

¿Creative Villages?



SOMMAIRE

› Introduction: quelques réflexions sur la notion de “projet”

Benoît Antille

› Introduction: Some thoughts on the notion of the “project”

Benoît Antille

› SEMINAR:

The territory of Leytron/Ovronnaz as a topographical metaphor to address contemporary dynamics of art in the public sphere

8

Leytron – “Bottom-up” position

› *Where are the dogs?*

Robert Ireland

› *Post-visit thoughts*

Eva Fotiadi

› *Excuse me, who is playing?*

Tine Melzer

› *Swimming in a bubble bath*

Giny Vos

› **Synthesis of the Session**

Javier González Pesce

› **Collected questions**

Montagnon – Alternative position

› *Sliding along – Some reflections on situated discourse*

Jeroen Boomgaard

› *¿Creative Villages?*

Symposium Ovronnaz (CH)

Nils van Beek

› *¿Creative Villages? or The Word often Heard by Non-Speakers*

Ronny Hardliz

› *Room 409 or Recomplexifying the pattern*

Eric Philippoz

› *Instability as resource*

Curdin Tones

› *Letter to ¿Creative Villages?*

Valentina Vetturi

› **Synthesis of the Session**

Alexandros Kyriakatos

Ovronnaz – “top down” position

› *The Work of Labour of Art*

John Byrne

› *Notes qui suivent le séminaire ¿Creative Villages? et deux semaines de résidence à Ovronnaz dont l’objectif était de penser une intervention artistique*

Suzanne Husky

› *Letter to ¿Creative Villages?*

Hans van Houwelingen

› *A Utopian Fantasy*

Olivia Leahy

› *Insecurities and theoretical backups*

Rachel Mader

› *Ovronnaz – Leytron*

François Dey

› *Positionnement d’un artiste qui ne crée pas*

Juozas Laivys

› *Positioning of an artist who does not create*

Juozas Laivys

› *Un art au service de l’économie?*

› *À ¿Creative Villages? à Leytron, le débat est ouvert.*

Aude Devanthery

› Programme

› Biographies

› Impressum

INTRODUCTION: QUELQUES RÉFLEXIONS SUR LA NOTION DE «PROJET»

BENOÎT ANTILLE

«Enraciné de manière indélébile dans l'essence même du terme <projet> [...] la projection temporelle dans un pas-encore-réalisé et un futur ouvert à tous les possibles est une caractéristique indispensable de toute chose considérée ou désignée comme <projet> [...]. Un <art> du projet devrait impliquer l'engagement d'un processus qui non seulement prend du temps, mais offre des manières créatives d'utiliser, expérimenter avec et de se réapproprier le temps [...].» (Gratton and Sheringham, The Art of the Project)

*«C'est pas possible de faire un truc bien; par contre, c'est possible d'imaginer qu'on pourrait peut-être faire un truc bien mais que ça va peut-être pas marcher. Donc, en fait, ce qui fait sens pour moi dans la vie, c'est plus d'avoir des projets que de réaliser réellement quelque chose, parce que toute réalisation réelle est vouée à l'échec, donc la seule solution qu'on a, c'est de multiplier des projets.» (Pierrick Sorin, interviewé à Leytron par Basile Seppey pour *Creative Villages?*, 16.5.2016)*

En février 2014, le Centre Pompidou et le Centre culturel suisse à Paris organisèrent une table ronde sur l'«Expérience Furkart», à laquelle l'institution française consacrait une petite exposition. Lancée en 1983 par le galeriste neuchâtelois Marc Hostettler, en proche collaboration avec l'artiste américain James Lee Bayer, Furkart prit place jusqu'en 1999 à l'Hôtel Furkablick et ses environs, au col de la Furka, en Valais. Durant seize années, ce site culminant à 2436 mètres et accessible seulement durant quatre mois durant l'été, servit de résidence à une avant-garde d'artistes (comme Marina Abramović & Ulay, Daniel Buren, Terry Fox, Jenny Holzer, Richard Long, Lawrence Weiner, Panamarenko et Rémy Zaugg) qui bénéficièrent de conditions uniques pour se rencontrer et travailler.

Etant donné que Bernard Blistène, directeur au centre Pompidou, décida de conclure cette table ronde sur un ton nostalgique en avançant qu'un tel projet appartenait à une autre époque, on pourrait se demander ce qu'il y a de si anachronique avec Furkart. Cela pourrait être le fait que quelques artistes parmi les plus importants du moment aient été prêts à entreprendre un long voyage pour passer du temps ensemble, dans un endroit reculé au milieu des Alpes, simplement pour partager une expérience et, éventuellement, créer une nouvelle œuvre, sans aucune pression ou attente de l'organisateur. Cela pourrait aussi être le fait que ce projet soit passé en dessous du radar du grand public, en partie par la volonté d'Hostettler qui semble avoir délibérément minimisé l'aspect communicationnel. *In fine*, quoi que Bernard Blistène ait vraiment voulu exprimer à ce moment-là, de tels partis pris font rétrospectivement de Furkart un projet radical, à une époque où la culture semble être dominée par les notions de «visibilité», «accessibilité» et «retour sur investissement».

L'actuelle économie de service n'utilise plus simplement notre force de travail, elle tire aussi bénéfice de notre capacité à innover, élaborer des idées, nous engager pour quelque chose, faire preuve d'initiative, proposer une vision pour le futur, autrement dit, notre propension à développer et réaliser des projets. Opposé au travail opérationnel (qui est basé sur une organisation stable, des compétences spécifiques, un travail répétitif et des résultats prévisibles), le projet est caractérisé par sa grande flexibilité, son aptitude à gérer l'imprévisible et sa capacité de créer des connections entre domaines de compétence ou individus. Mais, pour les raisons mêmes qui en font un processus véritablement créatif, le projet représente aussi un outil de management redoutablement efficace dans la réalisation d'objectifs ponctuels. On ne devrait donc pas s'étonner de voir proliférer, dans la «cité par projets» de Luc Boltanski et Eve Chiapello – qui représente pour les deux sociologues le tournant managérial du Capitalisme tarif – des projets de toutes sortes, aussi bien dans des domaines professionnels (scientifique, économique, politique ou culturel) que dans la sphère privée. À en croire le philosophe Boris Groys, le projet serait même devenu «une pré-occupation contemporaine majeure».

Questionné avec un regard critique par l'artiste Andrea Fraser dès le début des années 1990, ce phénomène a été identifié comme «économie de projet» dans le champ artistique; économie qui consiste principalement à mandater des artistes et curateurs pour réaliser des projets spécifiques, répondant à certaines attentes, qui sont bien souvent d'ordre économiques ou communicationnelles. Or, si d'un côté, ce retour en force de la commande artistique accroît de manière significative les opportunités professionnelles quantitativement – il suffit pour s'en rendre compte de considérer le nombre d'appels à projet publiés chaque jour sur Internet – d'un autre côté, un tel tournant managérial du champ culturel pose la question de la pertinence des projets réalisés. Il y a en effet des différences fondamentales entre la logique d'un projet artistique et celle du management par projet.

Une de ces différences est temporelle. Le management par projet implique des deadlines, qui peuvent s'avérer antagonistes avec la temporalité nécessaire à l'élaboration d'un projet artistique pertinent. En effet, si la projection dans le temps peut être sur du (très) long terme pour des artistes, la «vision du futur» de l'économie de projet est bien souvent à court terme. La plupart du temps, les artistes doivent produire sur des périodes qui peuvent s'avérer contreproductives et limitatives.

Une autre différence tient dans la finalité du projet. Fondamentalement managériale, l'économie de projet peut s'apparenter à du «problem-solving», en recherche de solutions concrètes ici et maintenant. Les pro-



jets sont financés pour remplir des objectifs – affichés ou non – qui sont souvent inspirés des concepts de l'économie créative, tels que gentrifier un quartier urbain, accroître le taux de fréquentation d'une institution, booster l'attractivité d'une localité périphérique ou favoriser l'inclusion sociale. Le projet artistique, au contraire, a une finalité intrinsèque qui pourrait aussi bien être l'échec. Un de ses aspects les plus intéressants n'est pas de produire un *résultat*, mais de maintenir le processus créatif actif et tendu, dût son achèvement être perpétuellement différé... réalisant ainsi le vieux rêve des avant-gardes de fonder l'art dans la vie.



Inspiré par des projets comme Furkart ou l'*U.F.O. Gallery Ganek* de l'artiste slovaque Július Koller (une galerie fictive perchée dans les Hautes Tatras qui sera présentée à Leytron du 30 septembre au 18 décembre 2016), *¿Creative Villages?* souhaite préparer le terrain pour des projets à venir qui feront du sens. Ce programme veut ménager un espace aussi libre de déterminations que possible, encourageant des rencontres fructueuses et des questionnements critiques;

son but est de créer et activer des réseaux de personnes partageant les mêmes doutes et des visions similaires de ce que l'art devrait être ou faire aujourd'hui. *¿Creative Villages?* se concentre plus sur les questions que sur des solutions toutes faites. À cheval entre la recherche et la pratique curatoriale, ce projet représente l'opportunité de confronter des idées théoriques aux réalités d'un contexte comme Leytron/Ovronnaz. Tout au long de la phase pilote, le but de *¿Creative Villages?* est d'accumuler des expériences, de construire un savoir et d'expérimenter des projets de manière à proposer à la Commune des propositions pertinentes, à la fin d'avril 2017.

Dans cet esprit, *¿Creative Villages?* organisa, en collaboration avec le LAPS (Research Institute for Art and Public Space à Amsterdam), un séminaire intitulé «The territory of Leytron/Ovronnaz as a topographical metaphor to address contemporary dynamics of art in public sphere» (Le territoire de Leytron/Ovronnaz comme métaphore pour questionner les dynamiques en jeu dans le domaine de l'art dans la sphère publique), auquel l'essentiel de la présente publication est consacré. Comme ce séminaire avait notamment pour but de questionner des notions comme l'instrumentalisation de l'art ou les dynamiques «top-down» au sein de l'économie de projet, Jeroen Boomgaard, du LAPS, proposa de diviser le groupe d'artistes, curateurs et chercheurs en trois sous-groupes durant un jour, chacun d'entre eux étant chargé d'explorer une position symboliquement liée à la topographie de la Commune.

Basé en plaine, à Leytron, le groupe en charge d'explorer des dynamiques bottom-up décida de faire table rase, aboutissant ainsi à une série de questions interrogeant aussi bien l'art dans la sphère publique que le contexte local ou la présence d'un projet tel que *¿Creative Villages?* à Leytron. Comme Robert Ireland l'explique: «Lors du groupe de travail «Bottom-up» et des questionnements du groupe de travail sur l'opportunité d'intégrer le modèle «site-specific» au village de Leytron, nous avons tout d'abord procédé à une déconstruction de l'heuristique «art» versus «espace public», en nous mettant dans une approche interrogeant l'origine ainsi que le

sens commun de toutes les notions évoquées. Partant de l'abstrait: Qu'est-ce qu'un public? Quel est l'enjeu dans ce lieu? Quel est l'enjeu de l'art? Qu'attendez-vous de l'art? etc. – nous sommes ensuite revenus au concret, sur le terrain, avec une promenade dans le village pour l'éprouver, l'interroger, le saisir: Qu'attendez-vous de nous? Qu'est-ce qui fait que je me comporte différemment? Pourquoi voulez-vous de l'art si ça vous est égal?»

Comme le décrit Jeroen Boomgaard, le groupe installé à Montagnon pour imaginer des positions alternatives proposa de «laisser le lieu décider, plutôt que de décider pour le lieu et d'essayer de changer la situation». Il s'agit, autrement dit, de «situer le discours» dans les réalités d'un tel contexte, un hameau presque abandonné, situé sur une zone exposée aux glissements de terrain. «Des artistes pourraient résider dans ce lieu pour un moment. Non pas pour former une communauté, mais pour vivre au sein de la communauté avec les habitants.» Pour Nils Van Beek, cette résidence d'artistes d'un autre genre «pourrait se focaliser sur l'idée de non-rentabilité, sur la possibilité de l'échec et sur une approche non nostalgique de la signification de la *disparition* comme concept: la disparition partielle de paradigmes, de la connaissance, d'habitudes, de la culture face à la globalisation, aussi bien que la disparition et la vanité de l'humanité en général» (faisant ainsi écho à l'exposition «Paix, amitié, limites et règlements – tout ceci se trouvait d'habitude à l'extérieur» des artistes Ricardo Rivera (USA) et Chris Daubert (USA) dans le cadre de *¿Creative Villages?*).



Installé au cœur de la station de ski d'Ovronnaz, le groupe chargé des dynamiques top-down s'est principalement focalisé sur deux discussions d'ordre systémique: **1.** Si, selon John Byrne, il n'y a plus aucune possibilité d'opérer à l'extérieur de l'univers de la marchandisation et si la collaboration est maintenant une donnée incontournable de structures en réseau comme le management par projet (qui sont horizontales plutôt qu'hierarchiques), alors la notion d'instrumentalisation héritée de la critique institutionnelle de l'art n'est plus pertinente. S'accordant sur le fait qu'une telle vision serait aussi limitative que victimisante, le groupe de travail trouve beaucoup plus productif de chercher des manières d'opérer de l'intérieur du processus collaboratif et de tourner la situation à son avantage. **2.** Dans le même ordre d'idées, John Byrne suggéra de «recomplexifier» le discours: qu'il s'agisse de remettre en question la conception même de ce qu'est ou devrait faire une œuvre d'art – pour Byrne – ou dans notre manière de gérer des dichotomies comme l'approche théorique d'un côté et les réalités d'une pratique de terrain de l'autre – pour Rachel Mader.

Ensemble, ces trois groupes qui se sont retrouvés pour une session plénière le deuxième jour, ont profondément questionné des notions comme l'art public et les pratiques site-specific, aussi bien que les modalités de travail actuelles dans le domaine artistique. Les participants ont interrogé frontalement la raison d'être d'un projet artistique, le rôle de l'art au sein d'une économie de projet et dans un contexte rural («Sois comme l'eau et sois capable de prendre la forme idéale», suggère Valentina Vetturi), ainsi que les notions de public ou de contexte. Le style du séminaire, qui était à la fois ouvert et convivial, permit de mener des discussions franches, sans simplifications et langue de bois.

Tout au long de son programme, dont le deuxième semestre est présenté à la fin de ce journal, *¿Creative Villages?* s'efforcera de promouvoir et partager de tels questionnements...

INTRODUCTION: SOME THOUGHTS ON THE NOTION OF THE “PROJECT”

BENOÎT ANTILLE

“Rooted in the etymological indelible make-up of the term ‘project’ [...] temporal projection into an as yet unrealized and open future, marks an indispensable characteristic of anything regarded or designated as a ‘project’ [...] An ‘art’ of the project might suggest engagement in a process that not only takes time but offers creative ways of using, experiencing, structuring and reappropriating time, and of exploring the effects of time as change and durée [duration].” (Gratton and Sheringham, The Art of the Project)

“It’s not possible to do something good; on the contrary, it is possible to imagine that one might do something good, but that it is not going to work. Thus, what makes sense to me in life, it’s more to keep having projects than realize something for real; because any realization is likely to fail. The only solution thus is to multiply projects.” (Pierrick Sorin, interviewed in Leytron by Basile Seppey for ¿Creative Villages?, May 16, 2016)

In February 2014, the Centre Pompidou and the Swiss Cultural Center in Paris organized a panel discussion on the “expérience Furkart” (Furkart experience), to which the French institution was dedicating a small exhibition. Launched in 1983 by Swiss gallery owner Marc Hostettler, in close collaboration with American artists James Lee Bayer, Furkart took place until 1999 at the Hotel Furkablick and the surrounding area on the Furka pass, in the Valais. For 16 years, this site at an altitude of 2,436m and only accessible during four months in the summer served as residency for an avant-garde group of artists (such as comme Marina Abramović & Ulay, Daniel Buren, Terry Fox, Jenny Holzer, Richard Long, Lawrence Weiner, Panamarenko and Rémy Zaugg), who benefited from unique conditions to meet and work.

Since Bernard Blistène, director at the Centre Pompidou, decided to nostalgically conclude the discussion by claiming that such a singular project belonged to another time, one might ask what in Furkart would be perceived as anachronistic today? Could it be the fact that some of the most prominent artists of the moment were ready to undertake a long journey and spend time in a remote area in the midst of the Alps, just to share an experience together and, possibly, create a new work, without any kind of pressure or expectations on the side of the organizer? Or because this project passed under the radar of the general public – partly thanks to Hostettler, who seems to have deliberately minimized public relations. Anyway, whatever Blistène’s words actually meant to him at this moment, such bias retrospectively make Furkart a radical project

nowadays, when the cultural arena seems to have been dominated by notions of visibility, accessibility and return on investment.

What is exploited by our current service economy is our ability to innovate, elaborate ideas, engage with something, show initiative and propose a vision for the future, in other words, to develop and realize *projects*. Unlike operational work (based on stable organization, specialized skills, repeatable work, and predictability), the project is a working modality characterized by its versatility, its ability to manage the unpredictable and to create connections between various fields of knowledge and networks of people. These characteristics make it equally a truly creative process and a perfect management tool to achieve punctual objectives within determined deadlines. In Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello's "projective city" – which for the French sociologists embodies the managerial turn of late capitalism – one should therefore not be surprised to witness a true proliferation of projects in all kinds of professional sectors (such as sciences, politics, economy and culture) and in the private sphere as well. According to philosopher Boris Groys, the formulation of diverse projects would have become "the major preoccupation of contemporary man."

Addressed by artist Andrea Fraser as "project work" in the early 1990s, this phenomenon has also been identified as "the economy of project work" in the art field. Such an "economy" basically consists in commissioning artists or curators to develop and realize projects in response to specific expectations, which often are economical or communicational. Now, if on the one hand, this fantastic comeback of the activity of art commissioning significantly expends artists and curators' work opportunities quantitatively – let's just note the number of calls for projects released everyday on the internet – on the other hand, the cultural field's managerial turn raises questions on the relevancy of the projects implemented. There are indeed fundamental differences between the logic of an *art project*, and *project management*.

One of these differences is temporal. Project management indeed implies deadlines, which might be antagonistic with the timescales needed to develop a thorough artistic project. If the projection into time can be on the (very) long term for artists, the economy of project work's "vision for the future" is often short-term. Most of the time, artists have to produce results within deadlines, which can be very constraining.

Another difference relates to the project's purpose. Fundamentally managerial, the economy of project work can be seen as a "problem-solving" process looking for solutions here and now; it follows that art projects are funded to fulfil specific objectives – openly claimed or not – often informed by the concepts of the creative economy, such as gentrifying a given area, increasing the audience of an institu-

tion, boosting the attractiveness of a place or reinforcing social inclusion. The artistic project, on the contrary, has its own stakes, including failure. One of its most interesting aspects is not to produce "results," but to keep the creative process active and meaningful, even if its realization is perpetually postponed to a (fictional) future – so realizing the avant-garde's dream of art & life.

Inspired by projects such as Furkart or Slovak artist Július Koller's *U.F.O. Gallery Ganek* (a fictional gallery space in the High Tatras, which will be presented in Leytron between September 30 and December 18, 2016), *¿Creative Villages?* seeks to prepare the ground for relevant projects to come; to open up a space freed from determination, encouraging fruitful encounters and critical questionings; its endeavour is to create and activate networks of people sharing the same doubts and similar visions of what art should be or do today. *¿Creative Villages?* focuses on questions rather than answers or ready-made solutions. Half research-based and half curatorial, the project represents a challenging opportunity to put ideas to the test in the context of Leytron-Ovronnaz. Throughout the pilot phase, the goal of *¿Creative Villages?* endeavour is to accumulate experiences, build knowledge, and experiment with projects in order to come up with meaningful proposals for the *commune* by the end of April 2017.

In this spirit, *¿Creative Villages?* organized, in collaboration with the LAPS (Research Institute for Art and Public Space in Amsterdam), a seminar titled "*The territory of Leytron/Ovronnaz as a topographical metaphor to address contemporary dynamics of art in public sphere*," which is the main topic of this publication. Since the seminar partly sought to question the relevancy of notions such as art's instrumentalization or "top-down" dynamics within the economy of project work, Jeroen Boomgaard, from the LAPS, suggested splitting the group of invited artists, curators and researchers into three groups for one day, each of them being in charge of exploring a position symbolically related to the topography of the commune.

Located in the plain, in Leytron, the group taking a bottom-up approach, choose to start with a blank sheet, and came up with a series of questions addressing public art, the context and the very presence of a project such as *¿Creative Villages?* in Leytron. As Robert Ireland explains, this group focused on the possibility of integrating a site-specific model in this village. The group started by deconstructing the heuristics of "art" versus "public space," through questioning the origin and common sense of all the notions invoked in the seminar's statement, which is published in this issue. Starting abstractly: What is (the) public? What is at stake here? What is at stake for art? What do you expect from art?, etc. – the group then moved towards more a concrete approach, in the field, through doing a walk in the village in order to improve it, question it and get a better

understanding of it: What do you want from us? What makes me behave differently? Why would you want art if you do not even care?

As Jeroen Boomgaard explains, the group based in Montagnon, tasked with imagining alternative positions, proposed to “let the location decide instead of deciding for the location and trying to change the situation.” That is to say to “situate the discourse” in the reality of this place: an almost abandoned hamlet built in a dangerous landslide zone. As the group suggested, Montagnon could “be a place for artists to stay for a while. Not to form a community, but to live in the community with the people who live there.” For Nils Van Beek, a “residency” program of this sort “could focus at non-profitability. At the possibility of failure. And at a non-nostalgic take on the meaning of vanishing. The partial vanishing of paradigms, of knowledge, habits and cultures in the face of globalization. And the vanishing and vanity of human society in general” (thus resonating with the exhibition “Peace, Friendship, Limits and Settlement – This all used to be outside”, realized by artists Ricardo Rivera and Chris Daubert for *¿Creative Villages?*).

Two main sets of ideas related to systemic issues were discussed by the group focusing on top-down dynamics in the ski resort Ovronnaz: **1.** If “there is no longer any possibility outside the world of the commodity form” (John Byrne) and if collaboration is an inevitable condition of current network structures such as project management (which are horizontal rather than hierarchical), then the notion of “instrumentalization,” inherited from the Institutional Theory of Art, is no more relevant. The group agreed that such an approach would be way to limiting or victimizing; one should better look for ways to work from within collaborative processes and take advantage of the situation. **2.** In the same vein, John Byrne suggested that the debate should be “re-complexified”: whether it is about our understanding of what an “artwork” is or should do – for Byrne – or in the way we deal with dichotomies such as theoretical approaches and the realities of field practice – for Rachel Mader.

Overall, the three groups, which came together for a plenary session on the second day, fundamentally challenged notions of art in the public sphere and site-specific practices as well as current working modalities in the field of art production. The participants addressed head-on the *raison d'être* of an art project and questioned the role or position of art within an economy of project work and in a rural context (“Be water and be able to assume the needed shape,” claims Valentina Vetturi) as well as notions of “audiences” or “context.” The style of the seminar, which was purposely open-ended and convivial, allowed straightforward and honest conversations to happen, thus overcoming simplifications and politically correct positions.

Throughout the *¿Creative Villages?* program – the second semester of which is presented at the end of this issue – we will work to keep asking such questions and share them with the public.

¿Creative Villages? SEMINAR:

THE TERRITORY OF LEYTRON/ OVRONNAZ AS A TOPOGRAPHICAL METAPHOR TO ADDRESS CONTEMPORARY DYNAMICS OF ART IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

A collaboration between the École cantonale d'art du Valais (ECAV) and the LAPS Research Institute for Art and Public Space, Amsterdam

Leytron (Valais-CH), May 27–29, 2016

“The gestation of this book over the past few years is closely linked to my practical and theoretical work, which, through lectures, workshops, drama, work with producers and artists, travel, festivals, and artistic residences, has brought me face to face with the recurrent question of artistic powerlessness in relation to politics and contemporary methods of production.”
(Bojana Kunst, *Artists at Work, Proximity of Art and Capitalism*, 2015)

CONTEXT

Like many cities and rural areas now adopting the concepts of the creative economy, the village of Leytron in the Swiss Alps aimed to develop an art project to increase its visibility, generate social interactions, and attract outside audiences – particularly the tourists visiting Ovronnaz, a resort located in the upper part of the territory. Ultimately, rather than launching a municipal gallery or a sculpture park, the municipality agreed to

host *¿Creative Villages?*, a pilot program that would reflect on current working modalities in the field of contemporary art.

This pilot project follows *Ars Contemporaneus Alpinus* (ACA, 2013 – 2015), an ECAV research project, which critically addressed the phenomenon of landscape sculpture parks in relation to territorial development policies. Produced as a conclusion, ACA's video document introduces some of the issues at stake, which will be discussed in this seminar (see: <https://vimeo.com/142525234>, password: ACA).

PREMISE

Through focusing on the issue of art in public space, this seminar seeks to address artistic modes of production at a time when, according to John Byrne, “there is no longer any possibility outside the world of the commodity form.” This seminar will question artists’ and curators’ working modalities and production frameworks, and will examine the types of works that are produced in such a context.

Partly thanks to the service economy and global governance, which have made project work a privileged means of action, the activities of *art commissioning* and *calls for projects* (by institutions, city councils, governmental agencies, residency programs, academies, local communities, and the like) have greatly expanded the territory of contemporary art. But these working modalities within the public sector almost always also reflect specific objectives and working conditions:

› Over the last decades, contemporary art has become a sub-function of the globalized tourism and leisure industry; it is leveraged in a creative economy with highly managed cultural policies to brand cities, regenerate/gentrify neighbourhoods, produce social identities (often in the guise of politically correct multiculturalism), or generate social inclusion/cohesion. It is also a sought after approach, appreciated for its innovative and critical stance by think tanks or problem solving processes.

› Through working on “projects” *in lieu of the work of art* (Boris Groys), artists and curators alike operate as service providers, who are flexible and connected to an international network.

They have to develop projects collaboratively, therefore dealing with the expectations and criteria of other actors (commissioning agents, visual arts officers, funders, local communities, etc.) whose agendas can be antagonistic. In return, their working conditions are becoming increasingly framed, bureaucratic and managerial.

These conditions raise questions about the roles of artists and curators within an economy of project work; the function art fulfils in the public sphere; the type of works or projects produced; and the conditions of spectatorship that they create.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

The framework

According to a newly published report titled *Understanding the value of arts & culture*,* “the ‘focus on demonstrable outcomes’ demanded by policymakers encourages artists to predict in advance what the effects of their work will be, when applying for funding. But the whole point of the arts is that they are unpredictable...”

Do the frameworks provided by cultural policies and commissioners condition artists’ and curators’ working conditions, the type of practices implemented in the public sphere, and the final works and projects produced? If so, in what ways do they impact the outcomes of these sorts of projects, and what kinds of strategies can be developed to deal with or minimize the effects of this conditioning?

The role of artists and curators

When they operate as “service providers” of a kind, artists might play the role of consultants, experts, mediators or problem solvers. They are required to work collaboratively with networks of agents (urban planners, scientists, visual art officers, politicians, etc.) towards specific objectives (see the premise). As for the skills they require, (charisma, flexibility, availability, adaptability, attentiveness, creativity, etc.), these mirror the characteristics that might be expected of project managers or team leaders in the economic sector. What is the impact of these new roles and functions on art production?

* <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/documents/publications/cultural-value-project-final-report/>

What role or position should artists take in network-based structures if they do not want to be subject to managerial agendas and values?

The dynamics

At the time of the *New Spirit of Capitalism* (Boltanski & Chiapello, 1999, 2007), is it still accurate to talk about *top-down/bottom-up* dynamics? How do we describe power relationships when hierarchical organization has been replaced by networked-based organization? Are processes of instrumentalization, bureaucratization, normalization, uniformization or legitimization – all concepts addressed by the institutional theory of the art world – still relevant today?

To what extent have managerial terminology (such as *project management*, *goals*, *tasks*, *objectives*, *deadlines*, and so on) and values such as *effectiveness* and *innovation* (which are common terms in the fields of technology and government) now penetrated (and impacted) art production?

The function art fulfils in the public sphere

Now that economically driven global *governance* is said to be progressively supplanting the nation state, generating disengagement and de-politicisation (Alain Deneault), how might we consider the *public sphere* as a context for art? Are artists and curators sometimes compensating for the state's shortcomings? Or, more cynically, are they instrumented to manufacture illusory *participation* or *democracy* as these notions are said to progressively recede from public space? Which (critical) positions can artists and curators occupy in the contemporary public sphere? If we agree that everything is tied into a dominant economic-commodity-consumer network, then what place does art have within it?

If we agree with the assessment that, in the context of interdisciplinary problem solving processes (such as Bruno Latour's *Programme of Experimentation in Arts and Politics* or *The New Patrons*), contemporary art is becoming a *discipline* among others, valued for its criticality, innovation and effectiveness, will artists and curators embrace this move as a new opportunity or role? Or should they address it as a form of manipulation?

The audience

Do culture in general and contemporary art in particular need to be *everywhere* and for *everyone*, as

the slogan for the Arts Council England declares – “Great Art for Everyone”? Who is this everyone? How do we approach the issue of spectatorship at a time when everybody has become – according to Boris Groys and others – a producer? Does art in public speak to communities, groups or individuals? Can art sometimes be sited in the wrong place? Or addressed to the wrong audience? Is there a “right” public space for art?

The position of artists and curators

Considering the aforementioned questions, how can we define “meaningful art”? What criteria should be used to employ works of art (aesthetic, ethical, or other standards)? When do we consider an artwork in public space to be successful?

How should artists and curators position themselves if there “is no longer any possibility outside the world of the commodity form”?

Should the relevance of notions of autonomy, authorship, engagement, or criticality be re-evaluated today? Can one – as is suggested by British critic Ivan Hewett – “restore the individual's experience of art to the centre of the debate”?*

METHODOLOGY

Seminar participants will be split into three groups, which will work independently the first day before sharing the results of their conversations in the plenary sessions (see the schedule below).

Group I (session in Leytron)

- › Robert Ireland (mediator)
- › Tine Melzer
- › Eva Fotiadi
- › Giny Vos
- › François Dey
- › Javier Juan Andrés Gonzalez

Group II (session in Montagnon)

- › Jeroen Boomgaard (mediator)
- › Curdin Tones
- › Valentina Vetturi
- › Nils van Beek
- › Eric Philippoz
- › Ronny Hardliz
- › Alexandros Kyriakatos

* <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/art/what-to-see/how-weve-got-it-wrong-about-the-arts/>



Group III (session in Ovronnaz)

- › Benoit Antille (mediator)
- › John Byrne
- › Hans Van Houwelingen
- › Rachel Mader
- › Olivia Leahy
- › Suzanne Husky

The three chosen locations can be used as a (metaphorical) starting point to question contemporary dynamics of art in public sphere:

1. located in the plain next to the highway, the village of **Leytron** might represent bottom-up dynamics: this village is becoming a semi-urban residential area witnessing the degradation of its social life;

2. located up in the mountains, the ski resort of **Ovronnaz** suggests top-down dynamics: this resort is designed explicitly for an international audience and is aiming to find ways to attract more tourists;

3. and **Montagnon**, an almost abandoned hamlet built in a dangerous landslide zone, represents risk-taking or alternative models.

The mediator will be in charge of the session. Each of the groups is free to choose its own methodology, and to develop its own approach to the premise and guiding questions.

We suggest starting the group sessions with short presentations of public commissions produced by the invited artists.

This seminar seeks to provide artists, curators, and researchers with an open platform to freely exchange their points of view and share their experiences in a transparent and critical way.

ORGANIZERS

A partnership between the École cantonale d'art du Valais and the Commune of Leytron, *¿Creative Villages?* is a pilot artistic program in a village including an artist-in-residence program, seminars, workshops, exhibitions, public art, and a fanzine. Both theoretical and practice-based, the program seeks to critically address notions of art commissioning, cultural policies, the creative economy, and artists' working modalities within such frameworks – all from the perspective of the rural territory. The project is being conducted within the framework of the “Cultural Diversity in the Regions” funding scheme set up by Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia.

As the main point in the Netherlands, the LAPS Research Institute for Art and Public space, contributes to the development, dissemination and presentation of knowledge on art and public space. The research institute is the result of a partnership between the Gerrit Rietveld Academie (GRA), the Sandberg Instituut (SI), the Universiteit van Amsterdam (UvA).

Leytron – “Bottom-up” position

WHERE ARE THE DOGS?

ROBERT IRELAND

Lors du groupe de travail «Bottom-up» et des questionnements du groupe de travail sur l'opportunité d'intégrer le modèle «site-specific» au village de Leytron, nous avons tout d'abord procédé à une déconstruction de l'heuristique «art» versus «espace public», en nous mettant dans une approche interrogeant l'origine ainsi que le sens commun de toutes les notions évoquées. Partant de l'abstrait: **What is (the) public? What is at stake here? What is at stake for art? What do you expect from art?**, etc. – nous sommes ensuite revenus au concret, sur le terrain, avec une promenade dans le village pour l'éprouver, l'interroger, le saisir: **What do you want from us? What makes myself behave differently? Why would you want art if you do not even care?**

Le résultat de ces annotations et discussions a abouti à un diaporama de questions enchâssées les unes aux autres.



À titre personnel, j'en reprends une, non pas pour y apporter une réponse que je ne détiens pas, mais afin de prolonger l'entrelacs qu'elle initie.

Could Leytron be the centre of the world?

Cette question découle d'un voyage d'études que j'ai organisé et où nous avons fait le détour à Blessey* en Bourgogne afin d'y découvrir le travail de Rémy Zaugg. Aucun habitant ne fut rencontré lors de la visite, personne à part nous n'était sur ce site du petit barrage formant un étang juste devant le lavoir qui est en aval des sources de la Seine.

Le lieu ne se donnait pas comme étant de l'art et la question même de savoir si c'en était devenait réellement déplacée et futile devant la densité du «moment voulu» créé par le génie de ce lieu. Cette expérience m'a convaincu de plusieurs choses: la première étant que l'art n'a pas besoin d'être considéré comme tel pour opérer. La deuxième, que ce travail de Rémy Zaugg n'a pas besoin de public pour exister: il existe en tant que tel, pour lui-même, mais aussi au Monde, enchâssé dans le temps et l'espace. La troisième chose est qu'il est difficile de spéculer sur l'impact d'une proposition artistique, mais que cette dernière, une fois réalisée, peut acquérir une certaine force d'identification et, au mieux, renverser le paradigme d'un lieu en lui donnant une nouvelle appartenance et centralité.

Autant à Blessey qu'à Leytron, nous n'avons pas rencontré de chiens.

* Blessey et son lavoir a été l'exemple de l'implémentation des «nouveaux commanditaires», avec Rémy Zaugg comme artiste et Xavier Douroux comme médiateur. Les commanditaires étant les quelque 50 habitants de Blessey, en Bourgogne. A la fin d'un processus qui a duré de 1997 à 2007, Rémy Zaugg a évoqué Blessey en tant que centre du Monde.

POST-VISIT THOUGHTS

EVA FOTIADI

Not wanting to be engaged with? Searching on Google for information about the village of Leytron, one comes across Leytron's Wikipedia page, as well as the municipality's official website. What is noticeable, especially on Wikipedia, is that it provides almost exclusively dry geographical data: facts and figures about land area, demographics, the economy, politics, religion and education. It reminds one of an old-fashioned, high-school geography class. Much of the same type of information is also found on the municipality's website, in addition to various other examples of practical information and a film that focuses on the area's tourist appeal. There is little attempt from Leytron's authorities or inhabitants to present Leytron, or themselves, as anything different from the generic, tourist image foreigners have of an Alpine village – skiing, wellness, amazing landscapes, some agriculture. When students from the nearby art school in Sierre spent some days walking around, taking pictures and making videos in Leytron, they were not given a warm welcome. One could assume that the residents do not really want to be closely engaged with or represented. Do they have to? Should such reluctance necessarily mean a complete lack of interaction?

Reclaiming tourism? Tourism has had some bad publicity for several decades. Tourists are often seen as euros, dollars or Swiss francs. Many people crave travel and holidays abroad, and yet those same people often find other tourists a nuisance – especially tourists at home.

Should the relationship between tourism and a program that brings artists to a village for longer periods, and potentially also other professionals for shorter visits – e.g. for workshops – only be justifiable through the lens of tourism as business? Is the only alternative contemporary way of viewing the interaction between artists as regular visitors and locals that of artists' residencies as site-specific interventions that prioritize – if not depend on – the invention of local, social relevance? Are

there no other models of co-existence and interaction between artists and a local, rural context, models that Leytron's region could offer the opportunity to explore? Could tourism be reclaimed from business?

Converging/diverging stakes, questions and goals.

If residents do not wish to be at the centre of attention, then they should probably not be. Why should the presence of artists depend upon the artist-visitor finding one's reasons for being there in the residents' lives? Which is not to say that local residents will not have part of the attention. Could a program of artists' longer-term accommodation and short workshops run on a few different lines or tracks, that may include interest in the area and the people, but parallel to or through other themes and questions (related or not)? If residents are willing to open their houses to host an artist as a guest for a few weeks, then what about the artist opening up their own fascinations to their hosts in return? Could co-existence produce its own modalities of relevance, allowing space for convergence as much as for divergence of interests?

EXCUSE ME, WHO IS PLAYING?

TINE MELZER

Every place has its rules. Locals follow them, and lead subconsciously ordered lives by tradition at times. Maybe they were born in this village, perhaps they come from a small town some kilometres away. Their uncle used to own a vineyard here and his nieces used to come here during the summer.

Visitors stop by to have a look at the church. A young couple gets out of their car to buy some snacks at one of the two supermarkets. There are tourists' images available on *Google Maps* for such a small village, where people spend all their lives. Do you know Leytron? Or Ovronnaz? Produit? I have been there. I have visited the place. I have spent two nights and two days there. Is this enough? Enough for what?

Questions are special tools. They aim for answers, most of the time. Questions express the perspective of the person asking them. Questions are precise instruments of the practice of dialogue in language. Where is the church? See, there is the church. What do they do in this church? In Leytron, there are two churches: one is for praying, and on Tuesdays the believers exercise the tradition of the Adoration of Christ. One church is ready to be used for worshipping God: its presence is natural and good. This first church is run by the village's permanent residents. The other church is currently used by an artist's initiative to host exhibitions and seminars for artists, intellectuals and other cultural practitioners. This second church is run by outsiders. Its presence is artificial and good.

On Saturday morning I was told a local myth that fascinates newcomers: the village has two political parties, each of them accompanied by a brass band. The rivalling brass bands practise in two different buildings in the village, and they polarize the villagers. Either one belongs to one or the other brass band community. The outsider belongs to neither of them.

On Saturday noon we leave the second church for lunch and we hear the sound of a brass band playing. Loud and confidently the tones splash out from the window of one of the buildings across from the second church. For the outsider, it is just one of the bands practising, no matter which. How could we be so careless? Why haven't we asked the inhabitants, which one of the bands is playing there? And is it "live" at all? It sounds like a march, a cheerful manifold of acoustic power. A statement of presence. But if we cannot read the signs, if either of the two rivals is the same to us, and differences are not intelligible for the outsider, where has one been then? Is it possible that I spent two days in a place blindfolded, like some other kind of tourist?

History connects past and present and anecdotes express perspectives through particular stories. I enjoyed the stories of the rivalry between two brass bands, which manage to split and order a village of three thousand inhabitants. Their effort to be particular, to worship the insignificant detail – and the insistence of a small community to remain heterogeneous – impressed me. Their eagerness to celebrate

one's own perspective in contrast to a close neighbour shows the price one is willing to pay for a little bit of particular identity.

The outsider hears a brass instrument. The locals are tuned in to the significance of it.

SWIMMING IN A BUBBLE BATH

GINY VOS

The pool in the hotel is big enough, but you are not supposed to swim in the bubble bath. Walking just around as a small group of strangers through the village, you can do it, but you are not supposed to do. In both situations people try to make something clear to you by staring at you. And then they say that you are walking on their private road. Did I miss a sign? But there are no signs.

Should I have known?



Working as an artist in the public domain, I want first of all to understand the situation and my question is always what will/could make sense at that particular place.

To come up with ideas for art for a village in the valley between the mountains, where you never have been, is not easy. I get sweaty, the mountains that surround me are too high, the distance to what I know too big.

For whom the art was intended to be, became more clear to me and the end of the first day. The art is not for the tourist, but for the inhabitants. Pffff, what a relief.

The questions list made by our group helped me (us) to clarify our presence in Leytron. The questions were pretty obvious, but every question/quote needed more context. The context was there when we made them up, but that was gone when we presented it in the final session.

In the context, in the actual environment things get their meaning, but what the meaning is seems diffuse. The context is there when you are inside, but where does it start and where does it end.

Just jump in and start swimming. Unless there is a sign.

SYNTHESIS OF THE SESSION

JAVIER GONZÁLEZ PESCE

We gathered among a group of artists, curators and other art-related specialists at the church in Leytron (which is, for now, a kind of operations center for the *¿Creative Villages?* project and a space for different activities performed by the people), to discuss public art projects according to the “bottom up” notion of production and development. Anyway, everyone ended up making observations and proposals according to their own experience on public art projects, which led to several discussions, in which we mostly ended up assuming that

we had more questions than clear proposals. We defined a logic of interaction through different questions, locating uncertainty as a system to produce orientation. We ended up walking through the town, putting ourselves in the place of the stranger who has nothing but disorientation, and who, at the same time, disrupts a flat Swiss quietness, raising questions (through ourselves as a simple presence) about people who are found wandering as a curious group of wondering strangers.

One idea we discussed was that if art at a particular location is an artistic comment or proposal which inhabits a specific place, then, ideally the artistic proposal should emerge from certain ideas or observations coming from the specificity of the place itself (regardless of whether they are structural, cultural or political). Art is then an ideological element that engages in a dialogue with space and context, understanding that it has been produced under a reflective process of engaged witnessing, in which artists need questions (from the formal to the cultural or political). In the logic of artistic production, new spaces should demand new ideas for the production of singular creative processes. Should a place I haven't ever been to before, require me to have ideas I haven't thought before in the process of the development of an art project on site? I am not saying that this new idea, emerging from a creative process, should be totally different to previous ones one might have had. A new place should (or at least could) participate in the production process as a conceptual and structural element. So what should the artist do with questions that are produced by interests that are not mainly artistic, but mostly economic, and even related to tourism, such as, *How can we attract more tourists for this place after the skiing has gone?* for example. How should the artist deal with engagement in relation to questions which are of no interest to them, or are related to the specific context in which they are supposed to work but from an artistically irrelevant perspective. One solution would be to produce new questions and observations, to reset the logic of interest in the place, then highlight a certain aesthetic value from which to initiate a creative process. In this sense there is a sensitive element which is core to the production of many public art events, which would be the place itself, which is always driven by some interest which is not artistic, but rather economic in most cases.

COLLECTED QUESTIONS

At this point, and observing how the private sector (or other economic interests) has been demanding art to repair certain situations, we started to examine art as an element for the production of faith and at the same time, as a strong economic currency. This is probably a struggle in which art has been engaged for a long time, as a field of production of both symbolic and economic value. In this specific case, the elements in conflict would be the capacity of art to repair the flux or complement a certain economy in opposition to its capacity to establish strong cultural and social bonds, restoring or activating a cultural phenomenon. But, as we commented on our encounter, recently, this combination of the economic and the cultural ends up working on the production of spectacle (which fulfills the economic interests but does not always satisfy the artistic ones). In this sense we need to think about who is administering art and how it is being controlled as a means for something different than its reflective or artistic goal, and how we, as artists and other specialists in the art field are contributing to this, and if this is always negative. How can artists and curators inhabit the art field without being consumed by this spectacular and superficial spirit? At this point I am aware that it might be very possible that instead of basing our discussion on the “bottom-up” notion, we did engage in our conversation, strongly considering the “top-down” structure. It might be that everyone who was part of our discussion was not suspicious of the “bottom-up”: we might even trust this way of organizing the art production chain, but, the other way around might even make us scared, for all the reasons I might be briefly pointing out in this short text (and for sure some others).

To finish I would like to signal some questions that were formulated and which I think might be very relevant for deepening this discussion.

- › What does art do?
- › What is an art expert?
- › What does it take for art to be turned into business?
- › Do people recognize the “contemporary art logics” frustrating its effectiveness?
- › How is public art perceived by people?
- › Can art change social relations?
- › What kind of tool can art be?

01. Where is your vineyard?
02. Does a community need to be saved?
03. Could Leytron be the center of the world?
04. Should the artist educate a public?
05. What is (the) public?
06. What is at stake here? What is at stake for art?
07. Does art have to look like art?
08. What does art look like?
09. Is public art democratic?
10. Is democratic art public?
11. Can art pull a community together? Through identity, heritage, culture, value?
12. Is there any sense in putting culture in a place?
13. Is art a complementary experience of wellness tourism and nature?
14. Is the spiritual effect essential to your expectation of art?
15. What do you expect from art?
16. What do you want from us?
17. What is a model?
18. Is “public art” a utopia, a fantasy?
19. Should I innocently play the game of asking questions on how to increase tourism?
20. Do I want to help tourism to regain power in Leytron?
21. Should I care/know/speculate on the audience/public?

22. Do I need to know the public of Leytron?
23. What makes me behave differently?
24. Is my project for the tourists, for the inhabitants or for the artists?
25. Should my artwork produce solutions for communal, sociological problems?
26. How is my expertise meaningful in this context?
27. What does the spectator expect?
28. Who is the expectator?
29. Does the village feel patronized?
30. Why would you want art if you do not even care?
31. Is conflict constructive?
32. Are artists really there to please the audience?
33. What's the diagnosis for this community?
34. For how many people does it work?
35. How strategic is public art (and for what)?
36. What are the dynamics of the creative economy?
37. How to increase its visibility and attract outside audiences?
38. What do tourists need?
39. What do tourists want?
40. What is the tourist?
41. What function does the artwork perform in public space in general, and in rural areas in particular?
42. What can art mean for the participants and audiences involved (including government offices, commissioners, curators, artists, and local citizens)?
43. Why has commissioning art become such a wide-spread mode of production today?
44. What problems and complications can this form of artistic production create with regard to the type of artwork being produced, the relation of the work to its context, and the various and sometimes antagonistic expectations at stake behind the production of the work?
45. What are contemporary managerial cultural policies?
46. How to take advantage of the topographical characteristics of Leytron's territory?
47. How to use top-down versus bottom-up dynamics?
48. Does the commissioner confuse art with liveliness?
49. Do we need to base the art on any actual historical identities of the village?
50. Is identity simply adopted fiction?
51. What is iconic about Leytron?
52. Is there anyone trying to build a bridge?
53. Why art?
54. Which way to walk through the village?
55. What should I do this Saturday afternoon?
56. What if it starts raining?
57. At what age can I send my children to the choir?
58. On which weekday is the Adoration of Christ?
59. Who is keeping the schedule of the Adoration?
60. Is the church busy on Sundays?
61. Is Produit a village model for Switzerland?
62. When does Produit have its carnival?

Montagnon – Alternative position

SLIDING ALONG – SOME REFLECTIONS ON SITUATED DISCOURSE

JEROEN BOOMGAARD

I guess that we all share that feeling of slight despair, sitting in a seminar room, very seriously discussing the underprivileged or the precarious state of them and those. A feeling of embarrassment maybe: what am I doing here talking when I should be taking action? But then again: words are my tool, so talking is doing. But still.

While artists have since long discovered that situating a work can make it stronger, because it can start resonating with its surroundings, the only talking that is site-specific is either done with the help of a megaphone or passed on in chants that seem to lose their content as they get passed along. How is it possible that while we know how different it is to talk *to* someone instead of *about*, we keep talking *about* certain situations or locations instead of *to* them? I know it sounds stupid: to talk to a situation. It sounds even more stupid when you say the situation talks back, but that is exactly what happens once you decide to place the debate at the heart of the matter.

We talked about the role of art in the village of Montagnon. And by being there, the village joined in the discussion. Not by sending some of its inhabitants as representatives, but by offering its steep streets, wooden houses, goats and cheese, wine and view. Montagnon did not

- 63. Is this private property?
- 64. May I walk here?
- 65. Where are you going?
- 66. Where do you come from?
- 67. Who is more exotic: the ones who live here or the ones who visit?
- 68. Who are the “savages” of the upper village?
- 69. Should we keep the savages for tourism?
- 70. Is there a school in Leytron?
- 71. Will the Pope re-accept Ecône back into the church?
- 72. Where do the streets of Leytron end?
- 73. Why do I always end up here when I walk through this village?
- 74. Aren’t there any animals?
- 75. Where are the dogs?
- 76. Where is the public area in the village?
- 77. Is there a main square?
- 78. Why did they fence the sculptures at the church?
- 79. How old is this building?
- 80. Is the exhibition open?



present itself as a hamlet on the brink of disappearing, and it certainly did not present us with a perfect podium for art in public space. When pressed to propose a possible intervention there, a work to be produced, a community project to be started, the artists present were very reluctant. Because it felt somehow ridiculous to think about making art in a place that was peacefully endangered and that had made no request for an art intervention whatsoever. But it certainly did not feel strange to be there.

Once you let the location decide instead of deciding for the location and trying to change the situation, the situation will change your decisions. That is what we found out in the small, wooden church/school that transmitted its messages to us. The talking we did made sense because the place provided the sense. So we decided the best thing to do was to continue the debate there. Montagnon will be a place for artists to stay for a while. Not to form a community, but to live in the community with the people who live there. Not to help the village to survive by turning it into a centre of attention, by gently gentrifying it back onto the map again, because that was not what the houses were telling us. A place for working, thinking and debating. Always on the brink of disappearing.

¿Creative Villages? **SYMPOSIUM** **OVRONNAZ (CH)**

NILS VAN BEEK

After leaving Ovronnaz, there was some time left for a quick visit to Geneva, so I went to see Konrad Witz's *The Miraculous Draft of Fishes* at the Musée d' Art et d'Histoire. Witz was the first Western artist to include an actual and accurate rendering of the landscape of his region in a Biblical scene, as if a Geneva citizen could overlook the Sea of Galilee from the city's waterfront. On the horizon, you can recognize the Alps and Mont Blanc. In his book *Landscape and Memory*, Simon Schama refers to Witz and

his contemporaries to prove that on the verge of the Renaissance, the cultural perception of mountains was changing. The mountains are no longer to be feared and avoided, but offer places to understand and reflect upon the world as it is. Petrarch describes his motivation to climb Mont Ventoux simply from the longing for a view.

What would one long for in Montagnon? Switzerland is blessed with many more and even more picturesque places that would be suitable for putting spectacular art objects on display. And when you think about Montagnon as a regular venue for international meetings, as was suggested during the very interesting workshop we had about location, places like the European Graduate School in Saas-Fee or the Monte Verità hotel in Ascona would come to mind first for a Bilderberg meeting for the arts. But what makes Montagnon appealing to me, is that it is not spectacular.

The representation of mountains is absorbed into a regime of accomplishment. The domination of nature by sublime pieces of engineering. The challenging of the human body in more or less extreme sports activities, or simply embracing a healthy lifestyle. Disciplining the human mind and spirit in acts of meditation (many monasteries were founded in the mountains). A programme in Montagnon could focus on non-profitability. On the possibility of failure. And on a non-nostalgic take on the meaning of vanishing. The partial vanishing of paradigms, of knowledge, habits and cultures in the face of globalization. And the vanishing and vanity of human society in general.

Because of the predicted landslide, which is used as an excuse for no longer investing in Montagnon and its inhabitants, instead focusing on the development of Leytron as part of generic urban development and Ovronnaz as part of a dominant leisure culture, Montagnon would serve as a perfect metaphor for this subject. It would be a place to discuss precarity by a group of artists and thinkers who are very often instrumentalized for the gentrification of economically less prosperous areas and for the flexibilization of labour, with no thought given to sustainability. Montagnon would become a place of resistance, simply because of its vulnerability. And the gradual vanishing of the village could become the pivotal point of the programme.

¿Creative Villages? **OR THE WORD OFTEN HEARD BY NON-SPEAKERS**

RONNY HARDLIZ

It has been a wonderful experience to be in Leytron and to think with peers about what could be done there in terms of ¿CREATIVE VILLAGES?. While talking and, more importantly, being there, encountering the “villages” and their inhabitants through gestures, chats, or even longer conversations, it began to dawn on us that what we were doing there could be seen as one possible answer to the question of what could be done there. Namely, gather at a specific place as a group of peers, discuss the possibilities of what could be done and in this very process of multiple encounters, generate a proper force of inherent artistic desire. All this could be given names like “the hotel” or “the seminar”, however, basically it points to the ambiguity inherent in art-led discourse as both a process of epistemological production and objectified fixation of knowledge. Artists, nowadays, can actually say something by producing discourse as art practice. The awareness that discourse practice is already the product and that this logic can be extended to any other practice defines our contemporary condition and aporia. The formula of the question of ¿CREATIVE VILLAGES? thus seems appropriate, which, when looked at retrospectively, projected the answer in its particular way of asking the question, namely with an inverted question mark: “¿”. Whether intended or not, we can read the inverted question mark as a marker of all the possible answers that might be given to the question as already inherent in the question, or we might read it as the precise projection of inversion, as something that necessarily must turn back onto the question as the answer that is already there: the seminar was the “creative” project for these “villages”.

As the inverted question mark is used in written Spanish, and Catalan, to enclose a question, one might rightly ask if in the seminar’s title it is a code for some Hispanic insider relationship?

However, in Catalan it is omitted for short questions, in which the nature of a question is immediately recognizable – as would be the case with “CREATIVE VILLAGES?”. Interestingly, nevertheless, the length of the sentence does not seem to be the only reason why the Real Academia Española introduced the inverted question and exclamation marks in 1754, according to Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inverted_question_and_exclamation_marks).

The other reason is the structure of polar questions, also called yes-no questions. These are questions which, in contrast to questions using an interrogative word such as “why”, “when”, or “how”, rely on the structure of the sentence to express the question, in English, as for example: “Do you like Leytron?”, as opposed to the affirmative “You like Leytron.” In Spanish, however, there is generally no difference between the structure of a polar question and its affirmative equivalent: “¿Te gusta Leytron?” and “Te gusta Leytron.” We can say then that although the inverted question mark might be omitted in the project’s title because of its relatively short length it nevertheless makes sense to use the inverted question mark because of the title’s polar structure, in which the affirmative counterpart would be structurally indistinguishable: “CREATIVE VILLAGES”.

According to Wikipedia the inverted question marks are also used in older standards of Galician and a language called Waray-Waray. Waray-Waray is a spoken native language of the Philippines belonging to the Austronesian language family, thus unrelated to the Latin language family. Its writing system, however, is Latin. This is supposedly due to the three centuries of Spanish colonial rule when Spanish was the national and official language. Supposedly, the inverted question mark was adopted in Waray-Waray with the specifically Spanish use of the Latin writing system. What might give us a phantasmagorical hint to the secret ties between the Waray-Waray language and the ¿CREATIVE VILLAGES? seminar in Leytron, following this convoluted research, is the enigmatic etymological explanation Wikipedia provides us with: “The language name comes from the word often heard by non-speakers, ‘waray’ (meaning ‘none’ or ‘nothing’ in Waray).” (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waray_language)

ROOM 409 OR RECOMPLEXIFYING THE PATTERN

ERIC PHILIPPOZ

The light bulb was blinking in the corridor of *Hôtel des Bains d'Ovronnaz* as I entered room 409. A few details suggested that the room hadn't changed much since the hotel was built; the armchair, for example, whose back and seat were covered with an exuberant fabric: tropical green leaves on a red background. "So 20 years ago", I thought. That said, the amount of wrinkles on the fabric proved that: a) numerous people had used this piece of furniture so far; and b) it was therefore most likely to be highly comfortable. I decided to give it a try. Not bad. But really, what was the point of choosing such an extravagant pattern? I wondered whether the other rooms were appointed with the exact same armchairs and similar motifs, or if each room was given a different pattern. I pictured myself as some impatient decorator, confronted with an incredible range of fabrics to choose from and resolving it with

a contemptuous: "Let's have a different pattern for each room"; and room 409 randomly got the luxuriant foliage motif. Or better, someone from the staff found that pattern "beautiful" and "modern" and picked it up consciously, out of mere personal aesthetic considerations.

I stood up and peeked at the landscape outside, then turned around and looked back at the armchair. I was now wondering about the correlation between tropical vegetation and the mountains: what was the connection between thermal baths in the Swiss Alps and the motif of a sunset in the rainforest? And generally speaking, what about placing green leaves under people's bottoms? By the way, who designed this motif? Which fabric was used? Which company produced it, in which conditions, in which country? What had been the intermediates between the production of the fabric and the manufacture of the armchair, between the retailer and the consumer?

I sat on the left armrest and looked at the pattern more carefully: the banana leaves were fooling around with flower petals; the orchids were showing off in a gracious but rather over-emphasized way; and all the others, a bit more constrained or shy, kept hiding in the distance: each element seemed to be living their plant lives quietly, floating on the flat surface of the fabric. On its red surface, to be precise. Did the plants actually have a say about the background colour, or did a designer impose it on them? If so, on what grounds? Or did the red colour perhaps originate from the plants themselves? I suspected one of them – the pinkish palm tree in particular – of leaking and contaminating the space; but for what reason? As an egocentric statement, an act of generosity or the result of a simple biological secretion? The red colour thus invaded the surface, revealing to the plants the mere existence of a space between them – which wasn't a space as such beforehand, actually. It invited them to think about this common space together and to discuss it – but did they actually speak the same language?

Intrigued, I sat closer to the fabric and was able to hear the plants' babble. The negotiation of this new, shared ground didn't seem to be without conflict. Some of the plants were arguing that their lives weren't much affected or improved – if that was the first intention – by that red com-



mon space; whereas others plants claimed that it allowed them to connect differently to each other and to the place where they'd been quietly floating beforehand. They'd become aware of the infinite possibilities in shifting places, in modifying and rearranging themselves and, ultimately, in affecting the pattern. That was it, actually: they were now conscious of their role as the constituents of a same pattern.

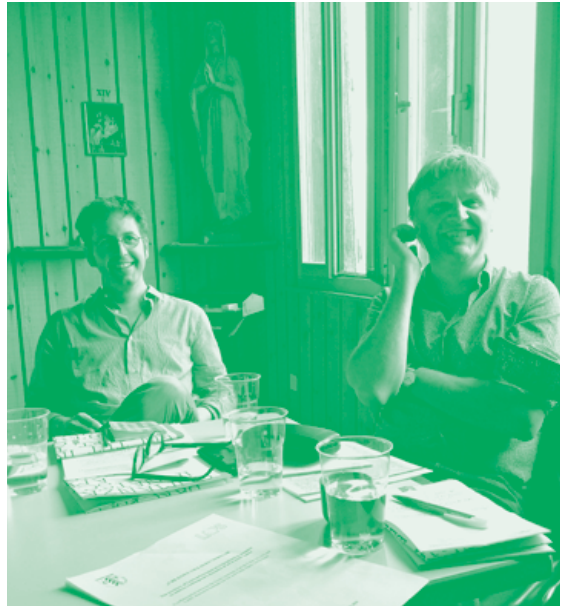
To be honest, their conversation was so repetitive and their voices so irritating, that I decided to get myself ready to join the seminar instead. But before leaving room 409, I sat down and listened to the pattern one last time: the plants were now considering the dangers of being exploited by the industry as some kind of exotic-looking fabric. Their biggest fear, indeed, was being replicated on the seat of a chair and crushed by human bottoms...

INSTABILITY AS RESOURCE

CURDIN TONES

What if a place wouldn't look for appeal through art by setting up a parade of artworks by internationally celebrated artists? The fact that originally such an art event was requested to attract and entertain a new sort of cultural tourist, indicates quite clearly that a tourist spa and ski resort like Ovronnaz is looking for new attractions and another public. What is left for such a place once the spa as a concept runs out and the snow is less predictable in winter?

Looking at the development of the village in Ovronnaz, the chalet building frenzy of the last decades has left its mark, providing uninspiring architecture, neatly cut lawns and private parking opportunities. The impressive natural landscape of the Alps serves as a panorama to be consumed from the sun-facing balconies or the open swimming pool of the spa, or reduced to a site for sporting entertainment. The effects of a kind of tourism that leaves Ovronnaz now interchangeable with other mountain tourist



resorts. One may truly wonder whether it is the role of art to compensate for the lack of genuine attraction of a place.

Situated between the satellite village of Leytron and its resort counterpart Ovronnaz, Montagnon seems to have been forgotten along the way. Lying on the shifting slope of the mountain amidst vineyards and rooted in its agricultural past, Montagnon partly faces the threat of a landslide. The instability of the terrain foreshadows a relocation of the people who still live there. It is this potential threat and the existential change ahead that provides a sense of urgency, which makes Montagnon potentially an interesting place for artistic reflection and production. It is exactly that open space of an unclear future that can provide a productive mental space to reflect on instability and disappearance in relation to contemporary artistic practice.

At first it might sound perverse that such local, existential worry is not only simply disastrous, but could also be productive to a foreigner. But it might be exactly the genuine quality of that place, which, in the end, may help save it. As resources to reflect and work with, instability, the threat of potential change and a future after relocation are urgent and touching themes with a relevance that points beyond local problems. Besides, as resources, they contrast interestingly with the problem of entertainment Ovronnaz is struggling with. Thanks to the urgency of these resources, Montagnon truly has something to

offer when one seeks empowerment by starting to think about how to do things differently. Instead of waiting to be rescued by spectacular art, facing an insecure future, these few houses, its local church and cafe could become places in which one could locally engage in a different way with the aesthetics of instability and the existential question: What should be done?

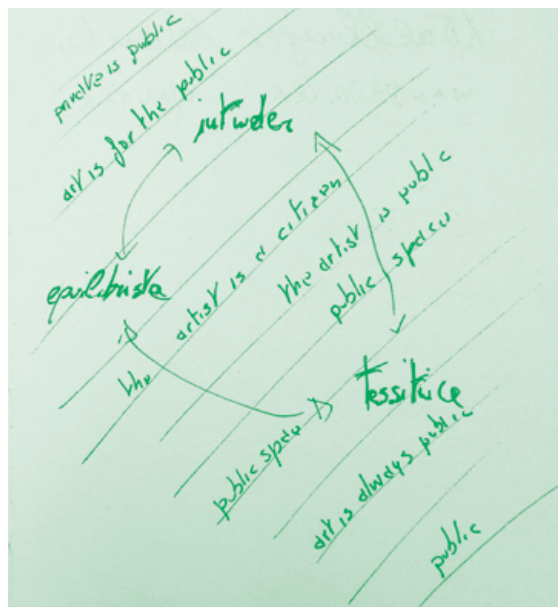
LETTER TO *Creative Villages?*

VALENTINA VETTURI

Dear Benoit,

I am writing this text in front of a Swiss lake. Yesterday I spent the afternoon at the Beyeler Foundation, walking among acrobats by Calder, shapes by Matisse, the weavers In Respite by Louise Bourgeois. Why the lake and why this private foundation?

Our seminar triggered this crucial question/matter: what is the role of an artist in public space? And while walking among these beloved works (and maybe also triggered by my deadline), I came up with these notes.



If art is for the (general) public and the artist is, first and foremost, a member of the Agora, what is his/her role?

It might be the position of the water I'm looking at now. It changes shape and infiltrates among the rocks even where they are narrow and difficult to reach. "Be water" and be able to assume the needed shape.

But how does one change shape and adapt without betraying? How to honour your research while changing and adjusting according to the new (public) commission? In my mind, I picture all the classical artworks I admire. The result of what now we call public commissions. I think of Giotto's frescos in Basilica di San Francesco, Cappella Cornaro and Fontana dei Quattro fiumi by Bernini, and others.

Time is my answer. Research goes on for years, crossing commissions as an opportunity to find the unexpected. The unforeseen that links the journey I am on, to a particular context. The surprising element that might enrich the path and form your research and your artwork.

I arrived in Switzerland last January with a grant while working on the hackers' world. I was supposed to stay three months, but the unexpected happened. I started to meet people and I received commissions that shaped my research and the artworks that came out of it.

And again, what is the position of an artist, or a curator in relation to this context?

I love to think it is the one Nancy describes in *L'intrus* while talking about the new foreign inside him, an implanted heart.

"The theme of the stranger in itself intrudes on our moral correctness (and is even a remarkable example of the politically correct). And yet it is inextricable from the truth of the stranger. Since moral correctness assumes that one receives the stranger by effacing his strangeness at the threshold, it would thus never have us receive him. But the stranger insists and breaks in. This is what is not easy to receive, nor, perhaps, to conceive..." Jean-Luc Nancy in *L'intrus* ed. Galilée, 2000

Can this position be the artist's one in the (public) space? Where public is intended as a potentiality of anywhere and anyone related to a given contest? I wish it were; it will.

Cordially yours,

the Intruder
(aka Valentina Vetturi)

Neuchâtel, 27 June 2016

SYNTHESIS OF THE SESSION

ALEXANDROS KYRIAKATOS

The *église* (church) in Montagnon is the space that the commune offered us as the location for our group meeting. The offering of this space is in accord with the memory of praxis embedded in the word *église*: that of a popular assembly (*Ecclesia*). Being in this space, which both constitutes and is constituted, we embarked on a free discussion on the interplay between the artist and the community. There were several current issues to clarify such as site specificity, production and all the necessary negotiations within collaborative projects. Inspired by the geographical position of Montagnon, located in midway between Leytron and Ovronnaz, we discussed the possibility of adopting an approach that is neither top-down nor bottom-up. Specifically, we found both non-context sensitive artistic production and social work-like production, that is art for the sake of the commune, to be inadequate. The position of the village, which was also the site of our discussion, at a midpoint, somehow prompted us to reflect on a bidirectional relationship between the artist and the community. We continued the discussion bearing in mind the difficulty that the word "community" brings to an artistic project, given the issue of demographics and participation of numbers of people. Another kind of definition started to emerge once one villager offered us cheese and the possibility of adopting a little goat. This simple gesture made it clear that the word "community" needs to be defined within the realm of social rela-

tionships, to the actual gesture of sharing and offering. The gift we received is an invitation to take part into a ritual of exchange, constructing a new meeting place between the artist/stranger and the community, the new and the familiar.

We reflected on our own contribution: did we give something back? It seems that our presence, our regard, the time and engagement did not go unnoticed. Indeed, for a while we might have been part of the community. And if that is the case, we do not need to give anything more, produced as a final work, but rather our presence, a *being there*.

We were informed that the land in and around Montagnon is floating in water, due to the high underground distribution of water of the area. The ground on which we stand is sliding, drifting, uncertain. We contemplated the disappearance of land, family, memory, language and that the artist is capable of making connections, piercing through absence and preserving lost traces. In the words of Malraux, only art can resist death. We agreed that we need to construct a space, a mental space to detach from the ordinary, a mental space where the imaginary could be inscribed as a collective production. This space where disappearance/resistance dialectics produce relations and expressions. We agreed that "useful" art retracts the very potential of art to exist. Art has the right to exist without obligations other than the responsibility to exist unappropriated, in affinity with the affect and the collective imagination. We propose that the final outcome will never be final, but an open-ended artistic process, in the form of a seminar that will constantly research ways to avoid instrumentalization. The proposed seminar will give the possibility for a collective reflection on art's proper content: resistance to disappearance and resistance by disappearance.



Ovronnaz – “top down” position

THE WORK OF LABOUR OF ART

JOHN BYRNE

At the initial meeting of the *¿Creative Villages?* Seminar the participants, myself included, were invited to consider ourselves and our activities as an artwork. For me, this invitation cut to the very quick of our ensuing debates and, also, to the key problematics that now confront a ‘contemporary art world’ that is struggling to “keep up” within an ever-expanding and globalized neo-liberal entertainment/infotainment sphere. As we all know, art, whatever that might now be, has long since lost its mantle or veneer of “avant-garde” leadership – art’s self-proclaimed and self-satisfied ontological status as cultural and political leader or barometer; a social compass whose North Star is always progress and the future. Instead, as we were encouraged to confront in our seminar, artists now work, more often than not, as project coordinators within extended networks of social engagement. Whether such a role indicates a surrender, on the part of art, artists and the art world, to the necessities of instrumentalized neoliberal logics (“doing the dirty work of neoliberalism in the name of art”) or the possibility of art, as somehow a special cultural activity, providing the last means and vestiges of resistance to the current political and economic status quo, is now largely a question of taste and position. The reality is that we are now in a struggle for whatever might be left of our future, in which art could possibly play a role in redefining what it might be like to become a new kind of subjectivity, a subjectivity still capable of growth and development beyond the bru-

tal reduction of our every nerve and fibre to the logic of capital. As such, the question we should be asking is not if art can somehow provide an alterity or alternative to the present condition, but how can we use art collectively, constitutively and politically to reimagine what art itself can be and become – as a tool of empowerment that enables us to collaboratively re-complexify the increasingly barren landscape of binary choice. This, in turn, will mean a shift away from our current obsession on the artwork, and its attendant aesthetic debates of identity, location and place, to a complex reconsideration of the kind of work, or labour, that the work of art has now (or could) become.

NOTES QUI SUIVENT LE SÉMINAIRE *¿Creative Villages?* ET DEUX SEMAINES DE RÉSIDENCE À OVRONNAZ DONT L’OBJECTIF ÉTAIT DE PENSER UNE INTERVENTION ARTISTIQUE

SUZANNE HUSKY

16/06/2016

Ovronnaz au Jacky Bar

Remarque d’une femme de 65 ans lisant un journal d’art contemporain et s’adressant à ses amis. «C’est très étrange, ces gens ne savent pas où se mettre. C’est comme s’ils se pensent supérieurs ou queqchose.» Dans ce contexte de village touristique, trouver sa place n’est pas une mince affaire. Les traits centenaires du léger passage des hommes et des bêtes sont

remplacés par une avalanche d'appartements tout confort vides et des complexes touristiques nourris de désirs manufacturés dans d'autres lieux tous plus soucieux de rentabilité que de cohésion urbaine. L'investisseur, le commerçant, le consommateur y trouvent leur place, mais l'artiste ne tombe dans aucune de ces catégories et dans ce contexte financiarisé, bulldozé, sulfaté par hélicoptère, on lui demande le poétique, la restauration du tissu social ou le spectaculaire.

Comment échapper à l'instrumentalisation par le politique à des fins touristiques, immobilières ou autres, est la question initiale du séminaire. Les artistes et représentants d'institutions présents autour de la table ne sont pas des victimes. Tous ont intégré les paramètres politiques et ont fait un travail herculéen afin de retourner la situation en vue de repenser des situations *site specific*. À l'image d'un monde en transition vers un post-capitalisme, post-individualisme, ces artistes et institutions artistiques modèlent, au mieux, un monde nouveau. L'«art utile», comme l'entend Tanya Brugera, est brandi comme une solution.

Les conversations de Leytron m'ont amené à lire William Morris (certainement à cause de la langue anglaise dominante mais aussi de la présence d'artistes anglais dans notre groupe de réflexion). Cet auteur réconcilie une pratique artistique antimoderne (où la modernité capitaliste hygiéniste et masculine asservit l'homme) et un communisme égalitaire sans état (dans son écofiction *Nouvelles de Nulle Part*, le parlement sert dorénavant à stocker le fumier). Une de ses descriptions de 1890 peut permettre une lecture du paysage suisse.

«Do not be deceived by the outside appearance of order in our plutocratic society. It fares with it as it does with the older norms of war, that there is an outside look of quite wonderful order about it how neat and comforting the steady march of the regiment how quiet and respectable the sergeants look how clean the polished cannon [...] the looks of adjutant and sergeant as innocent looking as may be, nay, the very orders for destruction and plunder are given with a quiet precision which seems the very token of a good conscience this is the

mask that lies before the ruined cornfield and the burning cottage, and mangled bodies, the untimely death of worthy men, the desolated home.» (William Morris, 1890)

Sur la commune de Leytron qui souhaite trouver une identité culturelle qui transcende ses services touristiques et sa croissance rapide, comment intervenir? Comment continuer une pratique artistique plutôt d'extrême gauche dans un contexte néolibéral? Comment fabriquer du tissu social et sauver le monde en étant parachuté sur du temps court? Comment faire entendre la poétique de l'invisible?

Le Nouveau Ministère de l'Agriculture répond à TOUTES vos attentes institutionnelles et plus: <http://www.nouveauministeredelagriculture.com>



RoundUp Ecolo Killer 2016. Made in Ovronnaz

LETTER TO *¿Creative Villages?*

HANS VAN HOUWELLINGEN

Dear Benoit,

A few words about my experience in the *¿Creative Villages?* seminar in Leytron. First of all I want to thank you much for the invitation, I was very pleased to take part in this discussion with such a good, and nice, group of participants. The highly detailed discussions in the different groups resulted in several options to implant art into the three locations in the area. We discussed most of the possible options, all the ins and outs, and most conceivable results and pitfalls, within several ethical frameworks. I don't think my personal feedback should be a resume of the matters discussed. I will try to give my private impression and opinion on the matter.

Most proposals in the seminar can be regarded within the category of social embeddedness. Art in public space is always highly dependent on social and political acceptance. As a result, the general artists' attitude today is to create socially embedded situations – it avoids the population's expectation of a traditional public artwork, and, at the same time, secures public acceptance for contemporary artistic practice. Although it is intelligible, I do not always think this is the most appropriate "answer". In looking for collaboration to produce the artwork, the artist's engagement with the inhabitants often turns out to be beneficial solely for the artist. Most often, the public is kind enough to participate, but it hardly ever reaches the awareness the artist intended.

The villages of Leytron, Montagnon and Ovrornaz are not familiar with contemporary art and there was not a plausible public need for the introduction of art. The idea of introducing art stems from a political reaction to economic decline. The "key" for me was the notion of the local politician that supports *¿Creative Villages?* (Alexandre Crettenand): art offers a possibility to say "fuck you". In other words: he feels the need for another language, on a platform that allows another kind of thinking and expression.

The villages might need a fresh new platform and languages other than the traditional ones that forcefully dominate the area, its politics and economics. My suggestion therefore would be to try to create "unembedded" possibilities, moments where the local people will be confronted with other understandings of living in that area. Situations that allow youngsters to join, having the old generation shake their heads, facing the unavoidable change of time and generations. The less compromise, the better.

I would say: say it loud!

A UTOPIAN FANTASY

OLIVIA LEAHY

A Utopia is defined by its lack of existence – the word itself means "no place" – however, there is a place in which a Utopia can exist: in the fantasies of the thinker. Fantasies are an essential privilege of artistic thinking; they can never be fully translated, resulting in the enigmatic presence of an artwork or artist. The production of fantastical worlds enables a thinker to abstract herself from a current social context and to use "what is" to propose "what can be".

How can autonomous Utopian fantasies be promoted in a rural context – a context that is accustomed (and required) to prioritise immediate pragmatic issues? Fantasies, in their privacy, can be uncorrupted by consensus. A fantasy is the sum of an individual's past (knowledge), their present (thought) and their future (hopes). The autonomy of these fantasies does not necessarily mean that they are anarchic; it does however facilitate the thinker to feel power and ownership over a world, even if that world only exists in their head. How can fantasy be re-defined as a powerful and liberating tool?

A group functions well when those involved are mutually invested in an atmosphere of respect and reasonable freedom, in which individuals can comfortably and effectively

perform their tasks. Freedom for any one individual always needs to be balanced against its impact on others – friction occurs where this is allowed into disequilibrium. Friction acts as a showcase, a public display of inequality. In the heat of performance, the nuances of the taciturn are lost and all that remains are undermining anecdotes of bickering villagers.

Fantasy has the ability to transcend social-economic boundaries if the host is given the structure to do so; and in doing so it has the ability to make profound critical analysis on the current context. Perhaps it is time to distance ourselves from the label of “art”, for its history and legacy discredit the shifting paradigm towards usefulness. Rather, it is time to look to the content of the goal. The goal is to create a society that asks more questions than it seeks answers. What better way to encourage questions than to develop them in the secret independent Utopias of a village?

INSECURITIES AND THEORETICAL BACKUPS

RACHEL MADER

Arriving at Ovronnaz on the first evening of our meetings we all seemed to be delighted, surprised and a bit disoriented at the same time: delighted by meeting a bunch of likable and interesting people; although knowing a bit where we would meet we were surprised by the environment the encounter took place: a huge wellness resort just slightly old-fashioned, but having some kind of charm and attraction exactly because of this; and then step by step a bit more disoriented by confronting these impressions with the task we had for this weekend – as open and relaxed it was formulated: reflect about what art could give to such a place, where traditional modes of gaining the income (basically farming and tourism) lost their capacity and with this a whole community needs to search for

new ways of securing their existence. There was no expectations that we should come out with concrete suggestions to solve this complex constellation. The idea of the meeting was much more that we should contribute to the overall theme from the backgrounds we have due to the things we did before.

As artists, theorists, teachers and researchers we were all familiar with the subject at stake: the request for arts taking on a concrete role in a specific social setting – at least we thought being familiar. Starting the discussion on saturday morning we lost certainties quite quick and thoroughly. This was represented in our discussion: how would it be possible to intervene in such a place with artistic and/or curatorial means without uncritically serve interests we can't support in the first place? Namely using art as tool for gentrifying even rural areas? Very quickly the discussion became rather theoretical due to the effort to fully understand the situation on site. Some keywords were mentioned very often (like neoliberalism as a diagnosis for the current state of society in general) and although we didn't lost the issue out of sight, it became clear that our approach was more or less moving on a theory-oriented meta-level.

And I guess the seminar was a very fruitful exercise because it addressed this gap: the gap between meta-competences and local insecurities. The dominance of the meta-theoretical debates in our discussion is representative for an issue that is at stake for all kind of similar meetings, projects, initiatives etc.: how can we interact with the complex and antagonistic situations real life offers out of a theoretically informed position, that tends to a purist argumentation? Artistic and/or curatorial practices often are very precise and courageous attempts and theory (be it philosophical or cultural criticism) tends to ignore exactly the potential locally situated interventions lay off due to its interest for overall analyses. Taking this serious would mean to re-discuss the interaction between practical and theoretical gestures, the meeting in Leytron was a first step within this huge task.

OVRONNAZ – LEYTRON

FRANÇOIS DEY

Desperately looking for a house, after visits to studios, in chalet-like apartment buildings, we had to turn down the offer of a cottage for 1700 Swiss francs. I had somehow started to call every advertisement on the tourism webpage of the holiday resort of Ovronnaz. Either too late to get it right away, or too expensive, or just at the wrong spot, as in the commune of Chamoson, I finally got on the phone with Marie-Gabrielle. She had already heard of me, given the fact that I had, previously, tried to call every brass band director, as well as every choir in the village, in order to set up the opening performance. The word must have got around, that a young man was looking for musicians as well as for housing. This apartment was to be vacant by the end of March, and as she told me, her husband was an architect, and so she said, “that flat is a perfect match for an artist – it has such cachet.”

By March 26, a Saturday, after a day of skiing, I had arrived at the “Plein Soleil C”, to meet Guy and Marie-Ga, and discover their lovely apart-

ment. Guy had collected old wooden beams and boards, unwanted by the house owners for whom he worked as a foreman, rebuilding their cottages into modern chalets. He had thus furnished his whole apartment, every corner and surface, with these old planks, giving the feeling of a real rustic style. He had built the three apartment blocks, next to one another, with something like nine flats in each of them, with an individual entrance for each home. They had certainly chosen the best-positioned slot for themselves. We could see the mountains in the back, as well as the whole valley, and the Mont Ardève on the left. That same afternoon, he proudly brought me onto the balcony, and showed me his old wooden beam, used in the roof structure of his apartment. I immediately fell in love with that residence, because it had something very uncommon. We could see he had built everything himself, from the shelves to the kitchen. The arrangement of the old wooden beams was wonderful as it mimicked the idea of being structural, but in fact, it was only here for decoration. The most important spot was the fireplace, which took up about a third of the living room. A whole set of benches, made of stones, that would begin from the furnace, formed seats for about eight people around the chimney, and then continued as a stone wall. It was a most ingenious use of space.

Much was being talked about, in the village and its cafes. I noticed this was to be a possible source of information. Slowly I started to visit, regularly, the different bars, at the top of Ovronnaz, or in between, in Montagnon and Produit, or at the bottom in Leytron. I could feel a very different atmosphere at each height. While in Leytron something was going on between the two main political sides, there was another contrast being felt from the plateau to its tops. The word, “montagnard”, a sort of mountain dweller, would be used sometimes to name the people from above. The ski resort was living off tourism and its housing market while the bottom was flourishing with all kinds of industries as well as with the winemaking. The middle ground seemed out of the discussion and perhaps enjoyed a less polarized situation. I mostly recall encountering the “friends of the bread oven” association. The idea of gathering, or the making of society was very present in Valais. I understood it as, “having the right to say something about something you take part in”. As one volunteer helper told me the day





they were baking bread, “I can help and give a hand, but I have no right to say how they should cook it, I’m not part of the association.”

In Leytron, each political party had their respective cafes and restaurant, accompanied by their own shop, their own auditorium for parties and gatherings, as well as their respective brass band with their own rehearsal room, all within the same building complex. This situation wasn’t anything special, as it happened all over the canton of Valais, in different variants, and sometimes, simply with a fusion between the two sides, especially for the brass bands, as the number of new musicians was falling. It often came up in early discussion about the village: when a stranger came from outside, he was introduced to this existing polarity. They also said it would make the quality of music better because they competed. Nowadays, the radical party was in the majority within the municipal council and thus, most, if not all people working for the village were on that side. As an external figure of possible neutrality, people might have felt it was an opportunity to tell me some stories from behind the bar.

This is how, I was told about, Guy, who was referred to me as “Le Corbusier of the village”. He had built the somewhat modern church, in

the upper village of Ovronnaz. In Leytron, as I proudly displayed my local knowledge, I was to be told by a passer-by, around the “Café de la Coop”, “Pfff, he is no architect, he bought the plans from a French architect. The same building is standing somewhere in the region of Savoie.” These comments reminded me of how small the village was, and how everyone needed to fight their own corner. Guy was perhaps more from the conservative side. He told me about the idea of preserving the authenticity of the “Café de l’Union”, a wooden bar of a most interesting shape, as well as its arched windows and the whole structure made of tuff stones. He felt just sorry, because the wooden floor had been replaced by a set of tiles, which, of course, made its maintenance much easier for the new owner of the restaurant.

I wake up sort of early in these soft sheets and my head hurts. Not the head, but a spot right before the ear is getting something like electrical impulses. Thinking about a walk, I’m trying to decide if I should take the skateboard or not. I decide not to. I’d be better take a look at this road as a little piece of research. The snow is nothing but a sort of little dirt mountain on the side of the road. The road surface isn’t really

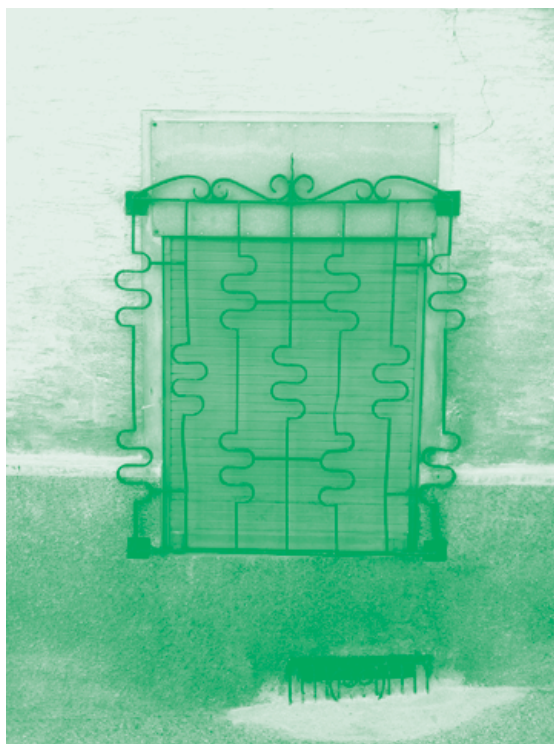


clearly delimited on its downward side. As if the earth would crumble or slide down while the asphalt would remain as a flat surface with nothing beneath it. At other times the layer of bitumen would simply crack and looked as if it had been sucked from beneath the ground. Somewhere along the side road I imagine, the road workers or perhaps friends of the next house owner have even extended or further shaped the asphalt edge into four stairs leading toward the entrance of a cottage.

The traffic isn't busy but drivers have a sense of racing here. Later, I also noticed when driving along that road that drivers ahead of me would stop their car in a layby, let me pass by and continue their drive. Maybe my black Audi A4 gave that same feeling of racing car danger. On the other hand, when I was driving up the mountain, from Leytron to Ovronnaz, most of the time the cars behind me would actually overtake. Even women, not to comment on how men and women drive, but it made me feel as though I'm not really part of the village yet. I thought I had the right-looking car and the "VS" plates, but they noticed I just didn't drive fast enough along the serpentine curves.

I enter the first bakery shop and ask directly if it would be possible to pin. In order to avoid a situation, I comment and say something nice about their chocolate rabbits. I can still taste the big 440 gram chocolate rabbit bought at the Coop, which tasted like white sugar. She says, "thanks", and explains they've got a laboratory down in Leytron, a bakery as well, just next to the pharmacy. I do this thing I always do in shops, as if today was to be different. I say, "I'll make a decision soon". Not with words, but perhaps with a sort of body position while moving my eyes. I ask her if they've got any wheat bread and she starts going through the list, detailing me each and every bread they have. After five, I stop her and say, "The chasseur will be fine, with the something seeds". My card doesn't work again. Lately this has just become reality, as if Holland was too far away. As if I had to explain I'm not poor but somehow the card is empty. I mumble something and say, "My Swiss card, I don't know the code".

I must have said that I was sorry and perhaps have asked for a possible cash machine, though I already knew already it wasn't going to hap-



pen. Still, with my positive attitude, I say I will try. She's very nice and says, "That's no problem". I can just come back. She'll be in until Wednesday. I also ask her where she lives and she says, "here", not down. I'm surprised. I level what I'm asking and wonder if that's too much to ask. So I try the post thing. There isn't an ATM. "Hello, could I take out some money?"

– "No, only with the PostCard." There is something too polite about the people, either because they do not know me or because it's Switzerland or because I move and speak differently. The thermal baths, this is where I'm heading now. Entering some buildings with their yellowish barriers and tunnels. I get muddled in the maze of residential apartments.

I am somewhat surprised every door is open. You can just walk in, from any of the outside entrances and hang around the passageways, if you like. Every tunnel leads to a wider area, organized with soft corner sofas placed around a table. Every time the same set, for about five to six people. I never saw anyone sitting there. It is like a functional decoration, giving the possibility of resting and relaxing, maybe waiting for someone in the corridor or perhaps for the elevator. Painting and sculptures are also hung or stand every three to four meters, with their

respective prices. A choice of mostly golden and silver tones, each piece is thus like a monochrome. The temperature is warm, the whole inside space is like a prolongation of the bathing and wellness feeling. At some point I get this image of a Space Odyssey in my mind, perhaps it's the dressing gowns or the pentagon shape of the tunnel itself, a mix of something very old and futuristic at the same time.

I feel I am part of the crowd of bathers but on the other hand I feel I am a sort of intruder, walking with my black cowboy boots and my loaf of fresh bread under my arm, among mostly couples and old folks here.

I finally get toward the entrance and the shop. First I try the ATM, but again I see that something is going wrong. I do not get that sweet noise of bank notes flickering out of the machine, but simply the message, "Transaction not possible". I enter the restaurant having the feeling that I do not have a penny and look straight at the man in charge at the moment, a young man possibly from Portugal or Spain. Feeling pretty shabby, I ask him if they're having a concert at the bar or in the restaurant. "Yes, in the bar," he says. I'm looking for a possible stage for Hans to play his Neoschlager. I feel as though I'm becoming a keyboard play-

er at that moment and so I add the fact that I'm working on a cultural project and say that we'll be inviting artists to perform sometime soon. He says he's not going to give anyone his boss's name or number. I can leave mine if I want, "Creative Villages, François Dey, my number". They do a concert once a month. As for the pool, they do not do the film screenings anymore. He does not know. He has never been. "All right," I say, I'll find a way to contact him. I wait a little bit and turn back to some bathers to get a photo of the bar with people in towels walking by. I take a final moment at the information point and check what their calendar looks like. Saturdays are black jack poker. I make my way out, picture the glass barrier with its Ovronnaz baths sign repaired with heavy brown tape and arrive at the garage exit. I walk right up the grass to finally get to the road.

My pain gets a little worse. I'm working on something, basically emailing and surfing.

Someone had told me about the broken organ in the Church of St-Martin in Leytron, and these two words had since remained stuck in my mind. The news had already gone around the village that I was interested in the old instrument, so one evening at an opening of the old church, an elderly lady introduced herself to me with her daughter, and asked me if I was the artist interested in the organ. She told me about the last and possibly only player of the time, a certain Marc Goddard, a school-teacher back then. She said he sort of built it for himself and had no special motivation in teaching the instrument to the next generation, "They should try the violin if they want to play music". Once he was gone, the machine must have started to decay, because as one organ player had told me, "the worst thing you can do is not play it".

Once I had found out where the key was – that is, the bell-tower key hidden behind the flag of the St-Cecile choir, in the glass case at the top of the staircase leading to the gallery, and the gallery key in the sacristy room, for which the key was hidden under a carpet on a mid-height marble table, right next to its door – I would regularly visit the church and start opening the





cabinet of the instrument in order to look at it, and try to figure out how I would get the ventilation system started. At other times, I came round and blew some pipes, emptying them of their dust and respective chunks of wall that had fallen inside them, perhaps at the time of the wall renovation. I would make the note resonate in the whole space of the church and feel the organ come alive for a second. Asking around I had found out someone had already tried to start the instrument, but with no luck. He had then made a very detailed visual report of the machine.

The solution seemed so close, I had put this goal in my mind, I would start this engine and make this organ breathe again very soon. First, I made sure I understood the electrical wiring, and then figured out I knew what I was doing, I reconnected the three-phase current. It must have been a Tuesday as Jackie, whom I knew from the church, was sitting in the front row on the right, staring at the Eucharist. Although very rare in other villages, Leytron still had the custom of adoration, every Tuesday, the working day as we call it in other languages; from morning until evening, a schedule was arranged so that someone would be watching the Eucharist at every moment, throughout the day. I went down and told Jackie I was trying

to fix the engine of the turbine and he looked at me and acknowledged, "Sure, no problem!" The tension grew in me, I was ready to switch on the knob on the right side of the keyboard and hopefully hear the blessed sound of the turbine engine. I turned on and nothing happened, or seemed to have happened. I went down to check the circuit board and yes, a fuse had blown. Determined not to leave it there, I decided to give it another chance. I had reset the main push-button and this time, decided to get right into the engine to find out what was going on. I asked Renata to turn it on. Still nothing but the roar of another motor could be heard once I was back at the gallery. For a while I thought the turbine must have finally started, just after I left it. I then noticed half of the church lights were not working by now. I pushed some notes of the keyboard in a hopeless attempt. I started getting worried.

Thinking to myself it would be all right, I went down to Jackie. He was still looking at the Jesus figure, within the Eucharist. This one was now sort of slightly flashing in its golden tones, almost like a commercial sign. I waited for a while. He seemed very concentrated. I looked at him and said, "Sorry! I think something happened. I thought I knew what I was doing but possibly not." We approached the light and wondered. He tried to unplug the LED chain around the Jesus but nothing much happened. He plugged it back and now it was truly not working anymore.

We walked to the sacristy room and looked at the electrical circuit. Most of the fuses were now in the off position and didn't want to be switched back on. I was getting really concerned but tried to remain calm. Jackie was very serene. Not sure what to do, I went back to the gallery and nearly started to shake. The background noise could still be heard and then Jackie looked at me and said, "There's some smoke down here." This is when I got really nervous.

Meanwhile some new people entered the church. A woman dressed as if she was about to get married, some children and some more people with them. They also seemed very comfortable walking around. They noticed something was going on with me: my face must have betrayed me. "Is everything all

LE POSITIONNEMENT D'UN ARTISTE QUI NE CRÉE PAS

JUOZAS LAIVYS

Le moment présent a toujours été un des principaux enjeux de ma démarche artistique. La création d'actions ici et maintenant, là où se trouvent de multiples traces du passé et où le futur n'est pas encore défini, me permet de marquer le temps présent en tant que tel, de le modeler. Cette approche peut être perçue comme un des éléments essentiels de ma créativité aussi bien que de ma «non-créativité».

Vingt années d'activité artistique intense et de réflexion constante sur ces questions ont confirmé mon sentiment que les œuvres d'art vivaient indépendamment de leur créateur. Les œuvres ne sont pas seulement capables de survivre à leur auteur, dans des situations particulières, elles peuvent même générer de nouvelles œuvres par elles-mêmes. Dans le but d'approfondir les relations entre des œuvres et leur auteur et d'établir de nouvelles formes de connections entre eux, une institution a d'ailleurs vu le jour en 2011 sous le nom de Programme de Kleopas, auquel mes œuvres et moi-même prenons part.

En 2015, à l'approche de mes 40 ans, j'ai décidé de suspendre mes activités artistiques pour une durée de quatorze ans. Cette décision vient du désir d'essayer de vivre la vie que Paul Gauguin aurait eue, si le célèbre artiste postimpressionniste n'avait pas passé les quatorze dernières années de sa vie à peindre les chefs-d'œuvre que tout le monde connaît. Étant intéressé par des éléments biographiques de sa vie (je pense au fait qu'il ait renoncé à sa carrière de courtier en bourse pour dédier les dernières années de sa vie à un projet pictural), j'ai adopté ce positionnement qui pourrait être interprété comme la tentative de transformer une vie personnelle en œuvre d'art.

Je conçois ma vie «gauguinienne» comme une véritable performance: mes voyages, mes rendez-vous, ainsi que les artefacts et photographies qui documentent ma vie en tant que Gauguin-qui-n'aurait-pas-décidé-de-devenir-



right? We have a wedding ceremony tomorrow so we're here now to have our rehearsal session with the music." –“No problem”, I replied, “just some fuses...” I just hoped in my mind the CD player would actually work and they would perhaps not notice half of the church lights were now off. The heating system of the church was now blocked or somehow running on less electricity. I climbed down to the cellar and saw the big machine making this abnormal noise, like it would soon just burn or something. I was envisioning the end of it all: a 60,000 francs bill was now at stake, I thought.

We tried to call the technical services whose numbers hanging on the closet door, but nothing. It was certainly not a Tuesday but a Friday and it was Corpus Christi day. Not knowing what to do we phoned Stéphane. I knew it was a bad idea as he had told me he was going to Europapark this weekend with his family. He was still here, having a drink at the open cellars weekend for wine tasting. I explained it was bad and didn't know what to do. Ten minutes later, there he was, unperturbed as always. He found out the pump was having a problem, he turned it all off. He would get in touch with a real electrician and see what was to be done.

un-artiste me font ponctuellement coïncider avec cet Autre fictif. Ainsi, toutes les choses qui relèveraient *a priori* de l'aléatoire ou de la routine de la vie de tous les jours se chargent de significations nouvelles, ouvertes à de multiples interprétations, même contradictoires, qui sont les conditions fondamentales de la créativité. *In fine*, cette nouvelle vie sans créer m'a fait comprendre que le plus important est de travailler avec plaisir... ce qui ne veut pas forcément dire pour le plaisir.

Un des enjeux principaux de cette démarche est de transgresser les idées reçues, limitatives, sur les artistes ou sur ce que l'on considère généralement comme un travail artistique. J'aimerais que tout un chacun puisse décider de lui ou d'elle-même, en toute liberté, ce qui ressort de l'art ou pas, en laissant bien sûr ouverte la possibilité de revenir sur ses choix et de les changer à l'envi. À travers un tel positionnement, quatorze années sans travail artistique apparent pourraient bien se révéler plus sensées et remplies qu'une vie prétendument pleine de créativité. J'ai bien conscience que ce choix est difficile à expliquer et qu'il peut être rejeté par le corps social... bien que, si l'on considère la perte de valeurs humanistes basiques qui caractérisent notre société actuelle, le geste d'un artiste qui renonce à créer puisse ne pas être déraisonnable.

Où commence et où finit la création ?

Qu'aurait été le monde sans le postimpressionnisme ?

Est-ce qu'une vie créative est possible ?

Ces questions restent en suspens...



THE GESTURE OF AN ARTIST WHO DOES NOT CREATE

JUOZAS LAIVYS

The present moment has always been one of the mainstays of my artistic practice. Creating actions in the here and now, surrounded by multiple examples of evidence of the past and the future not yet realized, allows me to mark the present as such, to model it. This approach could be seen as a fundamental element of both my creativity and "noncreativity."

20 years of intense artistic practice and constant reflection on this topic have confirmed my feeling that artworks have a life apart from their creators; artworks are not only able to live longer; in certain circumstances they can even generate new artworks. In order to strengthen the relationship between artworks and their author, and to establish new forms of connection between them, an institution was created in 2011 under the name of "The Fellowship of Kleopas," to which my works and I belong.

In 2015, approaching the age of 40, I decided to suspend my artistic practice for 14 years. This decision stemmed from the desire to live the life Paul Gauguin would have had if the famous post-impressionist artist hadn't spent the last 14 years of his life painting the masterpieces everyone knows. Interested in specific biographical elements of his life (in particular the fact that he decided to stop his career as a stockbroker to dedicate the last years of his life to painting), I adopted a position that could be interpreted as an attempt to transform one's personal life into an artwork.

I consider my "Gauguin-ish" existence as an authentic performance. My trips and meetings as well as the artifacts and photographs documenting my life as Gauguin-who-would-not-have-decided-to-be-an-artist allow me to coincide on occasion with this fictional Other. Thus, all the apparently random things of everyday life are provided with new meanings and open to multiple interpretations – even if they are contradictory – which are consistent with the very condition of creativity. Ultimately, this new life without creating has made me understand that the most important thing is to work with pleasure... and I don't mean to work just for the pleasure.

One of the mainstays of this approach is to quash the received wisdom – which is very restrictive – on what one generally takes for an artistic work or an artist. I would like anybody to decide what is art or not, and to freely change their mind as many times as they want. Based on such a position, 14 years without artistic practice could turn out to be more meaningful than life, which pretends to be full of creativity. I'm aware that this choice may be hard to understand and that it may be socially rejected... but if one takes into account the cur-

rent loss of basic humanistic values that characterize our time, the gesture of an artist who does not create might not appear so foolish.

Where does creation start and end?

What would the world have been without post-impressionism?

Is a creative life possible?

These issues remain unsolved.

UN ART AU SERVICE DE L'ÉCONOMIE ? *À Creative Villages?* À LEYTRON, LE DÉBAT EST OUVERT.

AUDE DEVANTHÉRY

La table ronde du 30 avril 2016 sur la question rassemble des spécialistes de la sociologie et de l'économie, ainsi qu'un public bien présent et plus ou moins directement touché par cette thématique plus que jamais d'actualité.

Instinctivement, la question ramène au marché de l'art et à ses prix records, aux fameuses sociétés de ventes aux enchères, aux foires internationales ainsi qu'aux grandes métropoles de l'art contemporain. Si ces passerelles de l'économie de l'art englobent à elles seules la quasi-totalité du marché de l'art contemporain, il n'en demeure pas moins une véritable économie de projet outre leurs frontières.

Ainsi voit-on fleurir nombre de projets artistiques s'intéressant aussi bien au processus de création qu'à l'œuvre elle-même, comme cela est le cas notamment pour les résidences d'artistes. Cette démarche est largement adoptée par la plupart des institutions publiques qui n'ont aujourd'hui plus les moyens d'être actives sur le marché de l'art et se tournent vers les collectivités, qui vont permettre la réalisation de ces projets. Toutefois, si les collectivités publiques sont prêtes à s'enga-

ger financièrement, c'est bel et bien parce qu'il existe un enjeu économique. Un phénomène que l'on nomme économie créative, ou comment booster l'économie locale grâce à la culture. L'art devient alors une ressource de la région, à l'instar de ce qui se fait dans toutes les grandes villes. Reste à savoir si ce modèle produit un effet vertueux sur un territoire à échelle réduite ne présentant naturellement pas les mêmes ressources en termes de culture et de fréquentation qu'une grande ville ou qu'une métropole.

Dominique Sagot-Duvaurox, économiste et chercheur, attire l'attention sur le côté pervers d'une telle méthode, qui tend à mesurer l'impact de la culture en termes de coût et non en termes d'investissement. Une tendance omniprésente pour le moins réductrice sachant que l'économie de projet favorise notamment le développement des territoires. De surcroît, la plus-value produite par la création artistique échappe totalement aux principaux acteurs de la culture pour se greffer, par exemple, aux prix de l'immobilier. Ainsi, la culture devient un moyen et non pas une fin en soi. Un tel détournement amène donc à s'interroger sur les problématiques de l'instrumentalisation et de l'autonomie de la culture. En effet, est-il envisageable de faire collaborer art et société sans que le premier devienne un instrument au nom de l'économie ou du développement social? Quant à l'artiste, peut-il créer indépendamment de toute époque et de toute société? N'est-il pas, automatiquement, sujet à un conditionnement, quel qu'il soit?

Originaire de Fribourg et installé à Amsterdam depuis près de dix ans, l'artiste François Dey confirme que le processus de création est, pour lui, tout à fait différent selon le public auquel il s'adresse. S'il assure, en ville, délaissier la question de l'enjeu et de l'intérêt du public, celle-ci occupe, en revanche, une place primordiale au sein d'un village. Aussi, pour son exposition à *Creative Villages?* en avril 2016, l'artiste a véritablement cherché à s'imprégner du lieu et de son histoire locale, «pas forcément pour toucher un public plus large, mais par curiosité et par respect», dit-il.

Guy Saez, sociologue spécialisé notamment dans la sociologie de l'action publique et la recomposition des systèmes territoriaux, préfère, plutôt qu'une forme d'instrumentalisation, évoquer des champs de tension existant entre la culture et l'économie, de même qu'entre les différents fac-

teurs de la culture, par exemple entre le global et le local ou encore entre l'institution et la collectivité. Un enjeu particulièrement stimulant pour les communautés villageoises qui, n'échappant pas à une dynamique de globalisation, ont tout à gagner en tendant vers une recherche d'appropriation et vers une volonté de faire exister la communauté en tant qu'entité à part entière.

Le débat reste donc ouvert et concerne directement *¿Creative Villages?*, dont le projet est soutenu par Pro Helvetia, la HES-SO, la Loterie romande, le Service de la culture de l'État du Valais et la Commune de Leytron. Avec ce programme artistique prometteur, le conseiller communal Alexandre Crettenand et l'historien de l'art Benoît Antille espèrent notamment créer des ponts entre les villageois et susciter une nouvelle forme d'appartenance. Pourvu que culture et économie puissent, dès lors, y former un champ de tension propice à son avenir!

PROGRAMME AOÛT-DÉCEMBRE 2016*

Samedi 27 août à 20:30 **Concert** de Bachar Mar Khalifé (FR/LB) aux Bains d'Ovronnaz, collaboration entre le PALP Festival, *¿Creative Villages?* la Commune de Leytron et les Bains d'Ovronnaz.

Dimanche 28 août *¿Creative Villages?* participe au **rallye** de l'Université Populaire de Leytron

Samedi 10 septembre à 10:30 À la buvette de Loutze: *Poétique du Banc*, une **conférence en plein air** de Michael Jakob (professeur de théorie et histoire du paysage à la Haute école du paysage, d'ingénierie et d'architecture, Genève, professeur de littérature comparée à l'université de Grenoble et chargé de cours à l'EPFL)

Vendredi 30 septembre à 17:30 **Vernissage** de l'exposition «*UFOMANY: réflexion sur le projet d'artiste*», Július Koller (SK), Juozas Laivys (LT), Vincent Fournier (CH) et Carlo Schmidt (CH), jeudi/vendredi 17h–19h, samedi/dimanche 14h–17h, du 30.09 au

6.10 et du 17.10 au 18.12 (interruption de l'exposition du 6.10 au 17.10 pour l'Humagne en Fête)

Jeudi 13 octobre à 18:00 À l'ancienne église, **conférence** de Jean-Pierre Boutinet (Enseignant-chercheur en Psychosociologie, Professeur honoraire à l'Université catholique de l'Ouest d'Angers, ancien Professeur suppléant à l'Université de Genève, Professeur associé à l'Université de Sherbrooke au Canada): «Les logiques du «projet», entre création et pratique managériale»

Du 8 au 16 octobre **Workshop** *Curating the Alps – In Search of Alternative Models*, entre l'École cantonale d'art du Valais (Sierre) et le California College of the Arts (San Francisco): à la recherche d'approches curatoriales alternatives pour le Valais, avec des interventions de Jeroen Boomgaard (NL), John Byrne (UK), Séverin Guelpa (CH), Simon Lamunière (CH), Marianne Lanavère (FR), Janis Osolin (CH), Adam Sutherland (UK), Elizabeth Thomas (US) et Natalia Huser (CH).

Les 11 et 12 novembre **Humagne en Fête 2016**, travail photographique de Gilbert Vogt (CH) sur les vignobles et vignerons de la région, durant la vendange 2016

7 et 8 décembre de 18:00 – 22:00 *¿Creative Villages?* participe à la **Nuit de l'Image** à Riddes: **photographies** de Katerina Samara

Samedi 17 décembre à 10:00 **Pour le finissage:** discussion sur la notion de temporalité dans le projet artistique, autour de l'œuvre de Vincent Fournier, en présence de l'artiste et d'autres invités.

Décembre **Sortie du journal** *¿Creative Villages?* #3

RÉSIDENCES D'ARTISTES

20 août – 8 septembre Juozas Laivys (LT)

10 – 30 septembre Olivia Leahy (GB) & Lou Atessa Marcellin (FR)

8 – 16 octobre California College of the Arts (USA)

Octobre – novembre Francisco Camacho (CO)

* D'autres événements s'ajouteront à cette liste, pour en savoir plus consultez notre site Internet creative-villages.ch ou rejoignez-vous sur Facebook

BIOGRAPHIES

Born in Switzerland, **Benoit Antille** graduated from the MA Program in Classical Archeology and Art History at the Fribourg University (Switzerland, 2001) and from the Curatorial Practice MA Program at the California College of the Arts in San Francisco (2011). He currently works as researcher for the École Cantonale d'art du Valais (ECAV) and independent curator. He is co-director of MAXXX – Project Space, leads the project *¿Creative Villages?*.

Nils van Beek is partner and curator at TAAK, a collective of curators and producers of art projects in the public domain. He studied art history at the University of Amsterdam. Van Beek worked as a curator for SKOR | Foundation for Art and Public Domain, and longer ago as the coordinator of Sandberg2/Mariakapel in Hoorn and as an art theory teacher at the AKV / Sint Joost and the HKU. Currently, he is also artistic leader of KiK, an artist in residence in a former dairy factory in the rural village Kolderveen.

John Byrne is currently a Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) and is also LJMU's coordinator for 'The Uses of Art' Project. Byrne is currently developing research for LJMU's School of Art and Design and the L'Internationale Confederation around the area of art, use and value and is currently the Managing Editor of the L'Internationale "Constituencies" research strand. Byrne also works closely with the Asociacion de Arte Útil and, over the last two decades, has published internationally on issues of art, technology and popular culture.

Jeroen Boomgaard is trained as an art historian. Since 2003 he is working as Professor of Art and Public Space at Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam. At the Universiteit van Amsterdam he is head of a Master Artistic Research. In 2011 he published *Wild Park*. Commissioning the *Unexpected* which contains his key theses on art in the public domain. In 2016 a collection of essays edited by him together with Rogier Brom will be published by Valiz Publishers with the title *Being Public*.

Née en 1988 en Valais, **Aude Devanthéry** a étudié l'histoire de l'art et la conservation du patrimoine bâti à l'Université de Berne. Ses intérêts se portent notamment sur la promotion de l'art contemporain et la question de la réhabilitation d'édifices.

Born in Switzerland **François Dey**, studied engineering in the University of Fribourg, photography with Friedl Kubelka in Vienna, fine arts at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam and has been researcher at the Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht. His practice lies in between the everyday and the attempt of taking distance. Wandering thus around the structures, he seems to be hardly thinking of them.

Eva Fotiadi is Fellow in the Context of the DRS Fellowship Program Postdoc International (POINT) at the Dahlem Humanities Center. She investigates the relevance of theories of the event from aesthetics, performance and philosophy for the politics of artistic actions, as well as for the aesthetics of political actions in public space in Athens (Greece) since the early 2000s. In 2014 Eva was a visiting fellow in Hellenic Studies at Princeton University. Prior to that she was a lecturer in contemporary art and theory at the University of Amsterdam, where she also completed her PhD in 2009.

Javier González Pesce is a Chilean Visual Artist based in the city of Sierre, Switzerland. I hold a BA in Fine Arts at the Arcis University (2008, Santiago, Chile) and currently I am coursing an MA in Art in the Public Sphere (with support of the SACHA Scholarship) at ECAV, Sierre, Switzerland where I live since September 2015. Since 2006 I have participated in numerous collective and solo exhibitions in Santiago in different institutions (private and public) and aboard. Since 2011 I am director of the independent art project LOCAL (Santiago, Chile).

Ronny Hardliz is an independent practicing artist and researcher holding an MA in Architecture from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Lausanne. Currently he is candidate for a mixed mode PhD entitled "wall sandwich" – The Architectural in Art Practice from Destruction to Non-Construction at the Art & Design Research Institute of Middlesex University in London, and Swiss National Science Foundation DocMobility fellow at the doctoral degree program "Curatorial/Knowledge" within the Department of Visual Culture at Goldsmiths University of London.

Hans van Houwelingen (1957) was educated at the Minerva Art Academy in Groningen (Netherlands) and at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam. His work is internationally manifested in the form of interventions in public space, exhibitions, lectures and publications, in which he investigates the relations between art, politics and ideology. He realized various exhibitions and various permanent projects in public space. He publishes regularly in newspapers and magazines.

Diplômée de l'école des beaux-arts de Bordeaux et certifiée en Paysagisme horticole à Merritt college, Oakland, Californie, **Suzanne Husky** a enseigné le paysage à l'ESAD d'Orléans pendant 2 ans. Elle vit et travaille en France et aux États-Unis. Elle est maintenant ministre du Nouveau Ministère de l'Agriculture. Avant cette charge, elle menait un travail dont les enjeux étaient intimement liés à ceux de son époque: extractivisme et relations aux non humains, capitalisme, résistance anti-consumériste et précarité.

Robert Ireland, né en 1964 a fait ses études à l'École cantonale d'Art de Lausanne. Il réalise régulièrement des interventions artistiques dans l'espace public ou architectural, qu'elles soient pérennes ou temporaires. Il écrit régulièrement des textes critiques sur l'art (Acouphènes; in Proximité réduite-Rudy Decelière; Intro-rétro/spectif; Tunnel In Tunnel Verlängerung; A. Epars et D-R. Hunziker) et l'architecture (Pavilions/art in architecture; Le paysage envisagé). Il a enseigné à l'EPFL (Collège des Humanités et ENAC), ainsi qu'à la HEP. Il enseigne actuellement à l'ECAV.

Alexandros Kyriakatos originally trained as a psychologist and neuroscientist is currently a student of the MAPS program in ECAV. Of Greek origin, he lives in Lausanne since 2010 and he is a member of the association Sleep-in under the Social Service of the city of Lausanne (SSL). He is also member of the artist collective *err based in the art space Topic in Geneva.

A conceptual artist for twenty years, **Juozas Laivys** decided to stop his artistic practice for fourteen years, in order to live the life Paul Gauguin would have had, if the famous French postimpressionist didn't have decided to become an artist. Before, Laivys was doing sculptures, objects, installations, performance art, oral texts, video and photography. He graduated from the Vilnius Academy of Arts with a degree in sculpture in 2001.

Olivia Leahy is a freelance curator and writer based in London, UK. She worked as Curator at Grizedale Arts (2015–16) and has curated projects at Wysing Art Centre (2014), ACME Project Space (2015) and Lewisham Art House (2015), amongst others. A graduate of the RCA MA Curating Contemporary Art course, Olivia has a long-standing interest in utopian/dystopian narratives in contemporary art. This interest is routed in how they are enacted in text, in gallery spaces and how institutions can be formed from them. Olivia writes speculative fiction alongside her curatorial work.

Rachel Mader is an art researcher; since 2012 she has directed the competence centre Art, Design & Public Spheres, at the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Art; 2009–14 head of project “Organising contemporary arts: structures, production and narrations” (to be published in 2017).

Tine Melzer connects philosophy of language with visual art and her main motif is language. She works as an artist and researcher and has taught at academies and universities since 2004. Her work has been exhibited and published internationally. She studied Fine Arts at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam and Philosophy at the University of Amsterdam, before undertaking post-graduate research at the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten and receiving a PhD from the University of Plymouth, UK.

Eric Philippoz is a visual artist working with video, installation, drawing, performance and text. He holds a Bachelor from the Haute école d’art et de design de Genève (art/medias) and a Master-degree from the ArtEZ Dutch Art Institute (Arnhem, The Netherlands). Recently, he initiated the project “Hotel Philippoz”, a residency and art events programme located in his grandmother’s house undergoing full renovations. Within a year, twelve international artists stayed at “Hotel Philippoz” and engaged a dialogue with the place and its memory.

Curdin Tones has been pursuing his sculptural art practice since his graduation in 2003 at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam. At current he is based both in Amsterdam (NL) and Tschlin (CH). In addition to his practice Tones is involved in art education both as tutor in Amsterdam and occasionally as guest tutor in different Academies in Europe. In 2014 he was working in Marfa (US) for Fieldworks. Currently he is setting up an artist initiative in a small alpine village Tschlin (CH) that aims at developing projects around the notions of independence and vulnerability.

Valentina Vetturi’s art interweaves writing performance and memory. Her works are the result of long processes involving fragments of apparently diverse forms of reality. The countless invisible characters and voices that inhabit her performances and installations lie on the never-ending borderline between presence and absence, interpreting the world around us. Her works have been shown in public and private institutions. In the upcoming months, she will be artist in Residence at the Italian Cultural Institute of Stockholm.

Giny Vos studied at the Rietveld Academie and the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. As a visual artist she has realized large installations with light in public space since 1985. Key works are: Work To Do (1985), Lust for Life (2000), Travelling Sand (2008) and Passage de la Baleine (2015). In 2011 a book was published on her work with the title Singing in the Dark (Valiz Publishers, Amsterdam). For a survey of her work see www.ginyvos.nl

Ce journal a été publié dans le cadre de *¿Creative Villages?*, un programme artistique pilote réalisé par l’École cantonale d’art du Valais dans le Village de Leytron de mars 2016 à avril 2017, en partenariat avec la Commune de Leytron.

Ce programme, comprenant une résidence d’artistes, des tables rondes, des workshops, des expositions, des projets dans la sphère publique, un journal et une série de reportages diffusés sur Canal 9, a pour buts d’interroger avec un regard critique l’approche curatoriale du territoire rural, les modes de production actuels dans le champ artistique ainsi que les rapports entre art et économie.

¿Creative Villages? est un projet réalisé dans le cadre de l’initiative «Diversité culturelle dans les régions» de la Fondation suisse pour la culture Pro Helvetia. Il bénéficie aussi du soutien de la HES-SO, de l’État du Valais et de la Loterie Romande.

ÉQUIPE DE TRAVAIL

- › Benoit Antille, responsable du projet
- › Alain Antille, conseiller scientifique
- › Maëlle Cornut, assistante
- › Jérôme Lanon, graphiste
- › Stéphane Darioly, réalisateur

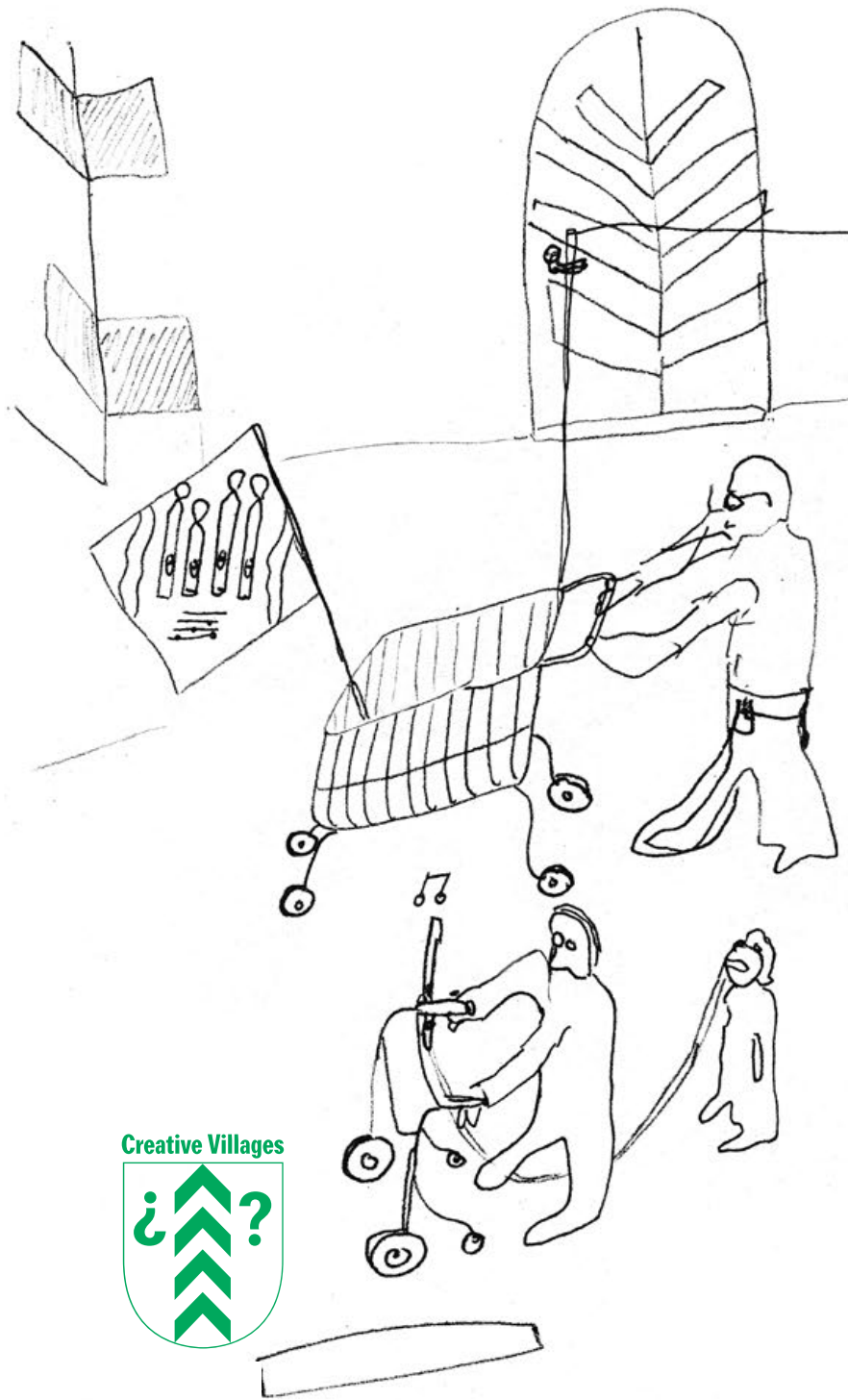
This journal is being published by *¿Creative Villages?*, a pilot artistic program realized in the village of Leytron (Valais-CH), between March 2016 and April 2017, by the École cantonale d’art du Valais (ECAV) in partnership with the Commune of Leytron,

¿Creative Villages? includes an artist-in-residence program, seminars, workshops, exhibitions, public art, and a fanzine. Both theoretical and practice-based, this program seeks to critically address notions of art commissioning, cultural policies, the creative economy, and artists’ working modalities within such frameworks – all from the perspective of the rural territory.

This project is realized within the framework of the funding scheme “Cultural Diversity in Regions” set up by Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia and benefits from the support of the strategic fund of the HES-SO.

TEAM

- › Benoit Antille, project manager
- › Alain Antille, advisor
- › Maëlle Cornut, assistant
- › Jérôme Lanon, graphic designer
- › Stéphane Darioly, film director



Creative Villages

