

Agnieszka Wolodzko (Poland), artist, curator and researcher working in Laznia Centre for Contemporary Art, Poland.

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.

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.