

Durational Performance and Curating

Tags:

#Durational performance

#Public art/ Public art curation

#Context-specific curating and commissioning

#Site specificity

#Place based works/ Place bound curatorial initiatives

Paul O'Neill and Claire Doherty in their book "Locating the Producers Durational Approaches to Public Art" write about curator producers who use longer term, durational and cumulative approaches to place specific works as opposed to the itinerary model of the curator/ artist- nomad critiqued by Miwon Kwon in her book "One Place After Another: Site Specific Art and Locational Identity". They write that the "durational approach to events and projects seems to allow for the formation, dispersal and reformation of temporary, active communities so as to avoid the pseudo – ethnographic parachuting of the curator or artist to work with a passive target group deprived of agency".¹ According to them, in 2006, the curator producer has emerged as the linchpin in negotiations between artist and place or as a specific curatorial practice defined as context -specific or place bound. Through their research they write how public art and its curation has begun to recognize the significance of engaging audiences and encouraging research-based outcomes that are responsive to their specific contexts, audiences and locations over time. Through highlighting durational approaches to public art and curation they want to show that a fundamental shift in thinking about the 'time', rather than simply the 'space' of public art commissioning is required to effect change at the level of policy.

Durational approaches to art making and curating are specific because they stress the time spent together to "constitute a new mode of relational, conversational and participatory practice"² in pursuit of a common objective.

This kind of artistic and curatorial practice can be exemplified by the multilayered art project "If Buildings Could Talk" about the Railway Residential Building in Skopje by Filip Jovanovski, curated by Ivana Vaseva and produced in the frames of the organization 'Faculty of things that can't be learned - FR~U', that started in 2014 and it is still evolving. Paul O' Neill and Claire Doherty write about of the specific field of public art commissioning as durational practices, in which place is understood as a "constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus", and it is precisely this specificity that connected their thinking to the story about the Railway residential building. Moreover, although it is a static place, a concrete building, this project doesn't only celebrate its architectural authenticity but also and maybe even more, what constitutes that building as a living space, or the building seen as a "state of flux", "an event in process", or a making of a place, constantly being made and remade.

¹Paul O'Neill, Claire Doherty (eds.), Locating the Producers Durational Approaches to Public Art, Valiz Antennae, Amsterdam, 2011, p.10

² Ibid.p.12

This project is discursive, processual and socially engaged in which participation "can only be experienced durationally" or as a "socialized process necessary for art's production".³

The vision of the project is to try to provide agency for the change in perception of public space and to show and research the potentialities of the public to use their resources to act upon them. It expanded upon the ideas of revitalization and preservation of this space, not only the cinema but the whole building as well, along with its historical, spatial, socio-political and economic background.

Therefore, in the first phase, lasting from 2015 until 2018, via research, workshops, work sessions, exhibitions, lectures and discussions, the need for community and public spaces was emphasized and culminated with a research based performative art project or in situ performance. In the second phase, which is still ongoing, the idea emerged for the renovation and management of the cinema by the tenants and collaborators, together with the Center's municipality (where this building is located) in terms of constitutive social practice and collective work where the common should become jointly managed. The third phase would involve practicing a different management model that would stimulate similar practices in other potential communities. There is one in between phase and that is a variation of the in situ performance or performance created especially for the Prague Quadrennial of performance design and space called "This buildings talks truly" that won the grand prix Golden Triga at this prestigious manifestation.

Thus "If Buildings Could Talk" is a performative experience that exists from 2015 in the Railway Residential Building in Skopje and is an example of durational approaches to art making and curating. It is a context – based, context-responsive and also context creating work, that is performative; not a performance per se, but a performative performance, re-performance, re-designing and re-contemplation of all that builds our contemporary world in terms of the common and public space and their destruction within galloping capitalism. More specifically, it is contextually, context-responsive as well as context-creating work, which, through its practice, is trying to enable conditions for transformation of social and artistic relations towards conquering common and public space. "These projects (as third spaces) clearly produce place as it is practiced and lived; they provide a space of interrelations, always in the process of being made and remade, not only materially but also socially".⁴

Duration in the context of the project "If Buildings Could Talk" didn't rely on the political will of the local council, Mayor or any individual with a vision for public art in the region but on several individual artists, a curator and three residents in the building.

Examples:

Edgware Road Project <https://www.serpentinegalleries.org/whats-on/edgware-road/>

Trekroner Art Plan (Kunstplan Trekroner) <http://urban-matters.org/projects/the-trekroner-art-plan-project/>

The Blue House project <http://www.blauwehuis.org/blauwehuisv2/>

³ Ibid. p.14

⁴ Ibid. p.12

If buildings could talk/ This building talks truly <http://akto-fru.org/en/1698-2/> <http://akto-fru.org/en/%d0%bf%d1%80%d0%be%d0%b5%d0%ba%d1%82%d0%b8/ibctif-buildings-could-talk/>

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curating
in

context



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