arts and crafts place, this agricultural training and learning centre occupies an unexpectedly generous eco-building in a landscape with few houses. The organic gardens, partly sheltered under polytunnels, are cultivated by professionals and trainees and the products are served in their own restaurant or sold to others. It offers weekend courses in gardening and all things green&alternative, from cheese-making to eco-housing. Geographically isolated, there are not many visitors and classes are concentrated at the weekends. What one doesn't see at the site, are the educational roots it spreads into nearby villages. At the time of our visit (November 2009) it coordinates and supports thirteen community and nine school gardens through weekly teaching sessions on both sides of the border. From practical help to establishing and maintaining a garden, soil and seeds delivery, to visits and exchanges to partnering (and competing) gardens. An imaginative, large-scale project, creating small satellites orbiting around the centre. The outreach programme is also a construct and response to available EU 'Peace and Reconciliation' funding for the border region, which stopped in 2010. Some of the garden projects still continue as an independent initiative.[11] Importantly, the outreach also works in an idealistic way. The centre radiates an alternative, ecological spirit and a sense of utopia, not least because of its architectural statement. Dominic Stevens'[12] description of the building as 'acupuncture architecture', as a small local intervention enough to stimulate cultural change, highlights the complexities of spaces for cultural production, from a tent or caravan, to a shop or purpose-built architecture.[13]

The image, 'No Selling of Produce in Tent', describes the functional attributes of a space: it is a showroom for a competition with many categories, one of them is home-made products. The temporary structure is elevated to a public venue for the display of agri-cultural products, assessed and admired in terms of appearance, beauty, skill – like Manet's painting in the museum. What is not on display is the making of these items, the work processes, the persons who made them; a final product, isolated from its cultural context. In a similar way, it could also be said that some organisations fragment and categorise culture, which is in fact a fluid and connected entity.

1   Email Sarah Browne, 05.09.2010. See: [www.myvillages.org]

2   In a similar vein but with an added question mark, PS² called a debate about aspects of rural art-practice: 'Where art grows greener? 17 December 2008, [www.pssquared.org/ruraldebate.php].

3   aaa, 'Rhyzom: collaborative network for local cultural production and trans-local dissemination', *Application outline*, 21.04.2009.

4   Alan Phelan, 'Knowing that audience is not enough'in, Fiona Woods (ed), *Ground Up. Reconsidering Contemporary Art Practice in the Rural Context*, (Ennis: Clare County Council, 2008), p. 95. The subject was also addressed during the *Cultural Agencies* workshop: *'Our project Cultural Agencies sits awkwardly between normally strictly divided and distant spheres – Istanbul's central cultural bubble and intellectual / artistic scene – and local post-gecekondu neighbourhoods. We consider the awkwardness of this position its main strength and tool. What publication formats can help us to explore the potentialities of this in-betweenness further and avoid the trap of generating a pleasing art / urbanism documentation sitting comfortably in Istanbul or European bookshops.'* See, Workshop outline, *PUBLICation as agency mode*, Cultural Agency, Istanbul (12.03.10 - 14.03.10), [http://rhyzom.net/workshops/publication.as.agency.mode/] .

5   The live project with students (6-12 October 2009) was organised by PS² in partnership with Agency research group, School of Architecture, University of Sheffield. See; [www.pssquared.org/life%20project.php; http://remotecontrol09.blogspot.com/. For the fieldtrip for Rhyzom partners (20-22 November 2009). See; [www.pssquared.org/FieldtripPS2.php].

6   See website of Leitrim Sculpture Centre (2009); [www.leitrimsculpturecentre.ie].

7   See, Woods (ed), *Ground Up* ; 'AFTER', [http://www.after.ie/project.htm]; 'New Sites new Fields', [http://www.newsitesnewfields.com/].

8   Source: [http://irishfarming.ie/2009/05/06/single-farm-payments-publication/]; source: [www.artscouncil.ie/en/news/news.aspx?article=551b16e7-5fe9-48d1-9498-8bbb4be3c41b]. These are only two major funding sources amongst many others. It is interesting that the title, 'No Selling of Produce in Tent', also describes an in-between status of cultural (subsidised) economies: a creative activity generates a product, which is later displayed and viewed / consumed, yet mostly free of charge (the sale of the competition entries is expelled from the white tent). A difficult dilemma, bridged by external funding, voluntary commitment or small-scale trade offs. The unfunded, but constituted 'Forever Young Pensioners' group in Ballykinler regularly have a stall at a nearby car-boot sale to raise money for their activities and community events.

9   Istanbul fieldtrip for Rhyzom partners (08 - 12 September 2009) organised by *Cultural agencies*; [http://cultural-agencies.blogspot.com].

10   PS² workshop, 'Cultural production in rural environments and small towns', Ballykinler, Northern Ireland, (19 June 2010), [www.pssquared.org/workshop.php].

11   The Organic Centre continuous to offer its services now on a fee base; [www.theorganiccentre.ie/schools_project].

12   From Dominic Stevens talk at the PS² fieldtrip (20. November 2009). See also: Dominic Stevens, *Rural: Open to all, Everyone welcome*, (Cloone: Mermaid Turbulence, 2007).

13   It is astonishing that the close by cultural centres do not network or collaborate. One reason could be a separation of culture into categories, similar to the entries at the agricultural shows.

CULTURE BETWEEN INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCY IN ISTANBUL

CULTURAL AGENCIES

Istanbul's ongoing dramatic urban transformation has not been confined to a political and economic level: it has also taken place in the fields of art and culture. Recent years have seen the development of a large number of privately financed, globally active art institutions such as Istanbul Modern, Platform Garanti and the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts/Istanbul Biennale alongside state cultural institutions, which date from before the 1980 military putsch and which are now largely redundant. In the central and increasingly gentrified Beyoğlu district in particular there is a growing blend of culture and commercial galleries, which is reminiscent of developments in New York's Chelsea, London's East End or central Berlin.

The spatial logic of the cultural infrastructure in Istanbul is not unlike that of many other megacities: a globally networked central area absorbs virtually all major cultural institutions and large cultural events. The bulk of the urban area – home to most of the local population – is under-resourced and under-represented. Thus, although last year's Istanbul Biennale 2009 focuses on a concept of art, which has been extended to encompass political and social facets, the three temporary exhibition venues are safely located in the central Beyoğlu district. Likewise, most events of 'Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture' are also concentrated here and in neighbouring central districts. The Capital of Culture is becoming a place, which combines spatial concentration with the generation of cultural capital.

The Cultural Agencies project takes a critical look at this city-centre fixation and examines models of institutional practice where official statistics merely reveal deficits: in the informally developed and rapidly changing periphery of Istanbul. Here there is little evidence of the traditional types of cultural institution such as museums, art galleries, libraries or theatres. Indeed, the state culture centres (*Kultur Merkezi*), which have been set up in state-planned residential projects are conspicuous by their absence. Nonetheless in the Gecekondu settlements a complex and in some cases institutionalised landscape of cultural institutions has emerged – without support from the state. These cultural agencies are inspired by the family, the community, religion and politics. They include self-help groups, neighbourhood organisations, associations, which cultivate their members' folklore, customs and traditions (*hemsehri dernekleri*), political organisations and committees organising one-off events such as local festivals or film showings.

Cultural Agencies seeks to give visibility to this cultural heritage. At the same time it looks to the future: how can existing cultural phenomena be consolidated allowing new formats to emerge? What are the

potentials and limitations of this cultural infrastructure to serve local residents and reflect their aspirations and needs? Field studies involving many students[1] have led to a large number of plug-in interventions, which impinge on the existing cultural infrastructure and generate multiple forms of collaborations between researchers, architects, artists and local residents. A distinction is made between formats of a more time-based and situative nature and those, which allow action to materialise and lead to Bruno Latour's notion of a negotiable *'Ding'*.

Gülensu-Gülsuyu

The Gülensu-Gülsuyu quarter lies to the north of the E5 motorway in the Maltepe district on Istanbul's Asian side. Both areas were built illegally in the early 1960s by migrants from Eastern Anatolia. Since the 1970s the Gecekondu settlements have seen the emergence of a closely knit network of activists groups, solidarity networks and neighbourhood associations. These settlements are currently threatened by urban renewal projects: Under the master plan the existing buildings are to be replaced by costly gated communities and most of the 55,000 local inhabitants are to be resettled. Already in 2001, more than 6,000 signatures of residents were collected to oppose a planned urban transformation. The political struggle against the risk of being forcibly driven away from their current homes is omni-present and builds on a local tradition of more than 30 years of left wing political radicalism, dating back to the 1970s Turkish unrest and the 1980 putsch.

What is less apparent is the cultural dimension of this process. The Cultural Agencies project is seeking a debate, which asserts the 'right to the city' not just as a political right but as part of a cultural identity and which fosters the creation of cultural (self-)awareness. With the exception of the folklore associations, which tend to focus on regional traditions, there are very few cultural institutions in Gülensu-Gülsuyu. It would appear that the process of making visible the culture of Anatolian migrants and its Gecekondu legacy has yet to take place – likewise the question of the formats of cultural (re)presentation and distribution.

Institutional experiment

The cultural production of Gülensu-Gülsuyu, which has tended to shy away from making itself visible and from formalisation, is being overlaid with the format of a quasi-institutional model, giving rise to a construct, which negotiates between form and lack of form. The intrinsic logic in the programme of a typical cultural institution is mirrored in and coupled with the local practices of a loosely organised community. Prototypical projects are developed within the community itself: a venue for events, a collection, an oral history and a magazine project. In July 2009 an empty shop from the first generation of Gecekondu buildings was leased and converted for the purposes of this experiment. The building geometry was divided into various programmatical components, which are not permanently attached to the shell of the building. They are used for temporary activities at various locations in Gülensu-Gülsuyu. The elements are re-assembled on specific occasions to underline the institutional framework, so creating a quasi-institutional conglomerate, which allows the various agencies to converge for a limited period.

Archive: Oral history

Since July 2009 Cultural Agencies has been building up an archive, which documents the complex history of Gülensu-Gülsuyu's illegal urbanisation since the 1950s. In interviews the people of Gülensu-Gülsuyu tell the story of their migration and arrival and the history of the district, and speculate on its future. These stories and histories of urbanisation thus become designs for the present, which impinge on current debates on clearance and expulsion. The spatial framework of their accounts is ambivalent: they move in a space which is both private and public, a space which is open and hence exposed to external influences, giving rise to a rhythm which is determined by the urban context.

Collection

Istanbul is a city rich in collections, objects and artefacts, which testify to a history going back more than two thousand years. But is it possible to evolve a new type of collection for a history of migration, arrival and urbanisation, which spans only 50 years? Like most of the Gecekondu settlements the outsider perceives Gülensu-Gülsuyu as place devoid of culture. But in the 50 year-long struggle to establish a new homeland the migrant population has constructed a specific culture, which reflects the development of contemporary Istanbul. Until now, this cultural production has been invisible and its stories have remained untold. However, for a number of years the post-Gecekondu settlements have increasingly been the subject of cultural projects and urbanistic studies.

Cultural Agencies is seeking to examine the process of making culture visible, with reference to the change in representation and production of cultural added value, simultaneously furthering this process. The local people of Gülensu-Gülsuyu are invited to tell their stories and make them available to the public, illustrating their personal accounts with personal belongings, which are displayed in a mobile showcase. One-week long exhibitions are organised with associations, clubs and individual residents. Items such as everyday objects, tools, photo albums, letters, photographs and posters are put on display in the showcase to visualise the history and the stories of migration and the urbanisation process which followed. Items were selected by local residents and then made visible in a locally curated exhibition series staged in a mobile vitrine, which toured various local institutions. After cataloguing and labelling, items were handed back to their respective owners. A virtual inventory of all displayed items remained as a collection of post-Gecekondu urbanisation, which is constantly growing and evolving.

Agency and/or institution

The project operates within the opposing contexts of 'institution' and 'agency', form and lack of form. The relationship between the two concepts is generally interpreted as an irreconcilable contradiction. The supporters in both camps cultivate their stereotypical images of the enemy. The term 'institution' traditionally stands for an object-based agenda of conserving and preserving; the term 'agency' on the other hand is seen as a flexible, supposedly unstructured antithesis that is frequently romanticised as 'informal'. Cultural Agencies is seeking new forms of thinking beyond the intransigence of the black and white approach, which will create a new balance between stability and instability, defining itself less through ideological struggle than the practice of cultural production. It seeks to establish a means of examining the process of visualising cultural production – with different words. And it is an attempt to

map the dramatic urban changes through stories, objects and organisation models, to define them so that they can be used for political struggle for the 'right to the city'.

Postscript

On 29 September 2010 the Gülsuyu-Gülensu *dükkanı* closed after almost 20 months of intense activity during which the former shop had slowly evolved, had acquired a new interior used as stage and seating for presentations and discussions between residents and guests. A new front terrace was constructed raising the pavement to provide additional space for the crowded interior, and happily appropriated by market stalls during the weekly market day. Finally, the pitched roof now houses a clock made from a recycled satellite dish.[2] The planned additions were collaborative efforts responding to the evolving needs of project activities, negotiating between artists as external authors and local residents. Users of the *dukkan*, local children and passers-by became co-producers by adding their work and findings such as a poem, drawings, furniture. This condition of 'open production' transcended the problematic relationship pattern between 'external experts' and locals who are assigned the role of informants. The *Dukkan* became a laboratory between organic and structural, between informal and formal practices underlining the ambivalence between agency and institution.

The project also stepped across established red lines, which had hitherto eyed cultural work outside the cultural bubble of Istanbul with suspicion. At times, mainly external observers felt the need to assume hidden agendas – is the project spearheading gentrification, perhaps even gathering data on local residents? Have funding sources been hidden? Locally, these questions were dealt with openly from the beginning. Partners and sources were exposed visibly at the entrance of the *dukkan*.
Trespassing, the active violation of established and all too comfortable boundaries – be they social, cultural, political or artistic, remained at the heart of the project: This applies to Istanbul's cultural bubble as much as to the fortress Gülsuyu-Gülensu as seen by some of the most radical local political activists. By establishing a 'generic and neutral cultural space' - a kind of Kunsthalle – the project became more than a comment on institutional practice. It created a space in which new, hitherto unlikely collaborations became possible, a space of negotiation that persistently questions assumed certainties of artistic practice, residents views on cultural projects and urban transformation or the 'good and bad' divisions of local political activists. The laboratory of the *dukkan* did not set out to deliver certainties nor indeed certain services. It remained a more uncomfortable arena with a certain autonomy, resisting the temptation to fall under the 'protection' of local fractions or a clear mission.

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1. Since May 2009, a series of workshops were conducted, partly supported by the Rhyzom project, which included students of Istanbul's Mimar Sinan University and Yildiz University, the Frankfurt Städelschule, Stuttgart University and Sheffield University.
2. Since May 2009, artist residencies as part of the Rhyzom project and supported by additional donors such as Allianz Kulturstiftung, led to a series of physical interventions realised with local residents. Artists involved included: Etcetera, Giorgio Giusti, Oliver Heizenberger, Danny Kerschen, Martin Kirchner, Shane Munro, Kirsten Reibold and others.

CARING FOR THE NETWORK, CREATIVELY

MANUELA ZECHNER

There are a few things we know collaborative networks of immaterial production to facilitate – virtuosic improvisation, self-exploitation, flexibilised labour, distributed production, bohemia, urban regeneration, project temporalities. Whether as cultural projects or other post-fordist production, networks of co-work are part and parcel of the neoliberal[1] blurring of work and life. We know how to make critiques of these as much as we know how to praise networks via discourses of horizontality and co-production. Yet, we understand little about those networks as sites of life: besides intense collaborations being forged, great projects getting done, struggles being organised, what happens in them? Who inhabits them and how?

Care and Creative labour: different types of trans-local networks

This text aims to operate a brief reflection on the dimension of life in two kinds of network cultures: those of creative and those of care labour. While collaboration may have high currency in certain arenas of post-fordist production, it isn't just within those that collaborative networks exist. To reflect on the kinds of subjectivities, complicities and forms of life that cultural projects and their broader networks produce, and a possible common culture of working across domains of informality and precarity, a glance at informal care networks is useful. Generally located at a lower strata of the class-race-sex chain, informal care work and its organisation have a few things in common with creative networks. These similarities in the organisation of care and creative networks may reveal two different ways in which neoliberal policy operates through the individualisation of subjects whilst making their collaborative cultures economically productive.

Creative labour networks tend to be oriented around a desire to 'work' or 'produce', operating through high-end communications technologies[2] and based on affiliations of interest, shared education and aspiration. Transnational networks of care are oriented around work too, though not so much as an end in itself but as means to a decent life, mediated through family structures, held together by low-end communications technologies and remittance systems.[3] Networks of migrant care labour stretch across generations and territories in order to make a living, shaping new modes of life and conviviality in the process. Just like the economies of cultural production, they are largely based on inventing ways of co-operating and negotiating informal with formal ties.

Chains and networks

To speak of the contingencies of globally interconnected labour, the concept of 'care chains' has emerged, referring to strands of people involved in the provision of care across the global South and North. Care chains[4] are made via people linked through family ties, sympathy and/or economic necessity, across local, social and economic geographies. A city woman employs a rural care worker for her children in order to dedicate herself more to her career; that worker leaves her family behind to earn this money; and in turn gets a poorer woman from a poorer country or an unemployed family member (mostly still busy, and female) to do the job. And so forth. Those are chains of exploitation (a proportion of the wage of someone higher up the chain makes the wage of someone further down) which, however, often also feature mutual support (beyond the flow of money). Care chains mark how complex relations of dependency are in a postcolonial geopolitics, not just following linear chains but branching out in various directions, linking up transnational networks of filiation (and to some extent, friendship).
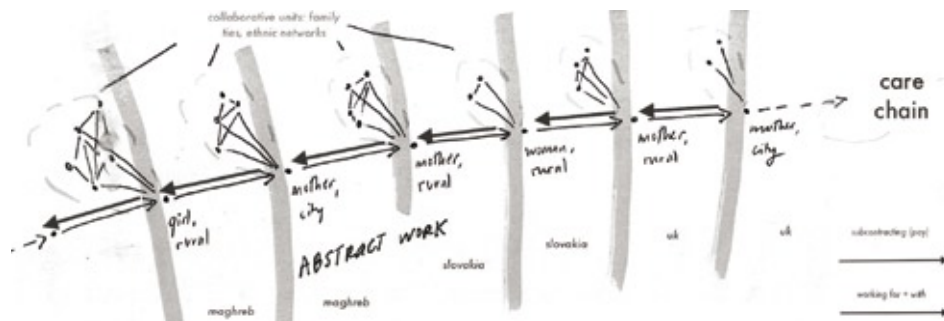
Flexibilised, precarious, informal, care work happens under similar conditions as creative labour does in this post-fordist, post-keynesian, post-colonial time. Those who come to care for us in the global North work under bad conditions, with bad pay, incessantly, most often informally. Those ambivalent spaces of care provision resemble creative networks in that they build on chains of exploitation as

AGENCIA PRECARIA

Madrid, Spain

WHO former collective Precarias a la Deriva and others
WHAT agency of precarious affairs
WEB http://www.sindominio.net/karakola/spip.php?article74
KEYWORDS *precarity - feminised labour - care - life - everyday*

The Agency of Precarious Affairs
It is a meeting place for those trying to cope with loneliness and isolation in a precarious everyday life and to help build networks of co-operation and self-organisation and political life.It is proposed as an open space for the exchange of information, support and strategies that help make our lives less precarious. It aims to be a place where we can give a name to our insecurities and can produce a knowledge of practical resistance for the transformation of the realities made of daily injustice and distress.
But above all, it wants to be a kind of "travel agency" from where to take control of our lives. Because we do not always know how and at what price we must live, here we want it to be us who determines the speed.

well as cooperation, and run across borders, technological systems and operate between informal and formal modes of work. Casually driven into illegality, precarious carers often work without permits. The cultures of free labour and low pay that dominate the creative sector echo those of the care field in some ways – which further echo unpaid housework, and even further, slavery – as state subsidy is removed and work becomes more informal for some and more bureaucratic for others. Whoever is in a position of power can get weaker links in the chain to work for free or very little – be they migrant workers or interns, students or academics. We don't like to be a link in a chain of exploitation, yet we inevitably are in neoliberal socioeconomic systems. Where there's a need, there's a desperate person to swim or skype across the network and meet it.
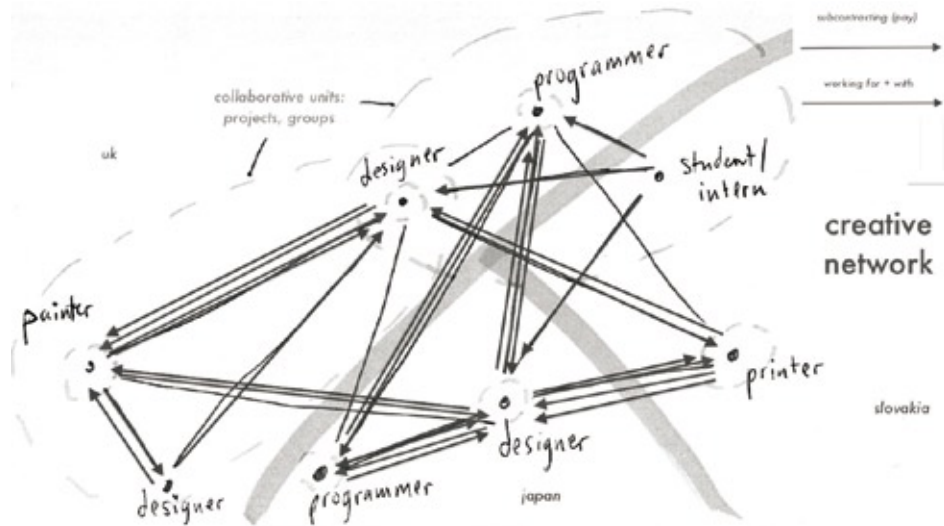
The networked lives of the global subaltern resemble the precarious existences of workers in the 'new industries' of the global North in that their subjects too have little rights and little access to social security (even more so if without papers or citizenship).[5] Such networks too forge their own cultures, systems of exchange and use of technologies and space. Where post-fordist fetishes of collaboration and creativity are determined by a search for careers and fame, networks of migrant labour are determined by a more acute struggle to survive, to find a better life, mostly together with a group of family members.

Work and Networks

For those working on selling themselves and their products in extremely competitive markets of knowledge, it is easy to forget that networks of collaboration are also sites of life. Whether plainly policy-driven or dissenting from such policy, activities within post-fordist networks tend to be driven by the idea of 'work': artworks, collaborations, art as work. Critiques of free labour are met with alternative cultures of (mostly free) labour, which do differ from the gratuity of the 'big society',[6] yet still primarily orient themselves around ideas of 'work' instead of opening onto 'life'. People and groups within post-fordist networks struggle to meaningfully organise their survival in relation to that of others, doing their 'Lebenskunst', trying to make sense of making a living. Yet, making an art of one's life is difficult when the question of how to make a living from one's arts never finds an answer that lasts longer than a few weeks or months. The radical vital potential of self-organising networks is kept in check by precarity and its policies: having to do several kinds of work at once, having no time, no insurance, no legal ground to claim pay. Smiling bullshit (neo-)liberalism[7] radiates in the faces of our labours with great cynical force as it tells us to keep trying, keep applying, keep networking, and contains the autopoeitic potentials of our said labours.

The German word '*Lebenskünstler*' refers to a fairly individualised mode of juggling one's survival with one's sensibilities, negotiating one's desire with one's needs on a day-to-day basis, based on opportunities. Left to opportunism in the current climate of crisis, many a motivated person may think of themselves as artfully juggling their life into a career. Yet, the crisis is social first of all, traversing and stemming from our everyday relations to each other. As those become more abstract, more 'work', they lose meaning. In a climate of competition, we are taught to think of them primarily as a matter of work. Our Lebenskunst exists within networks that constitute life, at once benefiting from them and feeding back into them, marked by ambivalent relations. How could we relate to labour and to networks otherwise?

There's a curious problem with measuring quality in abstract care and creative work. Their quality hinges on an investment of attention and love that management can't make us produce. We can fake it, but that won't make for good care, good design or good community projects - it'll just make for a service. Care and creativity

Diagram labels: programmer, designer, student/intern, collaborative units: projects, groups, uk, painter, printer, creative network, slovakia, designer, designer, programmer, japan, subcontracting (pay), working for + with

are not just forms of abstract labour, so-called industries, but also spheres for the invention of living. Running close to our hearts, care and creativity keep us from being bored, hungry, uninspired, depressed, lonely and sick. They help sustain our life and make it meaningful, if they operate on a degree of autonomy and autopoeisis – if we take it in our hands to organise them. Networks of informal labour may be the worst for exploitation, yet they may also be the most exciting for inventing ways of sustaining life collectively. Such invention doesn't easily happen where there's bosses commanding or managing activities, trainers inducing us to put on happy grimaces, competition making us dream we didn't care. It happens in those murky spaces of our networks where we face up to the fact that a chain is neither made of pure altruism or pure exploitation, but is always a double bind. Building chains – and networks – of solidarity across our double binds is a matter of dropping the armours of bullshit, to fight for rights and at the same time go beyond rights-based struggles in our self-organisation.

In our understanding of those kinds of 'work', at least two things come to be conflated: abstract labour and our labours of love. The more precarious we are, the more important abstract work comes to be for us, because we depend on ever reanimating its corpse. As the Krisis group said in their 1999 Manifesto against labour: *'Should the successful sale of the commodity "labour power" become the exception instead of the rule, a society devoted to the irrational abstraction of labour is inevitably doomed to develop a tendency for social apartheid.'* [8] The fact that our disconnectedness from each other operates through (linear) chains and (competitive) networks makes it even harder to discern the problem.

In the post-fordist segment (which is marked by a more privileged high-skill mobility that I would distinguish from the low-skill migrations of care work), we are obsessed with work, speak of it all the time, are made to do so. 'I have to work' is the universal excuse to escape ourselves, others and other work. As free labour becomes the norm, our abstract work becomes ever more unpaid, flexibilised, forcing us to juggle a whole lot of training and networking in order to eventually get paid jobs. We can't easily tell where we're dealing

with abstract, commissioned and money-based labour and where it is we're doing something we love, because we are constantly told and telling ourselves to love what we do, to be motivated, to do more, to do things for free, to see the bigger picture, to see the light at the end of the tunnel, to put ourselves to work on all levels. But at the end of the tunnel there's more 'work', because that's how we've learned to define what we do.

From this perspective, all our social relations come to be 'net-working', somewhat instrumental poles on our road somewhere (with a few potential exceptions that confirm the rule: the couple, family, therapy). Our networking is often oriented towards petty jobs, invitations, visibility that may lead to more 'work' in the abstract sense. Our therapy and love relations are there to keep us fit for work. This is the work-life that neoliberal policy forces on us. Competitiveness of a new kind seeps into our social relations. This goes for our collaborative networks as well as their various dimensions of friendship, care and learning. We can't find time for those unless they are 'work'. What we may have formerly called our (social) 'life' now slowly comes to be (net) 'work', since we simply can't legitimise life-related activities anymore in the face of the entrepreneurial subjectivities that neoliberal policy makes us embrace.
So what would our net-works mean to us? Some of our networking is also oriented towards projects and collaborations we love. Yet even with those we intensively focus on producing and counter-producing, to the point that we don't feel legitimate spending time that doesn't take us somewhere more or less immediately. If we drift, it is because we need a break from work – it's not easy to admit to ourselves that it may be because we try to inhabit our relations otherwise. Yet, saying this out loud may be important for forging a collective culture of refusing workaholism, towards building other infrastructures and spaces for life.

Those doing care work share the problem of doing much labour for free, whether it is stay-at-home mothers doing unpaid housework or underpaid workers employed privately by someone. Being tendentially less middle-class, care 'work' is not so much a signifier of prestige as a means to stability, to supporting oneself and ones family.[9] Whereas we want all our creative endeavours to count as 'work' in the project of a perfect career, we only want care to count as work when we need money. 'Caring' is not a career. The other care, the one that is part of our 'life', need not be 'work'. What if we took caring as seriously as we take our creativity – would networks be sites of labour or of life then?

Double binds

I have differentiated between two types of collaborative networks, those of disenchanted post-fordism and those of the subaltern. Across class and colonial divides, collaborative networks are ambivalent spaces. Given our need to make the most of them – conditioned by precarious conditions of work and crumbling social rights – they are sites of double bound chains of both mutual support and exploitation. I will now focus on their function of holding together precarious lives.

The networks we collaborate in constitute spaces across which affects, desires, hopes, friendships, love and support flow and come to be organised. As much as conviviality is ousted by work within them, our networks do constitute the fragile architectures upon which our lives rest. The more life is ousted, the more fragile these become, and the more vulnerable we become materially and psychically. How much space for care there is in our collaborations is contingent upon the situation we're in - and that may change by the hour - a project, unemployment, a grant, several other jobs. What is the work of care that we'd need to do in order to make our networks more sustainable? In order to take this question seriously,

we first need to find ways of conceiving of those trans-local spaces across which we move and relate as sites of life, not just work. To conceive of them beyond the idea that they are just temporary solutions to our precarity – to be superseded by a life of wealth or nuclear family – means to understand them as active spaces of care.

This relates to a problem that institutions such as the family and the state are facing today: there is no more time to care. Care is officially in crisis right now, as the global North runs out of time to dedicate to caring for its sick, young and elderly.[10] Along with care, life too is in crisis, as a space imagined, created and inhabited. With it, the care we give to each other in the everyday comes to falter – we don't know what 'everyday', 'care' or indeed 'creativity' may mean to us beyond abstract labour or neoliberal rhetorics at this point. We need to learn to see the chains that hold together our networked lives and work, and reflect collectively about our possibilities to modulate them. Where there are no social rights to protect us, but only those further up the chain to exploit/help us, we inevitably become troubled. It is within our groups and networks that other modalities of relation can be invented - the more we let our bodies do together (care, touch, protest, cook, create), the more possibility to build powerful alternative circuits.[11]

Open questions

There are increasing numbers of cultural projects that try to take the dimension of care into account, developing modes of mutual support and collaboration that run on desires of creating sustainable shared lives. I will conclude with a few questions, to be addressed in relation to the singularity of each net-like constellation. How do we care for each other in our networked projects, and what would we like to create? What kinds of spaces and temporalities are necessary for us to care? How do we reach across care chains and creative projects? How do we deal with being agents towards both ends of the chain, being exploited here and exploiter there? How can we give ourselves more space to refuse and expose exploitation through building collective strength and support? What would cultures of collective care look like: how might individualised network agents and exploitative chains subvert each other, finding common ways of countering individualisation?[12]

It's clear we won't be able to remove relations of instrumentality from our collaborations, nor to position our projects in a pristine space 'outside' capital. We're bound to be caught between informal and abstract labour, and there's even a few things we can learn from that back-and-forth. In network spaces, we have to learn to invent, experiment and care in ways that acknowledge both our dependency and autonomy. Every chain is a link of solidarity if you hold it right. Under neoliberalism, our relations come to be double-bound, murky, ambivalent: yet there are different ways of being both vulnerable and strong, both powerful and dependent. We can only learn those in common, by caring for the worlds we create.

1   By 'neoliberal' I mean policies that disintegrate forms of mutualism, social rights and welfare. See for instance 'Le gouvernement des inegalites' in, Maurizio Lazaratto, *Experimentations Politiques*, (Paris: Editions Amsterdam, 2009).

2   On new media and creative networks, see for instance Ned Rossiter, Organized Networks: Media Theory, Creative Labour, New Institutions, (Rotterdam: Nai Publishers, 2006).

3   See K. Datta et al., 'The new development finance or exploiting migrant labour? Remittance sending among low-paid migrant workers in London', *International Development Planning Review*, 29 (1)(2007): 43-67.

4   See for instance Arlie Russel Hochschild, 'Care Chains and Emotional Surplus Value' in, Will Huttons and Anthony Giddens, *On the Edge: Living with Global Capitalism*, (London: Random House, 2000).

5   See Laura Torrebadella, Elisabet Tejero, Louis Lemkow, *Mujeres y la lucha cotidiana por el bienestar*, (Barcelona: Icaria, 2001).

6   The Big Society was a major policy idea of the UK Conservative Party general election manifesto of 2010, based in the proposal that local organisations should be run for free by its communities, conveniently enabling a further disintegration of the public sector and secure wages.

7   See Miranda Joseph, *Against the Romance of Community*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

8   See Krisis Kollektiv, *Manifesto against Labour*, (1999) published online at http://www.krisis.org/1999/manifesto-against-labour.

9   See for instance, Aurelie Damamme and Patricia Paperman, 'Care Domestique: des histoires sans debut, sans milieu et sans fin', *Multitudes,* 37/38 (2009).

10 See for instance, Eva Klawatsch-Treitl, 'Care in Babylon: Überlegungen zur WIDE-Jahreskonferenz «We Care» 2009', *Olympe, Feministische Arbeitshefte zur Politik,* Issue 30 (2009).

10 For some discussions of organisational models, see for instance the issue on 'Monster Institutions' of *eipcp* webjournal (2008), http://eipcp.net/transversal/0508

12 The work of Agencia Precaria and of Precarias a la Deriva are inspiring referents for this. See, http://www.sindominio.net/karakola/spip.php?article74

PROTOTIPOS MENTALES E INSTITUCIONES MONSTRUO

UNIVERSIDAD NÓMADA

Prototipos mentales

Desde hace tiempo, circula en las discusiones de la Universidad Nómada[1] una palabra-valija que quiere resumir cuál consideramos que habría de ser uno de los resultados del esfuerzo crítico por parte de los movimientos y otros actores políticos postsocialistas. Hablamos de crear *nuevos prototipos mentales* de la acción política. Esto es así por la relevancia que a nuestros ojos reviste el nexo huidizo, tantas veces fallido, entre *diagramas cognitivos* y *procesos de subjetivación política*, es decir, el vínculo entre aquellos *saberes* que facilitan una analítica de poderes y potencias, por un lado, y por otro las *mutaciones* semióticas, perceptivas y afectivas que producen una politización de nuestras vidas, que se encarnan en nuestros propios cuerpos, que dan forma a territorios existenciales finitos abocados o disponibles al antagonismo político. Pensamos que es necesario crear nuevos prototipos mentales porque tanto las representaciones políticas contemporáneas como una parte importante de las instituciones creadas por las tradiciones emancipatorias del siglo XX han de ser sometidas cuando menos a una seria revisión, dado que forman hoy, en muchos casos, parte del problema antes que de la solución.

Para la Universidad Nómada constituye una tarea urgente detallar los rasgos diferenciadores y los *diferenciales de innovación política e institucional* que presentan ciertas experimentaciones. Hemos elegido poner el acento sobre dos a ejes transversales , a saber: (a) damos preferencia a las formas de intervención política metropolitanas, atendiendo además en concreto a una de sus figuras más recurrentes, *los centros sociales*, buscando no reivindicarlos como formas fosilizadas ni como artefactos políticos con una identidad esencializada, sino intentando explorar en qué medida la forma centro social apunta actualmente hacia procesos de apertura y renovación[2], produciendo, por ejemplo, dispositivos novedosos de enunciación de (e intervención en) la galaxia del precariado[3]; y (b) a la vez, y en parte entrelazado con lo anterior, la constitución de redes de autoformación que se gestan en ¿que surgen de? la crisis de la universidad pública europea[4]. Europa, finalmente, como espacio de intervención política no naturalizado, sino como proceso constituyente; la producción de esos prototipos mentales y dispositivos de enunciación y de intervención como proceso instituyente[5].

Centros sociales como "cuerpo sin órganos"

Durante mucho tiempo, y todavía en muchos casos, los centros sociales okupados han utilizado la sigla CSO o CSOA (autogestionado) como elemento de diferenciación en la esfera pública, como una especie de marcador semiótico de la radicalidad de su apuesta. Y era inevitable que algunos participantes en

aquellas experiencias advirtiéramos la coincidencia virtuosa entre esa denominación y el cuerpo sin órganos, el CsO de Deleuze y Guattar[6], para imaginar e intentar poner en práctica las virtualidades no pensadas ni enunciadas que creemos que están presentes en la matriz de un centro social metropolitano. esto es, apuntan hacia la reinvención continua de un *dispositivo institucional* (una forma de *institución de movimiento*) que ya ha demostrado su validez y en cierto modo su carácter irreversible para la política de los sujetos subalternos en la metrópolis. Lo cual no quiere decir que esa validez irreversible provenga de una forma centro social que se mantenga invariable, autorreferencial, identitaria, siempre igual a sí misma, sino más bien al contrario[7].

Tal vez se podría hablar de la necesidad de contrarrestar la solidificación de la forma centro social mediante la producción de centros sociales intempestivos, es decir, de apuestas de creación política y subjetiva que partan de las potencias concretas de distintas determinaciones de la composición (política, cultural, productiva) de las cuencas de cooperación metropolitanas, y que tengan por tanto el objetivo no de clausurarse como islas más autárquicas que autónomas, sino de transformar lo existente con arreglo a envites variables en los que se expresen contrapoderes capaces a su vez de sustraerse a la dialéctica del antagonismo entre poderes tendencialmente homólogos[8]. Se abren así nuevas dimensiones espaciales, temporales, perceptivas, cooperativas, normativas y de valor, de tipo constituyente.

Son ya unos veinte años desde que los *squatters* aparecieron en la escena pública. De los *squatters* a los *okupas* a los *centros sociales okupados* ha habido, es innegable, crecimiento, evolución; pero la experiencia no ha salido, por así decirlo, del estado de *neotenia*. Las razones de ello son, obviamente, múltiples; y lo bastante complejas quizá como para poder abordadas con pleno acierto en este dossier. Se trata, en cualquier caso, de una complejidad que tampoco debe simplificarse atribuyendo un carácter negativo a los factores que retrasan el crecimiento, y positivo a los que despliegan el modelo sin más consideraciones críticas con el estado del mismo. El problema-factor de la (política de la) identidad que ha venido caracterizando a la forma centro social, con su inquietante ambivalencia, es una muestra de ello: porque a esa política identitaria se le pueden achacar numerosos males y atribuirle haber contribuido considerablemente al infradesarrollo de las experiencias y a la repetición de los mismos errores; pero, sin embargo, si no tenemos en cuenta la dimensión de esa (política de la) identidad, resulta difícil explicar por qué surgieron y persistieron la inmensa mayoría de las experiencias relevantes.

Metrópolis e identidad

Desde el punto de vista de la producción de subjetividad, el acto de desobediencia y de reapropiación directa de la riqueza (del "capital fijo" de edificios, infraestructuras, etc.) es y probablemente seguirá siendo fundamental en la evolución de la forma centro social (y no solamente de ella). Tenemos que tener esto en cuenta a la hora de afrontar una cuestión sólo relativamente reciente y que genera tensas disputas sin límite en el seno de los movimientos sociales: la negociación de espacios, tanto si se trata de acordar dialogadamente la permanencia en centros ya okupados, como de solicitar a las administraciones públicas nuevos espacios para ser gobernados en régimen de autogestión. Cómo conciliar por decirlo de una manera brusca desobediencia y reapropiación con negociación, o expresado de otra forma: cómo articular la dialéctica conflicto/negociación, es en este orden de cosas el problema crucial y sin duda una fuente sustancial de controversia.

Hay un nicho permanente de impulsos políticos y no sólo de los participantes más jóvenes en la experiencia de los centros sociales que no puede prescindir de *una forma predeterminada* de concebir el acto de desobediencia y conflicto como elemento de subjetivación política e identidad. Función política de los centros sociales e identidad, militancia e identidad, común metropolitano e identidad, se presentan así como algunos de los nudos problemáticos permanentes en los que se decide o se cancela el avance de la experiencia. Es decir, donde se juega la posibilidad de producir *un nuevo tipo de institucionalidad de movimiento* que saque provecho de la experiencia de dos décadas de centros sociales en Europa. En este sentido, lo que menos necesitamos es un nuevo argumento o un nuevo programa, y sí una explícita problematización de la manera en que afrontamos la singularización de la existencia colectiva en el medio productivo, cooperativo, relacional de la metrópolis; singularización que *siempre* conlleva que normalmente implica procesos complejos de identidad/diferencia. Si pensamos en la necesidad relanzar un ciclo de experimentación creativa de la forma centro social no es por ningún tipo de fetichismo de la invención, sino precisamente porque esas formas de singularización que experimentamos en nuestros cuerpos y en nuestra propia vida están actualmente atravesando en nuestras metrópolis una fase de transformación que exige inevitablemente como respuesta la puesta en práctica de formas de recomposición política arriesgadas.

Sumergirse en la metrópolis de la movilización total no puede ser un acto voluntarista. Desarrollar dimensiones de *empresarialidad política* algo a lo que apunta la producción de servicios desde el centro social, dimensiones de tipo (bio)sindical, cooperativas, proyectos públicos de autoformación, etcétera[9] exige no sólo enfrentarnos a los callejones sin salida de experiencias políticas endémicas y automarginadas en la metrópolis: implica además la elucidación de lo que podríamos llamar los *suplementos de subjetivación*.

Desde el año 2000 la Universidad Nómada constituye un laboratorio anticapitalista, antirracista, decolonial y feminista de organización de la producción y la transmisión teórica e intelectual y una agencia de intervención política postnacional y posteuropea de las nuevas fuerzas de trabajo globales y transnacionales que han emergido tras el ciclo de luchas de los movimientos antisistémicos históricos, los recientes procesos de reestructuración de la economía-mundo capitalista llevados a cabo desde finales de la década de 1970 y la explosión de las nuevas formas de subjetividad y existencia y constitución social de los nuevos sujetos productivos presentes en las actuales sociedades capitalistas de nuestros días

que permitan refundar lenguajes, universos de valor, territorios colectivos dentro de un dispositivo que pueda seguir siendo *subversivo*, en particular en el plano de las formas de vida, dejando de pretender serlo sólo en los rasgos de una dialéctica del enfrentamiento molar entre sujetos siempre formados de antemano, abocándonos a una dinámica binaria entre fuerzas ya contadas, y con resultados que se dan ya por descontados.

La *governance* como adversario

La *geometría de la hostilidad* de los centros sociales en la metrópolis productiva se concreta a medida que se consolidan figuras del gobierno que intentan conjugar el poder de mando centralizado con la difusión social (metropolitana y transnacional) de los poderes. El esquema policéntrico de los poderes capitalistas da cuenta de la crisis de las formas de integración partidaria y representativa, y encuentra en la *governance* su modalidad transicional.

> *Cuando hablamos de governance metropolitana aludimos al conjunto de prácticas públicas que ven en la armonización de intereses irreductibles y heterogéneos la respuesta a la incapacidad de hacer que la decisión se derive de un proceso de legitimación institucional previo. La desaparición de los mecanismos tradicionales de disciplinamiento social y de canalización de los intereses, ha terminado haciendo que las subjetividades mismas se vuelvan opacas a las prácticas de gobierno. En este sentido, la governance constituye el esfuerzo de producir constantemente, y a través de geometrías variables y flexibles, subjetividades adecuadas a la administrativización de la vida, allí donde las fronteras entre lo público y lo privado se tornan lábiles y huidizas[10].*

Los centros sociales tienen en la *governance* el dispositivo adversario, la contraparte cuyas producciones de consenso, obediencia y exclusión precisan ser desarticuladas, desestabilizadas, saboteadas. El principal objetivo de la *governance* metropolitana consiste en tornar productivas, con arreglo a las modalidades de la ciudad-empresa, las condiciones comunes de la vida; consiste en articular política e institucionalmente la movilización total de las poblaciones y de los flujos lingüísticos, afectivos y financieros, movilización total que neutraliza las valencias políticas y existenciales que surgen de la cooperación y de la vida común metropolitana; consiste en producir un gobierno de la diferencia que se basa en una inflación constante de estatutos, segmentaciones, regulaciones y límites que permiten jerarquizar, aislar y dividir a las poblaciones subalternas. Los centros sociales son (y están llamados a serlo con mayor intensidad aún) uno de los operadores decisivos de la crítica práctica de la *governance* metropolitana. La combaten en el terreno de las prácticas de desindividualización; en la reapropiación de espacios, que pasan así a estar en condiciones de configurar situaciones políticas en las que el conflicto que enfrenta a un agregado heterogéneo de singularidades poblacionales con los mecanismos de la renta urbana se convierte en nuevo motor de dinámicas urbanas; en la producción de nuevas relaciones de servicio, como las que ensayan una reapropiación de las relaciones de cuidado, que están en condiciones de desprivatizar y desestatizar procesos de reproducción y valorización de la vida que continúan confiscados por las instituciones del biopoder metropolitano; y en la experimentación de modos de practicar y vivir el tiempo de la metrópolis contra la movilización total de individuos atemorizados y angustiados.

Formación, autoformación e investigación en las *instituciones monstruo*

Coincidiendo en los retos plantean (más innovación, más cooperación, más contagio en la escala europea y más allá de ella), los intereses de la Universidad Nómada abordan la posibilidad de construir esos nuevos prototipos mentales que estén vinculados a la deseable monstruosidad, a la necesidad de pensar y hacer la otra política desde las cuestiones de la formación, la autoformación y la investigación. En ese campo, consideramos que existen cuatro circuitos elementales, que son los siguientes:

(a)   La elaboración de un *circuito de proyectos de formación* que ponga en circulación los paradigmas teóricos y los instrumentos intelectuales que consideremos más apropiados para producir esos *mapas cognitivos* aptos para (1) intervenir en la esfera pública creando *swarming points* de referencia y produciendo discursos contrahegemónicos; y, por añadidura, para (2) analizar las estructuras y dinámicas de poder así como las potencias realmente existentes;

(b)   La gestación de un *circuito de proyectos de coinvestigación* que permita estudiar de modo sistemático las áreas de la vida social, económica, política y cultural a fin de producir *cartografías dinámicas* de la estructura social y de sus dinámicas útiles para orientar las prácticas antagonistas, para redefinir los conflictos y luchas existentes, y para producir nuevas formas de expresión dotadas de un nuevo principio de inteligibilidad social y epistemológica[11];

LA CASA INVISIBLE, CENTRO SOCIAL Y CULTURAL DE GESTIÓN CIUDADANA
Malaga, Spain

WHO creadores invisibles (invisible creators)
WHAT self-managed cultural and social work taking place in a squat
WEB http://www.lainvisible.net
KEYWORDS *culture - activism - urban struggles - gentrification - alternative institutions*

his organisation could be understood as the first 3.0 generation of social centres, a figure that has always been seen very much in relation to the cognitive-creative-cultural labour. It is an 'institution of the common' which develops cultural and social activity in a local context and at the same time conducts critical debate on cultural governance models and on different forms of institutions and social movements, experiences of self-management and self-production in the cultural, social and cognitive fields.

La cultura hoy día, convertida en una mercancía más, agoniza en museos de interiores fosilizados, apellidos de prestigio únicamente mediático, presupuestos estériles y gestoras de derechos de autoría. Frente a ese modelo, La Casa Invisible se erige como un laboratorio de saberes y creatividad, un catalizador de experimentos en el que la cultura, mediante un flujo constante, es devuelta a la misma sociedad de la que nace. Decenas de talleres, desde capoeira hasta baile flamenco pasando por interpretación dramática o canto, exposiciones, áreas telemáticas, programas de radio, actuaciones teatrales y circenses, conciertos, seminarios, etc., conforman una programación abrumadora que es gestionada por sus propios participantes y promotores. La Casa Invisible, por tanto, implanta un modo de hacer política enraizado en el contexto de crisis y precarización actual de la cultura y sus creadores. La Casa Invisible abre sus puertas a los y las creadores-as invisibles que viven y producen en este territorio llamado Málaga y que muchas veces encuentran serias dificultades para ensayar, trabajar , compartir sus creaciones u organizarse con gente con inquietudes o problemas similares.La cultura se defiende compartiéndola. Desde esta área se programan y coordinan las iniciativas y las propuestas de los creadores locales, nacionales o internacionales, así como de los movimientos sociales y culturales de la ciudad. La Casa Invisible brinda un espacio para que sea gestionado por los propios interesados.

(c) El diseño de un *circuito editorial y mediático* que permita incidir transnacionalmente en la esfera pública y en los ámbitos de la producción intelectual así como en el de la enseñanza universitaria, con el objetivo de crear *laboratorios analítico-intelectuales* y, por ende, nuevos segmentos de referencia y de crítica de las formas hegemónicas de saber y de conceptualización de la realidad social;

(d) La trama de un *circuito de fundaciones, institutos y centros de investigación* que se convierta en la infraestructura autónoma de producción de conocimiento, que constituya un embrión de las formas de organización política por mor de la acumulación de análisis y propuestas concretas. Su actividad debería vincular el análisis de las condiciones regionales y europeas con las dinámicas estructurales de la acumulación de capital y de recreación de las opciones geoestratégicas globales que sean adecuadas para los movimientos.

Los dispositivos que hacen posibles tales tareas ya están, en algunos casos, en marcha, Se trata, para acabar, de dispositivos forzosamente *híbridos y monstruosos*:

híbridos, porque en un primer momento obligan a poner en red recursos e iniciativas de corte muy heterogéneo y contradictorio, extraños e incluso aparentemente incongruentes entre sí, que mezclan recursos públicos y privados, relaciones institucionales y de movimiento, modelos de acción no institucionales e informales con formas de representación quizá formal o representativa, y luchas y formas de existencia social que algunos tacharán de no políticas o de contaminadas o de inútiles o absurdas, pero que cobran dimensiones estratégicas, porque tornan directamente políticos y productores de subjetividad los procesos de dotación de recursos y de elementos logísticos que resultan a la postre cruciales para irrumpir en las esferas públicas estatalizadas y/o privatizadas, transformándolas;

monstruosos, porque su forma en un primer momento parece prepolítica o no política a secas, pero cuya aceleración y acumulación de acuerdo con lo descrito debe generar una densidad y unas posibilidades de creación intelectual y de acción política colectiva que contribuirán a inventar otra política;
otra política, esto es, otra forma de traducir la potencia de los sujetos productivos en nuevas formas de comportamiento político, y, en definitiva, en paradigmas originales de organización de la vida social, de estructuración dinámica de la potencia de lo público y lo común.

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1   El documento original de presentación de la Universidad Nómada se puede encontrar encabezando nuestra página web [http://www.universidadnomada.net/spip.php?article139]; un texto reciente, que ha adquirido un carácter indirectamente programático para la nueva fase de la Universidad Nómada, es el de Raúl Sánchez Cedillo, Hacia nuevas creaciones políticas. Movimientos, instituciones, nueva militancia, en *transversal: prácticas instituyentes*, julio de 2007 [http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0707/sanchez/es].

2   Nos remitimos a las reflexiones vertidas en el texto de Andrej Kurnik y Barbara Beznec, "Rog: la lucha en la ciudad", en *transversal: instituciones monstruo*, *op. cit.* [http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0508/kurnikbeznec/es].

3   Lo que constituye nuestra respuesta explícita al problema planteado en *supra*, nota 3.

4   ¿Cómo evitar apuntar aquí la centralidad que la universidad tuvo en la revolución mundial del 68, la manera en que los

estudiantes y las estudiantes vislumbraron la paradoja de una institución cuyo modelo histórico está en crisis mientras que cumple sin embargo una función cada vez más central en los modos de producción y valorización capitalistas? Véase, entre otras muchas reflexiones recientes, Gigi Roggero, La autonomía del conocimiento vivo en la universidad-metrópolis, en *transversal: prácticas instituyentes*, *op. cit.* [http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0707/roggero/es], y la experiencia, ligada a este último texto, recogida en La metrópoli y la llamada crisis de la política. La experiencia de Esc, en *transversal: instituciones monstruo*, *op. cit.* [http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0508/esc/es]. Véase también dos textos, producidos en el entorno de la Universidad Nómada, de Montserrat Galcerán, ¿Tiene la universidad interés para el capital? [http://www.universidadnomada.net/spip.php?article242] y "La crisis de la universidad" [http://www.universidadnomada.net/spip.php?article184], ambos s/f.

5   Véase Francesco Salvini, Las lunas de Júpiter: instituciones en red en las transformaciones productivas de Europa, en transversal*: instituciones monstruo*, *op. cit.* [http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0508/salvini/es].

6   Véase Mil mesetas y los espacios liberados metropolitanos. Notas para un agenciamient (1998) [http://www.sindominio.net/laboratorio/documentos/milmesetas/laboratorio.htm], que contiene reflexiones en las que participamos algunos de nosotros y de nosotras en una fase biográfica previa a la Universidad Nómada.

7   De ahí el tipo de asimetría entre poderes y contrapoderes que caracteriza a los movimientos del nuevo ciclo de luchas y que hemos llamado otra geometría de la hostilidad. Véase Amador Fernández-Savater, Marta Malo de Molina, Marisa Pérez Colina y Raúl Sánchez Cedillo, Ingredientes de una onda global, en *Desacuerdos 2*, Macba, Unia y Arteleku, Barcelona, 2006 [http://www.arteleku.net/4.0/pdfs/1969-2bis.pdf]; y [http://www.universidadnomada.net/spip.php?article188].

8   Uno de los casos sin duda más ricos e ilusionantes en este orden de cosas es el de las *oficinas de derechos sociales*, tal y como se explica en el texto de Silvia L. Gil, Xavier Martínez y Javier Toret, Las oficinas de derechos sociales: experiencias de organización y enunciación política en el tiempo de la precariedad, en *transversal: instituciones monstruo*, *op. cit.* [http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0508/lopezetal/es].

9   Atelier Occupato ESC, La metrópoli y la llamada crisis de la política, *op. cit.*; véase también Francesco Salvini, Las lunas de Júpiter: instituciones red en las transformaciones productivas de Europa, *op. cit.*

10 Véase Marta Malo de Molina, Nociones comunes, introducción al volumen colectivo *Nociones comunes. Experiencias y ensayos entre investigación y militancia*, Traficantes de Sueños, Madrid, 2004 [http://traficantes.net]; y publicado en dos partes en *transversal: investigación militante*, abril de 2006 [http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0406/malo/es] y *transversal: prácticas instituyentes*, *op. cit.* [http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0707/malo/es]. En este orden de cosas, puede resultar provechosa una visita general a los textos comprendidos en el monográfico de *transversal: investigación militante*, recién citado [http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0707], de entre los cuales recomendamos el de Javier Toret y Nicolás Sguiglia (miembros de la Universidad Nómada), Cartografía y máquina de guerra. Desafíos y experiencias en torno a la investigación militante en el sur de Europa [http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0406/tsg/es].

MENTAL PROTOTYPES AND MONSTER INSTITUTIONS

UNIVERSIDAD NÓMADA

For quite a while now, a certain portmanteau word has been circulating in the Universidad Nómada's[1] discussions, in an attempt to sum up what we believe should be one of the results of the critical work carried out by the social movements and other post-socialist political actors. We talk about creating new mental prototypes *for political action. This is due to the importance, in our eyes, of the elusive and so often unsuccessful link between* cognitive diagrams *and* processes of political subjectivation. *That is, the link between the* knowledge *that allows powers and potentials to be tested on one hand and, on the other, the semiotic, perceptual and emotional* mutations *that lead to the politicisation of our lives, become personified*

in our bodies, and shape the finite existential territories that are channelled into or become available for political antagonism. We believe there is a need to create new mental prototypes because contemporary political representations, as well as many of the institutions created by the emancipatory traditions of the 20th century, should be subjected to a serious review - at the very least - given that, in many cases, they have become part of the problem rather than the solution.

The Universidad Nómada believes there is an urgent need to identify the differentiating features and the differentials of political and institutional innovation *that exist in specific experimentations. We've chosen to place the emphasis on two transversal themes , namely: (a) we give preference to metropolitan forms of political intervention, specifically looking at one of their most frequently recurring figures -* social centres*; by this, we don't mean to lay claim to social centres as fossilised forms or political artefacts with an essentialised identity, but to try and explore the extent to which the 'social centre form' today points the way to processes of opening up and renewal,[2] producing, for example, innovative mechanisms for the enunciation of (and intervention in) the galaxy of the precariat; and at the same time, and partially intertwining with the above, (b) the constitution of self-education networks that are developing in – and perhaps result from? – the crisis of Europe's public university system.[3] Ultimately, 'Europe', not as a naturalised space for political intervention, but as a constituent process; the production of these mental prototypes and mechanisms of enunciation and intervention as an instituent process.[4]*

Social Centres as 'bodies without organs'

*For a long time, and in many cases still today, squatted social centres (*Centros Sociales Okupados *in Spanish) have used the abbreviation CSO or CSOA (the 'A' stands for 'Autogestionados', or 'self-managed') as a differentiating element in the public sphere, as a kind of semiotic marker of the radical nature of their project. And inevitably, some of us who participated in them were bound to notice the virtuous coincidence between this label and the Spanish for Deleuze and Guattari's 'body without organs', '*Cuerpo sin Organos'*'or CsO,[5] using it to try to imagine and put into practice the un-thought and un-spoken virtualities that we believe are present in the matrix of metropolitan social centres. They point towards the ongoing reinvention of an* institutional mechanism *(a form of* movement institution*) that has already proven its validity and, in a certain sense, its irreversibility in terms of the politics of the subaltern subjects in the metropolis. But this doesn't mean that the irreversible validity arises from a stable, self-referential, identitary 'social centre form' that remains always the same as itself, but just the opposite.*

Perhaps we could speak of the need to counteract the solidification of the 'social centre form' through the production of 'unsuitable social centres', that is, projects of political and subjective creation based on specific powers of different configurations of the (political, cultural and 'productive') make-up of the basins of metropolitan co-operation. Creations that wouldn't therefore try to seal themselves off as autarkic rather than autonomous islands, but to transform the existing context in accordance with the variable possibilities expressed by counter-powers that would then be capable of avoiding the dialectic of the antagonism between powers that tend towards equivalence.[6] This would thus open up new, constituent dimensions in terms of spatial, temporal, perceptive, co-operative, normative and value-based aspects.

Some twenty years have already gone by since squatters *first made their appearance in the public*

sphere. From* squatters *to* okupas *to* centros sociales okupados, *there has undeniably been progress, evolution; but the experience hasn't emerged from its* neoteny *stage, so to speak. There are obviously numerous reasons for this, and they may be complex enough to deserve to be fully dealt with in this dossier. In any case, this complexity should not be simplified by labelling the factors that delay its growth as 'negative', and those that implement the model without further critical consideration of its present condition as 'positive'. The problem-factor of the (politics of) identity that has characterised the social centre form, with its disturbing ambivalence, is proof of this: because identity politics can be blamed for many 'evils' and we can claim that this kind of politics has considerably contributed to the underdevelopment of the experiences and to the same errors being repeated; but if we don't take into account this aspect of identity (politics), it is difficult to explain why the great majority of relevant experiences arose in the first place and persist.*

Metropolis and identity

From the point of view of the production of subjectivity, the act of disobedience and direct reappropriation of wealth ('fixed assets'- buildings, infrastructures, etc.) is and will probably remain fundamental in the evolution of the social centre form (and of other things). We should keep this in mind when we confront a relatively recent issue that is generating endless tense disputes in the heart of the social movements: the negotiation of spaces - whether we're talking about negotiating the ongoing occupation of squatted social centres through dialogue, or about approaching public bodies for new spaces to be self-managed. Basically, how can disobedience and reappropriation be reconciled with negotiation? Or, in other words: how is it possible to articulate the conflict/negotiation dialectic? The crucial problem is along these lines, and undoubtedly a substantial source of controversy.

There is a permanent niche of political impulses – which doesn't just affect the younger participants in social centres – that cannot do without a predetermined way *of conceiving the act of disobedience and conflict as an element of political subjectivation and identity. The political function of* social centres and identity, militancy and identity, *and metropolitan commons and identity thus emerge as some of the permanent problematic nodes that end up deciding whether the experience is to make progress or be annulled. That is, what's at stake here is the possibility of producing* a new type of institutionality of movement *that can profit from the experience gained over two decades of social centres in Europe. In this sense, the last thing we need is a new 'argument' or a new 'program'. What we need is to explicitly question the way in which we confront the 'singularisation' of collective existence in the productive, co-operative and relational medium of the metropolis; a singularisation that* always *entails – that 'normally' implies – complex processes of difference/identity. If we think there is a need to re-start a cycle of creative experimentation in relation to the social centre form, it is not because of a fetishistic attachment to novelty, but precisely because the forms of singularisation that we experience in our bodies and in our own lives are currently going through a phase of transformation in our cities, and inevitably require us to respond through the practice of risk-taking forms of political recomposition.*

One's 'immersion' in the metropolis of total mobilisation can't be simply a willing act. The development of aspects of political entrepreneurship — as foreshadowed in the social centres' production of services, aspects that are bio(syndicalist) and co-operative, based on public self-education projects and so on[7]— requires that we confront the dead-end streets of endemic, self-marginalised political experiences in the city. But it also implies the need to clarify what we could call the *supplements of subjectivation* that allow*

languages, value universes and collective territories to be re-founded as part of a device that can continue to be subversive, *particularly on the level of forms of life. This means no longer aspiring to be subversive simply in terms of a dialectic of molar confrontation between subjects that are always pre-formed, channelling us towards a binary dynamic in the face of forces that have already been counted, with results that are already taken for granted.*

Governance *as an adversary*

Social centres' geometry of hostility *in the productive metropolis becomes fixed in accordance with the establishment of government figures that try and combine the power of centralised command with social diffusion of (metropolitan and transnational) powers. The multicentric scheme of capitalist powers demonstrates the crisis of party-like, representative forms of integration.* Governance *has become its transitional mode.*

> Thus when we speak about metropolitan governance we are alluding to a set of public practices that represent, in the face of the harmonisation of irreducible and heterogeneous interests, the response to the inability of deriving decisions from an initial process of institutional legitimisation. The weakening of traditional mechanisms of social regulation and the channelling of interests has in fact rendered subjectivities impervious to the practice of government. Governance, in a certain sense, constitutes the struggle to continually produce, through variable and flexible structures, subjectivities that are consonant with the 'administrationalisation' of life, where the boundaries between public and private become transient and elusive.[8]

Governance is the device that opposes social centres, the counterpart with productions of consensus, obedience and exclusion that have to be dismantled, destabilised and sabotaged. The main objective of metropolitan governance consists of making the shared conditions of life productive in accordance with the concept of the city-company; it consists of organising the total mobilisation of its inhabitants and of linguistic, emotional and financial flows in political and institutional terms - a total mobilisation that neutralises the political and existential valences that emerge from co-operation and from communal metropolitan life; it consists of producing a 'government of difference' based on a constant inflation of statutes, segmentations, regulations and restrictions that allow the subordinate groups to be ordered hierarchically, isolated and divided. Social centres are one of the crucial operators of practical criticism of metropolitan governance (and are destined to become even more intensely so). The fight of the social centres against governance takes place in the field of practices of de-individualisation; in the reappropriation of spaces that can then be used to configure political situations that transform the conflict arising from placing a heterogeneous mix of population singularities up against the devices of urban income into a new motor for urban dynamics; in the production of new service relationships, such as those that try out a reappropriation of the relationships involved in care provision, which can de-privatise and denationalise the processes of reproduction and valorisation of life that remain confiscated by metropolitan biopower institutions; and in experimentation with ways of practicing and experiencing the time of the metropolis in the face of the total mobilisation of frightened, anxious individuals.

Education, self-education and research in monster institutions

In the context of the challenges of greater innovation, increased cooperation, more contagion at the European level and beyond, the Universidad Nómada is interested in tackling the possibility of constructing these new mental prototypes linked to the necessity of monster institutions, to the need to think and do another, different kind of politics based on education, self-education and research. We believe there are four basic circuits to be implemented, as follows:

(a) *A* circuit of educational projects, *to be developed in order to allow the circulation of theoretical paradigms and intellectual tools suitable for producing these* cognitive maps *that can be used to (1) intervene in the public sphere by creating* swarming points *of reference and producing counter-hegemonic discourses; and, in addition, to (2) analyse existing power structures and dynamics, as well as potentials;*

(b) *A* circuit of co-research projects, *to be organised for the systematic study of social, economic, political and cultural life for the purpose of producing* dynamic maps *of social structures and dynamics that can be useful for guiding antagonist practices, redefining existing conflicts and struggles, and producing new forms of expression endowed with a new principle of social and epistemological intelligibility;[9]*

(c) *A* publishing and media circuit, *to be designed with the aim of influencing the public sphere, areas of intellectual production and university teaching, for the purpose of creating* intellectual-analytic laboratories *and, consequently, new segments of reference and criticism of hegemonic forms of knowledge and ways of conceptualising the social situation;*

(d) *A* circuit of foundations, institutes and research centres, *to be devised as an autonomous infrastructure for the production of knowledge, which would constitute an embryonic stage for forms of political organisation by means of the accumulation of analysis and specific proposals. Its activities should link the analysis of regional and European conditions with the global structural dynamics of the accumulation of capital and of the recreation of the global geostrategic options that are favourable to the social movements.*

In some cases, the devices that make these tasks possible are already operating, we are talking about devices that are necessarily hybrid and monstrous*:*

hybrid, *because right from the start they make it necessary to create networks out of resources and initiatives that are very different and contradictory in nature, that appear strange and even seemingly incongruent among themselves; these resources and initiatives mix together public and private resources, institutional relations with relations of movement, non-institutional and informal models for action with forms of representation that may be formal and representative, and struggles and forms of social existence that some would accuse of being non-political or contaminated or useless or absurd but take on a strategic aspect because they directly give a political and subjectivity-producing dimension to processes of allocation of resources and logistical elements that end up being crucial for bursting onto nationalised and/or privatised public spheres and transforming them;* monstrous, *because they initially appear to be pre-political or simply non-political in form, but their acceleration and accumulation as described above must generate a density and a series of possibilities for intellectual creativity and collective political action that*

will contribute to inventing another politics;
another politics, *that is, another way of translating the power of productive subjects into new forms of political behaviour and, ultimately, into original paradigms for the organisation of social life, for the dynamic structuring of the potential of that which is public and communal.*

Translated by Nuria Rodríguez

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1   *The original document (in Spanish) presenting the Universidad Nómada can be found at the head of our web page [http://www.universidadnomada.net/spip.php?article139]; a recent text that has become something of a summary for the new phase of the Universidad Nómada is Raúl Sánchez Cedillo, 'Towards New Political Creations. Movements, institutions, new militancy', transversal: instituent practices, (July 2007): [http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0707/sanchez/en].*

2   *We refer to the reflections contained in the text, Andrej Kurnik and Barbara Beznec, 'Rog: Struggle in the City', transversal: monster institutions, (April 2008): [http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0508/kurnikbeznec/en].*

3   *How can we avoid mentioning the centrality of 'the university' in the 68 world revolution, how students discerned the paradox of an institution that is in crisis in terms of its historic model, but meanwhile plays an increasingly central role in capitalist modes of production and valorisation? See, among many other recent reflections, Gigi Roggero, 'The Autonomy of the Living Knowledge in the Metropolis-University', transversal: instituent practices: [http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0707/roggero/en], and the related experience described in, Atelier Occupato ESC (Rome), 'The Metropolis and the So-Called Crisis in Politics. The Experience of Esc', transversal: monster institutions: [http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0508/esc/en]. See also two Universidad Nómada texts: Montserrat Galcerán, '¿Tiene la universidad interés para el capital? (Are universities already of interest to capital?)', (Feb 2008): [http://www.universidadnomada.net/spip.php?article242]; Montserrat Galcerán,'La crisis de la universidad (The crisis of the university)', (June 2007): [http://www.universidadnomada.net/spip.php?article184].*

4   *See Francesco Salvini, 'The Moons of Jupiter: Networked Institutions in the Productive Transformations of Europe', transversal: monster institutions: [http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0508/salvini/en].*

5   *See,* **C.S.O. El Laboratorio,** *'"Mil mesetas"' y los espacios liberados metropolitanos. Notas para un agenciamiento ("A Thousand Plateaus" and metropolitan liberated spaces. Notes for an assemblage)' (1998): [http://www.sindominio.net/laboratorio/documentos/milmesetas/laboratorio.htm], which contains reflections that some of us participated in before becoming involved with the Universidad Nómada.*

6   *Thus the type of asymmetry between powers and counter-powers that characterises the movements in the new cycle of struggles that we've called 'another geometry of hostility'. See, Amador Fernández-Savater, Marta Malo de Molina, Marisa Pérez Colina and Raúl Sánchez Cedillo, 'Ingredientes de una onda global (Ingredients of a global wave)', Desacuerdos 2, Macba, Unia and Arteleku, Barcelona, (2006): [http://www.arteleku.net/4.0/pdfs/1969-2bis.pdf]; and [http://www.universidadnomada.net/spip.php?article188].*

7   *One of the richest and most hopeful cases along these lines is certainly that of the* oficinas de derechos sociales, *as explained in the text by Silvia L. Gil, Xavier Martínez and Javier Toret, 'Las Oficinas de Derechos Sociales: Experiences of Political Enunciation and Organisation in Times of Precarity', transversal: monster institutions: [http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0508/lopezetal/en].*

8   *Atelier Occupato ESC, 'The Metropolis and the So-Called Crisis of Politics', transversal: monster institutions ; see also Salvini, 'The Moons of Jupiter:'.*

9   *See Marta Malo de Molina, 'Nociones comunes', introduction to the collective volume* Nociones comunes. Experiencias y ensayos entre investigación y militancia, *(Madrid: Traficantes de Sueños, 2004): [http://traficantes.net]; also published in two parts, as 'Common notions, part 1: workers-inquiry, co-research, consciousness-raising', transversal: militant research, (April 2006): [http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0406/malo/en], and 'Common Notions, Part 2: Institutional Analysis, Participatory Action-Research, Militant Research', transversal: instituent practices: [http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0707/malo/en]. Also useful along these lines, is an overview of the texts included in the monograph* transversal: militant research, *mentioned above: [http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0707], in particular the text by Javier Toret and Nicolás Sguiglia (members of Universidad Nómada), 'Cartography and War Machines. Challenges and Experiences around Militant Research in Southern Europe', [http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0406/tsg/en].*

ATLAS

A number of local and trans-local projects have been quoted by the contributors to the Rhyzom project. Short presentations of them have been included in an Atlas which is spread across the book, on the pages where these projects are discussed, mentioned or alluded.

The list is obviously not exhaustive, but rather particular to this book and its contributors. It was meant to generate further ideas and connections. See also the cover/poster.

PROJETS

CONTRIBUTORS

AGENCY : TRANSFORMATIVE RESEARCH INTO ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE AND EDUCATION is a research centre initiated in 2007 at the Sheffield School of Architecture. It was formed through the alliance of staff and researchers working in and around the subject of architectural practice and education, and taking a critical view of normative values and standard procedures in this area, in order to propose alternatives.
www.shef.ac.uk/architecture/research/researchcentres/agency.html

ATELIER D'ARCHITECTURE AUTOGÉRÉE (*AAA*) is a collective platform which conducts actions and research on urban mutations and emerging practices in the contemporary city, involving architects, artists, students, researchers, activists and residents with different social and cultural backgrounds.
aaa's projects focus on issues of self-organisation and self-management of collective spaces, emerging networks and catalyst processes in urban contexts, resistance to profit driven development, recycling and ecologically friendly constructions, collective production of knowledge and alternative culture. Recent projects include Ecobox (2001-2006), and Le 56 (2006-2010). *aaa* has also coordinated PEPRAV (2007-2008), an European Platform for Alternative Practice and Research on the City and Rhyzom, an European network of trans-local cultural practices (2009-2010).Currently *aaa* runs R-Urban, a strategy for local resilience in greater metropolitan Paris, involving the creation of a network of locally closed ecological cycles linking a series of urban activities (i.e. economy, habitat, culture, urban agriculture) and using land reversibly.
www.urbantactics.org

CRISTINA CERULLI qualified as an *architetto* in Florence in 1999 and has worked in practice and academia. At the School of Architecture, University of Sheffield, she teaches in the MArch and MA in Urban Design programmes and is active in research. Her interests range from community-led housing development models and shared models of living to alternative and creative forms of management and procurement, emergence, resilience, mutuality and collaboration. Cristina is a member of the research centre *agency* a co-founder of Studio Polpo, a social enterprise architectural practice.

CÉLINE CONDORELLI works with art and architecture, combining a number of approaches from developing structures for supporting to broader enquiries into forms of commonality and discursive sites, resulting in projects merging politics, fiction, public space and whatever else feels urgent at the time. She is the author/editor of *Support Structures* (Sternberg Press, 2009), and one of the founding directors of Eastside Projects, Birmingham, UK. Recent work includes 'Il n'y a Plus Rien' (ACAF, Alexandria, Manifesta 8, 2010) Revision part 1 and 2, Artists Space, New York (2009) and Cell Projects, London (2010) and Support Structure phase 1-10, with Artist-Curator Gavin Wade (2003-2009).

CULTURAL AGENCIES is a project and collective with a duration of two years that seeks to develop contemporary models of cultural collaborations and institutional practices. Curated by Nikolaus Hirsch, Philipp Misselwitz, Oda Projesi with coordinator, Ece Sarıyüz.

FERNANDO GARCÍA DORY is a neo-pastoral and agro-ecologist artist. His work deals with subjects affecting the current relation between culture and nature in the framework of landscape, countryside,

desires and expectations related to aspects of identity, crisis, utopia and social change. He often uses self-organisation strategies, initiating collaborative social plastic processes. He studied Fine Arts at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, and Rural Sociology. His interest in mobility, rhythms and relation in space, made him start to work with trashumants and nomads. After creating a Shepherds School, he organised a World Gathering of Nomadic and Trashumant Pastoralists, resulting in the WAMIP (World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Pastoralists), representing the 250 mill of nomadic pastoralists in the world. **www.campoadentro.es ; www.wamip.org**

VALERIA GRAZIANO is a PhD candidate at the School of Business and Management and the Department of Drama at Queen Mary, University of London. She writes and works as artist and curator, both individually and collectively with the Micropolitics Research Group and the Carrot Workers Collective. Her research focuses on the formatting of encounters at the intersection of artistic practices, pedagogy and political organising. She is interested in devices for self-organisation and collective agency.

MIHAELA EFRIM is a community activist and educator in Brezoi, a town of 12000 habitants inhabitants located in the Carpathian Mountains. She has initiated the Community Foundation for Local Development in 1998 and has developed a number of EC funded community projects in Brezoi including a school for training unemployed workers in setting up small businesses in the wood industry and a number of Roma community projects.

GARETH KENNEDY is an artist based in Ireland. His practice is invested in the potential of dialogue and experiment to develop work which addresses environmental, social, aesthetic and economic concerns. Confluences of the modern with notions of the vernacular are central issues within his artistic practice. **www.gkennedy.info**

RUTH MORROW is an architect and academic with an interest in social changes through small spatial interventions. In her work she seeks to bring creative and strategic practice to wider publics. In this respect her collaboration with Peter Mutschler and PS² is a means to better understand how relatively modest creative actions have the potential to act as fulcrums of transformation. She is currently Professor of Architecture at Queen's University Belfast.

PETER MUTSCHLER is an artist, co-director and curator of PS² project space in Belfast and initiator of urban art projects.

ANDREW GRYF PATERSON is a Scottish artist-organiser, cultural producer and independent researcher, based, since 2003, in Helsinki, Finland. He works in different collaborative and cross-disciplinary processes, across the fields of media/network/environmental arts and activism, pursuing a participatory practice through workshops, performative events, and storytelling. He is currently a doctoral candidate at Medialab, Aalto University, School of Art and Design in Helsinki, and a member of Piknik Frequency association (organisers of *Pixelache Festival*). **http://agryfp.info**

CONSTANTIN PETCOU is an architect, activist and semiologist, co-founder of the atelier d'architecture autogérée in 2001. He has published in various philosophical journals (*Multitudes*, *Rue Descartes*) and architectural books. He collaborates with different partners at the initiation of the European Platform for Alternative Practice and Research on the City (www.peprav.net). Since 1996, he has taught at the University Paris 8, and in different schools of architecture. He is currently completing a PhD on urban micro-politics and practices at EHESS. He is co-editor of *Urban/ACT* (aaa-PEPRAV, 2007) and *Une Micro-politique de la Ville: L'Agir urbain / Multitudes 21* (2008).

DOINA PETRESCU is an architect and activist, co-founder of atelier d'architecture autogérée (aaa) in Paris and Reader in architecture at the University of Sheffield. She has written, lectured and practiced individually and collectively on issues of gender, technology, (geo)politics and poetics of space. She is the editor of *Altering Practices: Feminist Politics and Poetics of Space* (Routledge, 2007) and co-editor of *Architecture and Participation* (Spon Press, 2005), *Urban/ACT* (aaa-PEPRAV, 2007), *Une Micro-politique de la Ville: L'Agir urbain / Multitudes 21* (2008) and *Agency: Working with Uncertain Architectures* (Routledge, 2009).

PS² = Paragon Studios / project space, is a small artist collective, with studio space in the centre of Belfast. A former shop in the same building, *project space*, is used as a platform for art projects and run on a voluntary, non-commercial base. The focus of the activities is on urban intervention and social interaction by artists, multidisciplinary groups and theorists, deliberately opening the traditional categories and often expanding to other locations. **PS²** is supported by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. **PS² collaborators (for the Rhyzom project) included: Sarah Browne, Anne-Marie Dillon, Gareth Kennedy, Ruth Morrow, Peter Mutschler, Bryonie Reid, Craig Sands, Fiona Woods. www.pssquared.org**

PUBLIC WORKS is a London based group of artists and architects, and public works projects address the shaping and making of public space by its different users, and include both the informal and formal aspects of a site. public works projects include public realm co-design schemes, interdisciplinary debate and publications. Ad hoc design plays a central role in producing immediate change on a small scale, and presenting and testing 1:1 proposals for the longer term and larger scale. The use and promotion of local resource, from material-based, cultural and social, are integral to all projects. public works came formally together in 2004, as a mixed group of collaborators who had already been working together in different constellations since 1999. **Kathrin Böhm** and **Andreas Lang**, together with **Torange Khonsari**, are partners in public works. **www.publicworksgroup.net**

ANNE QUERRIEN, sociologist, urbanist and part-time philosopher, has taken early retirement and lives in Brittany; she is a member of atelier d'architecture autogérée and on the editorial boards of *Multitudes* and *Chimères.*

BRYONIE REID is a freelance researcher and writer with interests in cultural geography, art theory and practice, feminisms and theories of language and literature. She has degrees in visual art and cultural memory and her doctoral thesis examined imaginings of place and belonging in Northern Ireland. Her writings explore the role of place in political and cultural identity discourses on the island of Ireland, and recently she has worked in academic and curatorial capacities on several visual art projects and has written interpretive essays for Irish art journals and artists' publications. A co-authored book on the cultural geography of the Irish border is forthcoming next year.

CHRISTOPH SCHÄFER, artist, works and lives in Hamburg. He is one of the founding members of Park Fiction project and group. Park Fiction started in 1994 with a group of artists and musicians who, after having participated in squatters movements in the St. Pauli neighbourhood close to the port of Hamburg, decided to join the citizen urban struggles against the development of one of the last empty spots on the water front of the neighbourhood. The process of civic resistance and alternative design that followed the land occupation has invented an original space where art crosses sub-culture and political activism.

JULIA UDALL is a PhD student at Sheffield University researching architectural representation and participation. She currently teaches on the Masters in Urban Design and Landscape Undergraduate courses at Sheffield University and is a director at social enterprise architectural practice, Studio Polpo.

UNIVERSIDAD NÓMADA, functions since 2000 as a transnational laboratory and an anti-capitalist, anti-

racist-colonial and feminist organisation which conducts actions and research into historical and emerging social and political struggles and forms of subjectivity in current capitalist societies.
http://www.universidadnomada.net/

FIONA WOODS is a visual artist whose practice includes curating and writing. She is interested in the cultural possibilities arising from the emerging commons paradigm and in thinking the rural as a site for socio-spatial practices and productions. She has received a number of commissions and awards and is participating in a European network of practitioners focusing on cultural and agricultural contexts.
www.fionawoods.net

ERDOĞAN YILDIZ is a community activist, former head of Gülsuyu-Gülensu Beautification Association and resident of Gülsuyu-Gülensu for about 25 years. Cultural Agencies project team met him at the very beginning of the project and discussed the possibilities of realising the project in the neighbourhood. Erdoğan supported and critcised the project for a better realisation; suggested the idea of an oral history archive in the neighbourhood and worked a lot in his network for this project to be recognised.

MANUELA ZECHNER is a researcher and cultural worker based in London. Her current projects include a Phd on Collective Practices between Creativity and Care (Queen Mary University London) and the future archive **(www.futurearchive.org).** She works with the Micropolitics research group **(www.micropolitics.wordpress.com),** Carrot Workers Collective **(www.carrotworkers.wordpress.com)** and Nanopolitics Collective.

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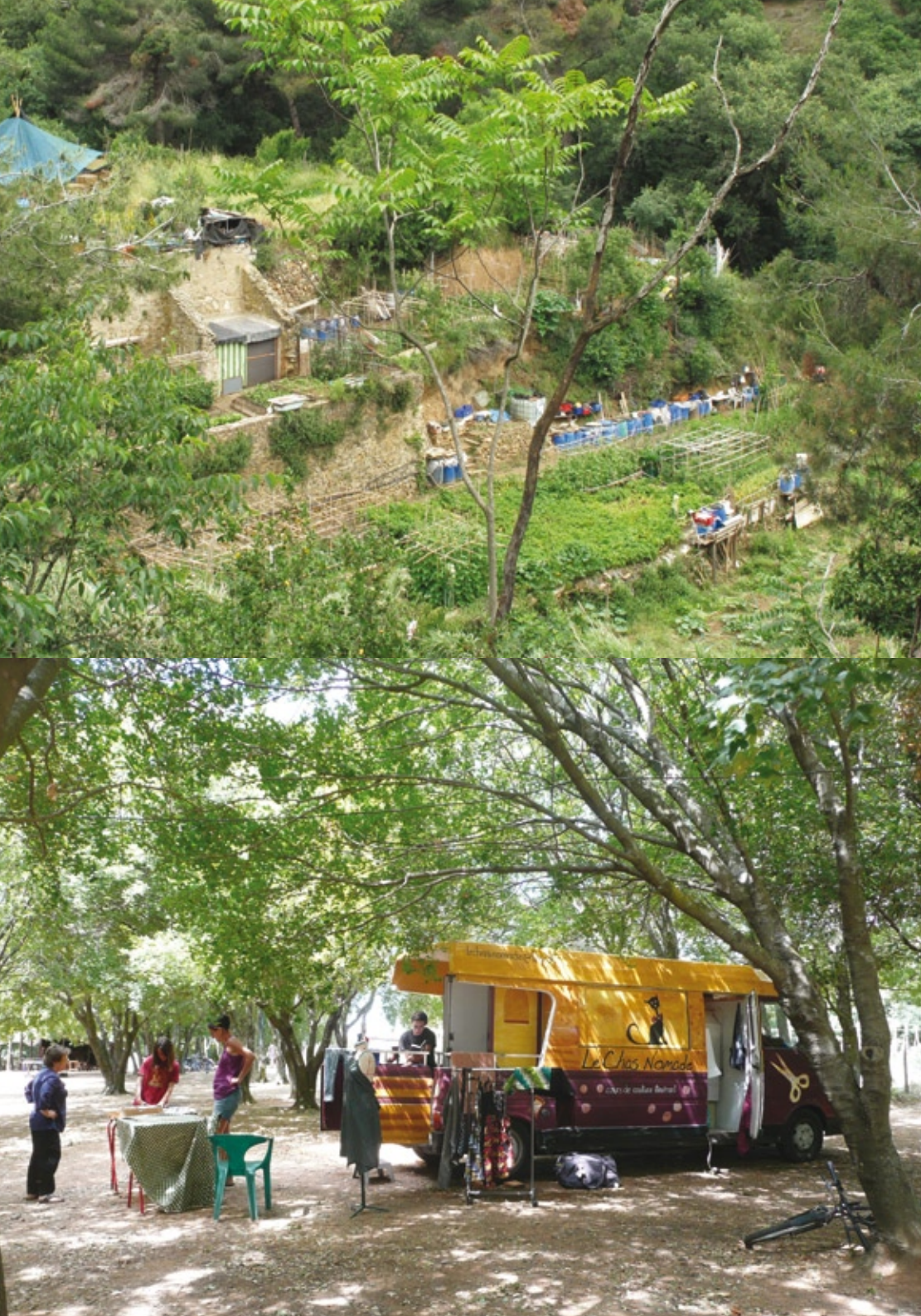
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