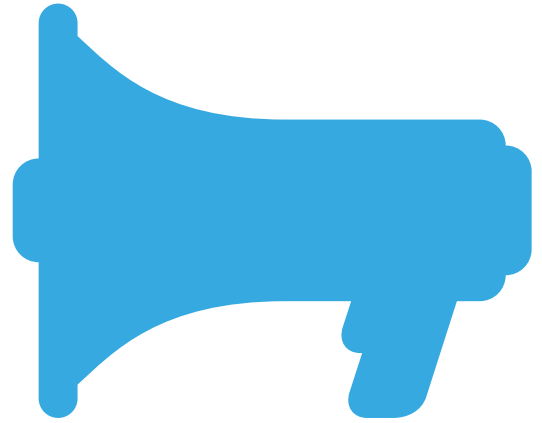


# KLAXON 9





(when art lives in town)

URBAN EXPRESSWAY

## The City Together

Antoine Pickels and Benoit Vreux

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## URBAN EXPRESSWAY

## The City Together

Antoine Pickels and Benoit Vreux

Since the 1980s we have been continually told that there are only individuals; the curtain had finally fallen on collective dreams and we were supposed to have “everyone is out for himself” as our sole horizon. And yet, for some years now, we have been witnessing the “singular” resurrection of ideas of sharing, the principles of pooling, as well as collective actions and the reinvention of community rules. Traces of this tendency were already present in the altermondialist demonstrations at the turn of the Millennium, and they have even been more manifest in the worldwide wave of gatherings in public spaces as witnessed in Occupy, the Arab Spring and in other versions of *Nuit debout*; these yearnings both to be and to do together have naturally assumed different forms depending on where in the world they occur. But, as the American philosopher Judith Butler has underlined, whenever people come together in public space, it is often to demonstrate about the fact that they are being deprived access to it, or that their rights have been flouted or threatened: hence, these gathering are at once an expression of resistance and a sign of vulnerability.

Those practicing living arts in public space, where vulnerability is an inherent component, are hardly immune to this common desire, a desire that we jointly explored, with CIFAS, during the 2017 SIGNAL Festival in Brussels. Most contributions to this issue of *Klaxon* are drawn from meetings and works presented in this framework.

The activist and educator Peggy Pierrot, who over four days moderated the debates that are the cornerstone of SIGNAL, revisits in her opening text a series of questions explored during the festival: Why do progressive forces forsake security and violence management issues on behalf of the community to police officers to the exclusion of other groups in society? Why is embracing the common perceived as a renunciation of dialectical thought? How do we forge a common “narrative” between history, media, and our adversaries? The way in which energies come together today has shifted; it is part of a wave of radicalism that defies artistic practices, which often have other agendas. Pierrot asks *How can art as a political device evince social creativity?* One way, perhaps, of attaining this goal would be to invent other and less hierarchical modes of exchange, calling into question authorship (notably of the artist)... and to offer a platform to those voices that are usually less audible.

Pierrot's critical questioning of hierarchy and of opening up to minority positions are already being applied in the programs of several “relational” art operators around the world, who work in another way. Two concrete examples, situated some thousands of kilometres apart, but united in this issue of *Klaxon*, demonstrate this tendency. The artistic programs of ArtOxygen (ArtO2) in Mumbai, India and of Indisciplinarte in Terni, Italy reveal similar concerns for the common good and common interest, questioning the pre-eminence of the artist or the curator; on the contrary, both programs promote collective decisions, shared processes, following horizontal modes, putting artworks to the test of common experience, irrespective of the risks involved... and with all that they will gain in terms of power by becoming collective imaginary spaces.

At times the art of the common in urban space is the fruit of necessity, and a veritable weapon in the fight to (re)conquer this space. A telling example is the Moldavian capital Chişinău, a city where rampant post-communist neo-liberalism has culminated in the disappearance of communal spaces that were numerous in the recent past. The journalist and activist Vitalie Sprînceană explains how urban protests nowadays willingly avails of artistry; the images accompanying the article document the stubborn and exemplary work undertaken by the association Oberliht in their combat against the powers-that-be: their critical proposal is also often festive and jubilatory in its unifying collective aspects.



Because the common also entails—in the ephemeral and thus precious time of artistic action—the potential for celebration and for sharing, it will give rise to the happiness of gregariousness, the collective's sensation of power. Two projects by very different artists testify to this. In *The Night...* the Basque blogger Carlos Sánchez renders a poetic account of how the Danish collective hello!earth invites a group of people who don't know each other to isolate themselves from society for a night so as to sleep together in one space and imagine a post-capitalist world through sleep and dreams; an interesting video document by Marlon Barrios Solano complements the article; in *Êt Qwè, Carnaval Doûci?* Robin Pourbaix, along with sixty accomplices, creates an improbable urban parade, using some of the codes used in carnival—the energy of the group in the end affects hundreds of people, spontaneously. Simple gestures such as sleep or walking, cooking or farandole, enable us to dream of ourselves together, to dream together of another life, of another city.

If these few examples in themselves can't encapsulate the numerous artistic strategies addressing the common in urban areas, they do nevertheless give the temperature of a particular fever. Echoing the above-mentioned political gatherings in public space, let us hope that through our collective experiences during the performances, the groupings, the dialogues that art imagines in public space will be imbued with this same capacity to create common stories and shared values.

Cifas.be/en

MAIN STREET

## For an Art of the Common

### Peggy Pierrot

Adama Traoré died on 19 July 2016, in Beaumont-sur-Oise (France) when he was arrested following an identity control after fleeing from the gendarmes because "he didn't have his papers on him."

[bit.ly/2Mnx4j5](https://bit.ly/2Mnx4j5) Rémi Fraisse was killed on 26 October 2014 by an exploding flashbang grenade during a demonstration against the construction of a dam in Sivens (France). [bit.ly/2Llxwae](https://bit.ly/2Llxwae) Initially peaceful, the gathering transformed, under the impetus of a black block, into a pitched battle against the national gendarmerie.<sup>01</sup>

**01.** In France, the national gendarmerie is an armed force charged with policing missions and under the control of the Ministry for the Interior. Unlike the police, its members are soldiers. The gendarmes generally assume policing duties in rural and suburban areas whenever the police are responsible for maintaining order in the towns and cities.

Recently, during a seminar I was moderating in France on the issue of political mobilizations, of their histories and forms, I had a difficult exchange about police violence during occupations of public space. When speaking of occupying public space, I was implying all forms of occupation, from a simple demonstration to a group of young people with their backs to the wall out of sheer boredom. We, the group and I, didn't share a common narrative symbolizing the brutality perpetrated by organs of *legitimate violence*, namely, the police. And, it was not a question of generational effect, contrasting, for example, Malik Oussekiné to Rémi Fraisse as a tragic symbolic incarnation of the question.<sup>02</sup>

**02.** Malik Oussekiné was a French-Algerian student, aspiring to become a priest, who was chased by police *voltigeurs* (they've since been disbanded) as he exited a jazz club, for he was seen as belonging to the high school students and students who had been protesting against a reform bill for higher education over several weeks.

[bit.ly/2JG2Wxw](https://bit.ly/2JG2Wxw)

Pro-Zadist<sup>03</sup> participants recalled the death of Rémi Fraisse, killed during the mobilization against the Sivens Dam project in 2014, as a symbol encapsulating the whole issue of police violence. My intervention at the seminar sought to extend the issue of brutality committed by law enforcement organs in public space to violent situations arising from everyday life, and not just the temporal exceptionality of an event, citing the emblematic death of Adama Traoré as an example.

**03.** Referring to the Zone to Defend (Zone à Défendre/ZAD) in Notre-Dame-des-Landes. [bit.ly/2MliTeg](https://bit.ly/2MliTeg)

What was striking during these exchanges was to see how well-traced the lines of concern were, contrasting violence committed in our daily lives, and amid general indifference, by the forces of law and order, and those committed within the framework of protest movements, be they mobilisations against the revised *Loi Travail*, the French Labour Law, the *Nuits debout*, or those against the evacuation of the so-called Zone to Defend in Notre-Dame-des-Landes.

Violence is perpetrated in working-class neighbourhoods, on the one hand, and yet, brutality also targets those in situations of militant protest.

Violence is perpetrated in working-class neighbourhoods, on the one hand, and yet, brutality also targets those from different social backgrounds, but in situations of militant protest in spaces identified as front line and in need of defence. The seminar brought together people who were all in agreement about being progressive and committed to the value of equality and are aware of social struggles. Yet, as the exchanges unfolded, the fact that crackdown at political rallies and daily facies controls posed a similar set of questions did

not seem self-evident. Above all, the structural and biopolitical dimension – that renders deafening the silence about police violence in working-class neighbourhoods on a daily basis and their inherently racist dimension – seemed to elude a group that could be characterised as politicised and anti-racist.<sup>04</sup>

Yet all these brutalities, and in these particular cases fatal, committed by law enforcement organs, those representatives of the armed forces to whom we citizens delegate, through our democratically elected representatives, the sole control of violence for the purpose of protecting the social body ought to equally concern us, irrespective of where they're committed.<sup>05</sup>

During the get-togethers at the 2017 SIGNAL Festival, *The Art of Gathering*, [bit.ly/2IsNJoW](https://bit.ly/2IsNJoW) I participated, at the invitation of the artists Eero Yli-Vakkuri and Pietari Kylmälä, at a meeting with officers of the Belgian Federal Police cavalry. Eero Yli-Vakkuri and Pietari Kylmälä are working on the human / animal interaction and the place of animals in urban settings. During the festival, the artists probed the nature of this relationship through workshops / meetings with the cavalry brigade and their horses.

This offered an opportunity for participants to hear first-hand the constraints faced by human-animal mounted police in their daily work, but also in crowd control and during demonstrations. For some of those participating in the workshop, this encounter represented the first opportunity for a peaceful exchange without the usual mutual suspicion with representatives of law enforcement agencies. The exchanges were cordial, surprising most participants in that they found these police officers friendly, almost forgetting their function during demonstrations. I kept asking myself one question at this meeting: how come that nobody in the group was aware that police boards, just as communal councils, are partially public forums?

**04.** This particular exchange occurred before *Marée populaire* [popular tide], a national unitary event on 26 May 2018 that brought together some fifty opposition groups that are against the French government's current policies. The group fighting against police violence *La vérité pour Adama*, which brings together people who want the investigation into Adama Traoré's killing to render him justice, placed itself de facto at the head of the Parisian protest, despite disagreements.

**05.** For Belgian readers, mention could also be made of the death of Semira Adamu, suffocated during an expulsion attempt at Brussels's Zaventem airport in 1998. While this article isn't the place to develop on police violence at our borders, the general question of police violence, and of which bodies are predominantly its victims could be extended to include what our security order and its agents commit on our borders.

## Public Order Without the Public

*I think we're leaving policing matters up to police officers on their own too easily. A tendency prevails among progressive movements of being unwilling to concern themselves about cases of public order, for it is considered as a reactionary jurisdiction. The choice of the right to security, however, embodied by the skewed figures of victims of police blunders, or simple security controls, should challenge and move any progressive egalitarian to act. This is far from being the case, however.*

The fight against police violence is a disqualified topic, deemed as a minority struggle – that of those concerned by looks-based profiling. Let's admit it. Still, why can't this minority struggle be embraced by the greatest number of anti-reactionary forces as its own struggle?

Not all get-togethers are one and the same, whether they disturb public order or not.

The common needs our bodies and what they represent. Because before we dive into collective cultural histories and individual stories, it is first and foremost our bodies

that separate us. Those bodies that are stigmatized in public space, bodies which we keep at a distance or suspects. And that is why not all get-togethers are one and the same; some are legitimate, whilst others are not, irrespective of whether they disturb public order or not.

Mandating violence to armed guards and to the police does not in any way exempt them from reporting on their actions, particularly with regard to police violence and arbitrary arrests, and this is a matter of concern for us all.

## Think, Act, Hand in Hand

To form a common front is to relinquish the idea that our projection on what constitutes life ought be the only one, and especially the only right one able to unravel antagonisms. This requires us to listen. To set value judgments and feelings aside. To embrace the political aims of strategic, temporary, or ephemeral circumstances. Being attentive to the other, however, doesn't entail no longer having a point of view, nor of completely subsuming to that of the other. *Embracing the common does not mean abandoning thought. But rather to think jointly.*

At my workshop discussion we were split by our existential sensibilities on that which impacted us about such a common subject as police violence. One narrative pitted against another. Would the common be a question of narration?

For someone who had opened up to the world in the 1980s, when widespread multiple campaigns railed against Apartheid in South Africa, where we closely monitored the ramifications of Perestroika, where we witnessed live on television, one after the other, symbols of the totalitarian Soviet Union collapse during the 1989 revolutions, for someone who looked on in despair and helpless two genocides in her lifetime, the question of the common also permeates that of mobilizing interest and political questioning. I don't cite these examples out of some melancholy for past alliances, or for some bygone humanist narrative that would have become obsolete. I do so only because they seem to me to belong to that which enables us to think of ourselves as part of a whole. At times in sadness and anger, but also with joy whenever we score a triumph.

## The Common as Narrative

As narrative, the common must always be renegotiated. And the struggles between different social entities are at the heart of these permanent re-negotiations of what WE are. If we regard the common as a narrative, or narratives, then one of the building blocks of these narratives is how we build historical discourse. I am of French nationality and I'm living in Belgium. I always like to remind my fellow citizens<sup>06</sup> of the Belgian kingdom that being French is also about choosing what we discuss in France. Is the "we" in France that of the Paris Commune, or that of its executioner Adolphe Thiers? Is one still French if one's heart doesn't beat on thinking about the royal coronations in Rheims,<sup>07</sup> but by reading stories about popular revolts by the Jacqueries and the *va-nus-pieds*? I most certainly place myself on the side of those that struggle and dream as evoked by the historian Michelle Zancarini-Fournel,<sup>08</sup> on

<sup>06</sup>. *Putain, putain, c'est vachement bien, nous sommes tous des européens.* [Fuck, fuck, what great luck, we're all Europeans] as sung by Arno with his band TC Matic. The reference here is to European citizenship.

<sup>07</sup>. The city in which the King of France was coronated, among whom were some of the Carolingian and Capetien kings, as well as all the Valois and Bourbons.

the side of *history as seen from below*. Which narratives of the common can articulate *the art of gathering* of which we speak here, in other words, forms and times for groupings where we establish political spaces with a radically democratic objective: collective action, participation, consultation, and codecision?

**08.** Author of the remarkable history book *Les luttes et les rêves, une histoire populaire de la France de 1685 à nos jours*.

Another basis for this shared narrative is how the media seizes political mobilizations and rallies to either report on or to muffle them, to embrace the dominant point of view or that of the critical masses. My example of police violence can serve as a paragon to illustrate my case in point. I am thinking of the way in which the 2001 G8 protests in Genoa, during which Carlo Giuliani, an anti-global Italian activist was killed, were followed and covered: [bit.ly/28LYzAL](https://bit.ly/28LYzAL) It was owing to the fact that media tactics [bit.ly/2JH5taH](https://bit.ly/2JH5taH) were implemented and animated by groups of independent journalists and activists that another discourse could take shape about the G8 economic project and ongoing events at rallies, different from that of governments of the most industrialized nations and multinational companies.

## Against!

To craft a narrative to share with one another is also to form a group, both strategically and temporarily, in the short- or long-term, against a common cause or enemy.

In the most recent series of the American franchise *Star Trek, ST: Discovery*, the Klingons, an alien people whose empire has been torn asunder, unite by following one of their leaders who designates the peace advocated by the United Federation of Planets, to which humans and other peoples belong, as contrary to their values. The Klingons thus designate the Federation as an enemy to attack. The various divided factions rally behind a leader, T’Kuvma, and engage in a fight against the Federation.

To create an enemy for oneself is a well-known spring for mobilizing support and collective identification.

To create an enemy for oneself, be it legitimate and objectifiable, or even an expiatory scapegoat, is a well-known spring for mobilizing support and collective identification. We assume that our objective is not to destroy a peaceful inter-planetary federation and that we aspire for the best for the greatest number in the galaxy.

## A New Art of Getting Together

We have seen the emergence and reformulation of other forms of not only urban but also rural get-togethers, of the pooling of destinies, projects, and actions that come to put aside the collective vision that pits private against public, professional policy and passive citizenship, both in terms of the economy and of spaces that make up our cities.

The common target here is neither private nor public (i.e. state privatization); it is of a different nature. Get-togethers, without the involvement of the State or political parties, in which operating rules are created that are revocable or undoable.

These social movements, these mobilizations are also a set of political, economic, computer, or social practices, emerging from a broad spectrum of local or international protest movements (self-support groups, support groups for those “without” [papers, tickets, shelter...], drug users, activist movements for access to HIV treatment). Their modes of action span everything from occupying sites for variable periods (squats, squares, such as Istanbul’s Occupy Gezi), demonstrations (anti-G. protests), no-border camps... to lobbying for the common good, for access to resources against cross-border agreements, against laws...

From movements such as Occupy Wall Street (2011) to Black Lives Matter (2013), from communal urban gardens to Brussels solidarity groups with asylum-seekers and rejected refugees, [bit.ly/2JEscE9](https://bit.ly/2JEscE9) from the chosen protest camps to the unchosen urban camps (undocumented, homeless, migrants wishing to cross over to England), from the *Indignados* in Spain to *Nuits debout* in Paris, the remunicipalization of water services in Naples, the occupation of Taksim Square in Istanbul, the Arab Spring... all these mobilizations taking place in specific contexts participate in these new get-togethers. These social movements identify points of tension, necessities, contexts, often local, at times global, that enable us to say “we,” to embrace the common, through opposition.

*Nuit debout*, the occupation of public spaces in France, went hand-in-hand with mobilizations against the government’s draft labour reform law in 2016. But the social movement struggled to spread beyond the city centers to the banlieues, the predominant living quarters for the working class throughout France. Dissent swiftly emerged concerning the place accorded to feminist issues and/or struggles against racism. The clamour of political minorities tarnished the lovely protest rally because the usual organs have for too long not addressed their struggles, and mistrust and distrust are now a prerequisite for any discussion.

In the wake of the ISIS attacks of 2015-2016 in Paris and Brussels, many have signalled the decline of our universal, symbolic, collective European identity. Note, I did say symbolic. Because in concrete terms, is the European identity truly threatened by the 7% of the entire population who happen to be foreigners and the 9% of citizens born outside the EU, a figure that also includes expatriates from other European nations? The LGBT population is estimated at comprising 10% of the overall population. Does it represent a threat that will wipe out heterosexuality? Why should migrations threaten us? Because, you will tell me, of those attacks – neat syllogism.

## Reclaim!

Reclaim! Take back that which belongs to you. Don’t ask permission to live and to do, but do it. Reclaim your body, re-appropriate your life – social markers, identifications, projections, and prejudices – and head into the streets and let the world know about it.

The art of getting-together of these social movements that reclaim the common doesn’t come in the form of a polite request, but rather an imperative to do the necessary. They attack the agents of universalism for failing to keep their promises and their contradictions, inventing innovative and unprecedented forms of resistance, such as gender strikes.<sup>09</sup>

<sup>09</sup>. Refer to Sam Bourcier, *Homo inc. Incorporated* — *Le triangle et la licorne qui pète*, Cambourakis, 2016.

We need to get down to work (and with “we,” I mean inhabitants of fortress Europe) and to think about our future, now that we no longer believe in global alternatives. And not let ourselves be crushed by TINA,<sup>10</sup> but that we occupy all spaces to think

together.<sup>11</sup> Think about local and global communities differently – without regionalism, without being encumbered by a separatist nationalist burden that excludes, without fascism or nostalgia for a bygone era that some have guillotined for good reasons anyway. There is, as Barbara Sollnit argues, *hope in the dark*.<sup>12</sup>

**10.** *There is no alternative*, TINA, is an acronym denoting the idea that there is no possible alternative to capitalism and that consequently all resistance is futile.

**11.** Refer to Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is there no alternative?*, Zero Books, 2009, which argues how the capitalist subjectivity presents itself as the sole possibility and that we are witness to forms of resocialisations and alternative conscience despite the prevailing hegemonic discourse

**12.** Barbara Sollnit, *Garder l'espoir: Autres histoires, autres possibles*, 2006.

## Radicality and Art

The arrival of oppositional practices and questionings of the common in the public arena<sup>13</sup> and in the financing of art – and it is still another matter whenever an artist, like other activists, decides to bring his/her competences to bear *pro bono* in activist space so as to work together – raises numerous questions. Are these institutional/depositional practices compatible with sites that are often hierarchical, whose objectives are not so much to work together – with the protracted periods that it sometimes requires – but instead to manage programs, funds, commissions, objectives, exhibitions, programs, and shows? What can be done about such practices in sectors supported by State funding, or by private foundations whose goals have nothing to do with the objectives and specifically the practices of the constantly shifting common gatherings that we are discussing here?

**13.** Public space becoming then a location for artworks.

What art practices in public spaces underpinning social transformation can be imagined, given the nature of the art market, its global economy and its networks of influence, its constraints, and the sense of insecurity that has come tumbling down on some of its producers?

To formulate social struggles in terms of the common is to strive to think of an alternative between private property and public property. A way out of ownership, goals, projects, production, of the obligation to be efficient.

The social movements herein described challenge participatory democracy to think of new political units, not just beyond the market-place, but also beyond the State and at the margins of the market-place and the State. But what about those stateless artists? What are communities without/against society?

How to engage with the commons movement without sticking to superficialities, by profoundly changing one's practices? By integrating positioned knowledge, by overturning the experts take, perhaps by learning from the experience of free software and their open licenses?

The commons movements raise the question of sharing. Sharing resources, sharing authority, sharing space, and especially the sharing of expression, surface, visibility, and thought. Is this not the polar opposite to the position of the artist who, in order to survive and to be recognized, must hone his/her idiosyncrasy to excess?

We saw that the common, the "we" was always a matter up for discussion, to redefine and work on, and for which we must fight.



## How can art as a political device evince social creativity?

What could the artistic commons be? How can art as a political device evince social creativity? The writer and activist Sarah Schulman<sup>14</sup> reminds us that it is “the responsibility of the writer,” but we can extend this to the responsibility all artists, “to take their place in the vibrant activist movements alongside all the others,” without necessarily constraining the form of their expression; this ought not be confined to this position but “(...) upon completing their work, they must attend demonstrations, lick envelopes, and place their bodies in line alongside everybody else.” This brings us back to the question: shouldn’t we also deprive artistic work of its exceptional position? Whenever an artist works together with others, they bring the other into their space but in doing so they co-create. What should we do with these co-creations? Why should artists be more the author than the public who join them in this space for exchange and work? Doesn’t common work invite us all to play the game of mobility, to embrace various roles, in turn that of artist, cook, handyman, and thinker? And not only artist or curator (these are but examples)?

14. “AIDS and the Responsibility of the Writer”, in Sarah Schulman, *My American History: Lesbian and Gay Life during the Reagan/Bush Years*, Routledge, 1994.

To cooperate is also to allow oneself to be encroached upon, to open oneself up to destabilization, to shift positions, to accept to change one’s identity. To move is also to change.

As a relational artist, what about the temporary “us” of the practice with the other, in constrained public space? To enter into a relationship also entails being affected in every sense of the word. How does it affect you, as a connected person, as an artist, to tread common ground? How does the common affect your *modus operandi*?

## To Speak Up... A Different Approach

These are the topics we tried to discuss during the 2017 SIGNAL Festival. To do this, we drew on the commons of gathering and opposition practices, ensuring that the floor was open to participants, paying attention to implicit hierarchies between ages, between genders, and between social positions. We focused on language, the meaning and the influence of words. By being attentive, together, to everyone’s role in the groups. By timing our speeches. By agreeing to temporary protocols. We thus sought to set up an explicit framework, by proposing different rules to moderate or even to somewhat force participants to take the floor.

One aim of the device was to enable everyone to participate and to realize that their voice and their thoughts do count, and that it is possible – and indeed desirable – to dare to enter into the debate, to defend their point of view, to add their take on matters to the common pot of ideas. We were inspired by these mechanisms, for they enable us to undermine hierarchies and favour the emergence of other forms of expression, of other forms knowledges, and also to render invisible themes audible, to formulate and then put them on the political and media agenda.

At a time when #metoo has come to disrupt the worlds of cinema, but also those of the performing arts, these practices that facilitate the speech of “dominated” people – and I’m obviously referring to women here – are among the tools that allow new proposals to emerge to help transform and improve the world.



BIOGRAPHY  
Peggy Pierrot



Peggy Pierrot is involved in projects linking information, media, activism, radio art, and technology. She has worked as a journalist and as a technical webmaster in media and non-profit projects. She lectures on writing, technology, African-American culture, science-fiction. She is working with A.Pass and Erg (École de Recherche Graphique) in Brussels, and after rethinking les Ateliers des horizons (ex-école du Magasin, Grenoble, France) together with the Magasin team, is now teaching manager and tutor within this institution.

Photo: RR

## REMARKABLE EVENT

## Indisciplinarte in Terni

### Triggering Common Sense, Cultivating a Sense of the Common

Linda Di Pietro and Chiara Organtini

A lone actor in the middle of a full stadium, a wild forest made from domestic plants, a cardboard monument jointly-made and destroyed by people, an amusement park activated by people energy. Through artistic interventions and provocation, local narratives come back to life, and memories seed a sense of belonging and collective appropriation.

To trigger our common sense and cultivate our critical imagination, Indisciplinarte operates at the intersection of disciplines, enhancing our daily lives and promoting at once detachment and enchantment through art intervention in Terni, a post-industrial city in Italy where we manage CAOS – Centro Arti Opificio Siri, a creative hub born on and from the renovated ruins of a former factory, transformed into a 5600 square meters space for arts and culture, where a community in transition is looking for a future to overcome its traditional industrial past.

At times undisciplined and reckless, we cross boundaries between disciplines and spectatorship, impertinence and *hypertinence*, ultimately aiming to create collisions, to re-locate art in public space, to combine opposing elements and reshape our physical and emotional landscapes.

## How? Terni Festival as a Tool

We started activity in Terni in 2006 with a festival, a collective challenge, an intellectual gamble, and a bet: we were fascinated by a city in transition and by a factory under renovation (soon to become the CAOS), as well as by Terni's hybrid marginality, somewhere between Rome and the beautiful green Umbria region. How interesting can the fringe be? What can happen in the margins? Scattered by centripetal force, Indisciplinarte developed a festival as a first step in this city.

Our festival exploded as an unexpected gesture toward Terni, creating an immersive moment composed as a dramaturgy whose leverage points were an intense use of time, complex geographies of spaces, and a radical, qualitative artistic program, albeit still accessible to the local community: a balancing act in-between alterity and familiarity.

With a ten-day timeframe and an intensive schedule of artistic projects and performances, the festival embraced the entire spectrum of the day. The many artists, invited to stay for its entire duration, broke some feedback loops creating remarkable electricity in the air. Seriality and the prevailing dialogue in the selected projects were acts of common sense, multiplying the festival effect like an echo. Despite our condensed timeframe, we crafted the use of space according to a nomadic vision of the city: the festival had a meeting point, the former Siri factory soon to become CAOS, an urban site as much as a "third place" and a hidden spot, juxtaposing theaters, exhibition sites, and alternative locations.

Being demanding is a sign of respect.

Our artistic choices were edgy and engaging, even radical, and yet emotional so as to easily attract and involve local audiences: being demanding is a sign of respect and we upheld artistic quality as a condition not to serve people's expectations or to answer their questions, but rather to broaden their imaginations and rephrase their questions.

## Commonality as a Subject

Since the local community was crucial in fulfilling our mission, we saw conviviality as a means to build bridges and conversations. Several projects we hosted in Terni, such as *Eat the Street*, the *Building Conversation* series and Olivier Grossetête's sculptures were interfaces for this sense of commonality as a subject and a process at the same time. *Eat the Street* was conceived by Toronto-based atelier Mammalian Diving Reflex. They create playful and provocative participatory projects aimed at disrupting hierarchies often associated with age, gender, and cultural backgrounds. They work specifically with non-artist groups, in non-arts settings, and as such their projects yield unexpected situations, conversations, and experiences. In 2003, its artistic director, Darren O'Donnell developed the term "social acupuncture" based on an oppositional principle – that of excess and depletion – so as to interrogate social dynamics through temporary events that explore how "generosity and abundance can drive new ways of being together.

More recently, we presented one series of Lotte Van Den Berg's *Building Conversation*, a project meant to contribute to a changing society, in which she practices agility of thinking and collective feeling. In order to achieve this, her projects create conditions in which exchanges of perspective can be practiced in conversation, creating space for exercise where we can let go of existing patterns of action so as to experience different ways of conversing and how that would affect us and our collective being.

The common is the critical focus of Olivier Grossetête's practice. With the help of the entire citizens' community invited to create a new city within the city, he creates impressive and poetic constructions simply by using packaging and tape. They offer city residents an opportunity to appropriate new places, making these ephemeral neighbourhoods into living spaces where they can get together, exchange, and work together on a common task, on a common goal. These cardboard cities can be used to question our perception of the spaces we occupy, and encourage us to imagine innovative ways of organizing and living together the public space.

## Commonality as Practice

The idea of a *choral model* is also reflected in the festival's governance and CAOS's management model: the festival doesn't have a pyramidal structure with an artistic direction, but rather a collective direction (understood here as both trajectory and leadership),

where diverse actors and associations are invited so as to converge and enrich the discourse with multiple voices.

Since CAOS itself has a hybrid status, half public and half private, owned by the municipality but run by private enterprises, surrounded by private houses, it is a threshold between a cultural institution and the community. It is a place to embrace complexity rather than to enclose and privatize. The very nature of the space combines indoor and outdoor spaces, crossed by bystanders or users: a courtyard for the neighborhood, a Wi-Fi free zone for many, a park or a playground for kids. A *heterotopia* with many uses and meanings.

## Commonality as a Format: *Come Close*, 12<sup>th</sup> Festival Edition

Across 12 editions the Terni Festival became an established feature, a ritual for the city while also positioning itself internationally thanks to its uniqueness. In the last three years we've been increasingly focused on the nature of CAOS Arts Centre as a system of connections: the festival changed direction, concentrating more on fictionalizing the environment, enacting its potential and transforming it into a temporary landscape to be used by people who co-author its shape and identity.

As a first step in this direction, we developed *Foresta* in 2016, a project on the margins of arts and urban regeneration, comprising a temporary village of tree houses placed on top of the lime trees of CAOS, hosting a community of artists: Leonardo Delogu, Michele Di Stefano, Christophe Meierhans, Friso Wiersum and Veridiana Zurita. The residency's purpose was not to produce new artworks, but rather to research the city, to map and witness its dynamics in conversation with local communities. From a privileged point of observation, recalling childhood dreams of a tree house and a bird's-eye view, the artists developed utopias for Terni's future.

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Transforming space rather than offering contents.

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Exchanging with audiences and passers-by, while sleeping in public spaces with neither privacy nor doors, the artists shifted their perception. Engaging people during walks, co-making sessions of urban furniture, they worked on the ecology of relations, fostering social imaginaries on an alternative city. Transforming space rather than offering contents, our curatorial activities focused on providing and inspiring contexts to let content be shared and co-created by artists, audiences, and users alike, as a real common space that created a sense of belonging and appropriation.

After the festival's 2016 edition, a vibrant community gathered around CAOS, and *Foresta's* legacy was an extended curation: both for the local community, who started taking care of the space and the built elements, as well as for the festival group, who decided to share the artistic vision of the festival's next edition with the artists involved in *Foresta*.

How can we share decision-making as much as we share responsibilities? How can we complement our diversities, perspectives, backgrounds, and codes for making space but also giving space? We worked on these questions as an enlarged and diverse curatorial group, rethinking the festival not only in terms of a body of programmed works, but also as a co-creation of an environment to be activated together with the participation of the city and its residents to share food, stories, and objects. For *Come Close*, the 2017 edition

of the festival, we invited citizens to give voice to their city with a remarkable choir, to dance (in) an exotic landscape, to walk together and plan a party. With the project *Garden State*, in collaboration with Fabrice Maziliah and Roberta Mosca from Mamaza, we asked 280 citizens to lend us domestic plants to create an indoor public forest, to enliven it with artistic actions and also open it to everybody to spend time in an environment designed by our collective domesticity.

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Understanding differently the idea of common good, the concept of “us,” the sharing of a space.

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On the tight rope of intimacy, on the threshold of public and private spaces, the festival responded to the need of redesigning and understanding differently the idea of common good, the concept of “us,” the sharing of a space, which at once becomes public and belongs to the public.

Our role of curators and artists changed radically. We won't make things any longer, but rather curate the conditions for people to make things happen themselves. In short, the art of hosting ourselves.

*In silent moonlight we keep on wondering: “If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?”*

[bit.ly/1UCcEn9](https://bit.ly/1UCcEn9)

[bit.ly/2tcliPH](https://bit.ly/2tcliPH)

Just when we are about to finalize this issue of Klaxon, we learn that the Festival of Terni is in great danger and that the 13<sup>th</sup> edition is delayed. You can learn more and sign the letter addressed to the Umbria Region to save the festival here: [bit.ly/2tcluyp](https://bit.ly/2tcluyp).



CAOS  
Centro Arti Opificio Siri  
Light design by Adalberto Mecarelli  
Terni, 2010

© RR





*Foresta*  
Geodesto house by Falegnameria Fasa

Terni, 2016

© Mariangela Loffredo



*Garden State*  
Fabrice Mazliah and Roberta Mosca

Terni, 2017

© Luna Cesari





*Terni non esiste*  
Leonardo Delogue and Friso Wiersum

Public walks  
Terni, 2017

© RR



*Sensazione*  
Peter De Bie / Laika

Terni, 2006

© Olimpio Mazzorana



*Bed and Breakfast*  
Heike Schmidt

Terni, 2008

© Olimpio Mazzorana





*Museum of the Moon*  
Luke Jerram

Terni, 2017

© Luna Cesari



*Structures monumentales*  
Olivier Grossetête

Terni, 2015

© Giordano Torreggiani

## BIOGRAPHY

## Linda Di Pietro and Chiara Organtini



Linda Di Pietro is convinced that culture and art are the main tools for change. She has invested the last 8 years in the reconversion and management of CAOS arts centre, a 6,000 square meters multidisciplinary cultural centre born on the ashes of the former SIRI chemical plant. 12 years ago she conceived and nowadays is the artistic director of the Terni International Performing Arts Festival. She is visiting fellow at the SAIC in Chicago, advisor of IETM international performing arts network, and President of ProgettoRena. Chiara Organtini is a project creator passionate about art and public space, from site specific outdoor interventions to digital experiments or participatory works that question traditional genres and the boundaries of spectatorship. Since 2006 she is part of Indisciplinarte and she is engaged in CAOS Centro Arti Opificio Siri management and Terni international performing arts festival.

[bit.ly/1UCCen9](https://bit.ly/1UCCen9)

Photo: RR

STROLL

## *Èt Qwè, Carnaval Doûci?*

### The Oranges' Carrier

Robin Pourbaix

Robin Pourbaix revisits the folklore of his native town, Binche. He gathers a parade composed of forty clones of the artist, walking as "Gilles de Binche." Accompanied by an orchestra playing traditional music of the Carnival of Binche, they walk through the city from one bar to another. Behind the procession, Robin Pourbaix throws oranges to the passers-by.

Robin Pourbaix interprets tradition in his own way and shows that it is far from being frozen. The heritage of the Carnival of Binche meets the obsession of the artist for the multiplication of his own image, by using anonymizing masks.

*Èt Qwè, Carnaval Doûci? / The Oranges' Carrier* took place on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017, in the centre of Brussels, in the framework of the festival SIGNAL #6, organized by CIFAS. The parade started at the end of the day and ended with Bengal lights on Grand-Place. The final rondo expanded spontaneously to hundreds of people present on the square.

Robin Pourbaix would like to thank the musicians and Olivier de Angelis for the music, and the forty performers for having lent their bodies to Robin Pourbaix: Rebecca Gischer, David Trembla, Alexandra Schaar, Ricardo Cortes Carreño, Vincent Legrand, Denyse Neuenschwander Champion, Jo Ko, Eric Gunera, Gérard Mugemangango, Jean Claude Soetens, Alexis Heroult, Nadège Albaret, Julie Simon, Clara d'Arc, Greg Dessart, Amandine Pourbaix, Jef Cravan, Michel Colot, Maxime Rayet, Carmen Smart, Fred Monnoye, Bruno Marcandella, Cécile Bodart, Christophe Dekeuwerr, Olivier Koeune, Raya Baudinet-Lindberg, Sissi Dela Fuerta, Ciprian Ciobanasu, Bred Spain, Charlotte Grimard, and the ones who wanted to keep their anonymity behind Robin Pourbaix's mask.



Èt Qwè, Carnaval Doûci?  
*The Oranges' Carrier*  
Robin Pourbaix

SIGNAL, Brussels, 2017

Video, 2'18"

© Camille Laufer / CIFAS



Watch the video here: [bit.ly/2K5Wtfg](https://bit.ly/2K5Wtfg)





*Èt Qwè, Carnaval Doûci?*  
*The Oranges' Carrier*  
Robin Pourbaix

SIGNAL, Brussels, 2017

© Bea Borgers



*Èt Qwè, Carnaval Doûci?*  
*The Oranges' Carrier*  
Robin Pourbaix

SIGNAL, Brussels, 2017

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*Èt Qwè, Carnaval Doûci?*  
*The Oranges' Carrier*  
Robin Pourbaix

SIGNAL, Brussels, 2017

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*Êt Qwè, Carnaval Douci?*  
*The Oranges' Carrier*  
Robin Pourbaix

SIGNAL, Brussels, 2017

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*Èt Qwè, Carnaval Doûci?*  
*The Oranges' Carrier*  
Robin Pourbaix

SIGNAL, Brussels, 2017

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*Èt Qwè, Carnaval Doûci?*  
*The Oranges' Carrier*  
Robin Pourbaix

SIGNAL, Brussels, 2017

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*Èt Qwè, Carnaval Doûci?*  
*The Oranges' Carrier*  
Robin Pourbaix

SIGNAL, Brussels, 2017

© Bea Borgers

BIOGRAPHY  
Robin Pourbaix



Robin Pourbaix (1971, Binche, Belgium) is a Brussels-based multidisciplinary artist. His work oscillates between various mediums: installation, performance, video, photography, painting and drawing. The essential component of his approach is the displacement of context. Through simple means, he questions the social codes. The installations he creates are at the same time reflective, poetic and semantic spaces. Humour and mockery are part of the process he uses; with soft irony he invites us to other possible readings of our reality. The mask, the costume, the *mise en abîme* of the persona, the energy supported by the action of a group are central to his recent performances. The individuality of the artist is multiplied and frozen in masks – mobile self-portraits – that make paradoxically this identity more tractable. Regardless of the space where the performances take place – arts centres, galleries, public space – , the public is invited to take part.

Photo: Thierry Lechien



## ITINERARY

**ArtO2, fresh air in Mumbai**  
**Relational Investigations between Art and the City**  
 Leandre D'Souza

These 'field notes' introduce ArtOxygen (ArtO2), a contemporary art initiative based out of Mumbai, India, whose work has been dedicated to bringing contemporary art into the urban context. Since 2009, its aim has been to create a more proximate relationship between artistic practice and the city, where both can challenge and enrich each other.

## A city of oppositions

There are 22 million people living in Mumbai, with a million people occupying every square mile in certain parts of the inner city.<sup>15</sup> Like its uncontained and increasing human count, the city too has developed in a rapacious, callous way. Its everyday life is characterized by a series of oppositions that define its social, geographic, economic, cultural environment.

Basic natural resources and human needs such as water, land, power, sanitation, healthcare and transportation, play a paradoxical role in the city, as they are abundantly available for a small number of people, but scarce for the majority. Just like its ruthless self, Mumbai entraps its inhabitants in a vicious game dictated by its policy makers, water/land/power mafia, the rich and powerful, who condition how the rejection of basic resources determines the way everyone lives, loves, works, sleeps and stays alive.

**15.** Suketu Mehta refers to invisible labor in cities as being its backbone and driving force. "Cities function on such invisible networks of assistance. In a slum colony, there is no individual; there is only the organism," Suketu Mehta, "Maximum Cities: Mumbai, New York", Session 11, Session 11, Keynote lecture, *Our Common Future*, New York University,

[bit.ly/2JDQxxX](https://bit.ly/2JDQxxX)

Can art become a catalyst to explore this dichotomous interlocking between people the city and basic?

In this entangled web of social, economic, urban and environmental issues, ArtO2 questions whether art can become a catalyst to explore this dichotomous interlocking between people (referencing communities that are marginalized), the city (questioning the absurdities of urban planning and development) and basic resources (that are persistently denied).<sup>16</sup>

**16.** Mumbai became the ground for our enquiry – or, in Lefebvre's terms, our urban revolution – those problems affecting the life of as many people as possible. Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, Robert Bononno, trans, The University of Minnesota Press, 2003, p. 137.

Since its inception, ArtO2 curates and produces the contemporary art project [en]counters, born out of a need to investigate Mumbai's relational networks teetering between solidarity and despair. Artists are invited to examine the value of this relationship and to consider whether a creative intervention into its daily life could enable a re-envisioning of a city beyond repair.

## [en]counters

[en]counters is both a point of meeting and clash: two opposing elements which define Mumbai / Bombay's divided self and unique soul. Since 2010, [en]counters has grown into an annual exploration into the contrasts which populate Mumbai's life, between dream and desperation, excess and parsimony, democracy and anarchy.

The project functions as a metaphor: a temporary, unexpected meeting space, a sociable suspension, an equal ground where the work, the artist and the audience would collide.

From a controlled environment to an uncontrolled one, where the boundaries between producer and audience blur.

ArtO2 has been studying the effects of these artistic intrusions into the urban terrain, and their implications on both the public and on the work of art.<sup>17</sup> In order to achieve this, the work needed to be relocated from a controlled environment, to an uncontrolled one, where the boundaries between producer and audience blur and the meaning of the work gets layered, multifaceted. The context becomes a place, a space that is inhabited, worked-in, passed-by, used, lived.

This place urges the artist to redefine his or her role, to engage in a multi-tasking act of mediation, while the work becomes the result of a negotiation, sometimes a confrontation<sup>18</sup> among a variety of factors, shaping it in a unique way.

The results from these intrusions emerge as prototypes, becoming an integral part of the site, integrating into its social dynamics and forming part of its daily conflicts.<sup>19</sup>

Through a practice and research that begins in Mumbai and carries forward in other cities, ArtO2 tries to test the role of art; to experiment with its forms; to question the hierarchies between the artist and the public; to inverse the mode of production which allows for multiple skills, opinions, readings, outcomes and finally to bring to the surface the expanding properties of the work.<sup>20</sup>

**17.** When art is confronted with the everyday and the most ordinary, this is when creativity takes place, and art's autonomy ensured. Peter Bürger explains: "When the avant-gardistes demand that art become practical once again, they do not mean that the contents of works of art should be socially significant. The demand is not raised at the level of the contents of individual works. Rather, it directs itself to the way art functions in society, a process that does as much to determine the effect that works have as does the particular content." Bürger, "The Negation of the Autonomy of Art by the Avant-garde", in *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, Michael Shaw, trans, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, vol. 4, 1984, p. 49.

**18.** Chantal Mouffe refers to the public space as constituting 'the battleground where different hegemonic projects are confronted without any possibility of final reconciliation.' Chantal Mouffe, "Artistic Activism and Agonistic Spaces", vol 1, no 2, in *Art & Research: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods*, STUDIO 55, Centre for Research in Fine Art Practice, [bit.ly/1tTJlb](http://bit.ly/1tTJlb) 2007. Mouffe puts forward the agonistic approach in critical artistic practice in "Art and Democracy: Art as an Agonistic Intervention in Public Space", n° 14, in *Cahier on Art and the Public Domain: How Art and its Institutions Reinvent the Public Dimension*, NAI Publishers SKOR, 2008, p. 12 and 13.

**19.** In the introductory note to *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, Suzanne Lacy recounts Allan Kaprow's observations on how for artists "the dialogue moved from knowing more and more about what art was to wondering about what life was, the meaning of life." "Cultural Pilgrimages and Metaphoric Journeys", in *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, Ed. Suzanne Lacy, Bay Press, Seattle, Washington, 1995, p. 26.

**20.** [...] "art enters a realm of useful, ameliorative and ultimately modest gestures, rather than the creation of singular acts that leave behind them a troubling wake," Claire Bishop, "The social turn", in *Artificial Hells*, Verso, London, New York, 2012, p. 23.

## The testing field

This interdependent network between people, place and work of art, was evoked in *Seven Islands Temple* by Andrea Caretto and Raffaella Spagna. The work began as an ecological research into Mumbai's former archipelago and the flux of material forming its present panorama. Their research took them to various sites from where they retrieved seven objects – a basalt rock, palm leaf, soil, red mangrove, aluminium, plastic, concrete slab. Each became symbolic, representing seven islands. Taking the form of a performance sculpture, seven guardians were appointed as protectors. Their task was to bear the physical and functional weight of the object until holding it became impossible. The “islands” began to search for new carriers to share the weight of the objects as they merged/stretched/dispersed/disappeared into the crowds. The materials were touched, nurtured, smelt and worn as they were passed on from one collaborator to the next. The work opened a series of questions on the relations between man and nature, their contradictions and coexistence, witnessed through the confrontations between the performers and collaborators. Following this activation, the performer-guardians autonomously embellished the seven object islands. In a ritualistic procession, the materials were then returned to their natural habitat, their status now elevated as island temples.

The work was drawn from the city's geography and history, triggering – through the gesture of the transfer – memories of its original islands. It also brought into perspective the identities and subjectivities of its many collaborators, which meant that it did not belong to one place or interpretation but instead, acquired multiple meanings.

*Happy Journey* (2016) by South Korean artist Kyungwoo Chun pushed further the potential for a truly discursive, heterogeneous work. Chun placed a table-bench at a site of transit and while people waited for their trains, the artist invited them to rest. He began to ask commuters to share with him personal objects: a rabbit's foot for good karma, a child's toy chewed by his dog, an x-ray, a precious bangle from birth. He only posed one challenge: they had to think about his request, go where they were headed and then return with the selected object. The artist wanted people to consciously decide to be a part of the project. By sharing a piece of themselves with the artist, they were intentionally giving a part of their lives to the work.<sup>21</sup> Each object shared was labeled with the name of the person, the place from where it originated and the distance it had travelled to arrive at the site. The tagged objects placed on the sculpture emerged as an objectual archive of stories of workers and city-dwellers.

**21.** "Aesthetic experience eludes the sensible distribution of roles and competences which structures the hierarchical order", Jacques Rancière *Thinking Between Disciplines: An Aesthetics of Knowledge*, Jon Roffe, trans, Parrhesia, 1, 2006, p. 4. [bit.ly/2ynTzS3](http://bit.ly/2ynTzS3)

Time was an important factor in Chun's work: by being present at the site, speaking to people, listening to stories and the interrelations that emerged out of the work left both him and the “participants” with a connection, a relationship. In some cases, this turned into participation. In other instances, they were both left with the memory of their encounter.

The element of time is stretched even further in the work of Tushar Joag, whose community projects begin as tests from where his experiments depart. Joag begins with an initial idea whose end is determined by his co-makers. In New Delhi, at Humayun's Tomb,<sup>22</sup> *Peeling the Onion in the Nizamuddin Basti* (2016) presented people with a cartographic outline of their neighborhood, and involved them to identify areas with specific uses or destinations.<sup>23</sup> Spaces where pigeons were hunted were coded as sites for leisure; homes were marked as living quarters; areas where markets were held became shopping centers. Once these demarcations were made, Joag involved women working with local crafts to cut out the maps using the *sanjhi*, a 16<sup>th</sup> century folk

**22.** The tomb of Mughal Emperor Humayun was commissioned by his son Akbar in 1569-70. In 1993, it was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Restoration work began in 1999 by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) in collaboration with the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

**23.** Kristin Ross, “Translator's Introduction”, in Rancière's, *Jacques Rancière, The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, vii–xxiii, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1991, p. xi.

technique, altering the structural elements of the form, reversing it in a way that the maps appear peeled off. They were then separated into glass containers and placed layer above layer, forming a superimposed constellation, floating and joining into each other.

The mapping was facilitated by the artist, but performed and executed by the inhabitants of the place.<sup>24</sup> As more locations are being marked, new maps will emerge and add to the existing ones, the terrain expanded and potential endless.

<sup>24</sup>. Rancière's *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, 1987, is an account of 18<sup>th</sup> century pedagogue Joseph Jacotot whose findings revealed that his students were able to teach themselves a language they didn't know. *Ibid.*

In other works, the audience became reactionary as with Prajakta Potnis's *Tracing a Disappearance* (2012). In a mapping exercise, the artist wanted to draw the original boundaries of an existing lake that had shrunk to the size of a pond because of urban and human reclamation. Working with slum inhabitants residing by the lake, she began tracing the contours of the water body using chalk powder. When the chalk touched the ground, the 'line' became instantly political. Local slum dwellers started to worry, fearing that the artist was not engaged in a performance but was actually a civil engineer sent to evict them.

The form can sometimes be compromised in public intervention.

Potnis was unable to complete the artistic action, illustrating how the form can sometimes be compromised in public interventions. It also demonstrated how power structures begin to shift when the work of art intrudes into places that are already entangled in their own struggles.

## A "place" of reflection

These bizarre intrusions into the city's landscape act as points of intersection from where multiple relations can be established and multiple expressions are allowed to ferment. They evolve as a study of the local terrain in terms of random exchanges between humans seen through their cultural, social, political and economic co-existence. What connections emerge, what emotions are induced, form part of its ongoing inquiry.

With Andrea Caretto and Raffaella Spagna this is manifested as the seven temples are handed over from the guardians to their many helpers, triggering a process of sharing to lighten the heavy weight of the object islands. In the case of Tushar Joag, relations with the workers turns into one of trust to the point where they become map makers of their own locality. For Kyungwoo Chun, the mediation of the artist with various commuters at the station and his strange requests results in rejection or empathy, while also probing people to think about the implication of their involvement and/or rejection. In Prajakta Potnis's work, the performative action elicits feelings of disbelief and ultimately disapproval.

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## Can we change our future?

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The [en]counter, that brings people randomly together, becomes a “place” of reflection.<sup>25</sup> Its origins are imagined, unknown. Its story unfolds from the social networks that are activated. What is the value of these actions? Do they restore in us the importance of trust, sharing, belonging, acceptance, tolerance, failure in our daily lives? Will the ‘fleeting’ moment alter the way we live, the way we see ourselves and others, the way we relate to those around us? Will we learn new skills, will we deviate from our own paths? Can we change our future? When art infiltrates into the urban sphere and interferes, enhances, unsettles the imaginations of both collaborators and artist, is when we begin to encounter art’s true potential of innovation and resilience.

**25.** Citing Suzanne Lacy, Suzy Gablik writes: “Like a subjective anthropologist, [... the artist enters] the territory of the other, and... becomes a conduit for [their] experience.” Suzy Gablik, “Connective Aesthetics: Art After Individualism”, in *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, op. cit., p. 82.

[bit.ly/2t2B6ol](https://bit.ly/2t2B6ol)





*Seven Islands Temple*  
Andrea Caretto and Raffaella Spagna

[en]counters, Mumbai, 2016

© Binaifer Bharucha



*Seven Islands Temple*  
Andrea Caretto and Raffaella Spagna

[en]counters, Mumbai, 2016

© Binaifer Bharucha



*Happy Journey*  
Kyungwoo Chun

[en]counters, Mumbai, 2016

© Binaifer Bharucha





*Happy Journey*  
Kyungwoo Chun

[en]counters, Mumbai, 2016

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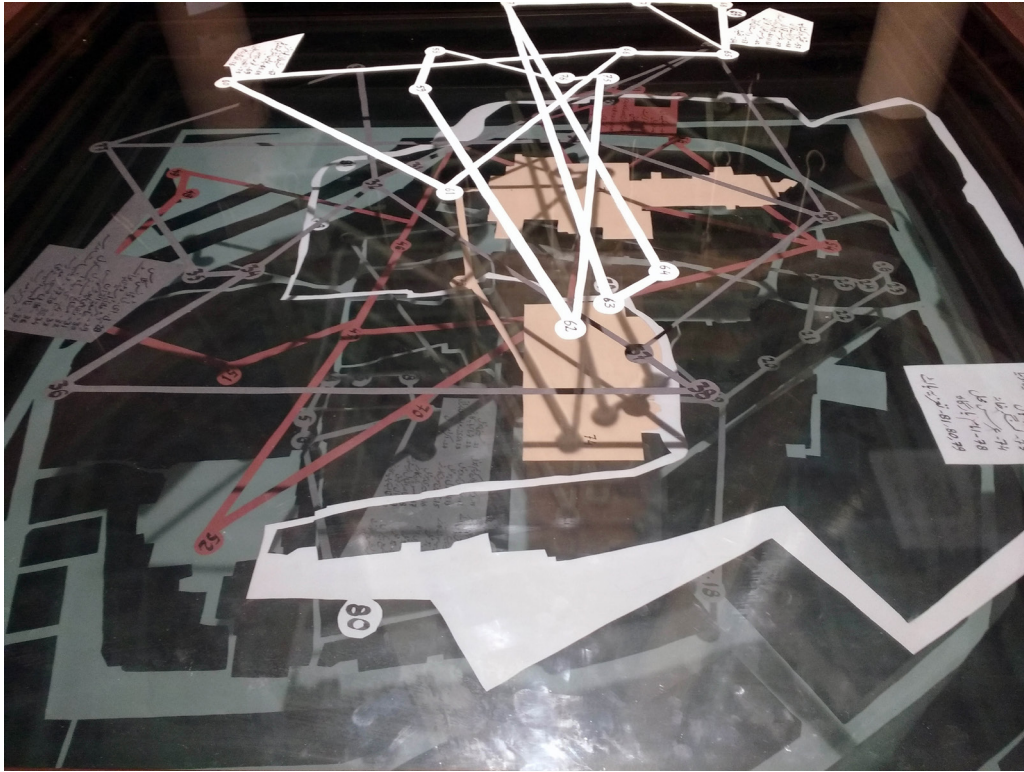


*Peeling the Onion in the Nizamuddin Basti*  
Tushar Joag

[en]counters, New Delhi, 2016

© Tushar Joag





*Peeling the Onion in the Nizamuddin Basti*  
Tushar Joag

[en]counters, New Delhi, 2016

© Tushar Joag



*Tracing a Disappearance*  
Prajakta Potnis

[en]counters, Mumbai, 2012

© Binaifer Bharucha



*Tracing a Disappearance*  
Prajakta Potnis

[en]counters, Mumbai, 2012

© Binaifer Bharucha



BIOGRAPHY  
Leandre D'Souza



Leandre D'Souza holds a Master in Arts Criticism from City University (London). She runs ArtOxygen (ArtO2) in Mumbai since 2009, aimed at curating and producing art projects in public, open spaces. Since 2010, she organizes [en]counters, a festival dealing with issues affecting the everyday life of Mumbai. She was invited to curate the participation of Indian and international artists at the biennial Haein Art Project in South Korea in 2013, and also curates independently, the *Sensorium* Art Festival for Sunaparanta Goa Centre for the Arts, among others. In 2014, she received an award for Culture and Change bestowed by the Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development.

[bit.ly/2t2B6ol](https://bit.ly/2t2B6ol)

Photo: RR

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

**A Night with hello!earth**  
**Collectively Dreaming to Create**  
 Carlos Sánchez

The Danish performance collective hello!earth is proposing something as simple as it is revolutionary: to dream together, collectively, with a desire to imagine other forms of society based on interdependence and community power, in an uncertain territory known as post-capitalism, or more aptly *postnow*.

The Australian aboriginal worldview maintains that *The dream space is the space of creation, the space of life. Here things are created and decided. The material form is only the consequence of the dream space, and we consider that dead material.* Beginning with this premise, hello!earth, specialized in creating *participatory cross-disciplinary art works with (a) relational approach, where the presence of the audience is the co-creating and central element,* invites us to dream in *The Night, visioning a postcapitalist society while we sleep.* The experience entails spending a night in a suitable place with some thirty persons who do not necessarily know each other.

Since 2015, with the help of artists, curators and interested people, the collective has been researching through a series of meetings, residences, and open laboratories held in Denmark, Finland, and Barcelona. This intense prospecting process has resulted in the crafting of a collective creation and vision space, a testing ground to be inhabited, in which the potential for dream practice and creating new communities are core elements. The proposal for this 12-hour participatory performance is at once radical and risky, for it seeks to make a situation—as fragile and ephemeral as spending a night together with strangers—serve as a catalyst and a trigger to generate more in-depth discussion and to rethink relationships based on the economy of encounter and exchange.

*The Night* is a symbolic journey, an initiation ritual into our collective dream and an open invitation to imagine other paths. Body and mind are prepared through multiple exercises, actions, and activities developed individually, as a couple, and collectively. Each participant follows an itinerary, reserves dream services during the night (transformed into a shepherd who cares for other sleepers, living through intergalactic encounters, walking or dancing a choreography outdoors...) or simply tries to sleep and dream like on any other night.

Ultimately, what bearing does this have with a concept as complex as post-capitalism? While the experience serves as a potent slogan to lure like-minded dreamers, perhaps it would be better to speak of *post-now*, something beyond this now, a now laden with dystopian overtones. Rather than criticizing capitalism or perpetuating its legacy by invoking it, this nocturnal experience connects with a generalized longing and feeling that attracts and impels us toward something still unknown. Inhabiting the night, opening up and letting ourselves go, as occurs in a dream state, but this time, collectively. This immaterial space is welcoming for soul and spirit, at a remove from the rationale of profit and productivity. A space for new ideas and fresh musings. Dream sweet dreams.



## A Dream of Shelter in which to take Refuge

*The author's dreams and experiences during the night of June 5 to 6, 2018 at the DNA Festival of Contemporary Dance in Navarre.*

Night falls under a waning moon. The old citadel gates in the historic city of Pamplona-Iruña are closed. We are inside. About thirty people, mostly strangers to one another, with a sleeping bag and a toothbrush, we enter a large white refuge. The park is closed off to nocturnal walkers. But tonight, we will traverse that injunction, and dream, collectively. The most revolutionary ideas are usually also the simplest.

Night envelops us. We are liquid identities, unknown to one another, eager with a common goal: to surrender to dreams, to embrace during the REM phase.<sup>26</sup>

We follow instructions, we practice, we execute some exercises, we search for our animal... Invariably, chance is a law impelled by causality. We walk in darkness, we project ourselves into a utopian future from the dystopia of the big city. We return to savour a light soup, huddled around a pale flame in a shelter at once as ephemeral and imperfect as cozy.

<sup>26</sup>. Also known as paradoxical sleep.

We prepare to detach ourselves, to collapse into sleep. We reserve dream services, individual and collective surprises, to be activated during the night. Starry darkness spies upon us. The cold keeps us alert but dreams overcomes us, yawns overwhelms us, and finally wakefulness defies us after we've spread ourselves about, to run around the bonfire, to release ballast, to lighten up.

In search of the dream's interstices, we yearn to be dragged by a vortex of purifying energy to imagine an unknown and perhaps fragile post-capitalist society; it could be a green nation, an equitable community with Ubuntu, an antipodean forest that regenerates following each dew bath. Trapped, we run, we dance a choreography, we open our skulls, we are born and we die (without pain), we undergo interstellar encounters... until the light of dawn and the sound shakes us, swaying us gently.

Our small communities feel robust in their fragility, anchored in concentric circles. We look for openings to expand relationships, the commons, we long to entangle ourselves. In the words of Josep Maria Esquirol, we encounter nihilism in the search for the nexus in the border areas.

Breakfast advances between words that reflect on the voyage. Something difficult to articulate and express. We stretch and touch, without embracing each other, without listening to everybody's voices. The group fragments, inexorably. A forced farewell, inevitably. We live a shared personal experience, an experience to expand our objectives and provide feedback in time and space. *Milesker*, thanks.<sup>27</sup>

[bit.ly/2LNZ5yO](https://bit.ly/2LNZ5yO)

[bit.ly/2MKo0oh](https://bit.ly/2MKo0oh)

<sup>27</sup>. *A light Bibliography, a nocturnal Bibliography* – These words that came to me can be traced to *La resistencia íntima. Ensayo de una filosofía de la proximidad* (Josep Maria Esquirol); in *Walkscapes: El andar como práctica estética* (Francesco Careri); in *El africano de Groenlandia* (Tété-Michel Kpomassie); in separate interviews with the philosopher Jürgen Habermas (*El País Semanal*, 06/05/2018) and with Qing Li, immunologist and director of the Japanese Society of Forestry Medicine (*La Vanguardia*, 05/05/2018); and in the hello!earth's digital tablets, fed by all fellow companions of travel and sleep.



*The Night, visioning a postcapitalist society while we sleep*  
hello!earth

DNA Festival, Pamplona, 2018

Exploration n°9: being compost / recycling

© Christoffer Brekne



*The Night, visioning a postcapitalist society while we sleep*  
hello!earth

DNA Festival, Pamplona, 2018

Rehearsal for sleeping and dreaming: the geological sandwich

© Txisti



*The Night, visioning a postcapitalist society while we sleep*  
hello!earth

DNA Festival, Pamplona, 2018

Night time ritual

© Christoffer Brekne





*The Night, visioning a postcapitalist society while we sleep*  
hello!earth

DNA Festival, Pamplona, 2018

Sleeping and dreaming

© Christoffer Brekne





*The Night, visioning a postcapitalist society while we sleep*  
hello!earth

DNA Festival, Pamplona, 2018

Sleeping and dreaming together

© Christoffer Brekne



*The Night, visioning a postcapitalist society while we sleep*  
hello!earth

DNA Festival, Pamplona, 2018

Morning conversations

© Christoffer Brekne



*The Night, visioning a postcapitalist society while we sleep*  
hello!earth

DNA Festival, Pamplona, 2018

Vegetable cutting for the people of the next overnight stay

© Christoffer Brekne

*The Night. On Letting go... together*  
After *The Night...* by hello!earth  
DNA Festival, Pamplona, 2018

Video 5' 06'

© Marlon Barrios Solano



Watch the video here: [bit.ly/2lnG3UV](https://bit.ly/2lnG3UV)



BIOGRAPHY  
Carlos Sánchez



Carlos Sánchez has worked most of his life in the cultural sector, in fields related to musical production, public libraries management, and cultural management in the framework of development cooperation, for AECID Honduras. He has also been in charge of cultural medias. Passionate with culture and more particularly with projects that have a positive impact through citizens participation, he currently works within the cross-border cultural creation and production factory Bitamine Faktoria, in the Basque Country. He is a co-founder of *Ezmugak*, an NGO for the development of cultural projects linked to the territory.

[bit.ly/2LVNQVq](https://bit.ly/2LVNQVq)

Photo: ©Patricia Gómez Rojo (Bitamine Faktoria)



## NEIGHBOURHOOD

**Public Space is Never Empty...****Chişinău's Urban Activism**

Vitalie Sprînceană

One sunny spring day in April 2018, a group of predominantly young people entered a fenced-off green area in front of the National Palace of Culture in the centre of the Moldovan capital Chişinău. The area was called “the House of Santa Claus” and, as its name suggests, contained a small wooden building assembled in December as a decoration for the annual Christmas Market. The market itself finished in January, but the wooden house and the surrounding fence remained. The authorities stated that the fence was installed in order to protect “Santa’s House” from vandals and that it would remain in place until the next Christmas Market. The fact is that this small island of green, situated between the National Palace of Culture and the National Library of Moldova, was the only public green space in the city centre. And, now it was to remain off-bounds for public access.

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Public spaces in Chişinău are disappearing as a consequence of privatization, appropriation, commercialization, and securitization.

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The goal of that small group that entered the fenced-off area was to organize a picnic and to make visible to the general public, through their gesture, that public spaces in Chişinău are disappearing as a consequence of privatization, appropriation, commercialization, and securitization. Not far away from this green area is another green space – in front of government buildings, but it is guarded by police and under surveillance. The tendency to privatize has accelerated in recent years, due to a combination of austerity, the pro-business attitude of local authorities and lax implementation of laws and regulations regarding public spaces, protection of heritage, participation of citizens in the decision-making process becoming the mantras of local governance... “Santa’s House” and its surrounding fence installed illegally during the Christmas Market, and the act of “refusing” to leave the public space long after the Market itself had closed, were by far the most visible and the most “friendly” symptoms of this tendency.

All was well with the picnic until such time as the National Palace of Culture guards appeared. They asked the activists to leave but when informed that the area is a public space, they threatened to call the police. The activists then decided to stay put, regardless of what it would take. A bit later, the police arrived and asked the activists to leave. The activists, in turn, demanded written confirmation that the space is not public, that the fence had been legally erected, and that “Santa’s House” was put there following legal norms. At this point the police started to enquire of the National Palace of Culture guards about their claims regarding the picnic’s illegality. Caught unprepared, the guards called the Palace administration which, in turn, couldn’t provide any justification for such claims... What a bizarre turn of events: the police were present but they didn’t know what to do, and the Palace administration who had called in the police was now forced to justify their accusations...

In the end, the administration of the National Palace of Culture “surrendered.” It transpired that they had no right to install the fence; thus, they had to remove it; they had no right to forbid people from entering the green area; and, they had no right to install any construction in public space without following proper procedures (public consultations, etc.). Within two weeks, the fence had been removed and Santa’s House was gone, too. The

area became a local attraction with some city residents enjoying lunch on the grass, whilst others relaxed in their comfortable hammocks.

## Trying to Create New Public Spaces

This success story inspired some activists to look for other public spaces that “have to be liberated,” as one of them put it. The obvious choice was another site that had hosted the ice-skating facility during the Christmas Market. The site had been covered in sand in order to bury pipes and cables at the ice-skating facility. Hence, after the ice-skating season, a “natural” beach emerged. In the beginning of May, activists organized a small “beach party” to make clearly visible and audible that this space could become another interesting spot in Chişinău...

Stories like these, albeit not too frequent, suggest that Chişinău's activist community's approach has shifted from merely defending the notion of space that is a common good under threat of being appropriated/commercialized to actively trying to create new public spaces in the city. And, they have diversified their tactics as well. Previously, a similar action would have seen banners, megaphones, and slogans, but many citizens would consider such instruments too “radical”; hence, activists started to use performances such as satire or peaceful sit-ins to further their cause.

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Every small parcel of public space is seen by entrepreneurs as a potential spot that could yield profits.

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It is a laborious and complicated process. Pressure from the business lobby is enormous — every small parcel of public space (squares, parks, green areas, sidewalks) — is seen by big and small entrepreneurs alike as a potential spot that could yield profits. And yet, the local authorities, which in theory should be responsible for protecting the public's interests, are all-too-often prone to fulfil the wishes of business groups rather than go against them. Moreover, the community of local urban activists is too small, too disorganized, and lacking resources for long-term organization and action. Activists also have to fight on many (too many!) fronts: participation, inclusion, transparency... While activists are fighting for one public space, several other public spaces are meanwhile being lost to illegal construction, privatization, or commercialization. To cite an example: while activists were busy removing that fence in the city centre, two substantial discussions were taking place at City Hall, concerning plans for constructing two huge buildings in the Central Public Garden: a hotel in one corner and an annex to the Metropolitan Cathedral in another.

Despite such a complicated context, various groups are attempting to change things on the ground and to influence the local public urban agenda. Early in 2018, an eclectic group of activists, comprising architects, sociologists, anthropologists, artists, and ecologists, organized under the umbrella of the Centre for Urbanism came up with the initiative to transform Strada Veronica Micle, a quiet city centre street, into a pedestrian zone. The activists intend to energize Strada Veronica Micle during the summer, by transforming it into a place that will host a summer school in participatory urbanism, a public open-air university, a stage for discussions, plays, and music, as well as a space that would host exhibitions and other cultural events.

## Fresh Narratives

The initiative addresses, on a general level, the issue of Chişinău's poor pedestrian infrastructure. Moreover, it attempts to propose a new format for urban policy making — a template for building public spaces in a participatory way: the whole idea was to try various sorts of arrangements, to test various pieces of urban furniture, to engage passers-by in this area and the public in general in a process of dialogue. Unquestionably, this is a way to show that these things are missing in the official policy-making process in the city.

Local activists who talk about the commons have difficulties in explaining to citizens that open free public spaces are crucial .

Discussion about public spaces is still, in a way, incipient in Moldova in general and in Chişinău in particular. Local activists who talk about the commons, i.e. common public spaces or resources, have difficulties in explaining to citizens that open free public spaces are crucial for interaction, democratic participation, socialization, recreation, and entertainment. The prevailing neoliberal spirit of our times — the hegemony of discourses about the priority of private property over public property, on the one hand, and of the state as a poor manager if compared to the private sector, on the other, doesn't help much to advance the cause of the commons. Partially in order to address this challenge, artists and activists organizations are attempting to organize actions and events that will not only provide concrete examples of urban transformation and democratization of public spaces, but that will also challenge some of the narratives that shape discourse and practices around public space.

Oberliht is one such organization that works around the idea of art as a tool for social change. In May 2018, they conducted the third edition of "Public Space Days", [bit.ly/2t4MSyS](https://bit.ly/2t4MSyS) a series of events whose objective was to create a platform for discussion and action concerning the opening up, democratization, and protection of urban public spaces. The first two editions were dedicated to the right to the city, and to the city as a common good. The 2018 edition focused on "culture as a common good" and attempted to draw attention to the disappearing public cultural infrastructure in the city. Apart from that, Oberliht has been busy during the last three-four years in creating a network of public multi-functional cultural spaces: the Open Flat, Zpatiu, the stage in Zaikin's Park. Additionally, the organization has helped and inspired other initiatives to inaugurate such spaces in other parts of the city. The Buiucani Cinema, an open-air cinema in the Buiucani District is one such example. The photographs and the video that follow show some of Oberliht's actions and projects.

These efforts received a huge boost last year, after the authorities started to implement, following a long period of hesitation, participatory budgeting in Chişinău. This opened up a whole new direction for action and activism: initiative groups started to promote projects that would transform public spaces that would include citizens in the decision-making process. Both Oberliht and the Centre for Urbanism have written projects for participatory budgeting involving transforming Strada Veronica Micle and the square around the Open Flat into accessible, democratic and open spaces. For activists and artists alike, this is a way of integrating the fight for communal spaces into the administrative process.

[bit.ly/2K1Jij2](https://bit.ly/2K1Jij2)



*Demolition*

International screening program

Abandoned pool in front of the Chekhov Theatre, Chişinău, 2012  
Chişinău Civic Center / open air cinema / KIOSK AIR (artist in residency program)

With the help of architecture and art collectives, the abandoned pool in front of Chekhov Theatre in Chişinău was cleaned and reconditioned to host an international screening program dedicated to the topic of demolition. The screening was organized in front of the former Dedeman hotel (today Radisson Blue Leograd Hotel), whose owners have illegally demolished the building of the first post office in Chişinău in order to built a congress center.

© Oberliht

[bit.ly/2K8sNSa](https://bit.ly/2K8sNSa)



*Extension of the Flat Space (The Annex)*  
Stefan Rusu [MD]

Bucuresti str., Chişinău, 2012

The Flat Space got an extension for accommodating the audience that would come to attend the open air screenings.

Chişinău Civic Center / open air cinema / KIOSK AIR (artist in residency program)

With interventions by the collectives 3\*2\*1\*0 [CZ], studioBASAR [RO], Urban Reactor [GE], Oberliht Association [MD]

© Vladimir Us





*If you don't need it*  
Michal Moravcik [SK] and Jana Kapelov [SK]

Chişinău, 2013

Chişinău Civic Center / Beyond the red lines / KIOSK AIR (artist in residency program)  
A site-specific installation produced from chairs collected from inhabitants living along the red lines of the project of Cantemir Boulevard in Chişinău.

© Vladimir Us

[bit.ly/2lf2SmG](https://bit.ly/2lf2SmG)

[bit.ly/2yy3Cns](https://bit.ly/2yy3Cns)



*Defensive Fruit Tree*  
Angela Candu [MD]

*Video surveillance sign*

Serhiy Popov [UA]  
Zaikin Park, Chişinău, 2014

Chişinău Civic Center, Zaikin Park— people's park / KIOSK AIR (artist in residency program)  
A site-specific installation produced to hinder the entrance of the car drivers in the park area. A (fake) sign of surveillance camera installed to secure the Park area during the nights.

© Peter Varga





*The Stage by the road*

Zaikin Park, Chişinău, 2016

By participants in the Architecture, Installations and Landscape Architecture International Summer School

Oberliht Association [MD], Archilitic Association [MD], MIEZ Architecture Lab [MD], studioBASAR [RO],  
Straddle3 and WWB [ES], Pixel 13 [FR]  
Chişinău Civic Center, Zaikin Park – people's park / SIVAIP / KIOSK AIR (artist in residency program)

The Summer School was organized as part of Zaikin Park – people's park, a project of rehabilitation and revitalization of Zaikin Park, [bit.ly/2llw6Y6](https://bit.ly/2llw6Y6) a semi-abandoned green space situated at the intersection of Sf. Andrei and Iv. Zaikin in Chişinău started in 2013 by Oberliht Association.

© Vladimir Us

[bit.ly/2thGiVP](https://bit.ly/2thGiVP)

[bit.ly/2JYtv50](https://bit.ly/2JYtv50)



*Public Façades*

Botanica district, Chişinău, 2017

By participants in the workshop of mobile platform design lead by Stefan Rusu [MD]

Oberliht Association [MD], MIEZ Architecture Lab [MD], Bike Time [MD], Atelier Vast [RO], MeetLab [HU]  
Public Façades / Art Prospect / KIOSK AIR (artist in residency program)

The series of actions and events organized in June 2017 as part of the Public Façades project attempt to contribute to the development of Chişinău residential areas through cultural innovation and creativity. By initiating various artistic experiments we aim to consolidate the local communities, encouraging interaction among different groups within the district and stimulate social cohesion.

© Vladimir Us

[bit.ly/2yv1ZH7](https://bit.ly/2yv1ZH7)

*Putere Floridor*  
*[Power to Flowers]*  
Jarek Sedlak [CZ]  
Chişinău, 2011

Shaping the New / KIOSK AIR (artist in residency program)  
Artistic intervention on the square next to the Flat Space, that raised publicly the issue of the illegal occupation of the square by private car owners.

Video 5' 07"

© Jarek Sedlak and Vladimir Us

[bit.ly/2yImOPr](https://bit.ly/2yImOPr)



Watch the video here: [bit.ly/2yL3uBg](https://bit.ly/2yL3uBg)



BIOGRAPHY  
Vitalie Sprînceană



Vitalie Sprînceană is a sociologist, blogger, journalist and urban activist based in Chişinău, Moldova. He is also a co-editor of Platzforma, [bit.ly/2tf9NGZ](https://bit.ly/2tf9NGZ) a web platform for social, economic and political critique. He is interested in, and argues for inclusive democratic public spaces, social justice, free knowledge, plurality of worldviews and practices.

Photo: RR

**Klaxon**  
**(when art lives in town)**

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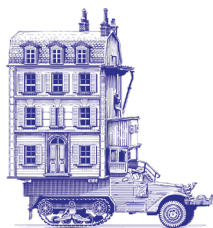
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More to come soon.

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