

Artists and public spaces

International Symposium
Salle du Faubourg, Geneva – 19.-20.10.2012

Program

Friday, October 19th 2012

1. Protocols.

Moderator: Dario Gamboni, Professor at the University of Geneva (History of contemporary art)

- 9.30 am: Thierry Davila*: *Introduction. The invention of space*

*Thierry Davila is curator of the Mamco, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Geneva

- 9.45 am: Xavier Douroux and François Hers* : *Art in the forefront of democracy*

In western history, art has always been the laboratory where society invented the forms of relationship with the world that it needed to adapt to change. However, it is curious that an institution representative of this society should accept the idea of questioning the very forms of its relationship to art by following up the suggestion of an artist to place at the forefront of contemporary cultural policy the work of art itself. Nevertheless, an institution as emblematic as the Fondation de France decided to take on this task twenty years ago, and to implement both in France and other European countries, the so-called Protocol of the New Patrons, which profoundly revitalises the working methods of artists in public spaces.

*Xavier Douroux is co-director of the art centre Le Consortium in Dijon, of which he is one of the founders, and also the director of the publishers Les presses du réel in Dijon. François Hers is a photographer. In 1990 he conceived the idea of the Protocol of New Patrons for the Fondation de France. This was designed as an extension of his artistic activity, which reinvented the relationships between art, artists and political space and in which Xavier Douroux plays an important role. Together they wrote *L'Art sans le capitalisme* (Art without capitalism), Dijon, Les presses du réel, 2011.

- 10.45 am: Rachel Anderson* : *Not knowing. A collaborative process in an unfamiliar environment*

Artangel is an organization based in London which commissions – and produces – large-scale projects from major contemporary artists. In the course of the last twenty years these projects have been carried out in greatly differing contexts and innumerable forms, from film and video to sculpture and sound installations. Artangel fostered the emergence of some of the most talked-about, controversial and celebrated works of the time, including those by Francis Alÿs, Jeremy Deller, Matthew Barney, Brian Eno, and Douglas Gordon. The idea will be to present the collaborative public approach developed by Artangel in the field of the commissioning and production of works, illustrated by a selection of projects dating from the last five years.

*Rachel Anderson joined Artangel in 2007. Her role is to produce collaborative projects. These take on a multitude of different forms, ranging from film, installation and performance, to literature and public interventions.

-11.45 am: Dr Brigitte Franzen*

*Brigitte Franzen is director of the Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst in Aachen. In 2007, she was curator of the Skulptur Projekte Münster.

- 12.30 : Lunch break

2. Works.

Moderator: Thierry Davila

- 2.30 pm: Dennis Adams*: *Worrying the limits, challenging the framework*

Using several examples of his public projects which bring into play a great variety of methods of work and entry into common space, Dennis Adams will demonstrate the different ways in which to attack the established limits between a site, a situation and the appearance of a work and its reception. Or how to call into question the public limits of a work and the way it is seen.

*Dennis Adams is an American artist internationally renowned for his urban installations. His works form part of the public collections of the largest American museums, among them the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York. He was formerly a professor at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) in Cambridge, Mass. where he held the position of Director of the Visual Arts Programme between 1997 and 2001. He currently teaches at Cooper Union in New York.

- 3.30 pm: Francesco Careri*

Presentation of Stalker's interventions in Rome between 1995 and 2008, on the subject of discrimination against the Roms in particular, as also the more recent work of the Laboratory of Civic Arts carried out in Brazil, Chile and Kenya. Urban public spaces of a different type appear recurrently in these examples: they are linked to indeterminate projects in informal townships.

*Francesco Careri is one of the founders of the joint action Stalker/Nomadic Observatory which brings together plasticians, architects and sociologists with the aim of exploring the future of present-day urban situations. Since 2005 he has been working as a researcher in the Department of Urban Studies at the University of Rome 3 where he directs the Masters programme in Arts, Architecture and Urban Studies.

- 5 pm: discussion between Ann Veronica Janssens*, Pierre Bismuth* and Thierry Davila

Ann Veronica Janssens and Pierre Bismuth are the last two artists to have each designed and developed a work in the framework of *Neon Parallax*, a public commission for the plain of Plainpalais in Geneva which was organized and managed by the Funds for Contemporary Art of the City and Canton of Geneva. How did they approach the relationship to space in their two projects? How did they see the public dimension of their work? Did this commission change their vision of art and their way of working? So many questions which, among others, will enable us to understand the various technical, aesthetic and political issues involved in *Neon Parallax*.

*Ann Veronica Janssens is one of the most important Belgian artists of her generation. Her work does away with the material consistency usually associated with works of art – she makes use of light and artificial fog – and underlines the relative nature of our perception of space and time. She develops installations and projections, proposes immersion in sensitive environments, urban installations and sculptures. Her work has been exhibited at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris and at the

Wiels Centre for Contemporary Art in Brussels.

*Pierre Bismuth is one of the French artists most present on the international scene. His work is multiform, often playful, made of films, drawings, objects, installations, and sound pieces; it revisits in questioning fashion the signs and images of our culture and our memory in a vein which could be classified as neoconceptual. All this lends his work both lightness and depth. In 2012 his work was presented at the MACRO (Museum of Contemporary Art) in Rome and the Biennale in Berlin.

Saturday, October 20th 2012

3. Concerning transmission.

Moderator: Christian Joschke. Christian Joschke teaches the history of photography at the University of Geneva and at Lumière University in Lyon (Lyon 2).

- 9 am: Pascal Le Brun-Cordier*: *Transmitting, producing*

Working in a public space implies the transmission of a particular type of knowledge. The intent is to carry out an evaluation of this knowledge based on the example of the cultural Masters projects in public space conducted by the University of Paris 1 – history, objectives, team, programme and pedagogical methods, completed projects, evaluation. It also involves examining case studies to see what artists can do in a concrete fashion in the field. This will be the focus of the critical presentation of the first five editions of the ZAT (Temporary Artistic Zones) project and some of the 120 completed works. This artistic event is organized twice yearly at Montpellier, and aims to explore the city and give it a narrative dimension in the framework of a multidisciplinary, contextualized, artistic programme about public space.

*Pascal Le Brun-Cordier is an associate professor at the University of Panthéon-Sorbonne Paris 1 where he directs the programme of cultural Masters projects in public space which he created in 2005, together with a team of thirty university academics and professionals in the field of art in public space. He is the artistic director of the ZAT, an artistic event on the theme of public space which he has been developing with the city of Montpellier since 2010.

- 10 am: David Harding*: *Context and collaboration. The practice of public art as a central element of artistic education*

Here is an abridged version of the instructions given each year to students following the course of environmental art at the Glasgow School of Art. These instructions will be analysed and illustrated: the context is half of the work; choosing a site which may or may not be resonant with the work; negotiate with the owners in order to be able to use it; creating the work as either a durable or a temporary piece; installing the work on the site in such a way that it can be seen and criticized by students and teachers; removing the work from the site

*David Harding is an artist and teacher. Together with Sam Ainsley he created the course of environmental art (for which he recruited philosophers, poets, and art historians) at the Glasgow School of Art, which played a major role in the creation of a strong local artistic scene, almost immediately achieving a high international profile (Douglas Gordon, Martin Boyce, Christine Borland).

- 11 am: Jean Attali*: *Urban description and the public role of art*

Just as it is the task of artists to “help see” or to “help hear”, so it is their responsibility to give a description of the great metropolitan spaces. The extensive territories of the town

call for new ways of understanding common space, shared or divided space, saturated or deserted public space. Before talking about public space in the democratic sense that philosophy and political history have attached to the term, we have to re-conquer inhabited space and fix on it representations of mobility, multiple and changing forms of belonging, and the disparity between living conditions. From now on we give less consideration to art exhibited in public space than the public space as shown in art: urban description as an artistic programme and as a transformation of the public role of art.

*Jean Attali is a philosopher, and professor at the Higher National School of Architecture Paris-Malaquais (l'École nationale supérieure d'architecture Paris-Malaquais). He concentrates his research on the themes of architecture and the city and has participated in numerous projects with architects such as Rem Koolhaas (OMA / AMO, Rotterdam), Nasrine Seraji (ASAA, Paris) and Philippe Samyn (Samyn & partners, Brussels). He has published a book entitled: *The plan and the detail. A philosophy of architecture and the city (Le plan et le détail. Une philosophie de l'architecture et de la ville*, Nîmes, Jacqueline Chambon), and is currently working on a book entitled: *The City Landscapes of the World/ An Atlas Shared (Le Paysage mondial des villes / Un Atlas partagé)*.