

Art and Participatory Strategies

Panel session and workshop arranged by Aarhus Center for Visual Art as a part of the RETHINK Participatory Cultural Citizenship Conference at Aarhus University, Denmark.

Program for Art and Participatory Strategies

November 15th 2013 at Godsbanen, Vogn 1.

10.30 – 10.35	Welcome: Anja Raithel (Denmark), head of Aarhus Center for Visual Art.
10.35 – 11.05	Agnieszka Wolodzko (Poland), artist, curator and researcher based in Laznia Centre for Contemporary Art, Poland.
11.05 – 11.35	Matthias Einhoff (Germany), artist and member of KUNSTrePUBLIK, Berlin, Germany.
11.35 – 11.55	Adria Florea and Anja Raithel (Denmark) from Aarhus Center for Visual Art on the project "From Godsbanen to Gellerup".
11.55 – 12.15	Discussion. Moderator: Anja Raithel
12.15 – 13.00	Lunch
13.00 – 17.30	Simultaneous workshops with Agnieszka Wolodzko (Vogn 1) and Matthias Einhoff (Vogn 2)

Registration and general information

Both the panel session and the workshops are open to the public, but the workshop requires registration. To register please write a few lines about your background and motivation for participating in the workshop and send it to godsbanengellerup@gmail.com along with your contact information. Deadline: 8th of November. The panel sessions do not require registration.

Please note that the panel session and workshop will be held in English.

If you have any questions please contact Aarhus Center for Visual Art

Mail: info@aabkc.dk

Phone: (+45) 30 48 42 74 or (+45) 40 12 38 90

Background Information

“RETHINK Participatory Cultural Citizenship” & “Art and Participatory Strategies”

In recent years increased focus has been placed on citizen participation and public involvement, especially within fields such as city planning, the arts, technological innovation, new digital media, and social entrepreneurship. In this relation it is important to discuss, how citizens can influence concrete projects as well as which positive or negative values their influence creates. With the conference *Rethink Participatory Cultural Citizenship* Aarhus University has invited Danish and international researchers, artists and cultural activists to explore and discuss the processes through which citizens can gain actual, and not only symbolic co-determination, and thereby how real participatory democracy can be achieved. The conference will take place in Aarhus, November 14th to 16th.

By arranging the panel session and workshop *Art and Participatory strategies* Aarhus Center for Visual Art wishes to contribute to rethinking art in public spaces and problematizing access to expression in the public domain despite challenges such as differing financial, linguistic, and educational levels. Through both theory and case presentations *Art and Participatory Strategies* asks:

- Who has access to expression in the public domain?
- How do we improve the possibilities for art production in public spaces?
- How do we secure artistic quality and diversity in city planning?
- Can artistic projects stimulate and give an incentive for active co-ownership without instrumentalizing art in the process?

To elaborate on these questions Aarhus Centre for Visual Art has invited Polish artist, curator and researcher Agnieszka Wolodzko and German artist and member of the artist collective *KUNSTrePUBLIK* Matthias Einhoff to present their respective projects. Moreover Adria Florea and Anja Raithel from Aarhus Center for Visual Art will present the center's current project “From Godsbanen to Gellerup”. Hereafter both Wolodzko and Einhoff will be hosting workshops.

Program in detail – The Panel session

10.35 – 11.05. Agnieszka Wolodzko (Poland), artist, curator and researcher based in Laznia Centre for Contemporary Art, Poland. (Godsbanen, Vogn 1)

About Agnieszka Wolodzko

Agnieszka Wolodzko was born in Gdansk in 1961. She studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdansk in 1980-1986, at the Faculty of Industry Design and the Faculty of Painting. She is currently a PhD candidate at Mickiewicz University in Poznan at the Faculty of Social Sciences. Her thesis treats participatory art in Scandinavian countries in the period 1990-2010. Concurrently she works as an artist, curator and author of texts on contemporary art, architecture, urban planning and issues of the cities of today. Since 2000 she has worked as a curator at Laznia Centre for Contemporary Art in Gdansk and she is currently curating the exhibition "Participatory Art in Scandinavian Countries". Read more about Agnieszka Wolodzko on her website: <http://www.wolodzko.art.pl/index.htm>

Abstract

WHO NEEDS WHOM? PARTICIPATORY ART IN THE CONTEMPORARY CITY

I will talk about participatory art (PA) as one of the manifestations of the so called new public art. My understanding of PA is based on two definitions. The first of them is that of Susan Lacy, when she describes someone involved in this type of practice as an "artist-activist". According to Lacy, the starting point of this type of activity is to challenge a traditional artistic practice based on work in the comfort of his/her studio, in isolation from society. The artist-activist creates new meanings and symbols in consensual co-operation with the public/selected social groups. This practice requires the use of skills and tools that have nothing to do with traditional methods of creating art. The artists have to face new challenges now: "how to collaborate, how to develop multilayered and specific audiences, how to cross over with other disciplines, how to choose sites that resonate with public meaning, and how to clarify visual and process symbolism for people who are not educated in art."

The second definition, authored by Claire Bishop, outlines the boundaries of this art, detailing the following features: 1 / "the desire to activate the subject - one who will be empowered by the experience of physical or symbolic participation"; 2 / ceding some or all of authorial control over the production process of an art project for the sake of its co-creators; 3 / desire to restore social bonds through the collective production of meanings.

Presenting some examples from the Polish and Scandinavian art scenes I will discuss projects, which I divide into two groups: "Encounters" and "Micro-utopias". I will also point to attitudes of the artist versus the

community, with which he/she co-operates: inside-in and outside-in. In the end I will mention some dangers that result from the artist's activity in the political domain.

11.05 – 11.35: Matthias Einhoff (Germany), artist and member of KUNSTrePUBLIK, Berlin, Germany. (Godsbanen, Vogn 2)

About Matthias Einhoff

Matthias Einhoff was born in Hildesheim near Hannover, Germany in 1972. He currently lives and works in Berlin. After training as a cabinetmaker, he studied at the Berlin University of the Arts and Central St. Martins College in London. As an artist, composer and performer, he is interested in the intersection of art, popular media and everyday life. Einhoff is a member of the non-profit organization and artist collective KUNSTrePUBLIK as well as co-founder of the innovative residency-venue ZKU (Zentrum für Kunst und Urbanistik). Read more about Matthias Einhoff, KUNSTrePUBLIK and ZKU here: <http://wasteland-twinning.net/explorers/matthias-einhoff/> , <http://www.kunstrepublik.de> and <http://www.zku-berlin.org>

Abstract

KUNSTrePUBLIK

Matthias Einhoff will present the artistic practice and strategies of the artist collective KUNSTrePUBLIK. In alternating roles, the collective has experimented in various social and professional fields. As artists, curators, researchers and activists, they employ a site-specific approach to generate critical confrontations between art and public. In exhibitions, lectures and workshops, they share and test their experiences with the public and other institutions. The members of KUNSTrePUBLIK engage in constellations and community-based activities, including education, urban planning, art making and curation.

KUNSTrePUBLIK's approach to projects is process-oriented and starts from the particular social, historical, economic and sometimes political situation. In 2012 KUNSTrePUBLIK opened the ZKU (Zentrum für Kunst und Urbanistik) in a former Railway Depot in Berlin, with a residency program for artistic practice at the interface of urban research. ZKU is aspiring to create a hub for artistic projects, scientific research and the everyday. KUNSTrePUBLIK is interested in creating and facilitating artistic projects, which are dialogical, partly ephemeral, participatory from the start and locally related. This bottom-up-approach will allow the participants to create meaningful interventions and communal experiments that allow conclusions on broader questions concerning urban landscapes, social constellation and trans regional European collaboration.

By showing examples from Skulpturenpark Berlin_Zentrum, Washington D.C., Lahore / Pakistan and the Ruhrgebiet Einhoff will be laying out the methods of KUNSTrePUBLIK and examining the broader developments leading to the foundation of the ZKU.

11.35 – 11.55: Adria Florea and Anja Raithel (Denmark) from Aarhus Center for Visual Art on
From Godsbanen to Gellerup. (Godsbanen, Vogn 1)

Abstract

FROM GODSBANEN TO GELLERUP

The primary goal of this long-term project is to integrate art and urban development and urban renewal processes in the Godsbanen area and in the intercultural areas of Gellerup and Tøveshøj, as well as to support citizen involvement in these processes. The project will be deeply rooted in the local environments and their respective challenges, and will first and foremost be created by professional and local artists in cooperation with the respective area's inhabitants. Our focus will also lie in helping small autonomous artistic collectives to be acknowledged in the broader artistic milieu of Aarhus, as their talent and potential are overlooked because they do not meet the 'formal' artistic expectations.

Aarhus Center for Visual Art works closely with a locally anchored institution in Gellerup called Sigrids Stue. Sigrids Stue works with professional contemporary art and invites international artists to live and work in the area. Together, we want to establish a long-term platform for the intertwining of art and urban renewal in Gellerup, preferably within the new community house that is being built over the next couple of years. A space in which to facilitate creative workshops for children and adults, residency exchange programs, and not least, in which to spark debate on change in public space.

Our hypothesis is that the means to achieve successful city renewal in Denmark is a close cooperation between developers, architects, housing associations, citizens, artists and the local authorities.

Program in detail – The workshops

13.00 – 17.30: Simultaneous workshops with Agnieszka Wolodzko (Vogn 1) and Matthias Einhoff (Vogn 2)

Each workshop lasts four hours with a 30 minutes break. Max. 12 participants

Workshop with Agnieszka Wolodzko. Godsbanen, Vogn 1

The workshop departs from a contemporary artistic attitude described by Hal Foster in his well-known essay *Artist as Anthropologist*. According to Foster the nowadays artist in his/her practice borrows the methodology from the anthropologist. I want to focus on a situation “inside-in” that appears when the artist working in the public space and co-operates with the community, which he/she knows from everyday life. In the workshop I will invite participants, who are Aarhus citizens to prepare a map of the city of Aarhus that could help us to define possible needs for artists’ political involvement in local social life as well as potential relations between artists’ circles and the city’s citizens.

Workshop with Matthias Einhoff / KUNSTrePUBLIK, Godsbanen, Vogn 2

CHALK, CHALK, TALK...

A workshop exploring the possibilities of collective and pluralistic knowledge production beyond the limits of language.

The workshop is about discussing participatory cultural practices, about creating a sculpture together, about exploring language, and exploring power relations of words and visual representations and of democratic knowledge production!

During a collective discussion around the theme of the conference RETHINK Participatory Cultural Citizenship, Matthias and the participants of the workshop will be documenting the output of the discussion by writing with chalk on blackboards of various sizes. The blackboards will be arranged and taken apart again according to how the participants agree to place and connect them. The boards will be laying on the ground, will be fixed on poles and glued to the wall, etc. as part of the process. They might continuously be rearranged, destroyed, restored and extended to reflect the process of discussion. In the end the participants will have created a room-filling sculpture of words and signs on blackboards, visual connections and relations of meanings.