



## BLACKBOARDS WERE TURNED INTO TABLES ...

Questioning 'horizontality' in collaborative pedagogical art projects.

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May 2015



## ABSTRACT

*Blackboards were turned into tables ... Questioning 'horizontal' in collaborative pedagogical art projects* is research based on the practice of the collective *microsillons*, which is developing collaborative pedagogical art projects in different contexts.

The aim of the research is to explore the possibilities offered by 'horizontal pedagogical exchanges' and to question the very notion of 'horizontality'. It interrogates the possibility to challenge, through artistic projects in educational contexts, the traditional master–pupils (or artist–participants, or gallery educator–public) relationship.

After a presentation of *microsillons'* position in the cultural field, in particular regarding gallery education practices, collaborative art practices and the *Educational Turn in Curating*, a series of five collaborative pedagogical art projects realized by the collective between 2009 and 2011 are presented.

Inspired by methods such as thick description and Participatory Action Research, situations in those projects are studied where a more horizontal pedagogical exchange is sought.

Paulo Freire's reflection about dialogical pedagogy serves as a starting point in this reflection. Anarchist and libertarian pedagogies, as well as the critical pedagogies discourses following Freire, are used to discuss the various strategies used by *microsillons*.

Through those case studies are discussed the ideas of the classroom as a laboratory for democracy, of content co-generation, of network-like organization, of unpredictability and of constructive conflicts.

Drawing from poststructuralist and feminist perspectives, key terms of critical pedagogy (such as empowerment) are then rethought and the idea of 'horizontality' questioned, complexified, presented as a utopian horizon rather than a practicable concept. Shortcomings and paradoxes in the projects' attempts toward more egalitarian exchanges are identified and the limitations of the term are discussed.

Thoughts about ways to overcome those reservations and to avoid romanticizing 'horizontality' are proposed, opening to *microsillons'* future projects.





For Benjamin, Arthur, Charlotte & Emilie



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My supervisors, David Cross and Neil Cummings, for their commitment and enthusiasm.

Everyone involved in *microsillons*' projects since 2005.

Catherine Queloz, Liliane Schneiter and the CCC Research-Based Master Programme, for their inspiration during the last ten years.

Carmen Mörsch for her trust and support.

Marianne Guarino-Huet for her intellectual vigilance and for her friendship.

My parents.



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Cecon, Claudius, Lili (Freire, 1975: 17).

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 'Horizontality' as a horizon

Since 2005, when I founded the collective *microsillons* with Marianne Guarino-Huet, the idea of 'horizontality' has come up regularly in our research.<sup>1</sup> The 'horizontal' has inspired our collaborative art projects which aimed at opening a space of critical and democratic exchange.

In the discourses around pedagogy,<sup>2</sup> gallery education and collaborative art projects,<sup>3</sup> the idea of being 'horizontal' provides alternatives to the top-down teacher–pupils (or art institution–visitors) relationship.

The educator and theorist Paulo Freire is extremely influential for critical pedagogues, critical gallery educators and artists working collaboratively. He rethought ways to learn and to teach, and thought of ways to overcome the mere transmission of knowledge that he called 'banking education' and considered as a vertical relationship. He advocated a dialogical, horizontal pedagogy in which learners would learn together with teachers, instead of being considered as empty bottles to be filled.<sup>4</sup> Freire considered dialogue as essential to the pedagogical process and believed that, through it, both teachers and learners could change.<sup>5</sup> Ira Shor (1980: 95), who collaborated closely with him, summarizes Freire's position regarding dialogue:

According to Freire, didactic lecturing, at the heart of traditional classrooms, is antidialogical, a vertical relationship between unequals, with authority on top and the students below, the authority speaking and the students being filled with official content. [...] He distinguished 'horizontal' dialogue as liberating pedagogy from 'vertical' anti-dialogue as an oppressive pedagogy.

For Freire (2005: 90–91), the fundamental issue is that the horizontal

<sup>1</sup> In 2006 we used the term 'a horizontal approach to knowledge exchange' (my translation) during an evaluation session at the Geneva University of Art and Design (HEAD).

<sup>2</sup> See in particular: Freire (1974) and his interest in the philosopher Jaspers. See also: Shor (1992) talking about Freire and his importance for his own thinking.

<sup>3</sup> See for example the conversation: Summit, non-aligned initiatives in education culture (2007).

<sup>4</sup> 'Narration (with the teacher as narrator) leads the students to memorize mechanically the narrated content. Worse yet, it turns them into "containers", into "receptacles" to be "filled" by the teacher. The more completely she fills the receptacles, the better a teacher she is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are. [...] This is the "banking" concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits.' (Freire, 2005: 71–72)

<sup>5</sup> See the introduction by Weffort, in Freire (1971).



relationship requires confidence in the faculty of human beings to create and search together,<sup>6</sup> leading to the development of a critical mind, whereas vertical relationships (in *banking education* or in non-progressive modes of socio-political organization) characterize an anti-democratic climate.<sup>7</sup>

Similarly, in political activism<sup>8</sup> (and in groups or organizations informed by computer network theories<sup>9</sup>), the idea of ‘horizontality’ informs non-hierarchical, network-like organizational structures.<sup>10</sup> Pleyers (1999), in describing people he calls ‘alter-activists’, says:

Alter-activists particularly insist on the absence of hierarchy (the horizontality) and on the direct democracy practices in their networks, that they oppose to the ‘vertical’ practices of the political parties, the unions, the NGOs and the big anti-globalist organisations.<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, the pair verticality/horizontality is not a binary opposition<sup>12</sup> but rather a constant tension, an unstable balance. ‘Horizontality’ cannot simply be applied to any context when one refuses hierarchy. Following Michel Foucault’s characterization of power as diffuse, existing only as a relation anchored in our daily exchanges, a strictly non-hierarchical relationship is difficult to imagine.<sup>13</sup> If horizontality exists, it is only as a direction, as a horizon. And this is what makes the concept so strong: as democracy,<sup>14</sup> horizontality is never fully realized, is utopian, and therefore can be used as a critical tool to reveal what would need to be done to reach it.<sup>15</sup>

Although horizontality might never be fully achieved, we can still use the concept as a critical tool to look for ways to change our interpersonal relationships. Conceiving power, in a Foucauldian way, as existing everywhere in a net of relationships rather than only being transmitted top-down suggests that important changes are possible; and that everyday interactions can have effects on a larger system.

John Shotton (1993), in his history of anarchist and libertarian pedagogy in

<sup>6</sup> ‘Our method, then, was to be based on dialogue, which is a horizontal relationship between persons. Born of a critical matrix, dialogue creates a critical attitude (Jaspers). [...] Only dialogue truly communicates.’ (Freire, 1974: 45)

<sup>7</sup> ‘The people adapted to a rigidly authoritarian structure of life [in the French version: ‘des relations verticales et antidémocratiques’ (Freire, 1971: 79)], which formed and strengthened an anti-democratic mentality.’ (Freire, 1974: 26)

<sup>8</sup> See for example: Pleyers (1999) or Nunes (2005). For a more historical approach see: Georgi (2003).

<sup>9</sup> See for example: Scholz (Institute for Distributed Creativity) (2004). See also more specifically point 3.4.

<sup>10</sup> See for example: Infokiosque mondial (2004).

<sup>11</sup> My translation.

<sup>12</sup> Freire was wary of binary oppositions and he underlined the ‘internalized oppressor’ which is part of any ‘oppressed’ (Freire, 2005: 61).





the UK, described a pedagogical experiment at the Prestolee Elementary School in Farnworth, Lancashire, in 1918:

Children were allowed to work on whatever subject they liked, playtimes were abolished; teachers' blackboards were turned into tables. (Shotton, 1993: 165)

In that example, the shift from vertical to horizontal was not an end in itself but a structural transformation that made it possible to imagine changing the mode of exchange between teacher and pupils as well as the content of the curriculum.

Reflecting on how to reach a more horizontal structure in collaborative art projects and thinking about the transformations that could result from that new situation are key to this research.

After an introduction about my motivations, and an introduction to a selection of *microsillos*' projects, I will focus on how those projects are a site for a practical reflection on horizontality. I will then go on to discuss problems linked to the application of horizontal models, and practical ways to overcome those problems. Through the process, I intend that my future practice will benefit from my thesis's critical reflection.

## 1.2 Why PhD now?

A central theme of my research is the transformative potential inherent in everyday power relationships. The hypothesis that reducing hierarchy produces social and political benefits connects to my daily experience: my art practice is in a collective in which decisions are continuously discussed; I am the father of three children (the eldest recently entered the authoritarian system of the state school) and I teach adults in an art school, where I reflect on the possible modes of dialoguing with students. Researching *horizontality* is both informed by my daily life and transforming it, in a constant dialogue

<sup>13</sup> About this conception of power by Foucault, see point 4.2. Jeffrey S. Juris (2005: 257) also warns: 'Horizontal networks should not be romanticized. Specific networks involve varying degrees of organizational hierarchy [...]'. Horizontal relations do not suggest the complete absence of hierarchy [...]. Lovink and Rossiter (2007), discussing networks in connection with new media, also state that 'networks are not by default open, horizontal and global'.

<sup>14</sup> See Derrida (2005: 104): 'What remains or still resists in the deconstructed (or deconstructible) concept of democracy which guides us endlessly? Which orders us not only to engage a deconstruction but to keep the old name? And to deconstruct further in the name of a democracy to come?' See also: Enwezor ed. (2002) and Polletta (2002).

<sup>15</sup> In a similar way to how the artist Nils Norman (who was involved in *Utopia and the Everyday*, a project described here) considers utopia: 'My main use of utopia as a tool, is to use it to show what isn't there, to use it in a critical way' (Asdam, no date).

*The excerpts of the project diaries have been copied here, in the form of work documents, without editing.*

The university students involved seem to like the fact of being confronted with a 'real' place and to 'real' problems to solve ...

Excerpt from the *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* project diary.

between theory and practice.

While studying Humanities for five years, in the classical academic context of a Swiss university, I was frustrated by the lack of the possibility of dialogue to actively produce new knowledge. Disappointed by both the content of the curriculum and the modes of exchange, I got my diploma as quickly as I could and decided to enter the *École supérieure des Beaux-Arts* (named today '*Haute école d'art et de design de Genève*' (Geneva University of Art and Design)) (HEAD).

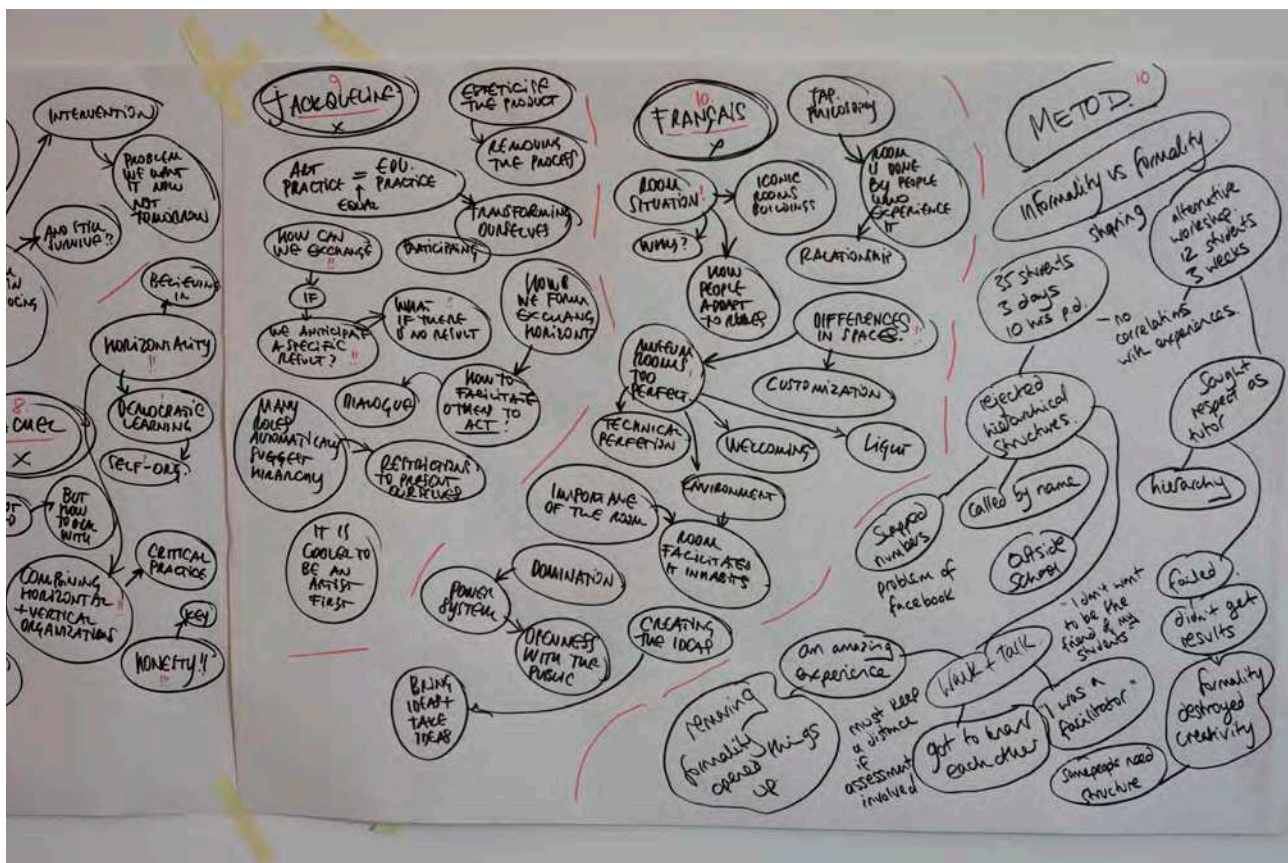
There, I was lucky not to experience the '*Maître d'atelier*' format (where the students learn directly from a Master, often developing rather similar forms to his), the mark of which had strongly imprinted art schools like Geneva's, but to encounter a pedagogy that has changed my relationship to schooling and oriented my practice for the following years. The CCC (Critical, Curatorial, Cybermedia) Research-Based Master Programme that I followed there was inspired by feminist and critical pedagogy principles. It emphasized the relationship between theory and practice – and their possible hybridization; it promoted a learning community where students were not treated as consumers but brought their own knowledge and energies to the making of the teachings as well as in working collectively. I learned to be involved in thinking about the structure of a class, of a group, about the conditions of knowledge exchange. I then became an assistant in the programme for two years, and was able to continue that critical reflection.

It might seem paradoxical to critically engage with pedagogy through the PhD system, which is – for continental European art schools – a novelty produced by the Bologna Declaration of 1999 that began a process of creating a European Higher Education Area in which comparable standards would be used.

Furthermore, my practice is strictly collective-based, whereas a key requirement of PhD is to produce an individual and 'unique contribution to



Critical Practice Cluster (supported by the Chelsea College of Art and Design, London/UAL), Barcamp in the frame of the event Kunstvermittlung in Transformation (2012).



Critical Practice Cluster, notes from the Barcamp.



knowledge'. One might ask, as Louise Lawler (1981) did in the beginning of the 1980s with pictures:<sup>16</sup> *why PhD now?*

A PhD, being an academic title, is first of all a legitimization. Of course, one can do academically relevant research or be a research-based artist without seeking a PhD or any academic validation. Yet the PhD as an academic title provides an alternative to the current legitimization models for artists, still mainly based on visibility in exhibitions and position in the art market. Instead of receiving a validation from curators, specialized press or dealers and their customers, an artist awarded a PhD is recognized by her/his peers. And choosing supervisors is a way for the researcher to choose which orientation or position to confront, which line to be part of.

Whereas collaborative and pedagogical art practices are still considered by the institutional/commercial art system in Europe as being subordinate to individual, object-based practices, a research degree in the UK, where socially engaged, collaborative and pedagogical practices have been strongly encouraged since the end of the 1990s (Mörsch, 2003), with supervisors developing project-based collective practices, offers another form of peer legitimization.

This peer legitimization happens throughout the University of the Arts London (UAL) community of current and former PhD researchers, forming a new network of possible collaborators. Since the beginning of the PhD process I have been invited on several occasions to present my work to my colleagues, and to participate in conferences, exhibitions and events.<sup>17</sup> I have also organized, with *microsilons*, events to involve my peers in projects in Switzerland.<sup>18</sup>

This exchange with the UK takes on a special significance in Switzerland, which is beginning to imagine how the PhD might exist in art schools. Since 2007, I have taken part in the 'prospective PhD' (later renamed 'Pre-Doc') seminar organized by the CCC, a pre-doctorate programme playing a

<sup>16</sup> About the exhibition in which Lawler's work was originally presented, see: Fogle (2003).

<sup>17</sup> For example: Les Complices, Zürich (March 2010); Free/Slow University of Warsaw (May 2010); *Figures et méthodes de la transmission artistique: quelle histoire?* HEAD (April 2011) (see: Kihm & Mavridorakis, 2013); Engage/Enquire International Conference, Margate (November 2011); Bern University of the Arts (June 2012); Haute École de Musique, Genève (March 2014).

<sup>18</sup> For example inviting the Critical Practice Cluster, based at the Chelsea College of Art and Design, to run a BarCamp together in a conference for Swiss gallery educators. See: *Kunstvermittlung in Transformation* (2012).



pioneer role in reflecting on what is needed for PhD researchers in the near future in Swiss art schools. In this context, my critical view of my experience in the UK system can contribute to defining the ideal frame for PhDs in the arts in Switzerland and developing strategies to implement it.

PhD research also corresponds to the theory-practice articulation of my work with the collective *microsillons*. This involves constant dialogue between practice (running collaborative projects, staging exhibitions) and theory (writing, giving talks, teaching), one always informing the other, or rather, referring to the education theorist and practitioner Seth Kreisberg and to the Marxist roots of the concept (Kitching 1988), becoming only one, becoming *praxis*.

Praxis falls into two inextricably related but distinct categories: on the one hand, there is reflection, the development of critical awareness; on the other hand, there is action, taking meaningful steps to change or maintain existing conditions. The two, when most potent, interact dialectically, informing and emerging out of one another. This is praxis. (Kreisberg, 1992: 172–173)

The practice-based PhD format converges with the model of *microsillons*' imbricated and polymorphic work.

However, the need to produce an individual 'original contribution to knowledge' has been an issue. With both of the collective's members working on PhD research in the same institution, with the same supervisors,<sup>19</sup> we had to adapt to make sure we would produce two sufficiently different theses. Instead of continuously sharing our progress (even though we would still work together on the practical part), we decided to read each other's texts only at defined stages, to avoid being too influenced by the other's writing. Articulating two theses based on one collective practice underlines the non-objective, or interpretive, aspect of the projects.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Marianne Guarino-Huet's research is entitled *IF WE CAN CHANGE IT, WE CAN MAKE IT. Knowledge exchange and artistic practices with a pedagogical dimension: a vector for change*. Her Director of Studies is Neil Cummings and her Second Supervisor David Cross.

<sup>20</sup> Being close to the suspiciousness toward meta-narration that characterizes many of the poststructuralist discourses. See in particular point 3.2.3.

*All the pictures of the projects were taken by microsillons and the participants (and by the conception team in The Revolution Will Not Be Televised. Amateur videos from 8mm to 2.0).*



*Utopia and the Everyday. Between Art and Pedagogies. Class working with trafo.K in front of the entrance desk of Le Centre: improvising new spaces to work inside the institution.*



I imagine the PhD as a mean to analyse *microsillons*' work, to slow down the pace of the projects, to realize what Walter Benjamin (2002: 395) described in *On the Concept of History* as the tiger's leap: taking a step back before jumping further.

Working toward a PhD degree also has a professional dimension, as it supports my aim to continue teaching in art schools in the future, and to earn a living through my practice without being dependent on the art market. From the examples of the CCC, the Critical Practice cluster at Chelsea College of Arts and other structures like Aulabiarta,<sup>21</sup> I strongly believe in working critically on institutions from the inside. Following the artist Andrea Fraser and her assertion that 'we are the institution',<sup>22</sup> I'm even doubtful about the very existence, for cultural workers, of a space that would actually be outside art institutions, including the attempts at developing alternatives to them.

Therefore, obtaining a diploma that can improve access to teaching in the academy can be a way to a better position from which to continue pushing the transformation of pedagogy and artistic research inside art schools, as well as to transform *microsillons*' practice in the process.

### 1.3 *microsillons*

Because all the projects that will be discussed here have been realized within a collective and because I have dedicated almost all my artistic work to it, it is necessary now to introduce *microsillons*. *microsillons* was founded in 2005 by Marianne Guarino-Huet and myself, as we were studying in the CCC. We (when not otherwise specified, I will later use 'we' to mean *microsillons*) created the collective around our common interest in pedagogy and our will to develop collaborative art projects.

Our artworks take many different forms (collaborations with school classes

<sup>21</sup> See: 'Introduction to artists and projects mentioned in the thesis' on the *Blackboards were turned into tables* website (2014).

<sup>22</sup> 'Every time we speak of the "institution" as other than "us", we disavow our role in the creation and perpetuation of its conditions. We avoid responsibility for, or action against, the everyday complicities, compromises, and censorship – above all, self-censorship – which are driven by our own interests in the field and the benefits we derive from it. It's not a question of inside or outside, or the number and scale of various organized sites for the production, presentation, and distribution of art. It's not a question of being against the institution: We are the institution. It's a question of what kind of institution we are, what kind of values we institutionalize, what forms of practice we reward, and what kinds of rewards we aspire to. Because the institution of art is internalized, embodied, and performed by individuals, these are the questions that institutional critique demands we ask, above all, of ourselves.' (Fraser, 2005: 283)

# EN COMMUN.

## Journal du Bois de la Bâtie

Alors que la Terrasse du Troc s'installe cette année encore au Bois de la Bâtie, nous avons été invités par sa directrice artistique, Laura Györik Costas, à développer un projet impliquant des jeunes élèves. Une recherche sur le Bois de la Bâtie et son histoire, nous a amené à définir comme cadre de réflexion l'idée de bien commun. En 1868, des frères, du nom de Turretini, ont acheté des parcelles de terrain pour les offrir à la ville, à condition que le lieu reste pour toujours un lieu de promenade publique. Quels sont aujourd'hui les usages, officiels ou "braconnés", qui sont faits de ce bien public ?

Au-delà de cette question, nous avons proposé à deux classes, l'une du Cycle d'Orientation Montbrillant et l'autre de l'Ecole des Allobroges, de réaliser ensemble un journal où chacun pourrait s'exprimer sur un sujet en lien avec le Bois de la Bâtie. Suivant le thème de cette cinquième édition de la Terrasse du Troc, "l'esthétique écologique" – qui évoque l'idée d'une œuvre créée en utilisant les éléments trouvés sur un lieu donné – ce journal se nourrit donc du Bois et de ses usages. Il propose une réflexion sur le territoire complexe du Bois de la Bâtie et invite à réfléchir aux multiples utilisations qui, au fil des années, ont ancré ce lieu bien connu des genevois dans son environnement urbain, entre nature et culture.

Alors que nous assistons à une privatisation de l'espace public, que les brevets sur le vivant et la marchandisation de biens de première nécessité, tels que l'eau, sont monnaie courante, il nous semble pertinent de discuter de ce qui devrait être partagé par tous, qu'il s'agisse de biens matériels ou immatériels.

Pour Antonio Negri, le commun porte en lui un potentiel de changement réel et peut nous aider à imaginer des alternatives au néo-libéralisme et à son mépris envers la Res Publica.

« (...) partout où des luttes se sont déroulées contre l'Empire, elles ont mis en lumière un phénomène sur lequel elles ont beaucoup investi : la conscience nouvelle que le bien commun est décisif dans la vie comme dans la production, bien plus que le « privé » et le « national » pour utiliser ces termes vieillissants. Seul

le « commun » se dresse contre l'Empire. »

Cette question des « communs » a été abordée avec les deux classes sous un angle historique, afin de bien appréhender la dimension fluctuante de cette notion et son évolution au fil du temps. En effet, si ce terme désigne ce que nous partageons au sein d'une même communauté, cette zone de partage est mouvante et en constante redéfinition.

Ainsi, partant des notions de « Res Publicae » et de « Res nullius » du droit romain, nous avons discuté des banalités et des taxes dont il fallait s'acquitter, au Moyen-Âge, pour utiliser des infrastructures telles que les fours ou les moulins, appartenant aux seigneurs mais cependant nécessaires à toute la communauté.

A certains moments de l'histoire, le peuple a essayé de revendiquer un usage plus direct des biens communs, imaginant un projet de société nouvelle. La Commune de Paris, en 1871, par exemple, pendant laquelle les travailleurs se sont soulevés contre l'Etat et ont proposé – dans un système qui n'a duré que trois mois avant d'être réprimé – que le peuple gère directement la ville, les écoles, les institutions...

Plus tard, la révolution russe, en appliquant les préceptes du communisme, qui revendique la fin de la propriété privée, a mené à la création de l'Union Soviétique et, à sa suite, à celle d'autres Etats s'appuyant sur la même politique.

Nous nous sommes demandé ce qu'est un bien commun dans la société contemporaine. La tendance actuelle à la privatisation des écoles, des services de santé ou des énergies est forte. Quelles peuvent en être les conséquences ? La privatisation du vivant est une autre source de réflexion et d'inquiétude : génome, semences, peuvent-ils faire l'objet d'une mainmise de quelques grandes multinationales, sans qu'il n'y ait de participation du peuple à la prise de décisions pourtant vitales ? Faire bon usage du bien commun, c'est aussi comprendre qu'il faut gérer ce bien, que rien n'est inépuisable. Quelles ressources naturelles devons nous défendre pour le futur ?

Sur le plan de la propriété intellectuelle, nous avons évoqué

l'alternative proposée par la licence « Creative Commons » contre les brevets dans leurs formes actuelles et contre le « Copyright ».

Notre tour d'horizon s'est conclu par une discussion sur les pirates, des mers d'abord, pour qui l'idée de partage des biens et de communauté prévalait au sein d'un même équipage. Pirates informatiques ensuite, par le biais du Parti Pirate, qui revendique « un Internet libre, sans aucune licence, dans une société ouverte » au sein d'une formation politique officielle et reconnue, notamment en Suède, où est né ce parti.

Depuis le mois de mai 2010, les deux classes ont été impliquées dans les différentes étapes qui ont mené à cette publication, des discussions sur le thème du travail à la visite d'une imprimerie, en passant par la préparation et la réalisation d'entretiens ainsi que, bien entendu, la conception des articles eux-mêmes. Un soin spécifique a été porté à la dimension visuelle, primordiale pour un journal s'inscrivant dans le cadre d'une manifestation artistique et culturelle. Collages, dessins, cartographie : chaque groupe a travaillé selon un format différent.

Au fil des pages de ce journal, nous vous invitons à partager la vision sur la Terrasse du Troc d'une chauve-souris, à découvrir ce qui pousse dans les jardins familiaux qui bordent le Bois, à partir à la découverte de ses sous-sols et de ses habitants, y compris les plus inattendus, et à "braconner" quelques informations inédites en passant.

microsilons

Une proposition de microsilons pour la Terrasse du Troc. Projet réalisé avec une classe de 5P - 6P de l'école des Allobroges et une classe de 9ème du cycle d'orientation de Montbrillant.

5P/6P, école des Allobroges : Yann Alves Moreira, Valentin Candido, Ana Rita Da Silva Pinto, Florian Ernest, Yoann Etcheve, Florence Haymoz, Bryan Irago Cueva, Tamara Kovacevic, Stephane Lindin Carrión, Sara Marques, Rosa Fernandes, Mirko Negro, Paul Pattusch, Ana Catarina Pedrosa Da Cruz, Ramata Sow, Ejona Stojak, Ibrahim Sukia. Enseignante : Jessica Aguet

9ème, Cycle d'orientation de Montbrillant : Gabriel Bird, Joaquim El Sayed, Christel Ferreira, Fabio Giammarresi, Roxanne Merlin, Diana Miranda Da Venda, Yasmin Paes Batista, Sara Pereira, Dayanara Ponce Carmel, Celine Rocha Cerqueira, Cristel Rodriguez, Sofia Rodriguez, Talita Rossi, Gabriela Silva Oliveira, Anaelle Stoppini. Enseignante : Valentina Pini

Remerciements : La Fédération Genevoise des Jardins Familiaux, l'entreprise Parmentier et ses employés, le Service des Pompes Funèbres, Cimetières et Crématoire de la Ville de Genève, l'association Stop Suicide et ses employés, le Service des Espaces Verts et de l'Environnement de la Ville de Genève et le Parc Animalier du Bois de la Bâtie, Monsieur Cyril Schenbächler, le Service de la Voirie de la Ville de Genève, l'équipe de la Terrasse du Troc, Monsieur Che Huber et Noir sur Noir.

Avec le soutien du Département de l'Instruction Publique, de la Culture et du Sport et du Département de l'Intérieur et de la Mobilité, direction générale de la Nature et du Paysage

Imprimé à 5000 exemplaires à Genève en juillet 2010  
Graphisme : Ramon Valle  
Imprimeur : Alar



of different ages or with other interest groups, exhibitions, workshops, seminars, lectures, writing, participation in research groups, teaching, supervision) but always connect to the idea of exchanging and producing knowledge, in relation to pedagogy and art in a broad sense. Each of our projects is a bid to redefine our position, through hybridized practices, rather than fulfilling the traditional role of artist or cultural worker.

<sup>23</sup> In French, 'sillon' both means 'groove' and 'furrow'.

Several tendencies have emerged in the course of our practice:

- We generally work with small groups of people on long-term projects (usually at least a few months).
- We consider art as a starting point to discuss broader social or political issues, and never as an end in itself.
- We emphasize the public presentation of our research, as a way of sharing the project with a broader audience.
- Each project is custom made, in its content and methodology, for a specific group and situation.

We usually co-produce with the participants critical discourse about society and its different institutional systems (schools, cultural institutions, community centres, associations ...). We hope that some micro-changes can happen to transform the *status quo*.

Our name, which means 'microgroove' (and refers to a vinyl record) in French, allows us to refer to the DJ's reappropriation practices: mixing existing cultural elements to create a new sense and rethink the division between 'official' and 'popular' culture, as well as challenging single-handed authorship.

Moreover, our name also refers to a furrow,<sup>23</sup> with the simple idea that our projects are about creating, on a micro-level, conditions for something to grow afterwards. We see our projects not as a transmission of knowledge but as a starting point to act and transform, even if it is in a humble way.





Le Centre's building, 2009.

The lower-case letter at the beginning of our name refers to this *micro* approach and is an allusion to one of our founding references, the American pedagogue and feminist writer bell hooks, herself writing her name in lower-case letters.<sup>24</sup>

We work both autonomously and in collaboration with institutions. We were responsible for the gallery education projects of Le Centre d'art contemporain Genève (Le Centre) between 2008 and 2010.<sup>25</sup> We ran, between 2009 and 2014, a MAS/CAS programme named *Bilden – Künste – Gesellschaft*<sup>26</sup> at the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste in Zürich. In such institutional contexts, we adapt and apply concepts and methodologies borrowed from critical pedagogies or institutional critique. As artists – inspired by other artists who put pedagogy at the heart of their artistic practice<sup>27</sup> – we are using specific knowledge to provoke a dialogic situation, to produce unexpected outcomes.

Since leaving art school, we have earned a living exclusively from our practice, although this has meant accepting many projects. We have been busy. This financial imperative means we must balance the number of projects and the long-term, custom-made approach that we advocate.

#### 1.4 Positioning *microsillons'* practice in the cultural field

*microsillons'* work is at the crossroads of different types of practices. Before beginning the analysis of the projects and showing how the research has helped transform the methodology of the collective, I will present how *microsillons* is positioned regarding 'gallery education', 'art practices with a pedagogical dimension' and 'curating after the "educational turn"'.<sup>28</sup>

Rather than assign ourselves a clear role regarding those categories, we define our position through practice; this positioning attempt is meant to situate different elements, methods, concepts, questions, that were

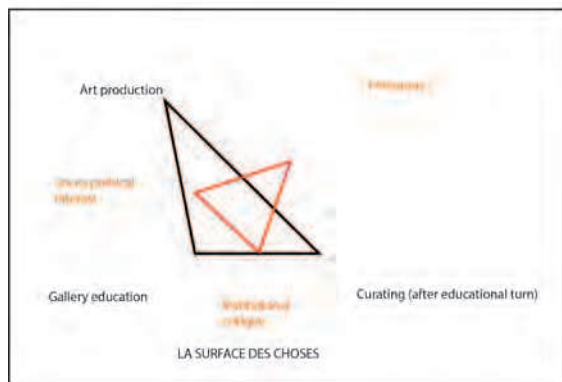
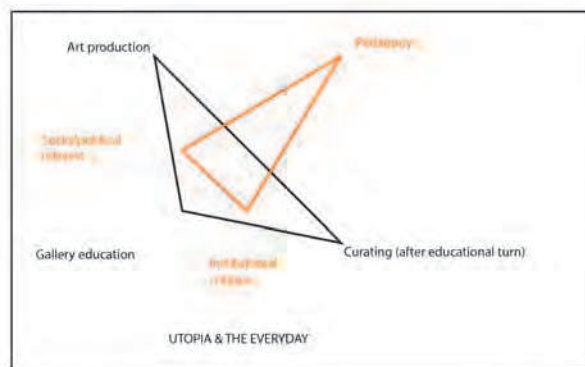
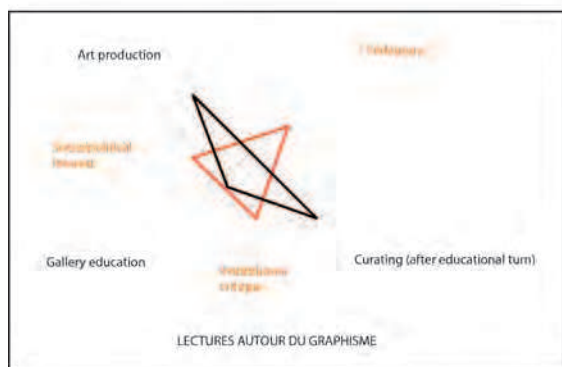
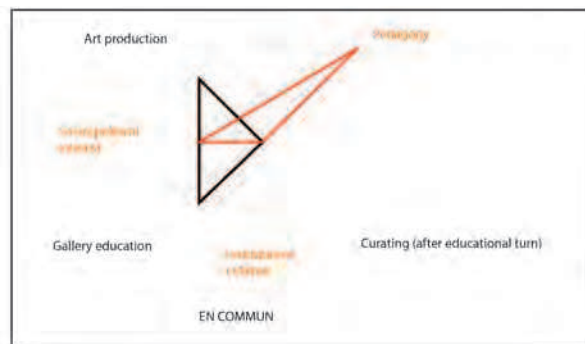
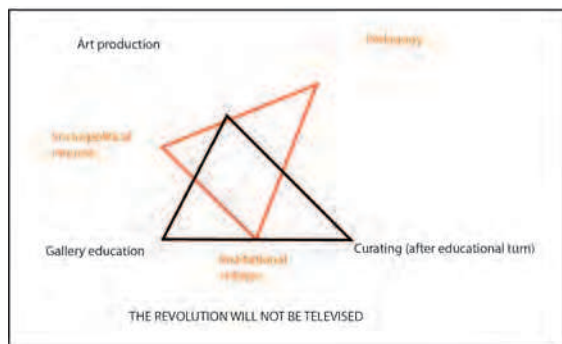
<sup>24</sup> 'bell hooks' is in fact her writing name, chosen after the slave name of her grandmother.

<sup>25</sup> And regularly developed freelance projects for the institution from 2005.

<sup>26</sup> Education – Art – Society. The title can also, in German, be read as the following question: 'Are the arts constituting society?'

<sup>27</sup> See: 'Introduction to artists and projects mentioned in the thesis' on the *Blackboards were turned into tables* website (2014).

<sup>28</sup> See point 1.4.3.



My attempt to represent the diversity and the balance of characteristics in the five projects described in the dissertation. 2013.

inspirational and that we hybridized in our work. Our practice exists in tension with those activities in the cultural field, but also in connection with social and political issues (including a critique of cultural institutions).

#### 1.4.1 Gallery education

Responding to the explosion of gallery education projects since the end of the 1990s in the UK,<sup>29</sup> a series of *Kunstvermittlung*<sup>30</sup> discourses and projects emerged from the German-speaking world.<sup>31</sup> This was followed, in Germany and Switzerland after 2000,<sup>32</sup> by an institutional interest in educational practices in museum, as well as by the ‘educational turn in curating’ that will be discussed later in this chapter.

In this favourable context for educational practices in the arts, we had many opportunities to collaborate and contribute to the official debate about *médiation culturelle*.<sup>33</sup> We were invited to give talks and run workshops around gallery education, to be experts to judge others’ *médiation* projects,<sup>34</sup> and even to be responsible for a gallery education department.<sup>35</sup>

Despite our clear position as an artists’ collective (and even though our identity as artists is usually what interests the people inviting us), this association with the gallery education profession – through projects that constitute the heart of our practice and not through a side practice – has contributed positively not only to hybridizing our practice but also to somehow blurring our identity.

We take a critical position regarding mainstream gallery education in Switzerland,<sup>36</sup> while greatly interested in ‘critical gallery education’ developing in the UK, Germany and Austria, for example. The French term ‘*médiation*’<sup>37</sup> implies the idea of solving a conflict. In the tradition of ‘culture democratization’,<sup>38</sup> ‘*médiation*’ aims to help people connect with art and to enjoy it, supposedly resolving a conflict between people ignoring the codes

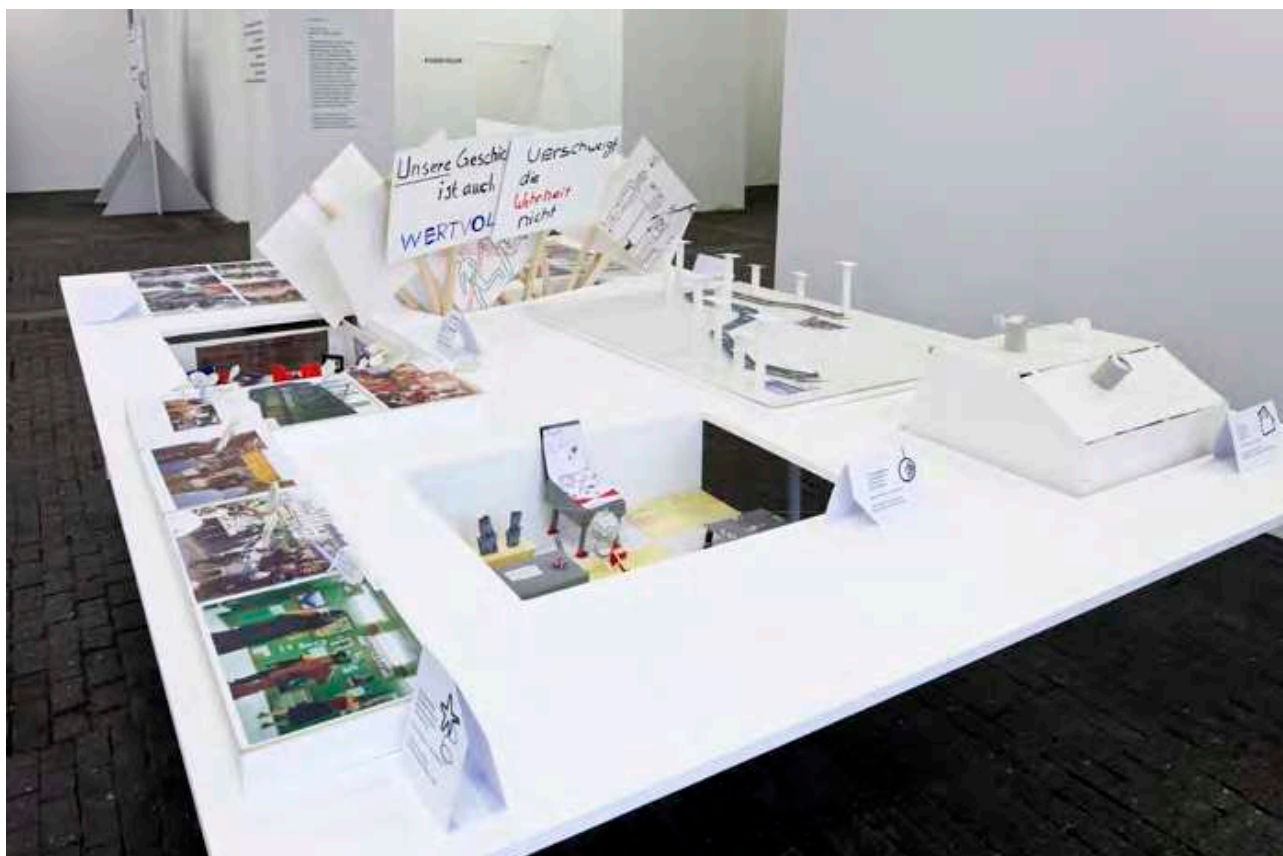
<sup>29</sup> ‘Since the end of the 1990s, cultural-political and institutional decision-makers are showing increased interest in gallery education. Here, the cultural policies of New Labour in England have played a precursory role, providing substantial financial support for “creative industries” and “socially engaged art”, and making the public funding of art institutions contingent upon the presentation of comprehensive education programs’ (Mörsch, 2009b: 15–16). Also see: Mörsch (2004).

<sup>30</sup> Most commonly translated ‘gallery education’, even though the term doesn’t necessarily address work in gallery spaces.

<sup>31</sup> See Babias’ overview of that discourse in the beginning of the 1990s: Babias (1995).

<sup>32</sup> In Germany with the project COLLABORATION | VERMITTLUNG. KUNST.VEREIN. by the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutscher Kunstvereine and the Land Nordrhein-Westfalen, and in Switzerland with Pro Helvetia developing a ‘Schwerpunkt’ (focal point) on Kunstvermittlung between 2006 and 2009.

<sup>33</sup> The term usually describes activities closer to ‘gallery education’ than to ‘mediation’.



trafo.K and a class from the Deutsche Schule Genf, *Wild Translations* (detail).



(therefore not enjoying contemporary art, for example) and artworks that are meant to be interesting per se. To do so, *médiation* explains art, and risks reducing its polysemic discourse to a single 'correct' interpretation.

Whereas *médiation*, in its traditional understanding, delivers 'a correct' interpretation authorized by the institution, in a vertical way (through canonic forms such as the guided tour), critical gallery education aims at developing a dialogical relationship, following a more horizontal model.

Contrary to the classical approach to gallery education, we believe that art can be used to create productive intellectual or political conflict,<sup>39</sup> to open a debate between citizens, to discuss political and social issues. To accomplish this, there is no need to promote the greatness of an artwork or to simplify its meaning; rather, one must work with it, sometimes manipulate it,<sup>40</sup> to find friction points that can generate debate.

Another limitation of the way *médiation* or gallery education is usually practised is that it is considered as something like an after-sale service for exhibitions, for fixed objects ready to be consumed by different publics. The idea is always to bring 'officially legitimized culture' to people.

Albert Meister (1976: 9), a French sociologist and author of *La Soi-disant Utopie du Centre Beaubourg*, in 1976 (the year before Beaubourg's opening) offered a fictionalized reflection about the democratic mission of the Centre George Pompidou in Paris. He wrote about the idea of bringing art to people:

Art is enabling people to do things. [...] people would be told: 'Here is what is beautiful. Look, here is what is worthy.' [...] This approach towards popular culture is a complete failure. I think that if we want to address the question of popular culture, we have to give people the opportunity to do.<sup>41</sup>

Accordingly, we develop projects in which people create values and forms (objects, exhibitions, sounds, texts ...) from their own positions, rather

<sup>34</sup> Being part of the jury for the Bourse pour médiateur en art contemporain de la Ville de Genève since 2011.

<sup>35</sup> At Le Centre, 2008–2010.

<sup>36</sup> The Swiss association for Gallery Educators, Mediamus, in its definition of 'Médiation', uncritically emphasizes its role as a facilitator of access to culture ('elle instaure aussi le dialogue avec les publics potentiels et les non-publics dans une perspective d'accès à la culture') and moreover of transmission of contents, values and even tastes ('La médiation transmet certes des contenus mais elle sensibiliser aussi à des valeurs, des goûts et des attitudes face au musée') (Mediamus, 2006).

<sup>37</sup> 'Entremise destinée à mettre d'accord, à concilier ou à réconcilier des personnes, des partis' [intervention meant as a way to lead to an agreement, reconcile or to reconcile people, parties]. Médiation. In: *Petit Robert, Dictionnaire de la langue française* (1991).

<sup>38</sup> An idea that is still at the center of the discussions in the French-speaking world (see among many examples: *Les Territoires de la démocratisation culturelle* (2007) in Besançon, or *Pour des théâtres ouverts! Démocratisation et médiation de la culture* (2013) in Geneva).



*Utopia and the Everyday. Between Art and Pedagogies. Pupils experimenting in the empty exhibition space.*

The participants see a real value in participating in such a project in such a frame ... A lot of emotion was put into the project by everyone. Some say that if contemporary art remains alien to them, they became more conscious that it can be a site of a potential debate and not only of celebration ... They enjoyed that fact that we were not contemporary art apostles.

Excerpt from the *La surface des choses* project diary.

than imitating institutional assessments without having the possibility to criticize them. This kind of ‘critical mediation’, within the cultural field, is not an explanation of a fixed existing object, but a process for participants to produce their own discourses and forms, to gain some autonomy and be able to contest the apparent ‘intrinsic’ value of the art object. We also defend and celebrate the practice of collective production, to oppose the usual mythology of the unique creator.

The co-creation of discourses and objects that our research projects are proposing is a counter practice, a practice against traditional gallery education through which an institutional discourse is merely reproduced. In that regard, the term *Künstlerische Kunstvermittlung* (artistic gallery education) – used by Pierangelo Maset,<sup>42</sup> a German author specializing in gallery education, and by the pioneer group of critical gallery educators Kunstcoop<sup>43</sup> – is clearly echoed in our research practice. Artistic gallery education (because it produces its own discourses and forms, often borrowing artistic strategies) is becoming an autonomous form of artistic practice rather than an activity that is subordinated to art making.<sup>44</sup>

Ultimately, this autonomy (toward the art object, not toward the socio-political sphere) could lead to what the artist Ana Bilankov (2002: 37–45, 191), a former member of Kunstcoop, called an ‘Art-Mediation / -Education / -Communication in the Empty Room’ (*Kunstvermittlung in Leehre Raum*). For Bilankov (2002: 37), working as art educator in an empty space can be a way both to use a ‘projection surface’ and to reveal the ideology of the White Cube. Even within an institution’s gallery education service, a ‘meta-mediation’ around the institutional system (its space, its social functions, its financing, etc.) could be developed, in the same way that an artist might work on an *in situ* project of institutional critique.

With a critical and autonomous gallery education, the idea of *transmission* – central to the traditional gallery education discourse<sup>45</sup> – is replaced by the will to generate the co-production of knowledge, often in critical and

<sup>39</sup> See point 3.6.

<sup>40</sup> In the sense developed by the Musée d’ethnographie de Neuchâtel, in a critical museography approach. See: Hainard & Kaehr (1984).

<sup>41</sup> My translation.

<sup>42</sup> Pierangelo Maset began his reflection about ‘Kunstvermittlung’ almost 20 years ago (see for example: Maset (1995). Specifically about ‘Künstlerische Kunstvermittlung’, see: Maset (2006).

<sup>43</sup> The group is for example referring to the meeting: *Ist Kunstvermittlung eine Kunst?* [is gallery education an art?], in Wien, 1997. See: Ronte ed. (1998).

We are building several very different narrations around the same project: presenting it in a critical way during the PhD RNUAL week in London, showing positive outcomes for the Geneva Department of Education, presenting it on a more institutional level in the frame of the festival's evaluation, etc. ...

Excerpt from the *En commun* project diary.

unpredictable ways. Critical gallery/art education is also often a way to reintroduce a political awareness and reaffirm the need for political actions against the dominant discourse of the autonomy of art – sometimes using Trojan horse strategies within art institutions. Janna Graham (2010: 127), a writer, organizer, curator and art educator based in London,<sup>46</sup> notes:

This redistribution of the rhetoric of creativity tells us that we cannot conflate the desire for *political autonomy* – that is, to resist the current forms of instrumentalisation of culture and education by coercive economic and governmental forces – with the discourse of *artistic autonomy*, which sits in direct contradiction to the ambition that lies at the heart of most theories of radical pedagogy – that is, to connect the *production of critical knowledge* with the production of critical consequences.

We can see that a whole range of practices, sometimes opposing one another, coexist under the big ‘gallery education’ umbrella,<sup>47</sup> sometimes proposing very different relational structures, from vertical teacher–pupils ones to more horizontal ones. In its critical form, when gallery education makes it possible for people to ‘produce their own articulations and representations’, it reconnects art institutions with their local socio-political context (Mörsch, 2009b: 20).

My research is concerned with controversy, with scepticism toward meta-narrative, and the potential of art education as a tool for institutional change. The affinity between *microsilons* and this ‘critical art education’ is based on gallery education as the exercise of critical freedom inside public art institutions, as a space to think through and with power relationships. When public galleries and exhibitions are under constant pressure to account for their visibility, visitor numbers, communicability, profitability, gallery education often primarily exists to justify public funding and is often overlooked because it is not considered as a site of art or discourse production.

It can be a potential to develop experimental and critical art projects. As an

<sup>44</sup> See also Mörsch (2009b: 19): ‘Another relevant, yet distinct strand of theory and practice, brings together contributions toward a “gallery education as artistic practice” [Künstlerische Kunstvermittlung] and “gallery education as deconstruction”. This approach, which has surfaced in the German art pedagogical debate since the middle of the 1990s, attempts to orient gallery education methodically and structurally toward its objects. [...] These approaches seek possible interconnections with realms purportedly outside of the institutions, thereby emphasizing societal and disruptive potential moments and challenging “normality” at the heart of art and gallery education.’

<sup>45</sup> In Geneva, the idea of transmission is at the centre of the practices and discourses of gallery education: The Musée d’art moderne et contemporain has a structure to address publics that is called ‘Bureau des transmissions’, the Master Program oriented toward gallery education and teaching at the HEAD is called ‘TRANS’, and a recent colloquium (and publication) organized by the same school was called *Transmettre l’art – Figures et méthodes, Quelle histoire?* (see: Kihm & Mavrikdorakis eds., 2013).



artist, to define oneself as a gallery educator can increase opportunities to work in that privileged space within public art institutions and to critically challenge the institutional *status quo*. But the conception of gallery education as being *critical* – as working in the *unknown* rather than being *instructive* – challenges the usual way it is considered, and therefore one must sometimes struggle to be able to develop this kind of approach:

Here, we spoke, not from a place of knowledge, but rather from a place of uncertainty, a search for possible answers, unsecured, questioning. This is a contradiction. Since the mediator is often thought to be at a place of knowledge, there, where there are no more questions [...] . This is not always desired, and the space and time for this are by no means available always and everywhere. The conditions for this must be created. (Sturm, 2004: 92–93)

<sup>46</sup> Graham is, among other activities, curator of the Centre for Possible Studies, a project supported by the Serpentine Gallery (introduced on my research webpage: *Blackboards were turned into tables* website (2014)). See: Graham, 2012.

<sup>47</sup> Carmen Mörsch (2009b) proposes an interesting topology that helps to identify the main differences in the perspectives of those practices, differentiating between: *affirmative*, *reproductive*, *deconstructive* and *transformative* discourses. About transformation, see also: Marchart (1998).

## 1.4.2 Art practices

### a) Art at school

Many artists, including those that interest me most, are involved in art classes in the traditional state school curriculum.

Art activities are often considered as something amateur, hobbyist and related to leisure, an aside to the school curriculum ‘proper’. Therefore, their content is often less defined and structured than a maths or English programme, and this leaves space for experimentation. Furthermore, assessment in art is often not considered important for the pupils’/students’ final grade.

As engaged artists, we use that space, usually not too much under institutional surveillance, to develop transdisciplinary or politically oriented projects as well as to introduce collaborative, self-organized and





Beuys, Joseph, *Free International University*, documenta 6, 1977 (Tisdall, 1979: 282).



Beuys, Joseph, *Free International University*, *Migrant workshop* (Tisdall, 1979: 262).



anti-competitive processes. In the classroom context – where a direct applicability of job market training is increasingly required, and where private partners are more involved in education – the art classroom can especially be seen, as the activist artists collective ultra-red suggests (Re:Assembly, 2012: 74), as a space of freedom.

<sup>48</sup> See for example: Raunig, Ray & Wuggenig eds. (2011).

This rare freedom might be, on a laboratory level, what Derrida (2002) calls for when he defends the idea of an ‘unconditional university’: a space of critical thought, where knowledge is free of any ideological or mercantile appropriation, where academic freedom, unconditional freedom, would be the rule, a space of critical resistance.

Herbert Read, a writer known for his anarchist orientation and who published several texts about art and education, notably *The Grass Roots of Art* (1937) and *Education Through Art* (1954), proposed that, to avoid children being strictly subordinated to the mechanized world, ‘creative arts of every kind should be made the basis of our educational system’ (Read, 1947: 138).

Later, Joseph Beuys (2004: 905), often presented as a pioneer of pedagogical practices within art practice, considered that an artistic education could be the centre of a new education, working toward a better society:

The isolated concept of art education must be done away with, and the artistic element must be embodied in every subject, whether it is our mother tongue, geography, mathematics or gymnastics. I am pleading for a gradual realization that there is no other way except that people should be artistically educated.

This artistic education alone provides a sound base for an efficient society.

If the notion of *creativity* used by Read has to be considered today with regard to the predominance of cognitive capital in our networked advanced society,<sup>48</sup> it is still interesting, as Beuys and Read proposed, to reverse the traditional view of art as a marginal matter for school education, and to



View of the exhibition *Transductores* (2010). Javier Rodrigo, material for his presentation in the *Utopia and the Everyday* round-table (Centre d'art contemporain Genève, 26 March 2010).



Meetings in the exhibition *Transductores*.



Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti (2010–2011) *Learning Machines. Art Education and Alternative Production of Knowledge.*

imagine what would happen if art were at its very centre.<sup>49</sup>

#### b) Collaborative art practices with interest for pedagogy

Artistic practices dealing with pedagogical issues exist in different forms and in different contexts. My goal here is not to draw a panorama of those practices but rather to focus on the work of artists for whom pedagogy is actually a central issue in their artistic practice.

The existing literature about artists working with pedagogical issues tends to focus on artists working with young people,<sup>50</sup> on community projects in general<sup>51</sup> or on artists running workshops.<sup>52</sup> No real anthology of artists working with pedagogy at the core of their work exists.<sup>53</sup> The use of documentation around three recent exhibitions is very useful in that regard. The artists' selection of *Transductores* in Grenada,<sup>54</sup> *Learning Machines* in Milano<sup>55</sup> and *Utopia and the Everyday* in Geneva<sup>56</sup> demonstrate that despite the diversity of practices, a coherent field is forming.<sup>57</sup>

If much art education or education through art takes place inside schools, then following Ivan Illich and his model for *Deschooling Society* (1972) one could imagine artists to be part of an educational network in parallel to the school system, or ultimately replacing it. In the process of deschooling society that he proposes, Illich (1972: vi) calls for recognizing the existing institutions other than schools in which education could take place and says that teachers should be replaced by another kind of people in charge of the education process. Illich (1972: 121) sees museum guides as a model for this new kind of staff.

This idea of being active in society through educational action led some artists, as we will see, to develop practices that differ from the traditional model of the art teacher, overcoming the dichotomy of working as an artist individually and teaching as an aside to earn a living. Claire Bishop, an art

<sup>49</sup> A recent project (The Art Party Conference 2013), proposed by the British artists Bob and Roberta Smith, promoted a similar position. On stage, a placard saying 'All schools should be artschools' was displayed (Searle 2013).

<sup>50</sup> See: Harding (2006).

<sup>51</sup> See for example: Kester (2005).

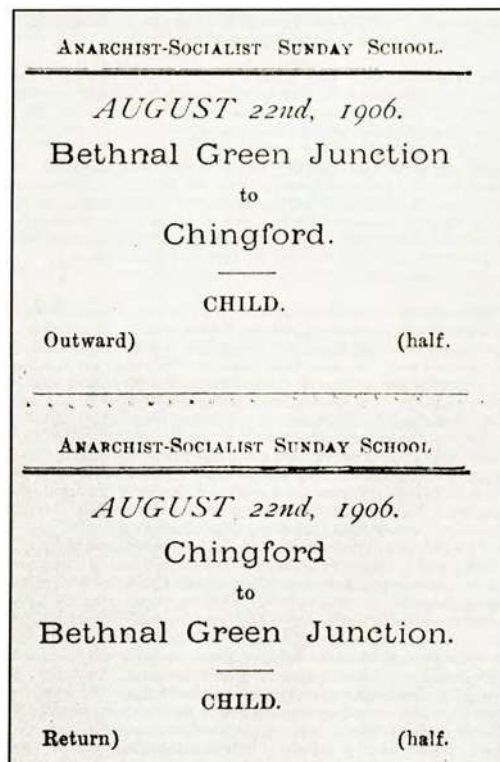
<sup>52</sup> See: Art21 (no date).

<sup>53</sup> In her research about the role of artists in contemporary gallery education, Emily Pringle (2008: 28) points out a 'lack of analysis regarding the ways artists' pedagogic practice functions'. Bishop's recent book, Bishop (2012), includes a chapter called 'Pedagogic Projects: "How do you bring a classroom to life as if it were a work of art?"', which proposes an attempt to map the history and some key figures of the contemporary mix between art and pedagogy. In 2006, Pablo Helguera (2009:99), to describe the practice of artists who 'blend educational processes and art making in ways that are clearly different from the more conventional functions of art academies and other varieties of formal art education', coined the term 'transpedagogy', thinking that no existing definition could apply to this kind of work.

<sup>54</sup> Centro José Guerrero de la Diputación de Granada (2010).



Geys, Jef (2008) *!Question de femmes?*  
Invitation to the exhibition Retrospective-Intropective Room 3. Luxembourg: Erna Hecey Gallery.



Anarchist-Socialist Sunday School, Jubilee Street, London, *Tickets to ride for a Sunday School outing, 1906* (Shotton, 1993: 40).



Norman, Nils (2002–2007) *The Exploding School*.

historian and critic who has written critically about collaborative art practices, notes that many contemporary artists no longer distinguish between an 'artistic work' and a 'discursive/pedagogical work'; and that traditional educational forms such as seminars or discussion are being considered by them exactly as artistic performances or objects.

Such artists have often totally hybridized their art practice with their teaching activity. I mentioned Beuys already (who said 'To be a teacher is my greatest work of art'<sup>58</sup>), and we can think, for example, of artists like Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro (who founded the Feminist Art Program at the Cal State University in the 1970s), Tim Rollins (who merged, since the 1980s his work as an artist and his teaching in the South Bronx in producing artwork collaboratively with a group of teenagers, the *Kids of Survival*), Jef Geys (a Belgian artist who used his classroom as a laboratory and developed collective creations) and Nils Norman (who regrouped several projects involving teaching under an 'Exploding School').<sup>59</sup> These artists are often developing their own learning structures outside the official educational system, or in its margins, and in doing so they make the pedagogical work the centre of their art activity. Their work has been very influential for *microsilons*, because they show how educational and artistic work can not only coexist but also be mixed into complex forms of practices.

We must also underline that many artists were involved lately in the creation of 'educational *self-institutions*'<sup>60</sup> (or *para-institutions*,<sup>61</sup> or *eckstitutions*<sup>62</sup>). In the libertarian Sunday schools of the early twentieth century, individuals (sometimes young people, like Nellie Dick, 13, who opened a school in her parents' London apartment, inspired by Ferrer's experiments in Spain and Kropotkin's writing<sup>63</sup>) established learning structures autonomously from any existing educational institutions. Similarly, artists today are setting up new institutions as counter-proposals to the official educational system.

The Copenhagen Free University, an alternative educational structure that emerged at the time of the critical discussion around the Bologna process,

<sup>55</sup> Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti (2010–2011). No exhibition catalogue or real documentation is currently available on that show but a visit in January 2011 allowed me to document it extensively myself.

<sup>56</sup> For the full documentation about the exhibition, see: *Blackboards were turned into tables* website (2014).

<sup>57</sup> A selection of artists' projects that build up structures or produce works in which pedagogy is a central concern is presented on my research webpage: *Blackboards were turned into tables* website (2014).

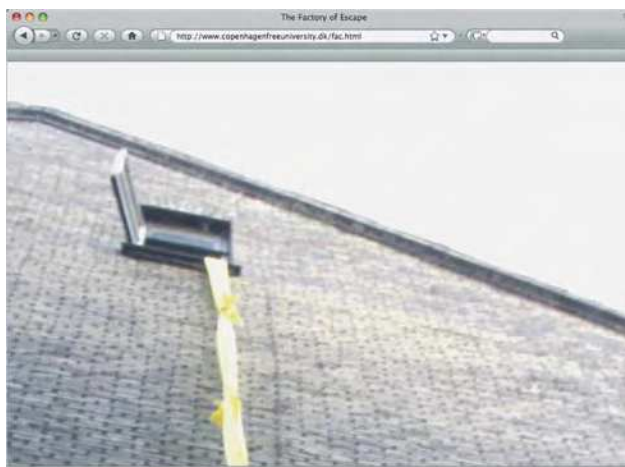
<sup>58</sup> Even though Bishop (2012: 245) considers that he still 'drew a conceptual line between his output as a sculptor and his discursive/pedagogic work'. For the original quote, see: Beuys, Joseph in conversation with Willoughby Sharp (1969).

<sup>59</sup> About these examples, see: 'Introduction to artists and projects mentioned in the thesis' on the *Blackboards were turned into tables* website (2014).

<sup>60</sup> See: Copenhagen Free University (2003).

<sup>61</sup> A term used by the Free/Slow University of Warsaw, for example in the presentation of Free/Slow University of Warsaw (2010).





Copenhagen Free University (2002) *Factory of Escape*.



Free/Slow University of Warsaw (no date) *Forest Survival Conserves; Readings For Artworkers Seminar; Meeting with David Riff from Chto Delat collective*.



Aulabiarta (2009) *Construction of the structure*. [Online image]. Available at: <<https://www.flickr.com/photos/aulabiarta/1705366154/in/photostream/>> [Accessed 27 March 2015].

is a good example of this.<sup>64</sup> The artists Henriette Heise and Jakob Jakobsen opened the university<sup>65</sup> in their apartment, using available resources and focusing its activities on ‘fleeting, fluid, schizophrenic, uncompromising, subjective, uneconomic, acapitalist knowledge’.<sup>66</sup>

Other structures, like the Warsaw Free/Slow University,<sup>67</sup> opened spaces to discuss and experiment with new ways to produce knowledge together and did it with the idea of an *exodus strategy*, in the sense of what the philosopher and art theorist Gerald Raunig (2009) is describing:

here exodus does not mean simply leaving the university, but rather the battle for autonomous free spaces in the university and simultaneously self-organization and *auto-formazione* beyond existing institutions.<sup>68</sup>

Other projects were developed within existing institutions, like Aulabiarta, a self-managed space inside the University of Granada, which aims at developing atypical collective practices within a learning community. Such attempts at critique from the inside can be related to libertarian historical examples, like the Prestolee Elementary School in 1918, where revolutionary methods such as individualized timetables were experimented with, and to Ivan Illich’s position of trying to change the educational institutions in order to change the state, instead of trying to change the state first (Illich 1972: 105).

The artists I have mentioned working in these pedagogical contexts show specific competences: an inventiveness toward structures and modes of organization, a facility to make links (between different participants, objects, disciplines, between art and an everyday context ...), a sensitivity to a productively critical point of view (identifying problems,<sup>69</sup> decoding problematic mechanisms<sup>70</sup>), exhibitionary skills to produce different kinds of forms for a public address, and an ability to productively deal with the unexpected, challenging the *status quo* and boredom of official education.

I believe that artists, with skills and methodologies different from those of

<sup>62</sup> Florian Schneider opposes the institution (limits the transmission of knowledge, is bound to discourse of infinite progress, includes everyone meeting the standards) and the *ekstitution* (provides instant access to knowledge, shows nebulosity concerning access policy but paradoxically supports an egalitarian ideology). See: Schneider (2010).

<sup>63</sup> The children were discussing together, defining their programme, organizing field trips and political protests. About this school, see: Shotton, 1993: 36–40.

<sup>64</sup> See: ‘Introduction to artists and projects mentioned in the thesis’ on the *Blackboards were turned into tables* website (2014).

<sup>65</sup> Using, like the Warsaw Free/Slow University, the term ‘University’ is a way to state ‘that the neoliberal university model was only one model among many models’. See: The Free U Resistance Committee (2011).

<sup>66</sup> Copenhagen Free University (no date).

<sup>67</sup> See: ‘Introduction to artists and projects mentioned in the thesis’ on the *Blackboards were turned into tables* website (2014).

<sup>68</sup> Raunig (2009).

<sup>69</sup> Emily Pringle (2008: 91–93) shows that some artist educators see themselves as ‘Empirical problem solvers’.



Aulabierta (2009) *Aulagarden*. [Online image].  
Available at: <<http://ecosistemaurbano.org/arquitectura/followarch-faaq/>> [Accessed 27 March 2015].



gallery educators or teachers, for example, can play a central role in critical learning both inside and outside schools, finding ways to go beyond an art education that would be 'only for the sake of it'. This is at least what *microsillons* is trying to achieve.

As I will discuss later,<sup>71</sup> the production of formal objects, as a result of the collaborative processes, is fundamental to *microsillons*' practice. As artists, and in dialogue with the educators and participants who are involved, we bring to the pedagogical process our specific competences in the production, representation and critical understanding of cultural forms.

Our goal in doing so is neither to fetishize the pedagogical exchange, nor to advertise the projects. On the contrary, involving the participants in this process is a way to think about our project in terms of address and of the responsibility originating from any public discourse. It is also a way to rethink – through practice – the conception of art as produced by a single expert. This approach produces a type of project that the participants have usually never previously experienced, as even adults don't often have the occasion to produce forms collectively and to address them to a public.<sup>72</sup>

Working toward a public presentation creates expectations, on the part of the participants, the public, and also of the involved organizations. The institutional partners – schools, associations, community centres or art structures – all have their own logics that are manifested in terms of making schedules, booking spaces, validating content and discourse, financing or communicating the projects. They need to get the most out of the work we are developing with them, and to make it fit into those existing logics.

On the part of *microsillons*, a condition for a project to have a dialogical nature is for it to be open-ended and unpredictable, so that the contributions of the participants can be included in the work and can even transform the very structure initially imagined.<sup>73</sup> The corollary of this is that we must keep open the possibility of setback or even failure,<sup>74</sup> because of the

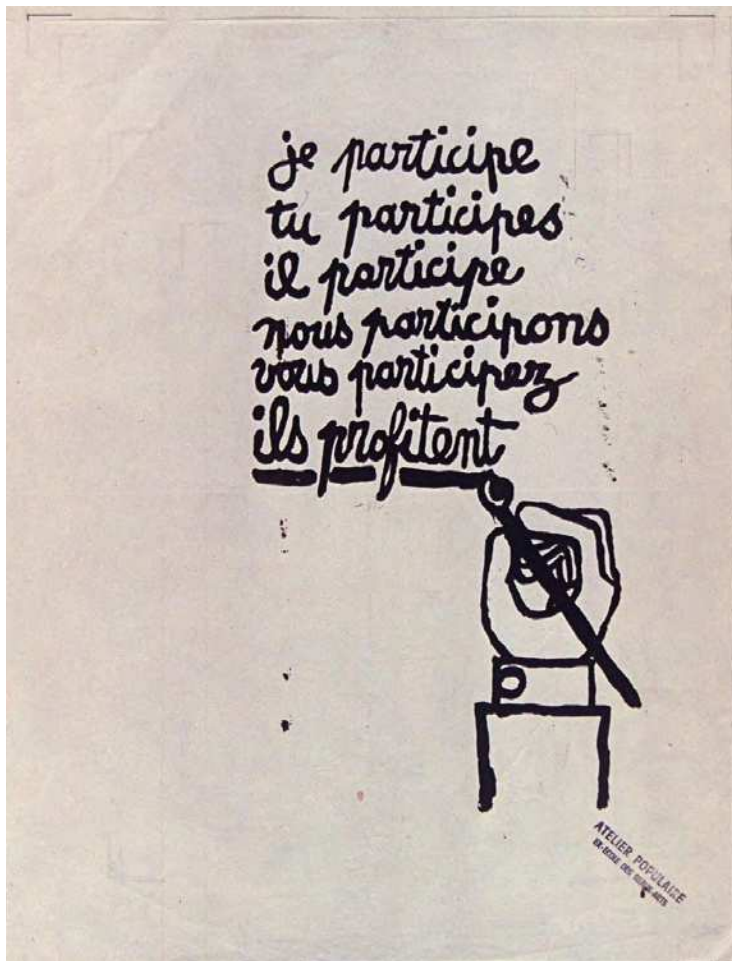
<sup>70</sup> Critical pedagogy and artists dealing with it often see themselves as a way to decode the official discourses. Trend (1998: 176) says for example: 'it can be used as a means of helping people to decode the mendacity of the mass media so that they can make informed decisions – whether at the grocery store or in the voting booth.' Ira Shor (1992: 131) sees 'critical Literacy' ('habits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath the surface meaning, first impressions, dominant myths') as key to critical consciousness. Regarding this, we could easily imagine why artists should have tools – in semiology, visual culture, cultural studies – to participate in work toward such a critical Literacy.

<sup>71</sup> See point 3.3.3.

<sup>72</sup> See page 250.

<sup>73</sup> See chapter 3.5.

<sup>74</sup> See point 3.5.3.



Atelier Populaire, *Je participe, tu participes, il participe...*, 1968.  
Poster screenprint on paper (Bishop, 2012: 76).

disengagement of the participants or of the absence of a transmissible result, for example. Thus, a constant tension exists between the institutional constraints arising from the essential public dimension of our work and our commitment to risk, uncertainty and failure (something not always easy to defend).<sup>75</sup>

To deal with this paradox, we need to find specific solutions for each given project. These solutions include developing a secured frame (such as an exhibition,<sup>76</sup> a newspaper<sup>77</sup> or a database<sup>78</sup>) including open spaces that can receive last-minute results of a collaboration, negotiating with the institution a project without any predefined timing or outcome<sup>79</sup> or working on an evolutive display that can take any form according to the content of the exchange.<sup>80</sup>

To affirm an artist position in an educational context is not simply a way to earn symbolic value or to earn a living. It is claiming the ability to use knowledge and skills to refuse a transmission-based, individualistic or employment-oriented education in favour of a critical, collaborative and unpredictable pedagogical relationship. Many artists today understand critical pedagogies as part of the political struggles against the neo-liberal manipulation of education or against the general trend of depoliticization, and are using their competences to serve a movement going way beyond the art world.<sup>81</sup>

#### 1.4.3 The 'educational turn' in curating

In 2005, a project called *Academie* (a series of conferences and exhibitions) aimed at discussing the way in which art is taught and learned. In 2006, when *Manifesta* decided to shape itself into an art school, the project was aborted for political/organizational reasons but the publication raised much interest.<sup>82</sup> In 2007, the forum *Summit. Non-aligned initiatives in education culture* was organized in Berlin, with the idea that a critical view on the

<sup>75</sup> Ulrich Beck (1992) shows how risk is less and less tolerated in our society and how risk management is becoming a key element in capitalist structures.

<sup>76</sup> See *Utopia and The Everyday*.

<sup>77</sup> See *En commun*.

<sup>78</sup> See *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*.

<sup>79</sup> See *La surface des choses*.

<sup>80</sup> See *Lectures autour du graphisme*.

<sup>81</sup> See for example: Radical education collective (no date), Carrott Workers Coalition (no date) or artists active in Edu-Factory (no date).

<sup>82</sup> See for example: the survey 'School of Thought': Enwezor et al. (2006).



knowledge economy should lead to alternative models to share and produce knowledge. Many artists and cultural workers were involved in the project. During the 2007 *documenta*, education was one of the three leitmotifs chosen by Roger M. Buergel, the artistic director.<sup>83</sup>

The following year, the theorist Irit Rogoff, who took part in some of those projects, wrote *Turning*,<sup>84</sup> an influential article describing what she calls 'the educational turn in curating'.<sup>85</sup> A series of exhibitions and events about education continued and even increased after the publication of the text.<sup>86</sup>

In an event called 'Educational turn. Internationale Perspektiven auf Vermittlung in Museen', organized by the Schnittpunkt organization in Vienna in 2010, the art educator and theorist Nora Sternfeld introduced Irit Rogoff's talk, saying that gallery educators and artists had been somehow left out of the debate about the 'educational turn', which had focused on a curatorial discussion. In her article *The Unglamorous Task*, Sternfeld (2010) criticized the manipulation of art education by curators:

it becomes clear that the 'educational turn in curating' functions as a turn exclusively for curators. It instrumentalizes 'education' as a series of protocols, bypassing its complex internal struggles with notions of possibility and transformation.

[...] Suddenly, these areas seem to be of interest to the field as a whole — a discourse that has been marginalized for years is now associated with the themes of conferences and publications, with artistic, political, activist, and theoretical approaches, drawing international attention. However, questions remain: Who ultimately profits from this discussion?

Janna Graham shows that this curatorial trend around education, in a neo-liberal context, can still provide a frame for critical art education projects. For Graham (2010: 125), the 'pedagogical turn' relates to the neo-liberal discourses and practices linking creativity and education as well as to the art institutions' need for the novelty of *turns*, but can paradoxically provide

<sup>83</sup> In the *documenta* 12 (2007) Leitmotifs, one can read: 'The final question concerns education: What is to be done? Artists educate themselves by working through form and subject matter; audiences educate themselves by experiencing things aesthetically.'

<sup>84</sup> Rogoff (2008).

<sup>85</sup> For a good overview of how Rogoff's text has been part of a network of projects and discussions around the same subject, see the introduction to O'Neill & Wilson (2010: 12–22).

<sup>86</sup> I mentioned already *Transductores* (Centro José Guerrero de la Diputación de Granada 2010), *Utopia and the Everyday* (Centre d'art contemporain Genève 2009–2010) and *Learning Machines* (Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti 2010–2011). Examples like *Deschooling Society* (2010), *MDE11 | Encuentro Internacional de Medellín Enseñar y aprender* (2011) and *Entre utopia y desencanto* (2013), can be added, to name only a few.





*Utopia and the Everyday. Between Art and Pedagogies. Visit with the gallery educators of the Mediamus association.*

a platform for critical gallery education to question, for example, the idea of *artistic genius* and to propose alternatives.

*Utopia and the Everyday*<sup>87</sup> was *microsillons'* attempt to take advantage of the curatorial trend for education. We were able to produce a critical art education project and to initiate a public discussion around those practices and their role in art institutions and society. *Utopia and the Everyday* was not conceived and realized by curators but from our position as practitioners responsible for art education projects.

Janna Graham had observed that art projects dealing with alternative pedagogies usually reproduce the 'short-term, spectacular mode of presentation that arts institutions habitually employ',<sup>88</sup> suppressing the transformative potential of education. She underlines the need for projects that could be defined as experimental researches. *Utopia and the Everyday* was an attempt toward such an investigation. Because it was connected to a network of people and a series of projects developed during the five-year involvement of *microsillons* with the institution, it aimed at outlasting the seasonal curatorial trend of the 'educational turn'<sup>89</sup> in rethinking the distinctions between cultural workers, imagining new roles for the art institutions and experimenting with new ways to exchange knowledge.

## 1.5 Methodology

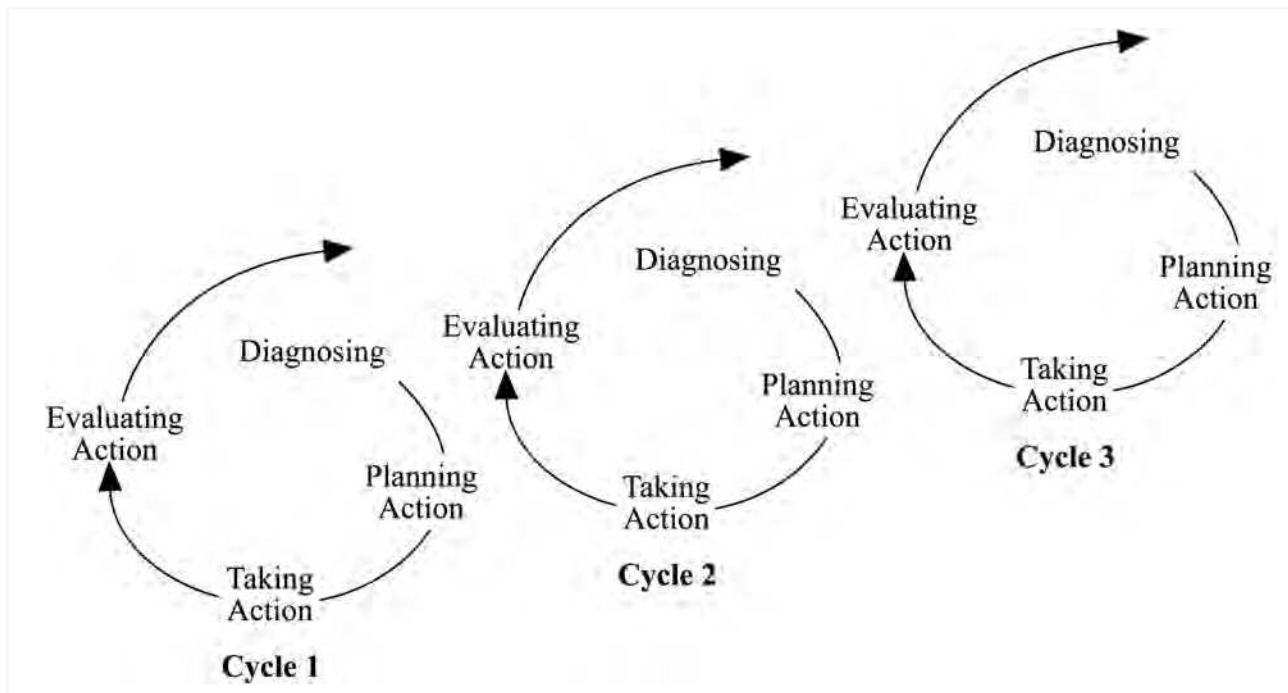
The PhD process has not interrupted the way in which *microsillons* considers and practices artistic research, nor has it been a post-rationalization. I align myself with Bourdieu and Chamboredon (1968: 28), who, within the field of sociology in the 1970s, voiced a suspicion of methodological fetishization:

Forgetting that 'methodology is not the preceptor or the tutor of the scientist' but 'always his pupil' [...], such methodological fetishism [an ostentatious display of data] is condemned to dress up preconstructed objects in the

<sup>87</sup> See the introduction to the project in point 2.1.

<sup>88</sup> 'For this and other reasons, many artists and curators have turned to the longer time periods and more experimental possibilities.' (Graham, 2010: 129)

<sup>89</sup> Taking advantage of that situation requires caution, because visibility can also be a trap, as Michal Herer (2009: 1) underlines, in a publication of the Free/Slow University of Warsaw, following Foucault: 'All creative art must submit to the requirement of broadening the cultural offer. In the fields of art that are particularly close to Deleuze, this translates into the dominance of the "journalistic" element in literature and the "television" element in the cinema. In Discipline and Punish, Foucault wrote that "visibility is a trap", having in mind a system of continuous observation constituting the grounds for disciplinary power.'



Spiral of Action Research Cycles (Coghlan & Brannick, 2001: 19).



garb of science and risks inducing scientific myopia: 'The sophistication of techniques of observation and proof can, if it is not accompanied by a redoubling of theoretical vigilance, lead us to see better and better fewer and fewer things.'

Nevertheless, two research tools from other disciplines were useful in my research, once I adapted them freely so they could be helpful in my praxis.

### 1.5.1 Participatory Action Research

Following Moacir Gadotti (1979: 21), former director of the Instituto Paulo Freire in São Paulo,<sup>90</sup> Paulo Freire and more generally the field of Participatory Action Research theory, I see this PhD research not only as a way to analyse something existing but also as a tool to transform our collaborative practice, myself and people involved in our projects, and the art institutions in which they take place.

The discourse, the critic, the reflection are not enough. And if there is a discourse to make, if we must critique, demystify, suspect education, this will mainly be done through a determined practice of education. Otherwise, a research in education is an uprooting, an immurement, a tragic and fatalistic circle of dead-end critique and analysis. If our task doesn't help us to educate ourselves, all of our research in education is pointless. If we leave our work as we came into it, we have lost time.<sup>91</sup>

As *microsilons*, we conduct research around our projects, each project leading us to critically rethink the next one. The PhD is a continuation of that *praxis*:<sup>92</sup> a structure in which practice informs theory and theory transforms practice, in a fluid process of reflection, investigation and action. The recursive spiral model of Participatory Action Research,<sup>93</sup> where every project redefines the research questions and outcomes of the next one, is therefore an interesting image here.

<sup>90</sup> See: Paulo Freire Foundation (no date).

<sup>91</sup> My translation.

<sup>92</sup> See point 1.2.

<sup>93</sup> About the Participatory Action Research spiral, see: McIntyre (2008: 6–7). About Participatory Action Research, also see: Whyte ed. (1991) or Wadsworth (1998).

EACH PROJECT HAS ITS OWN SPIRAL OF 'DIAGNOSING/PLANNING ACTION/ TAKING ACTION/EVALUATING ACTION'.

SEVERAL PROJECTS ARE DEVELOPED SIMULTANEOUSLY.

OBSTACLES, BREAKS IN SPIRAL :

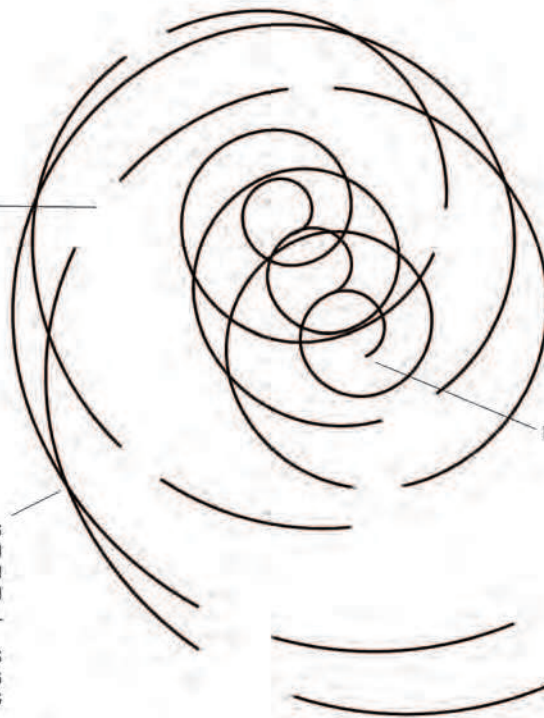
- Different narratives.
- Limited time for analysis.
- Limits of evaluation.
- Need for visual results.
- Institutional/Financial limitations.

INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN PROJECTS RUN IN PARALLEL

PROJECTS INFORMING EACH OTHERS

END OF A SPECIFIC PROJECT

CONTINUOUS RESEARCH THROUGH MULTIPLE PROJECTS/SITUATIONS



My draft of a different spiral inspired by the Participatory Action Research 'classical' spiral, which would be closer to my own experience. 2013.

According to the teacher, the participants are not always conscious of taking part in a project that will be made public. Extra sessions would have been needed, in particular for allowing more feedback.

Excerpt from the *En commun* project diary.

The ‘classical’ spiral model of the Participatory Action Research, in which the actions of analysing a situation, planning an action, taking an action, evaluating an action and reflecting lead to a new analysis, a new planning, a new action, a new evaluation, a new reflection, and so on and so forth, is close to the way I’m working with *microsillons*: each project is planned according to a specific situation that is analysed; the project is run and discussed afterwards, in particular with the participants, and this leads to a new project, a new action. However, this spiral model is not fully satisfactory for *microsillons*: first, because we usually run several projects in parallel, so the interaction between projects needs to be included; and second, because many obstacles interrupt the supposedly smooth flow of the action from one project to another – lack of time to analyse; financial limitations that constrain the theme, form or frequency of our projects; different, sometimes contradictory, conclusions that each member of *microsillons*, the participants and the collaborators draw about a project and the implications for the following one.

As an ongoing and fragmented spiral that would have roots at the beginning of *microsillons*’ practice, this dissertation aims at opening new questions and new problems for the collective’s future projects.

As in Participatory Action Research, the co-conceivers of our projects, and the participants, are included in *microsillons*’ reflexive process, usually through feedback sessions. Nevertheless, whereas our projects aim for transformation in the collaborating institutions or in the minds of the participants, the main aim of this PhD is to transform *microsillons*’ practice.

Therefore, outside of each specific project, the participants are not included in the research process as they would be in a full Participatory Action Research model. Separating the projects from the PhD ‘meta-analysis’ aims to avoid a false ‘equality’ of all actors involved in the research. As Lea and Pekka Kantonen (2007) (artists developing ‘community art projects’) stress, ‘Participatory research isn’t symmetrical’ and ‘the artist shares authorship



with the community, but only the artist is rewarded and recognized by the art community.’

As this research aims both to analyse and to transform *microsillons*’ practice, self-criticism is key. Rather than advertise and celebrate art practices and projects, research for a PhD appears as a rare space to rethink one’s practice critically and in depth.

### 1.5.2 Thick description

An enduring problem in a study of the history of libertarian education and schooling is the nature and availability of source materials. There is an abundance of worthwhile secondary material in some of the private adventures in education. [...] Much of the writing available, though, is concerned with the politics of the campaigns that developed in those schools and the conflict that occurred between the schools and the authorities. It is difficult to build up a picture of what the experience was like for children in the schools. (Shotton, 1993: 17)

John Shotton’s observation on libertarian and anarchist pedagogies is also true for collaborative art practice and gallery education projects. This has been a frustration for me as a practitioner, because being able to draw from existing experience could have led to rich exchanges about the use of specific methods in specific contexts.<sup>94</sup> Conscious of that lack, from the outset, *microsillons* has documented extensively the results and the different steps of its projects,<sup>95</sup> and made it available on its website.<sup>96</sup> The method of documentation and dissemination has changed according to the projects, the time available, and the particular difficulties of documenting some works. When we began the PhD, we were working on a project called *En commun* and had some frustrations about the collective process developing: we felt it was the result of a complex web of different problems. In the rush of action, we didn’t register enough details about the course of the work to identify

<sup>94</sup> The book *Transforming Power* (Kreisberg 1992), articulating the theoretical part with a large section comprising teachers’ writing about their experiences, is an inspiring example in that regard. See chapters 4 (‘Six Teachers’ Experiences of Empowerment in Educators for Social Responsibility’), 5 (‘Power in the Experience of Empowerment’) and 6 (‘Transforming Power: Power in Empowering Teaching’).

<sup>95</sup> This has been done since the first projects, on *microsillons*’ website (*microsillons*, since 2005), and was formalized into the *Gazettes* publication during *Utopia and the Everyday* (see: *microsillons* 2009–10c–i).

<sup>96</sup> *microsillons* (since 2005).



precisely the problematic points, making it difficult to turn this frustration into positive outcomes for subsequent projects.

From there, for my PhD, I decided to be more careful about the documentation and to develop a layered descriptive methodology that would support a more detailed analysis. I was inspired by the idea of thick description as developed by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973) – that recording the context and not just the behaviour of the observed is the only way to interpret any actions, even the simplest ones.

From the basic idea of thick description I developed a set of description categories, to analyse in depth each step of a project. Starting from the project *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*, I kept a diary in which I assigned myself to provide information for categories covering a wide spectrum of observations, from factual ones to personal feelings, from person-to-person exchanges to institutional forces, in an attempt to connect what I would normally have noted or remembered (a synthesis of the content discussed and a list of the decisions that were taken) to a larger net of observations. The categories were:

- Date and time of the working session
- Venue of the session
- People present at the session
- Content discussed/produced
- Decisions taken (what/by whom/how)
- Relationships between the people attending (nature of the exchanges, tone, possible tensions ...)
- Personal feelings about the session
- Institutional level (how are the institutions involved, what are their requirements ...)
- *microsillons'* general situation (what are the other activities run simultaneously, what is the financial situation, etc.)





The categories reflect the recurring types of observations and attempt to describe relevant levels of the situations, as a step toward a deeper analysis.

Observations around ‘relationship’ and ‘personal feeling’ allow a more psychological and interpersonal understanding of the group dynamic, which is seldom discussed in the documentation of collaborative art projects, including *microsillons*. In a critical account of horizontality – an account that is willing to be self-critical but also to engage with power dynamics and the effect they produce on a practice – developing an observation method that would allow me to be more attentive to the relationships occurring in the course of a project, and to gather information, was crucial. As we will see later on, feminist and/or poststructuralist theories about power<sup>97</sup> have emphasized the importance of the exchanges on a micro-level in the construction of power structures. In that perspective, recording carefully the interpersonal exchanges taking place during a project was a necessity, trying to pay, as the feminist researcher in education Jennifer M. Gore (1992: 59) calls for, ‘more attention to the microdynamics of the operation of power as it is exercised in particular sites’. My thick descriptive method made me more sensitive to the microdynamics of practice, regarding tensions, modes of decision-making or splitting of tasks, for example.

The category ‘*microsillons*’ general situation’ helped me to consider a specific project as part of a broader practice. This allowed me to understand better that the reason for choosing a specific method or the grounds for a given problem are found not only in the course of the project itself, but in a more general working situation, as the projects or activities that are run in parallel to a given project often impact on it, in terms both of time available and of content.

This opens broader questions about the condition of production, such as the financial need to accept different projects simultaneously and the pressure to produce a visible result (such as spectacular exhibitions) in order to secure future projects – points that have a direct influence on the nature of the

<sup>97</sup> See chapter 4. Kreisberg (1992: 193) mentions that ‘feminists have tended to see the microdynamics of relationships as a more central and important focus for inquiry into the nature of domination and the possibilities of liberation than have critical theorists’.



exchange in any collaboration.

Like any description, this thick description is partial and incomplete.<sup>98</sup>

The degree of thickness of the observation is not a claim of being more neutral or scientific. On the contrary (as in autoethnography methods (Ellis 2004)), it foregrounds more ‘subjective’ elements – and more interpretative openness in the way they are linked – affirming the personal and incomplete dimension of any research. Geertz (1973: 10), presenting *Thick Description*, emphasized the fact that ethnographic research is always confronting gaps, incoherences and ever-changing objects.

Doing ethnography is like trying to read (in the sense of ‘construct a reading of’) a manuscript – foreign, faded, full of ellipses, incoherencies, suspicious emendations, and tendentious commentaries, but written not in conventionalised graphs of sound but in transient examples of shaped behaviour.

The application of this method of documenting to three of the five projects discussed in this dissertation (the first two having been realized before I began to think about the potential of thick description) informed in a ‘thicker’ way some specific moments and issues of the projects. Thick description made me more aware of elements that I would otherwise have overlooked, and also helped me to consider the always incomplete nature of any observation, the importance of the *unsaid*.

### 1.5.3 Ethical considerations

The research was conducted in accordance with ethical principles, as defined in the University of the Arts London Code of Practice on Research Ethics.<sup>99</sup> People involved in the five projects realized during the research were all participating as volunteers or within the frame of their usual school or extra-school activities (having previously established with the teachers

<sup>98</sup> This view can be related to the *actor-network theory*, in which the relationships between actors is emphasized to study a situation in which everything is always in transformation: ‘For the semiotic approach tells us that entities achieve their form as a consequence of the relations in which they are located. But this means that it also tells us that they are performed in, by, and through those relations. A consequence is that everything is uncertain and reversible, at least in principle. It is never given in the order of things’ Hassard & Law (1999: 3–4).

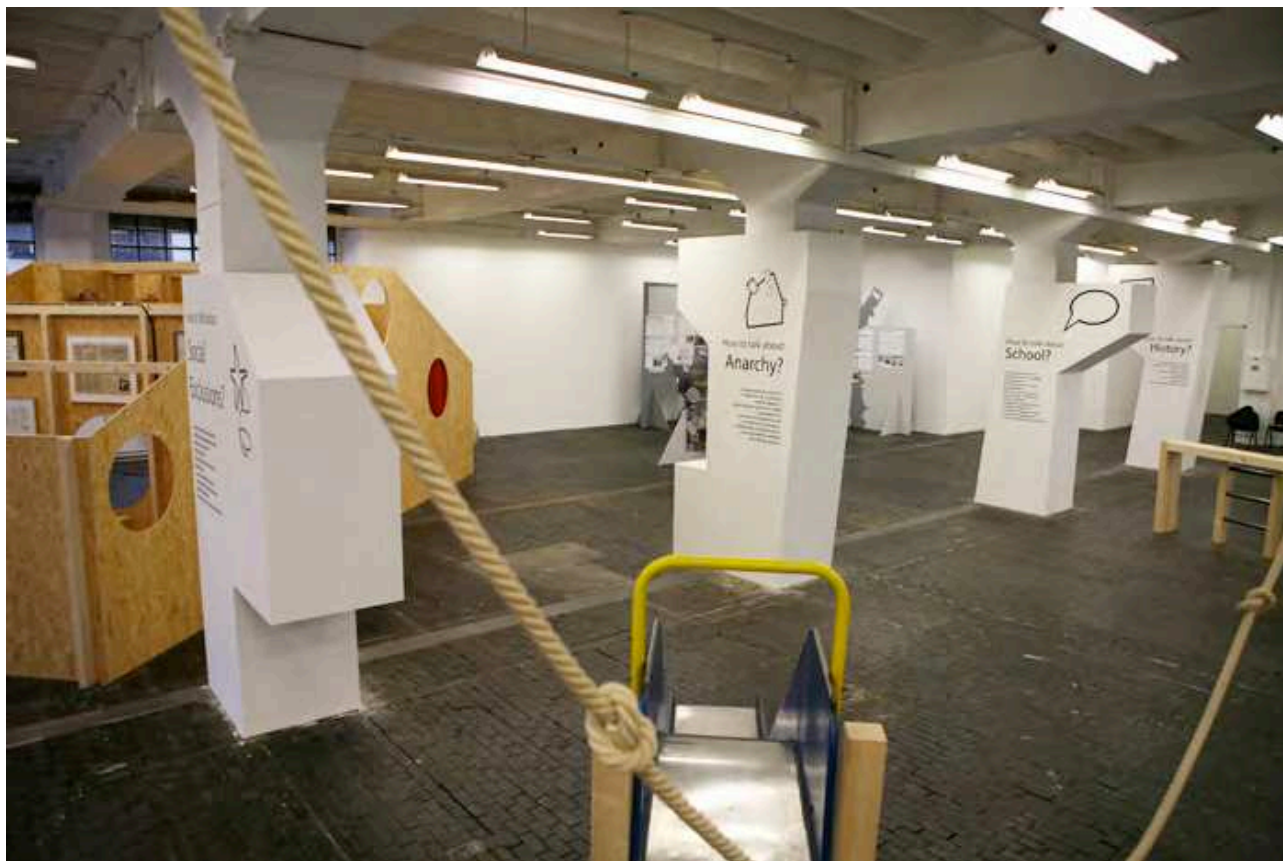
<sup>99</sup> University of the Arts London (2015).



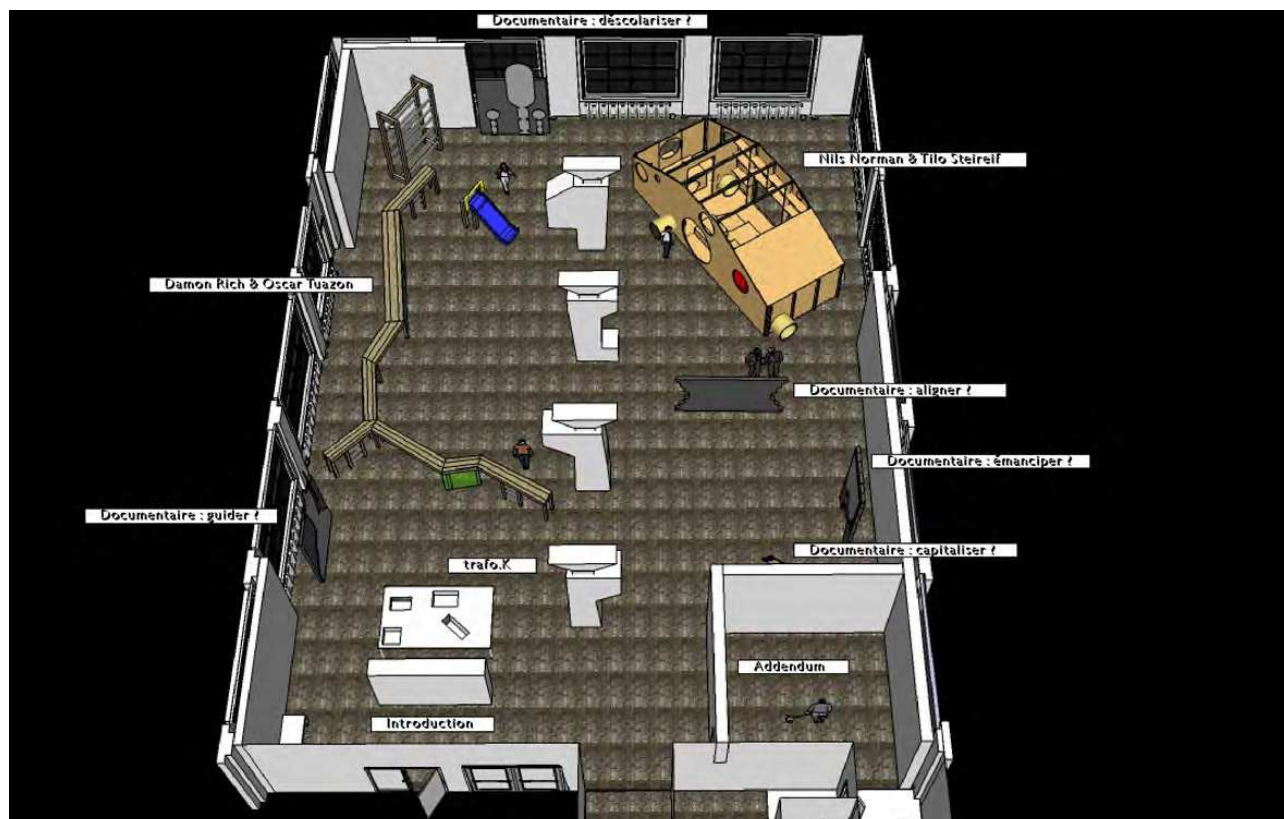
or community centre educators that the project would be educationally beneficial). Every participant agreed the project she/he took part in would be included and studied in my PhD research. They were informed that they could withdraw at any time. There were no extra risks for the participants in the workshops we convened than in any normal classroom or extra-school activity.

Every participant gave her or his consent to being photographed and quoted. On several occasions (the pictures in the *En commun* newspaper or the trafo.K workshop in Utopia and the Everyday for example), the documentation was realized by the participants themselves, as part of the collaborative process.

Throughout the thesis, the names of the participants (including the teachers) have not been mentioned. In the exhibitions and publications produced during the projects (including those in annex of the thesis), the participants decided how they wanted to sign (full name, first name, initials, no signature).



*Utopia and the Everyday. Between Art and Pedagogies.* General view of the show, in the main exhibition floor of the institution. Project initiated by Rich and Tuazon's installation (playground in the foreground), project initiated by Norman and Steireif's on the left (wooden house), and part of the project initiated by trafo.K's in the middle (columns). Part of the documentary section on the grey wooden panels in the background.



Modelization of the space.

## 2. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECTS

My research focuses on five different projects realized by *microsillons* between 2009 and 2011, during the first two years of my PhD research. Four of those projects were developed for Le Centre, where the collective was hired to be responsible for the gallery education projects. The fifth, a satellite project of an interdisciplinary festival, presents a more autonomous part of our practice.

<sup>100</sup> See: *Blackboards were turned into tables* website (2014).

The projects are presented in more detail on my research webpage, where microsites for each projects, with multimedia material, are available.<sup>100</sup>

### 2.1. *Utopia and the Everyday* (2009–2010)

#### 2.1.1 Context

In 2008, *microsillons*, after a series of freelance pilot projects for the institution, was hired by Le Centre to be responsible for art education projects.

For the direction of Le Centre, hiring us at that position not as individuals but as a collective, not as art educators but as artists, was a way to affirm an experimental position and to accept our proposal of an art education department which would develop custom-made artistic projects for specific small groups, leading to public presentations.

At the beginning of our employment, we proposed to the director, in parallel with the collaborative projects we were running, to curate an exhibition presenting the work of artists and gallery educators developing critical pedagogy strategies.



# UTOPIA AND THE EVERYDAY

27.11.2009—14.02.2010

Opening Thursday 26th November, 6pm – 9pm

Open from Tuesday to Sunday, 11am – 6pm

The exhibition is closed between 24th December 2009 and 1st January 2010

## CENTRE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN GENÈVE

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### GAZETTE # 1

"UTOPIA AND THE EVERYDAY. BETWEEN ART AND PEDAGOGY"

"UTOPIA AND THE EVERYDAY. Between art and pedagogy" is a Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève project, conceived by the *microsilons* collective in collaboration with the Centre's director, Katya García-Antón. This ambitious, experimental project aims to open a debate, in Geneva and Switzerland, about the role of artists in education, both within and outside artistic institutions. It draws on the practice of artists and collectives for whom a reflection about teaching methods lies at the heart of their work, and explores points of contact between art and education.

The exhibition also proposes avenues for reflection on the role of mediation (a practice associated with the educational mission of artistic institutions) as a discursive movement in which constructive criticism

of these institutions can take place: a laboratory on culture and society rather than as a means to reduce misunderstanding between works of art and the audience.

Three artists or collectives were invited to develop projects with local partners, and the fruit of their work will be presented during the exhibition, which takes place from 27 November 2009 to 14 February 2010, on the second floor of the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève.

The three partnerships were as follows:

– trafo.K (Vienna) and Gabu Heindl (Vienna), in collaboration with 8. Klasse of Deutsche Schule Genf.

– Nils Norman (London) and Tilo Steireif (Lausanne), in collaboration with the HEP (Haute Ecole Pédagogique) of Lausanne

and the CIRA (Centre International de Recherche sur l'Anarchisme).

– Damon Rich (New York) and Oscar Tuazon (Paris), in collaboration with the inhabitants and associations of Le Lignon.

Besides the results of these partnerships, a number of earlier projects undertaken by other artists will be presented in documentary form. They will be structured around a series of questions based on educational theory, which will be brought to life in the space.

#### GUIDING?

What is the role and position of the teacher towards the learner? Should he be a leader, a guide, or simply one who accompanies, a facilitator? In his analysis of pastoral power, the philosopher Michel

The goal was first to present critical practices mixing art and pedagogy (and their genealogy) in a Swiss context where they remained mainly not discussed or even unknown.

<sup>101</sup> See point 1.4.1.

Then, at a moment when traditional gallery education was at the centre of an important discussion in Switzerland and in Germany,<sup>101</sup> we took the opportunity to bring examples that could challenge the usual separation between art and gallery education.

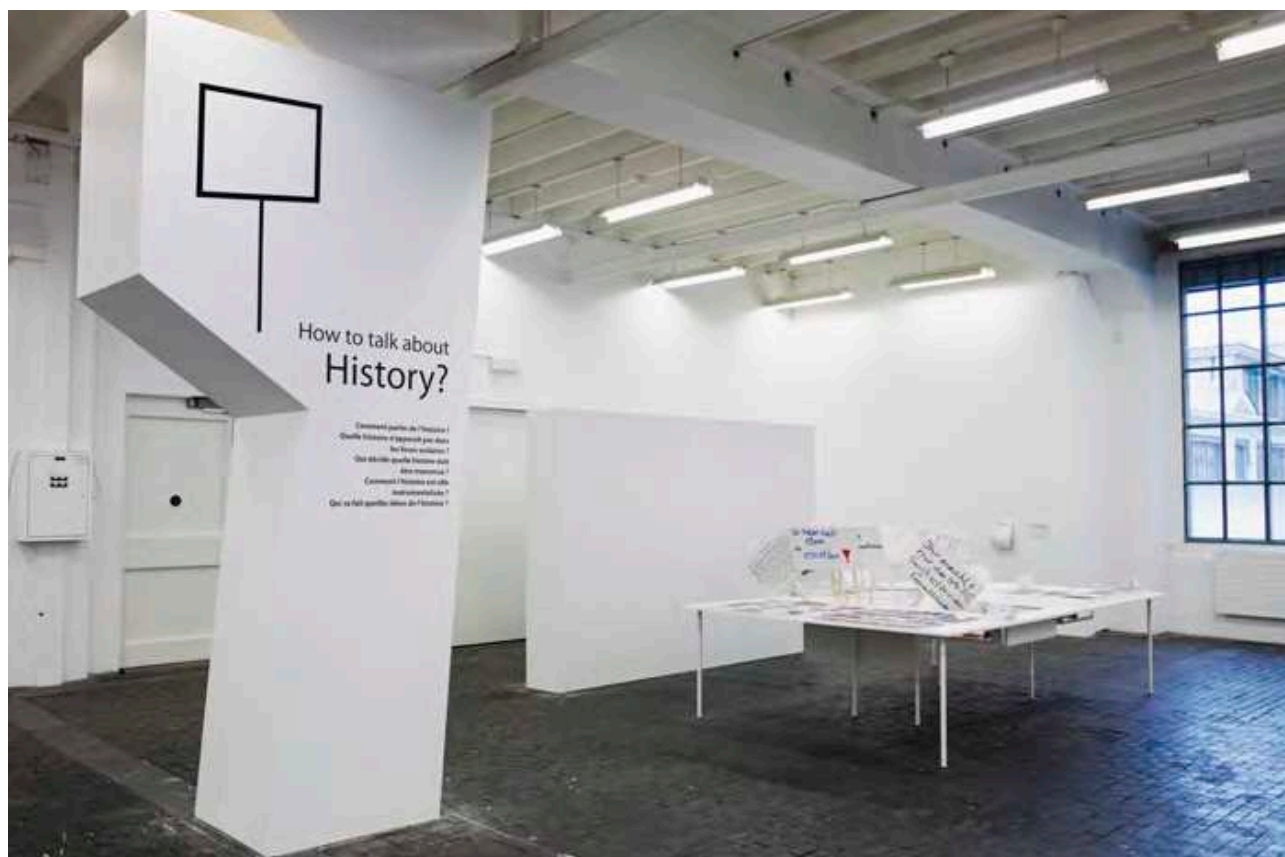
Finally, because we curated the show from our position of responsibility for gallery education projects, contrary to most of the 'educational turn' projects curated by full-time curators, *Utopia and the Everyday* was a way to build a network of peers we could engage in dialogue and with whose practices we could confront our own work. It was a way to contextualize our own practice and to build a theoretical basis to our position. Therefore, many aspects of my PhD research are rooted into that project.

### 2.1.2 Exhibition structure

The project was conceived in two main parts that were mixed in an open exhibition space. First, three groups of artists or critical art educators were invited to realize new projects in the Geneva area, in collaboration with local people. Second, a documentary section was developed by *microsilons* to present art practices dealing with pedagogies, from the 1930s to the current time.

### 2.1.3 Collaborative projects

The invited artists (Nils Norman and Tilo Steireif; Damon Rich and Oscar Tuazon) and gallery educators (trafo.K) were chosen because of their long-term interest in pedagogy and because of their experience in developing



*Utopia and the Everyday. Between Art and Pedagogies. trafo.K and a class from the Deutsche Schule Genf, Wild Translations (detail).*



*microsillons providing a guided tour in the empty exhibition space to the group of pupils working with trafo.K.*



collaborative projects. The invitation was made about one year before the beginning of the show and – an extremely unusual thing for the institution – came with fees for the artists and art educators. This was for us the condition for the possibility of long-term projects, where a real involvement from the guest artists and educators could emerge. We requested that the projects be completed before the opening and presented in the show visually (the choice of the final form of presentation was left totally open, and therefore the outcomes were unpredictable). A series of *Gazettes*<sup>102</sup> describing each project step by step was published and made available free of charge in the exhibition.

trafo.K, an art educators collective from Vienna, immediately raised the issue of language and saw translation as too much of an obstacle for a real dialogue to take place.<sup>103</sup> Therefore, they worked with a class of 13-year-old pupils from the German school in Geneva. trafo.K took full advantage of the travel budget we could offer and, considering that spacing the sessions with the participants was important, first organized a one-day session in the classroom, then a three-day workshop at Le Centre, and finally a session when the project was being installed in the exhibition space.

After introductory discussions in the classroom about art, utopia and education, the group followed a guided tour (provided by *microsillons*) of *Utopia and the Everyday* before it existed, in an empty gallery space. During the tour we said as much as possible about what would be in the exhibition.

Then, the participants worked on models (that trafo.K called ‘commentaries’) of what they imagined the exhibition would be. trafo.K used the format of an ‘advice centre’: the participants worked independently on their projects, consulting the art educators when they needed to.

The pupils’ productions were presented in a display realized in collaboration with the architect Gabu Heindl, forming within the exhibition a *translated* version of it.

<sup>102</sup> See: *microsillons*, 2009-2010c-i. One *Gazette* was produced for each project and one worked as an introduction to the exhibition. This process was also a reference to the importance of self-edited material in pedagogy history, in particular to the work of Célestin Freinet.

<sup>103</sup> Interestingly, *translation* – meant as a translation of artists’ ideas into the visual vocabulary of young people and into series of questions of the gallery educators – became the project theme.

‘The proposal is based on a series of ‘translations’ that lead to thinking about ways to tackle complex subjects with pupils, through art. In the frame of a workshop, the pupils interpret in their own vocabulary seven projects that will be presented in the exhibition. Their proposals are presented in the exhibition and re-interpreted or ‘translated’ again by the gallery educators, taking the form of questions about their own practice that are integrated in Gabu Heindl’s architectural display.’

*Utopia and the Everyday, Gazette #2 (microsillons, 2009–2010d-e)*



Pupils and trafo.K members arguing about the display of their project.

Another part of the display, materialized by four columns, presented commentaries by trafo.K about the pedagogical process and the themes discussed during the collaboration. A system of logos linked these to the pupils' commentaries.

The London-based artist Nils Norman was also invited and accepted our proposal to collaborate with an artist living in Lausanne, Tilo Steireif, in order to deal with the issue of being geographically remote from the field of action. Together, the two artists decided to involve a group of art teachers<sup>104</sup> and their classes.

The two artists worked together on research about anarchist and libertarian education, in collaboration with the *Centre International de Recherche sur l'anarchisme* (CIRA)<sup>105</sup> in Lausanne. They discussed the outcome of their investigation with the group of teachers and invited each of them to develop, from there, a project with her/his class.

The groups came up with a variety of proposals presented as drawings, plans, diaries and sculptures. In the exhibition, all productions were displayed by the artists in a common structure. That structure, built as an architectural reference to the CIRA, put into dialogue the classes' projects with a selection of documents about anarchist and libertarian pedagogies. It also included a video in which each of the more than 200 participants involved talked about the experience.

The Newark-based and founding member of Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) Damon Rich was invited as the third guest. Considering the geographical distance and willing to work in dialogue with another artist, he proposed to team up with an artist living in Paris who also got involved with CUP on several occasions: Oscar Tuazon.

After a first visit by Oscar Tuazon, the two artists became interested in *Le Lignon*, a modernist architectural development in Geneva. They decided to

<sup>104</sup> Tilo Steireif is teaching at the Haute école pédagogique du Canton de Vaud and gathered a group of teachers whom he was either working with in life-long learning programme or had worked with in the past years.

<sup>105</sup> See: Centre International de Recherche sur l'Anarchisme (no date).

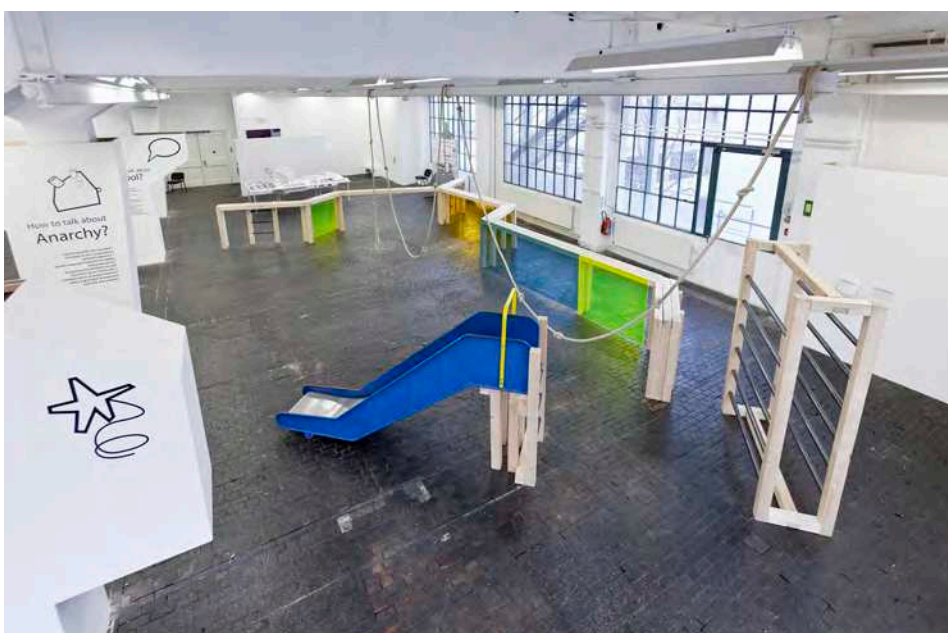




*Utopia and the Everyday. Between Art and Pedagogies.* Project initiated by Nils Norman and Tilo Steireif, in collaboration with six teachers and 11 classes for the Lausanne area, *Untitled*.



Centre International de Recherches sur l'Anarchisme (no date).



Project initiated by Damon Rich and Oscar Tuazon, in collaboration with inhabitants, workers and conceivers of the Lignon, *Le Lignon Triple Beam*.



Le Lignon architectural development, Geneva. Comité Central du Lignon, 2009.

work on ‘the idea of a playground for adults, a playground that tests the idea of a pedagogical landscape’.

Rather than work in a direct collaborative way like the other guests, Rich and Tuazon gathered information from several people who were either living or working in Le Lignon or had taken part in its building. A series of questions was written by the artists, and meetings were organized in Geneva between people connected to Le Lignon and us. Answers were collected and sent to the artists.

From a reflection partly fuelled by those answers (the plan was mostly designed before the artists received them), they realized a 1:1 scale model of a playground that could be built in Le Lignon. This playground, based on the architectural plan of Le Lignon and referred to as ‘a playground for adults’, was meant as a way for the inhabitants to reappropriate an architecture that they are said to be adversely affected by.

The artists decided that the content of the interviews would not be visible in the final installation (except in the *Gazette*), putting emphasis on the final form rather than on the collaborative dynamic.

#### 2.1.4 Documentary section

The documentary section was organized as a series of questions. Five wooden panels were cut in the shape of five different symbols that we imagined as a way both to arouse the visitors’ curiosity and to crystallize each question in a strong visual form. Each panel raised a specific question and contained an introduction text as well as project descriptions around this central interrogation.<sup>106</sup> The panels were organized as follows:

<sup>106</sup> The full content of the panels (in their original layout with pictures in French and as a linear text in English) is available under: *microsillons* (2009–2010a).



*Utopia and the Everyday. Between Art and Pedagogies. Documentary section, Guiding? panel.*



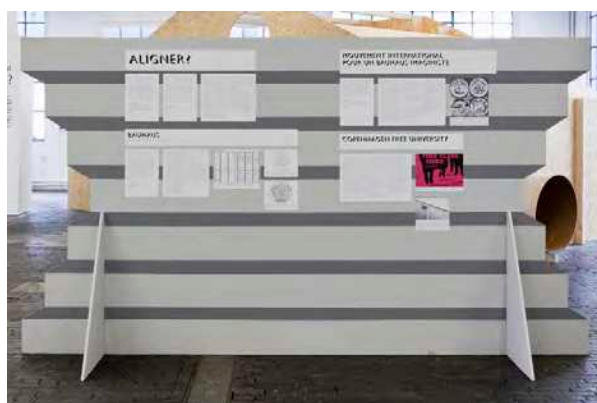
*Making a profit? panel.*



*Empowering? panel.*



*Deschooling? panel.*



*Standardizing? panel.*

### a) Guiding?

The shape of the panel represented Moses played by Charlton Heston in *The Ten Commandments*. Based notably on the Foucauldian theory of pastoralism,<sup>107</sup> this panel interrogated the position of the artist or art educator toward the participants, critically discussing the idea of 'being a guide'. It presented Joseph Beuys' Free International University, Oda Projesi's projects and Thomas Hirschhorn's Musée Précaire Albinet.

<sup>107</sup> About this concept, see point 4.3.2.

<sup>108</sup> See point 4.2.1.

<sup>109</sup> 'To play truant', but the word 'buissonnière' contains 'buisson' (bush).

### b) Making a profit?

Making an ironic reference to the figure of the owl on books – a symbol of wisdom – an owl falling from an oversized stack of books was the model for this panel. The links between collaborative art practices with a pedagogical dimension and the art market was questioned here, through the examples of Rainer Ganahl's *Reading Marx seminars* and Tim Rollins + K.O.S. projects.

### c) Empowering?

The shape of the 'empowering?' panel was inspired by John Tenniel's illustration of Alice's *Through the Looking Glass* mirror. This part questioned whether or not art education projects could lead to some form of emancipation. Partly based on Elisabeth Ellsworth's critical approach to 'empowering',<sup>108</sup> the panel brought to discussion the works of Huit Facettes – Interaction, of Gran Fury, and the experience of the Feminist Art Program.

### d) Deschooling?

Illustrating the French idiom 'l'école buissonnière'<sup>109</sup> and reproducing the trees of the video game *Mario Bros*, this panel introduced Ivan Illich's





L'histoire des jardins communautaire – à travers l'article wikipédia sur le sujet ([http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jardin\\_communautaire](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jardin_communautaire)) – a été évoquée en guise d'introduction.



Nous avons été très bien accueillis, on nous a offert un verre à boire. On nous a fait visiter les jardins, montré les différentes sortes de légumes et de fruits et surtout, les jardins étaient très bien entretenus. Nous avons goûté de bonnes choses: des fraises, des petits pois... Et il y avait beaucoup d'insectes, j'ai même vu une chenille qui mangeait une feuille. J'ai bien aimé le jardin car c'est bien organisé, c'est joli, les légumes et les fruits sont meilleurs qu'au supermarché. Le jardin est coloré, les gens étaient sympas et les insectes comme les araignées protégeaient le jardin en mangeant les mouches. Il y avait un chien qui n'arrêtait pas d'aboyer mais qui était quand même mignon. On a été très bien accueilli par le président de tous les jardins mais je n'ai pas très bien aimé les gros insectes qui font peur. Le jardin que j'ai préféré c'était un avec des poissons rouges. Puis nous sommes repartis tout contents.

**F a m i l i a u x**

Nous avons été très bien accueillis, on nous a offert un verre à boire. On nous a fait visiter les jardins, montré les différentes sortes de légumes et de fruits et surtout, les jardins étaient très bien entretenus. Nous avons goûté de bonnes choses: des fraises, des petits pois... Et il y avait beaucoup d'insectes, j'ai même vu une chenille qui mangeait une feuille. J'ai bien aimé le jardin car c'est bien organisé, c'est joli, les légumes et les fruits sont meilleurs qu'au supermarché. Le jardin est coloré, les gens étaient sympas et les insectes comme les araignées protégeaient le jardin en mangeant les mouches. Il y avait un chien qui n'arrêtait pas d'aboyer mais qui était quand même mignon. On a été très bien accueilli par le président de tous les jardins mais je n'ai pas très bien aimé les gros insectes qui font peur. Le jardin que j'ai préféré c'était un avec des poissons rouges. Puis nous sommes repartis tout contents.

3

proposal to ‘deschool society’ (Illich, 1972). The work of Repo History, the Pedagogical Factory project initiated by the Stockyard Institute with AREA Chicago, and the work of George Maciunas composed a heteroclite panorama around that question.

<sup>110</sup> *microsillons* (2009–2010b).

#### e) Standardizing?

The stairs of Raphael’s *Academy* (Raphael, 1509–1510) were the inspiration for this panel raising the question of the interest and danger of models in the field of art and gallery education projects. The histories of the Bauhaus, of the Bauhaus Imaginiste and of the Copenhagen Free University informed the debate. The back of the panel was designed by a group of CCC students<sup>110</sup> and raised the question on a local level, presenting research about *L’éducation nouvelle*, an educational trend developed in Geneva at the beginning of the twentieth century and spread worldwide after the end of the Second World War.

## 2.2 *En commun* (2010)

### 2.2.1 Context

Responding to an invitation from the organizers of the Geneva interdisciplinary festival *La Terrasse du Troc*, we worked on a pedagogical art project in collaboration with a class of *cinquième* and *sixième année* (10–12 years old) and with a *neuvième année* class (14–15 years old) from the state school of Geneva. The project was financed by the Département de l’Instruction Publique de Genève.

Teachers were contacted in advance and accepted, after a short exchange, that we would run the project with their classes. They couldn’t spend extra time preparing the content with us, so the structure consisted mainly of us





*En Commun.* Pupils working with their teacher. Finding ways and space to work in groups instead of individually.



Visit to a community garden with one of the groups.



running a project in their classrooms, during usual class time, with their assistance.

### 2.2.2 Steps

We proposed to the pupils to work on a newspaper about the park (le Bois de la Bâtie) in which the festival was taking place. We oriented the project toward the idea of ‘common’ (The Commons, common goods, community ...).

After a series of introductions in the classroom about the idea of the common, through discussions and readings (excerpts of *Reading As Poaching* by de Certeau and *Walden* by Thoreau, among others), we presented ourselves as the editor-in-chief of a newspaper and proposed to the pupils to be journalists writing for us.

The theme of this newspaper would be the *Bois de la Bâtie* and its different uses. The pupils then worked in small groups on specific themes (that they could either select from a pre-selection or propose) linked to the park. They wrote and illustrated articles about each of the themes.

An important part of the process was a series of field trips to visit the park and to run interviews with people working inside or around it.

To conclude the work, we organized a session in a print shop, discussed the roles of the graphic designer and the printer and the means of distribution.

The whole process, which took place over a two-month period (not including the conception phase and the time of distribution of the newspaper), was realized in weekly sessions.



*En Commun. Visit to the printshop. microsillons, 2009–2010.*



Participants interviewing collaborators of the Stop Suicide association in their office.

### 2.2.3 Public presentation

The newspaper contained an editorial presenting the project as well as seven illustrated articles (on a mushroom plant used as a venue for semi-legal parties, a community garden, the bats living in the park, the neighbourhood waste-recycling process, an infamous bridge called ‘suicide bridge’, a cemetery and a zoo). It was printed and distributed for free in the festival, as well as in different cafés and cultural places in the city.

## 2.3 *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised. Amateur videos from 8mm to 2.0* (2010–2011)

### 2.3.1 Context

*The Revolution Will Not Be Televised. Amateur videos from 8mm to 2.0* is the project that followed *En commun*. It was the occasion to experiment with a very different way to work, on many levels: it was conceived not only by *microsillons* but by a larger team, and it involved many different groups of people.

The project was realized as part of our work for Le Centre and led to an exhibition presenting a panorama and a database about amateur video, in the exhibition *Image – Mouvement*, a biennale aimed at presenting an overview of the contemporary moving image, from the fields of art and cinema. It continued with an expansion of the database and a publication.

As we were simultaneously invited to take part in a collective research project (supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation) about the current state and the possible transformation of gallery education in Switzerland (Settele & Mörsch eds., 2012), we proposed to focus on the themes of voice and horizontality which we were exploring in our PhD researches.





*The Revolution Will Not Be Televised. Amateur videos from 8mm to 2.0. Installation in the frame of Le Centre's exhibition Image – Mouvement.*



*Detail of the timeline with some of the articles written by the University students and by the conception team.*

### 2.3.2 Conception team

In this frame, we were able to extend the collaborative process to the level of the conception of the project. We formed a conception team, with the idea that the project would be conceived in a totally egalitarian dialogue between all the members. To form this group, Helen Bauman and Lea Fröhlicher, students at the Bern University of the Arts, were hired by Le Centre (officially as interns, allowing them to validate the experience within their studies), and also the Geneva-based cultural worker Christina Gasser.

<sup>111</sup> The title 'The Revolution Will Not Be Televised' was borrowed from Gil Scott Heron's song, written in 1970, which points at the fact that mass media ignored the degradation of living conditions in poor US neighbourhoods. For *microsilions*, the term 'Revolution' referred both to the protests and uprisings that are not covered by the mass media and for which amateur videos play an essential role and to the Web 2.0 Revolution (where Internet users became content producers).

### 2.3.3 Steps

The conception phase, both with the conception team and with the Swiss National Science Foundation research team, led to the following concept:

The project would involve several groups from different parts of Switzerland. It would include two main sections:

- An online database collecting examples of amateur videos that would be selected and commented on by the participants.
- A timeline of the history of amateur video, interrogating the complex circulation of images between the professional and amateur contexts, at a moment where that distinction, as well as the distinction between the producers and the consumers of those images, is increasingly blurred.

One of the project goals was to question the absence of amateur video in the panorama of moving images proposed by the institution's main exhibition.<sup>111</sup>

The project was imagined in a polyphonic way: instead of working with one group (or two as in *En commun*) as we usually do, we decided to involve

### Rodney King

Le 3 mars 1991, Rodney Glen King, un afro-américain, roulant en état d'ébriété au-delà des vitesses autorisées, est arrêté par des policiers du Los Angeles Police Department. Il refuse de coopérer et agresse les policiers présents. Ne réussissant pas à le maîtriser, ces derniers le rouent de coups. Le tabassage, qui dure presque deux minutes, est d'une rare violence. Il est filmé par George Holliday, un habitant du quartier.

Holliday fait d'abord part de ces images à la police, mais, face au désintérêt des forces de l'ordre, il les envoie à une chaîne de télévision locale. Elles seront reprises par les chaînes du monde entier, provoquant une indignation générale.

Les quatre policiers seront poursuivis par la justice et acquittés par un jury majoritairement composé de blancs, le 29 avril 1992. Ce verdict déclenchera les plus importantes émeutes raciales du XXe siècle aux Etats-Unis, émeutes qui feront 52 morts.

### America's Funniest Home Videos (AFHV)

L'humour a également sa place dans la vidéo amateur. Les années 1980 voient ainsi l'émergence d'émissions à contenu humoristique. C'est une émission japonaise, *Fun with Ken and Kato Chan*, produite par Tokyo Broadcasting Company, qui, la première, invitera les téléspectateurs à envoyer leurs propres vidéos à caractère humoristique. Dès lors, on observe un renversement : le consommateur de télévision devient producteur.

Ventable carton, le programme est repris aux Etats-Unis, en 1990, par la chaîne ABC, sous la forme d'un concours : le *America's Funniest Home Videos (AFHV)*. Chaque semaine, trois vidéos amateur étaient en compétition et 10'000 dollars en jeu. Le public de l'émission faisait office de jury et désignait le vainqueur. L'originalité et la fantaisie étant les critères clés, on assistait à une ribambelle de chutes, farces et fous rires. *AFHV* va alors connaître un boom retentissant : l'audience et le taux de participation au programme atteignent des sommets. Bien plus, l'émission américaine ne manque pas de faire des émules : *You've been Framed* en Angleterre, *Drôle de vidéo* au Canada et bien sûr, le cultissime *Vidéo Gag* en France. Autant de programmes qui, au début des 90's, ont conforté le statut de la vidéo amateur comme véritable art populaire.

1983

Entre 1981 et 1983, le nombre de foyers américains possédant une caméra passe de 6% à 28%.

### Catégorie "film personnel" (1984, FIAF)

En 1984 apparaît au sein de la FIAF – L'Association Internationale du Film d'Archives – une nouvelle catégorie de films nommée "film personnel". Ce genre regroupe, selon la FIAF : "(...) des films produits non pas par une équipe mais entièrement réalisés par une seule personne. Il peut s'agir d'œuvres d'art, de travaux de recherche, de documents privés, d'imitations de films industriels, de journaux, de messages filmés, de films faits par des enfants, etc."

1995

Apparition des premières caméras numériques.

### The Real World

Créée en 1992, *The Real World* est l'émission de télé-réalité la plus longue de l'histoire : elle ne compte pas moins de 24 saisons (436 épisodes). Le principe sur lequel est construit le programme est simple : laisser à ses participants une totale liberté d'action, autant dans l'appartement qu'ils partagent qu'à l'extérieur. Les téléspectateurs peuvent constater l'immaturité de certains candidats et assister à des scènes plus ou moins mouvementées.

L'émission connaît un véritable succès et plus particulièrement la saison 3, *The Real World : San Francisco* (1994), grâce à la participation du candidat Pedro Zamora, l'une des premières personnes à revendiquer son homosexualité et à parler du SIDA dans un média populaire.

*The Revolution Will Not Be Televised. Amateur videos from 8mm to 2.0. Excerpt of the publication. pp. 8–9.*



Some of the participating students working in small groups to select videos for the database.



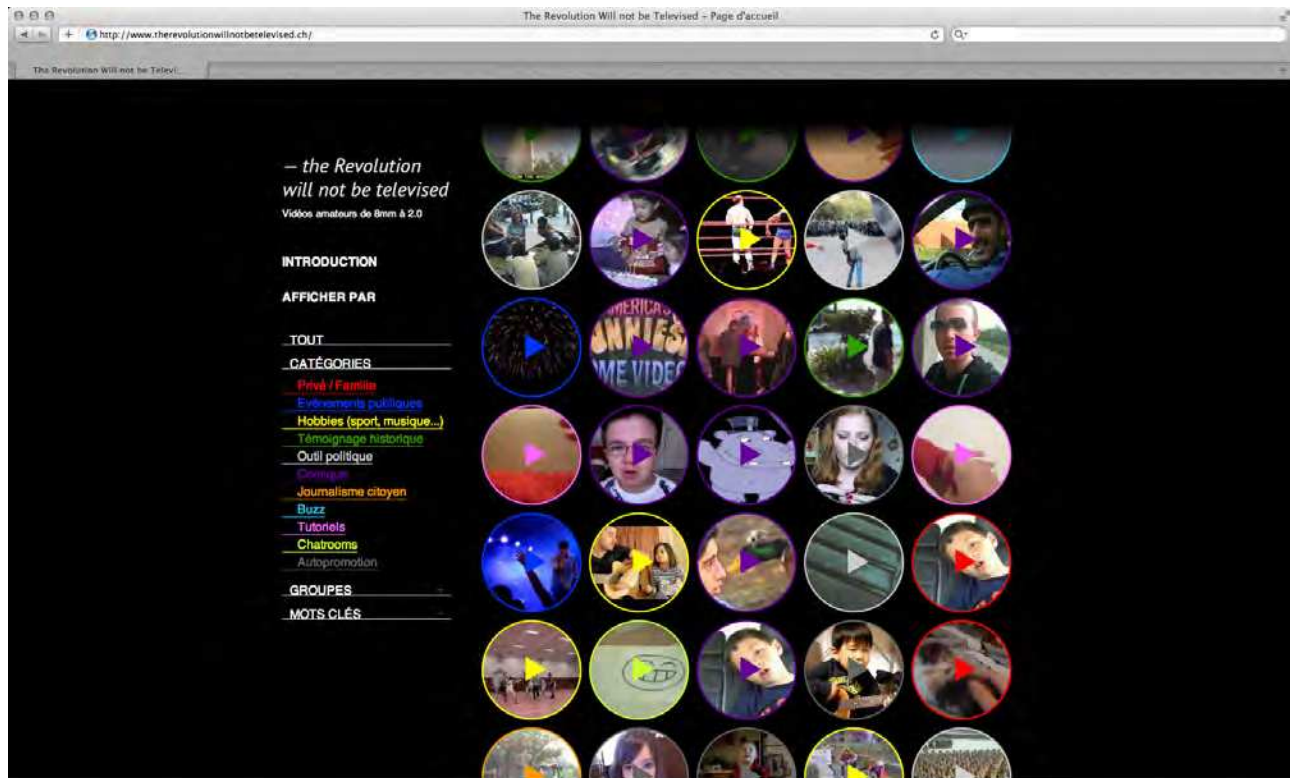
many groups in order to collect a plurality of points of view on amateur moving images. We worked with a group of children from an asylum-seeker centre, users of two community centres, a class from a business school, university students of communication, and two secondary classes and two primary classes from the state school. Involving diverse groups of participants (which were addressed through pre-existing contacts we had with educators interested in our approach) was a way to think about how a work around moving images could make sense in different learning situations. It was also a way to show different positions regarding amateur video (from kids using it in a recreational way to teens accustomed to producing their own video material, to media students deconstructing it). Involving people with different cultural backgrounds was also a way to diversify the database examples.

The participants ranged from five-year-olds to adults and the groups came from different places in Switzerland, speaking – like the members of the conception team – French or German. The social background of the participants and the level of their pre-existing knowledge about the subject also varied widely.

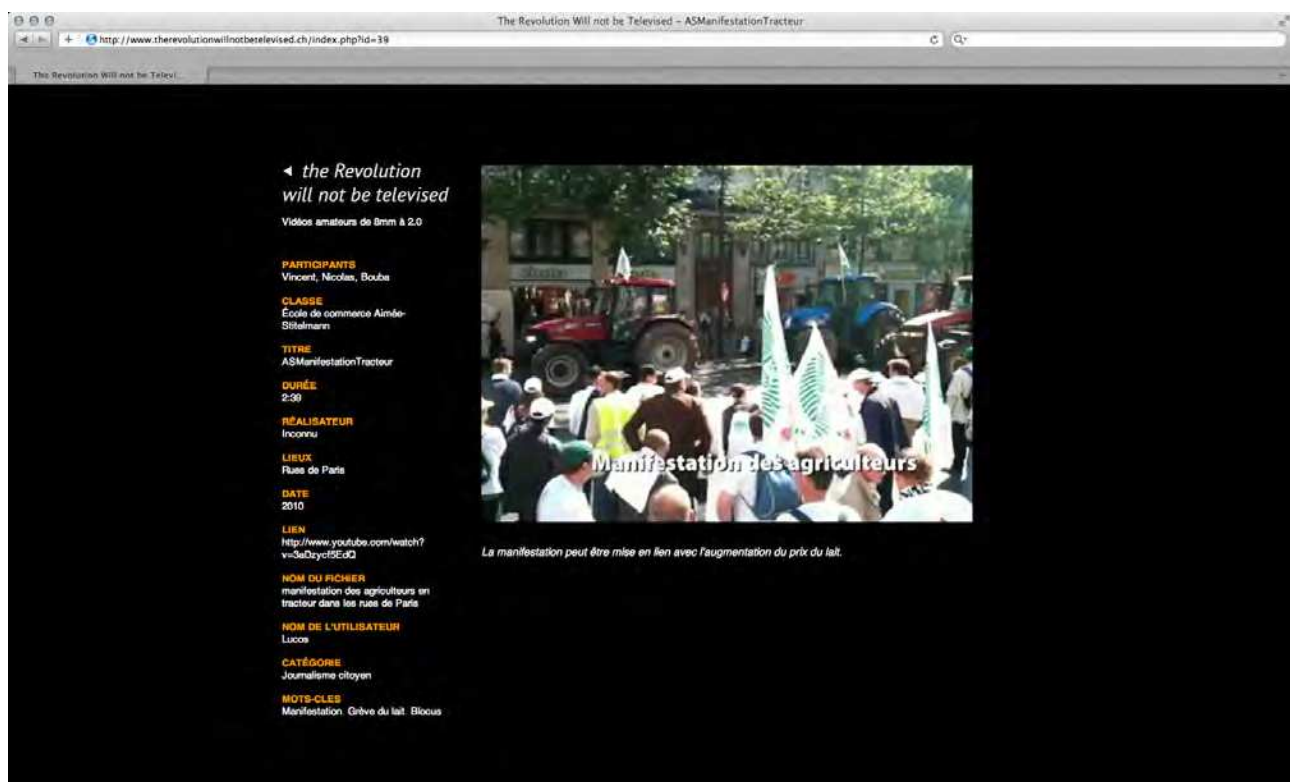
The groups added video to the database and the group of university students also contributed to the realization of the timeline.

In different configurations regarding practical issues such as language, geographical proximity and schedule, members of the conception team visited each group once or twice, in the place of their usual activities. Each visit began with an introduction to the project and to amateur video, discussing the term, its history and the relationship of the group with that format. A list of categories classifying amateur videos was proposed and discussed. According to each discussion, the list was transformed. Then, the participants, individually or in pairs, selected on the Internet an amateur video illustrating one of those categories and wrote some factual elements about it, as well as a comment. Finally, the videos were presented and





*The Revolution Will Not Be Televised. Amateur videos from 8mm to 2.0. Homepage of the online database.*



*Example of a database item.*

discussed with the whole class.

In parallel, we proposed to the university students a series of key events or themes linked to amateur video and asked them to write a very short article about it, to be included in the timeline during the exhibition (most of the texts of the timeline were still written by the conception team). We also allowed them to choose a fact or theme of their own to write about.

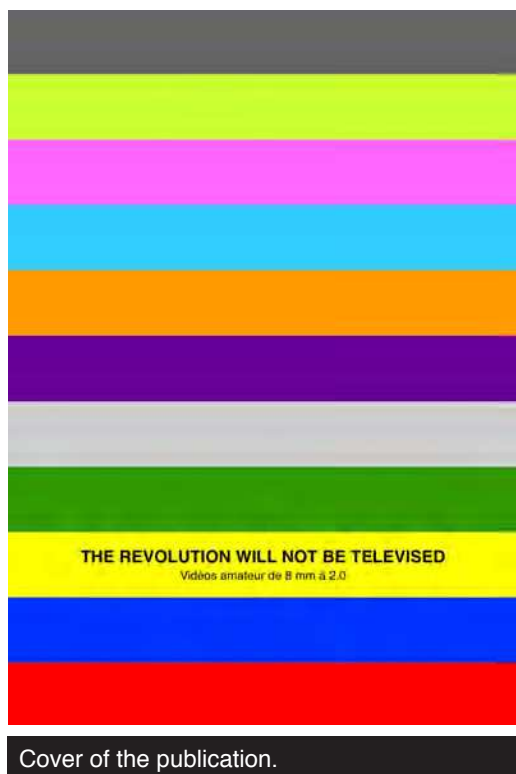
#### 2.3.4 Public presentation

The project was presented in a small room just in front of the entrance to the *Image – Mouvement* exhibition. It was announced as a gallery education project but the signage system used was the same as for the rest of the exhibition, making it fully part of the larger show.

The timeline ran around the three available walls, using lines of colours referring to the categories of the database. The varying height of the lines represented the quantity of amateur videos produced at the different time periods. The texts were organized around those lines. In the centre of the room, two computers provided access to the online database. A text, available both on the computers and on the walls, introduced the projects. Moving images from the database, selected by the conception team, were screened on a glass partition, from the inside toward the outside, to signal the project.

#### 2.3.5 Further extensions

In Spring 2012, the database was completed by the conception team (in particular adding articles about the Arab Spring) and presented once again, along with a free publication containing all the timeline texts, in a smaller display at Le Centre.



Cover of the publication.



View of the installation from the entrance of Le Centre's exhibition *Image – Mouvement*.



*La surface des choses*. Participants from the Association pour le Bien des Aveugles et malvoyants Genève, the artist Raphaël Julliard and *microsillons*.

In March 2012, the conception team presented the work in a symposium discussing the results of the research *Kunstvermittlung in Transformation* at the Kunstmuseum Luzern.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>112</sup> *Kunstvermittlung in Transformation* (2012).

<sup>113</sup> See: Association pour le Bien des Aveugles et malvoyants de Genève (no date).

An article about the project was published in the *Kunstvermittlung in Transformation* publication (Baum, Jacob & *microsillons*, 2012).

## 2.4 *La surface des choses* (2010–2011)

### 2.4.1 Context

This project also took place as part of our work for Le Centre. It was imagined with the artist Raphaël Julliard, for a reflection about vision, specifically the non-visual dimensions of contemporary art. Le Centre (with the financing of the City of Geneva) undertook to support us for that work without requiring us to specify a precise schedule or outcome.

### 2.4.2 Steps

After discussing the concept with Raphaël Julliard, we decided together with him to work with a group of people with visual impairments, in order to operate a shift from our established conception of visual art.

We contacted an association working with blind people and people with visual impairments in Geneva.<sup>113</sup> We presented the project to a representative of the association, emphasizing the experimental dimension of it. She proposed it to some of the members she met in the following weeks and gave us a list of contact details of interested people. We then contacted these people and presented our project to them. Five people agreed to join us.





*La surface des choses*. Opening of the exhibition, in Le Centre's building.



Detail of the exhibition (series of wooden objects).



Visit at the MAMCO.  
Experiencing the non-visual dimensions of minimal and conceptual artworks.

For the first session, we gave a presentation about contemporary art and its non-visual dimensions (for example, through conceptual art).

We met at Le Centre 11 times, about once a month, for two-hour meetings. The content of the project was not defined in advance; rather, each meeting was informed by the discussions that took place in the preceding meeting.

The group expressed its desire to visit some exhibitions, which we did. The participants, Raphaël Julliard and *microsillons*, discussed very freely for many sessions art, their relationship to the institutions, and their visions of the world.

Together, we came up with the idea of realizing an art installation that would be presented publicly. This installation would be made of five almost identical versions of an object and five soundtracks recorded by the participants talking about that object – five totally different perceptions of it. This was seen as a way to consider the non-visible dimension of any object, and the discursive polysemy any object can provoke. After imagining this scenario, and after each member proposed ideas for an object, we selected by consensus a wooden shape. Wood was chosen for its capacity to evoke for the participants many different stories and tactile memories. The shape – two pieces of wood crossing each other as an 'X' – echoed the process of meeting and of exchange between Raphaël Julliard, the participants and us.

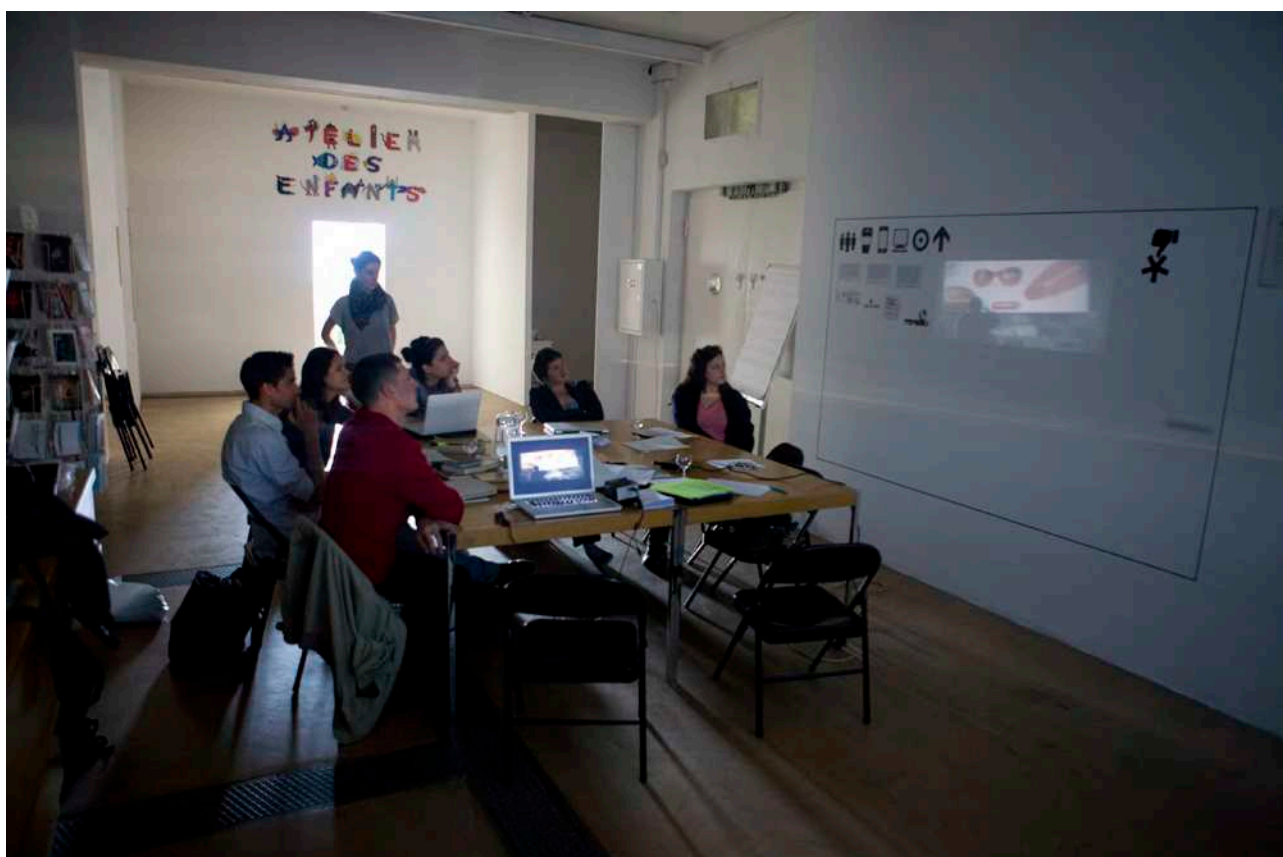
Then, each member of the group wrote, or selected, a text that we recorded. A collective decision was made that *microsillons* and Raphaël Julliard wouldn't record their own tracks but would organize the exhibition.

#### 2.4.3 Public presentation

The exhibition was presented in the Bâtiment d'art contemporain, in Geneva, as an independent art education project of Le Centre. It contained a large



*Lectures autour du graphisme. Setting for the meetings, in the entrance corridor of Le Centre.*



*Group discussing the choice of visual elements to compose a wall installation evoking one of the readings.*



table (evoking the table around which we met many times) on which the five wooden forms were displayed, as well as a monitor showing still images of those objects and a soundtrack of the five proposals.

## 2.5 *Lectures autour du graphisme* (2011)

### 2.5.1 Context

This project is the last one we realized when we were responsible for gallery education at Le Centre. It was financed by the Fond d'art contemporain de la Ville de Genève, and realized in connection with an exhibition called *Panorama. Design graphique en Suisse romande*. As a modest project in terms of public visibility and time spent on it, the project offered a chance to experiment very freely with a new type of collaboration. We formed a new and diverse group of voluntary people, to favour different points of view during the discussions. Our goal was to organize a reading group discussing the role of graphic design in our society.

The project took place in a corridor of Le Centre, in the margin of the main exhibition spaces.

### 2.5.2 Steps

We sent invitations directly to students, from the university and the HEAD, and from a transdisciplinary (Design and Science) workshop in Lausanne. We also invited a professional graphic designer and artist, Izet Sheshivari, to join the group and to share his knowledge and competences about graphic design with the group.

In each session, a different panel of people attended, the group comprising

*Lectures autour du graphisme.* Wall compositions resulting from the first two reading group sessions. Realized after a collective consultation. Excerpt from the online publication.

from four to ten members (including us) according to the sessions.

In three two-hour sessions at Le Centre, we discussed texts by Naomi Klein (2000) (*No Logo*), Hal Foster (2002) (*Design & Crime*), Ellen Lupton & Abbott Miller (1996) (*Low and High. Design in Everyday Life*) and Max Bruinsma (2007) (*The Applied Art of Art*). The participants were asked to prepare the text in advance and to participate in a discussion, which often drifted from the text itself.

### 2.5.3 Public presentation

After the discussion, notes were exchanged by email and a proposal for a visual installation (including graphical elements and quotations) was made to the group by *microsillons* (always using one of the group's ideas as a starting point).

A wall at Le Centre was reserved to publicly present the results of these reading groups:

- The first visual assemblage (around Naomi Klein's text (2000)), organized around the figure of a snake biting its own tail, discussed the hijacking of advertisements by activists and their reappropriation by the advertisers themselves.
- The second visual assemblage (around Hal Foster's text (2002)) was inspired by the *Sim City* video game and talked about the role of design in (re)shaping the urban environment, as well as about the importance 'to attempt again "to provide culture with running-room"' (Foster 2002: 25).
- The third visual assemblage (around Ellen Lupton and Abbott Miller's text (1996) and Bruinsma's article (2007)) presented a critical reflection around the 'High & Low' cultural dynamic, and was organized around a collage putting into communication a bottle of ketchup and a Duchamp's 'fountain' (Duchamp 1917).





Le style supposément naïf et "vernaculaire" du logo Freud a été en réalité l'objet d'une recherche formelle poussée. L'étiquette n'est pas tellement naïve, mais fait partie d'un programme iconographique d'identité d'entreprise.

Ellen Lupton, Abbott Miller, "Low and High, Design in Everyday Life", in: Design Writing Research, Writing on Graphic Design, 1996.



Ce qui me m'intéresse ici n'est pas tant de montrer que l'art contemporain est une sous-catégorie du design – ce qui est, en fait, ce que je pense – mais de pointer que des connaissances, des critères et des contextes du design sont aujourd'hui nécessaires pour comprendre et interpréter l'art.

Ian Thompson, The Applied Art of Art, 2001.

De nombreuses appropriations d'éléments que l'on appelle "vernaculaires" ont fonctionné du haut vers le bas, voyant des objets de publicité ordinaires comme des sources esthétiques à étudier avec une admiration détachée. Cependant, la question du bas et du haut peut aussi être décrite du bas vers le haut – du point de vue du vers de la vie occidentale plutôt que du point de vue de l'observateur. Alors que l'observateur regarde le monde en bas depuis le haut, le vers regarde le monde au-dessus, depuis le dessous. Ce texte défend l'idée que, pour renouveler leur vue critique sur la vie contemporaine, les graphistes et les designers doivent trouver un moyen de partir de l'intérieur de la culture et non de se positionner en dehors ou au-dessus de celle-ci.

Ellen Lupton, Abbott Miller, "Low and High, Design in Everyday Life", in: Design Writing Research, Writing on Graphic Design, 1996.

Les formes sont utilisées avec une autre finalité par l'artiste, mais les moyens sont les mêmes que ceux des designers : y compris la technique du pliage, la représentation de l'architecture. Le temps où l'on pouvait voir si un objet était de l'art ou du design en se basant sur ses qualités matérielles est passé depuis longtemps. Ce n'est plus l'artiste et le designer s'empruntent mutuellement des choses. Et de plus en plus, c'est un processus unidirectionnel. Bien entendu, il y a des graphistes designers qui, comme la grande estampeur, jouent avec des techniques comme des peintures géométriques, ou qui font usage de l'association, de l'ironie et de l'aspect – rubriques – de l'art, mais bien plus fréquemment, les artistes empruntent les techniques et les langages formels de leurs collègues de l'art graphique.

Max Bruniens, The Applied Art of Art, 2001.



Parfois, les publications autour des expositions semblent plus réussies que les installations des artistes elles-mêmes.

Dans l'exposition "D'une révolution à l'autre" au Palais de Tokyo, Jeremy Deller présentait des pratiques "vernaculaires", sans les transformer mais en les assemblant. Il est intéressant de mentionner que personne ne se souvient des noms des créateurs originaux, mais uniquement de celui de l'artiste/curateur.

La corrélation entre bas et haut n'est pas une question de contenu mais de structure. Bas et haut sont un motif, une coquille conceptuelle dont les valeurs varient de situation en situation. Ce qui est haut dans un contexte est bas dans l'autre. En fait, même lorsque, dans un style, on peut passer de "chic du moment" à convention, à nostalgie, à rétro, à renouveau, à non-conventionnel. Le terme "vernaculaire", comme la coupe haute/bas, est relatif : il positionne un langage standard contre un dialecte, une culture dominante contre une sous-culture. Le vernaculaire c'est l'autre, et chaque discours a son autre.

Ellen Lupton, Abbott Miller, "Low and High, Design in Everyday Life", in: Design Writing Research, Writing on Graphic Design, 1996.



Mais ce qui est difficile à cerner très souvent est "qu'est-ce qu'on se vendrait à travers cette idée de rapprochement art-design ?".



Même s'il y a aujourd'hui un certain flou entre les catégories "ethnologie", "curatorial", "collection", "art", "design", la division "art majeur" / "art mineur" reste un héritage fort.

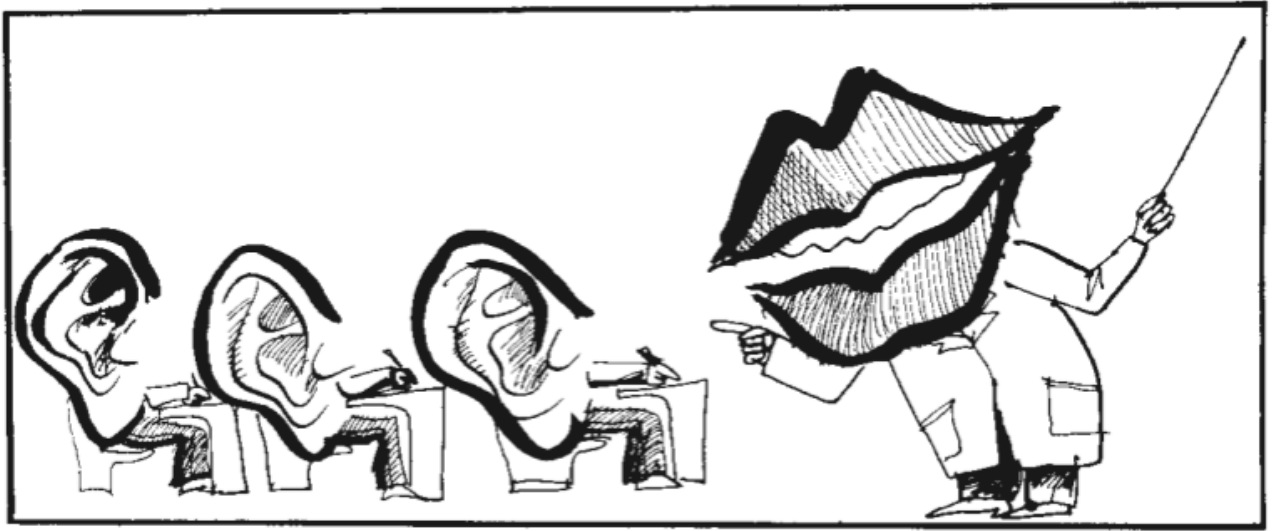
L'idée d'autonomie de l'œuvre, même en tant que "fiction", comme le dit Hal Foster, est quelque chose de finalement très limité historiquement.

Groupe de lecture autour Design Writing Research, Writing on Graphic Design de Ellen Lupton et Abbott Miller, compilé par The Applied Art of Art de Max Bruniens.

Légendes des images: D'une révolution à l'autre: Carte Blanche à Jeremy Deller, Palais de Tokyo, 2009; Chanel Mobile Art, Contemporary Art Container, Zaha Hadid, Sac Kneppel de Louis Vuitton par Sylvie Fleury, Exposition Enquête Kunst (Art délimité), Munich, 1997; Timbre: Rikala par Thomas Hirschhorn pour la poste suisse à l'occasion de la Biennale de Venise, 2011; Objets prétextes, objets manqués: Affiche de l'exposition, Musée d'Ethnographie de Neuchâtel, 1984; High and Low: Affiche de l'exposition, MOMA, New York, 1959; The Guerrilla Date, Art Museum Activity Book, Printed Matter, 2004; L'observateur/Spectre Calle Souvère de Berlin-Est, 1990; Et: Aches But, Paris, Andy Warhol, Brillo Soap Pad Box (Black/White type), 1968; Hilo Deyler, Red Alert, Biennale de Venise, 2007; The Long Island Ductling from God's Den-Juniyard, Learning from Las Vegas, Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, et Steven Izenour, MIT Press, 1977.

Third wall composition.

The different graphic proposals were also published on *microsillons'* website (2011).



Ceccon, Claudius (Harper et al., no date: 42).



### 3. TOWARD 'HORIZONTALITY'

#### 3.1 Horizontality today, in education and beyond

The idea of a horizontal pedagogy, of a pedagogy of dialogue, following Freire's conception (2005: 72), means first to rethink the division of the one teaching from the one being taught:

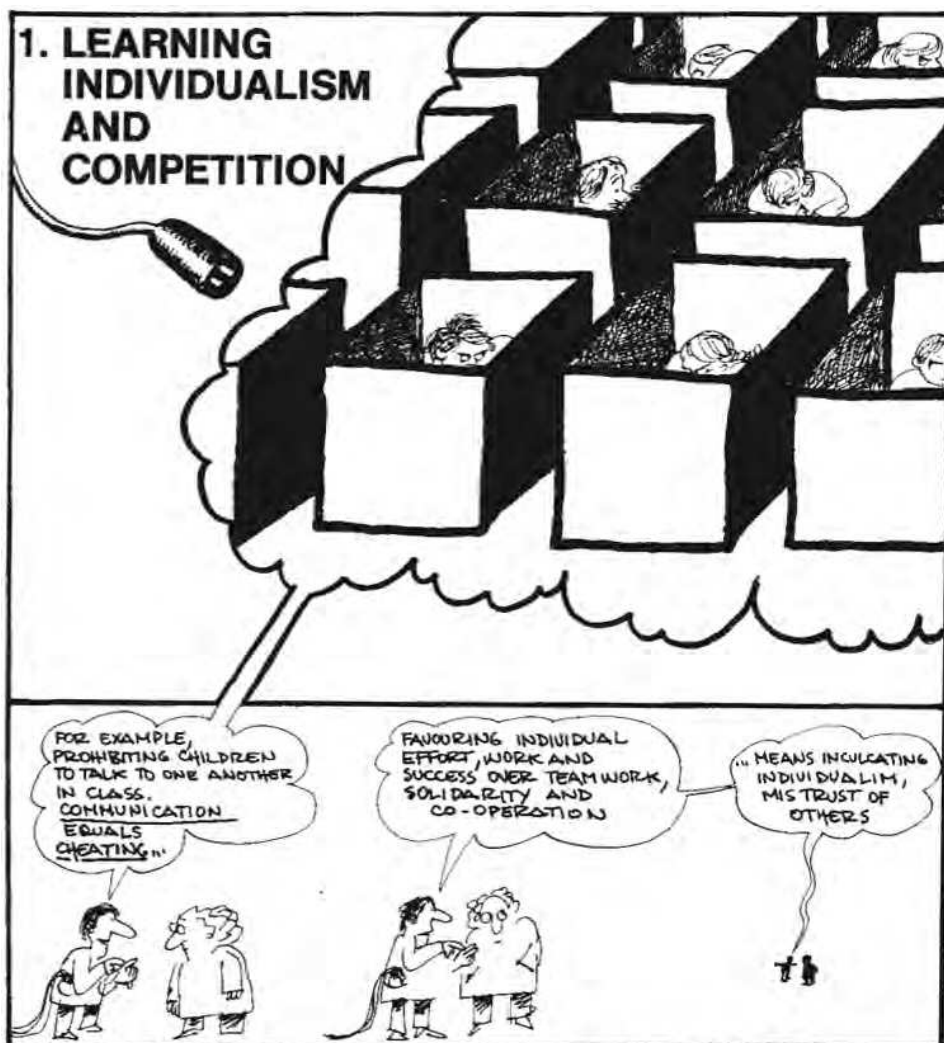
Education must begin with the solution of the teacher–student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students.

<sup>114</sup> In Switzerland, one of the top officials for higher education proposed in 2013 a *numerus clausus* for Humanities, in order to encourage people toward more employment-oriented options like sciences. See: *Un numerus clausus pour les sciences sociales et humaines évoqué* (2013).

Today, finding more horizontal ways to organize is an imperative, as many forces are working toward considering the student, pupil or citizen primarily as a future efficient worker<sup>114</sup> and consumer. The Bologna Declaration shows striking similarities with Freire's idea of 'banking education', the system being organized around a system of academic 'credits', attendance hours and pre-defined knowledge transfer.

In 1992, Ira Shor (1992: 143) observed that '[t]he curriculum should not be driven by business needs because business policy is not made democratically at the workplace or in society' and that '[b]usiness, industry, and the job market are not democratic or public institutions. They are operated hierarchically and privately from the top down'. He then asked: 'Why should education in a democracy subordinate itself to an undemocratic sector of society?'

In opposition to this commodification of higher education, to its subordination to the market, concrete alternatives were developed – inside and outside academies – such as alternative classes, seminars or schools, in which the traditional relationship between students and teachers was challenged and



in which artists played an important role.<sup>115</sup> Those adventures answer the call from critical pedagogy theorist Henry Giroux to '[challenge] hierarchical structures of power that demand reverence at the expense of dialogue and debate' (Giroux, 2001: 242).

In primary and secondary education, there is evidence of a popular desire to return to an education based on fundamentals and discipline.<sup>116</sup> In addition, alarmingly, art education is increasingly perceived as a way to train workers for the neo-liberal society. The recent Unesco *Roadmap for Art Education*<sup>117</sup> states:

21st Century societies are increasingly demanding workforces that are creative, flexible, adaptable and innovative and education systems need to evolve with these shifting conditions. Arts Education equips learners with these skills, enabling them to express themselves, critically evaluate the world around them, and actively engage in the various aspects of human existence. (Unesco, 2006: 5)

As the art classroom could have been seen traditionally as a space of relative freedom regarding the school demand for applicable results, the *creativity*<sup>118</sup> and *soft skills* that art practices can help to develop are now perceived as central in the training of future workers adaptable to the neo-liberal market.

The search for more horizontal modes of education is crucial in an attempt to challenge today's increasingly consumerist and competitive social model. Seth Kreisberg, describing this system based on competition in the 1990s, underlined the necessity for the ruling class of reproducing hierarchies and vertical domination in schools, in order to keep the political and social system unchallenged: 'It is a battleground of winners and losers where only a few can win. Within this paradigm, relationships are vertical. Disparities in power are seen as not only inevitable, but essential for the maintenance of our institutions' (Kreisberg, 1992: 13).

<sup>115</sup> See point 1.4.2.

<sup>116</sup> For example, in 2011 in Switzerland, the Canton de Vaud rejected by only 55 per cent a popular initiative called 'Ecole 2010: sauver l'école' (Canton de Vaud, 2011), which aimed at reintroducing grades from the beginning of primary school, to maintain a separation of the pupils by levels in the secondary school and to 'principally recentre the Vaudoise school on its primary mission, namely to transmit knowledge to the pupils' (Union Démocratique, 2010). My translation.

<sup>117</sup> Which seeks to 'explore the role of Arts Education in meeting the need for creativity and cultural awareness in the 21st Century, and places emphasis on the strategies required to introduce or promote Arts Education' (Unesco, 2006). Since 2012, *microsillons* has been involved, in a project called 'Another Roadmap for Art Education', initiated by the Institute for Art Education in Zürich, working on a counter-proposal to the UNESCO document, with an international network of critical art educators. See: Another Roadmap Network (since 2010).

<sup>118</sup> For a critical approach to the term and its applications, see: Raunig, Ray & Wuggenig eds. (2011).



Occupy Wall Street movement, General Assembly in Washington Square Park, 8 October 2011. [Online image]. Available at: <<http://wordobject.wordpress.com/2011/10/29/social-form-the-general-assembly/>> [Accessed 27 March 2015].

Frank Georgi, a historian working on the history of social movements, is particularly interested in the history of self-organization, with its dream of horizontality. He writes about the decline of the interest in self-organization since the 1980s (Georgi, 2003: 12–13), but he sees education as an exception to this decline, as many teachers practise it daily. For him, ‘social utopia presupposes pedagogical utopia’ (Georgi, 2003: 610–611).

<sup>119</sup> About this movement, see: *The Take* (2004). See also: Colectivo Situaciones’ websites (Colectivo Situaciones, no date) and, for an English introduction about their investigation: Colectivo Situaciones (2013).

<sup>120</sup> My translation.

If education can be a privileged space to seek more horizontal models of organization, *microsillons*’ attempts at horizontal organization must be part of a larger movement seeking a new social model. The *Occupy* and *Indignados* movements (born in 2011 after the global financial crisis that began in 2007 and the austerity politics that followed) brought to media attention worldwide live examples of participatory democracy, of working groups, of general assemblies, of consensus-based decision-making and of organizations refusing to designate a leader. Since the beginning of the 2000s, the idea of horizontal models of governance has gained interest, notably in connection with the Argentinean financial crisis which led to self-managed factories.<sup>119</sup>

Many authors describing the contemporary activist struggles use the image of horizontality to illustrate a new type of organizational structure and ideal. The researcher in sociology Geoffrey Pleyers, for example, in his analysis of the organization of the World Social Forum, talks about ‘[t]he preference of a majority of activists for a network structure’ that some ‘consider as a form of organization favouring democratic and horizontal relationships inside the movement’ (Pleyers, 1999: 90).<sup>120</sup> For Pleyers, ‘horizontality’ is a way for alter-activists to differentiate their practice from the hierarchical practices of the political parties, unions, NGOs and big anti-globalization organizations (Pleyers, 1999: 90–91). For such groups, the horizontal way to organize is not merely a non-hierarchical internal way to work but is at the very heart of their political statement and goal:

A constant complaint about the anti-globalization movement in the progressive press is that, while tactically brilliant, it lacks any central theme or coherent





*Utopia and the Everyday. Between Art and Pedagogies. trafo.K and the group of pupils working in the exhibition space.*

ideology. [...] It is not lacking in ideology. Those new forms of organization are its ideology. It is about creating and enacting horizontal networks instead of top-down structures [...] . (Graeber, 2002)

In this dynamic of redefining modes of relationship and of collective work, the epistemological shift brought by the Internet plays a crucial role. Granic and Lamey (2000), in the field of psychology, note: 'For many individuals, the Internet may represent their first experience acting outside the confines of a hierarchy.' Hardt and Negri (2009: 358) acknowledge that computer networks led to the transformation of decision-making processes, and that 'the experiences of networkers and net users have configured an institutional decision-making composed of a myriad of micropolitical paths'. And observers of the *altermondialist* movements such as Pleyers (1999: 95) recognize the major role played by the new technology networks in the development of those movements, seeing them as a prerequisite for the emergence of a worldwide civic society, making *altermondialism* possible.

I see *microsillons*' pedagogic projects as seeds that could grow to take part in this larger movement of transformation toward a more fair and equal society. In this process of change, horizontal exchange, dialogue, can play a fundamental role and collaborative art practices can be a space to experiment with such dialogical exchanges on many interconnected levels (the levels of the artists, the participants, the institutions, the cultural world, the society).

In this chapter, I will present practical attempts (following various approaches) to experiment with more horizontal structures in the frame of *microsillons*' projects, with the aim of finding ways to learn better, to co-create rather than consume, to work together rather than individually and to find more ethical ways to make decisions.



### 3.2 Art projects as a laboratory for a more direct democracy: anarchism in *Utopia and the Everyday*

<sup>121</sup> For a good summary, see in particular: Unesco (1980).

#### 3.2.1 Rethinking democracy in schools

I discussed in the first chapter gallery education projects as a possible space of relative freedom within the art institution, allowing the development of a critical discourse. Within the school system, the classroom itself might be considered as a similar space: there, the direction plans, the obligatory curriculum, the general education politics are all subordinated to the work of the teacher and her/his pupils or students. This might be why the work of teachers in their classrooms has been providing for years some of the most vivid experiences of self-organization.<sup>121</sup> bell hooks (1994: 12), talking about an adult education context, underlines that '[t]he classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy':

The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. (hooks, 1994: 207)

For *microsillons*, working with state schools – working with pupils in their classrooms, and also in art institutions – has been central to our practice since the beginning. Working with state schools is a way to defend public service and, on a broader level, the social state. The art classroom, under certain conditions, can be a place to experiment with forms of democratic exchange at a moment when representative democracy is in crisis.

Believing that changes can occur within this context requires confidence in the teachers' engagement, and requires an everyday involvement. For *microsillons*, it requires confidence in the potential for critical pedagogy to produce some changes in the system of power relations between the taught



*Utopia and the Everyday. Between Art and Pedagogies.* Library corner in the installation of the project initiated by Norman and Steireif.



and the teacher.

An exodus to alternative autonomous structures would address only a few (and sustain a multiple-level education system) and cannot therefore be considered as the only possible way for changing.<sup>122</sup> Working inside or in relationship to state schools is necessary in our practice, because it makes it possible to imagine transformation<sup>123</sup> going beyond the art world.<sup>124</sup>

The very influential founder of the Modern School movement Francisco Ferrer (1913: 49), in the 1910s, based his plans for developing new pedagogical structures on the belief that traditional schools could only reproduce the existing authority structure of the social order.<sup>125</sup> Transforming the classroom, the content that is discussed inside it, the way in which it is run and the structure in which it takes place become the first steps toward a social change. As the educationalist Mackenzie (1963: 27) summarized in the 1960s:

It all comes back to this: you can't have an enduring political change unless it is supported by a cultural change; you can't have cultural change unless you set the schools free from their present function of being indoctrinators of the status-quo. Change begins in the school [...].

Many experiences of libertarian and anarchist education were based on negotiation with the pupils/students of both the contents and the organization of the pedagogical structures. The 'mini-schools' allowed pupils to completely negotiate their timetables (Shotton, 1993: 176), and assert their own ideas of what to study, emphasizing the importance of learning how to reason for oneself rather than accept given facts (Shotton, 1993: 39). In the tradition of the anarchist Sunday schools,<sup>126</sup> children would organize themselves to discuss any issues important to them. Here, self-organization was meant not only as the organization of the teaching, but also as the general management of the school and its politics.<sup>127</sup>

<sup>122</sup> Following a similar reflection to that of Chantal Mouffe on Antoni Negri's call for exodus: 'I criticise the idea of exodus and desertion supported by Hardt and Negri. To that I am opposing Gramsci's war of position' (Mouffe, 2010).

<sup>123</sup> Georgi (2003: 610–611) also proposes self-organization in education as a model for broader application: 'Can this view of a "horizontal" and plural democracy, of an open and experimental utopia shared by a few hundreds of people, spread beyond and be a reference on a larger scale?' My translation.



*Utopia and the Everyday. Between Art and Pedagogies.* Room displaying a video in which all participants to the project initiated by Norman and Steireif speak about the experience.

‘My intervention in their classes was a way to have the teachers and the pupils discover – through documentary movies I realized – “applied utopias” from the CEIS in Rimini and the École d’Humanité in Goldern.’

Tilo Steireif (*Utopia and the Everyday*, Gazette #4) (*microsillons*, 2009–2010h-i)

In the 1970s, the anarchist writers Colin Ward and Anthony Fyson (Ward & Fyson, 1973: 15) called for the training of children to become politically active (emphasizing the usual disinterest of the schools in the matter), saying: 'We should aim at the preparation of school children for their future roles as participators in environmental decision-making. There are public arguments in all our cities over planning issues; school is the right place to rehearse the individual's role in such controversies.'

### 3.2.2 Nils Norman and Tilo Steireif's project: bringing libertarian and anarchist pedagogies into state schools

Knowing of Nils Norman's interest in the history of libertarian and anarchist education (including Colin Ward's writings) and his will to collaborate with the CIRA, we invited him to realize a project in *Utopia and the Everyday*. We suggested to him the idea of a collaboration with Tilo Steireif, an artist working in the Haute école pédagogique du Canton de Vaud (HEP) who is connected with many art teachers from the area who studied in the HEP.

Our idea was to confront teachers who had received the official training, and worked in state schools following the classical curriculum with anarchist and libertarian pedagogies. We had two aims.

First, we wanted, through discussing alternative, more democratic, educational models with teachers and later with pupils, to make the current existing system more visible, to show by comparison that it is neither the only possible system, nor an unchangeable or ideologically neutral one. By doing so, we hoped that a discussion about democracy at school could be opened.

Second, we wanted to see how re-engaging the more horizontal models of education proposed in those pedagogies could address the preoccupations of teachers today.

<sup>124</sup> Daniel Tucker (2007), during the *Pedagogical Factory* project, said: '[it] is not saying experimental or informal is better or more important than what goes on in the schools. The intention is to celebrate and ask questions of both – to suggest that there are ideas that classroom education might find useful from these other spaces of knowledge production, and vice-versa – but not to be unrealistic about what needs to happen now for the vast majority of people to access critical thinking skills and information through a reformed and equitable free public education system.' Regarding the address of cultural objects to a large audience and their possible democratic role, one can also think about the chorus in Greek tragedy, that was constituted of drafted citizens, represented the voice of the population on stage and was a way to train the citizens in democratic participation. See: Klimis (2009) and Kirkwood (1954).

<sup>125</sup> '[...] the organisation of the school, instead of serving an ideal purpose, has become one of the most powerful instruments in the hand of the ruling class.' Ferrer (1913: 49)

<sup>126</sup> See in particular the Anarchist-Socialist Sunday School (1907) presented by Shotton (1992: 36–40).





*Utopia and the Everyday. Between Art and Pedagogies.* Visit to the installation of the project initiated by Norman and Steireif, with the participating teachers.

‘Pupils from a visual art class propose to define utopia on the basis of the modification of a building. Another class (3rd Swiss grade) explode the usual timetable of their teacher for one day and propose an “ideal programme”: yoga, football, Chinese, experimental sciences ... During seven weeks, another class study visual arts during thematic walks. Finally, two projects take architecture and utopia as a starting point. The pupils and teachers are aiming at developing a group dynamic, integrating a critical approach.’

Tilo Steireif (*Utopia and the Everyday*, Gazette #4) (*microsillons*, 2009–2010h-i)

After the artists finished their research in the archives and in alternative schools active today, they presented the outcomes to the teachers and their pupils, in particular through the screening of documentary movies they had produced, and opened a discussion with them about how the project could continue. The decision was taken that each teacher would develop her/his own project with her/his class or classes.

<sup>127</sup> See in particular the example of the Burgess Hill School and its collective head (1936–1962). Shotton (1992: 95–99).

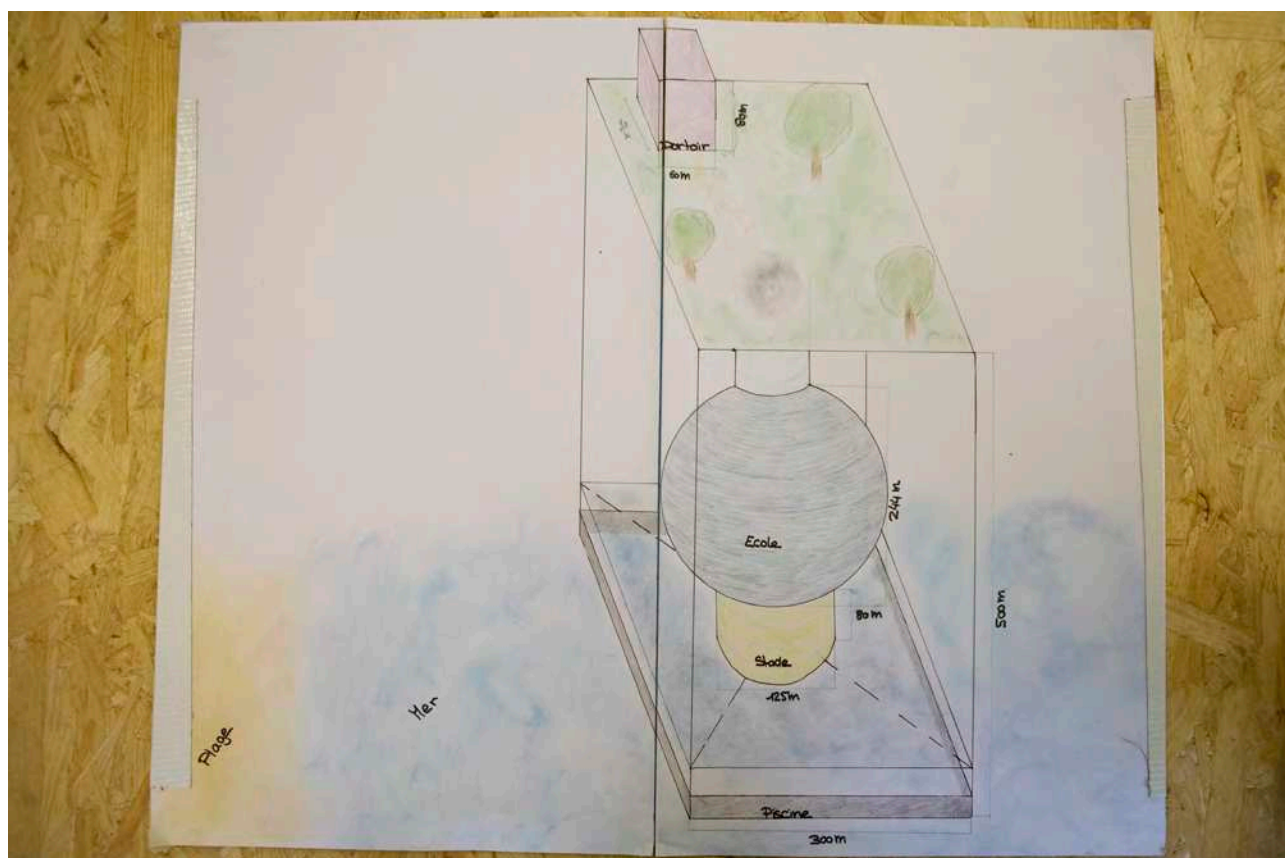
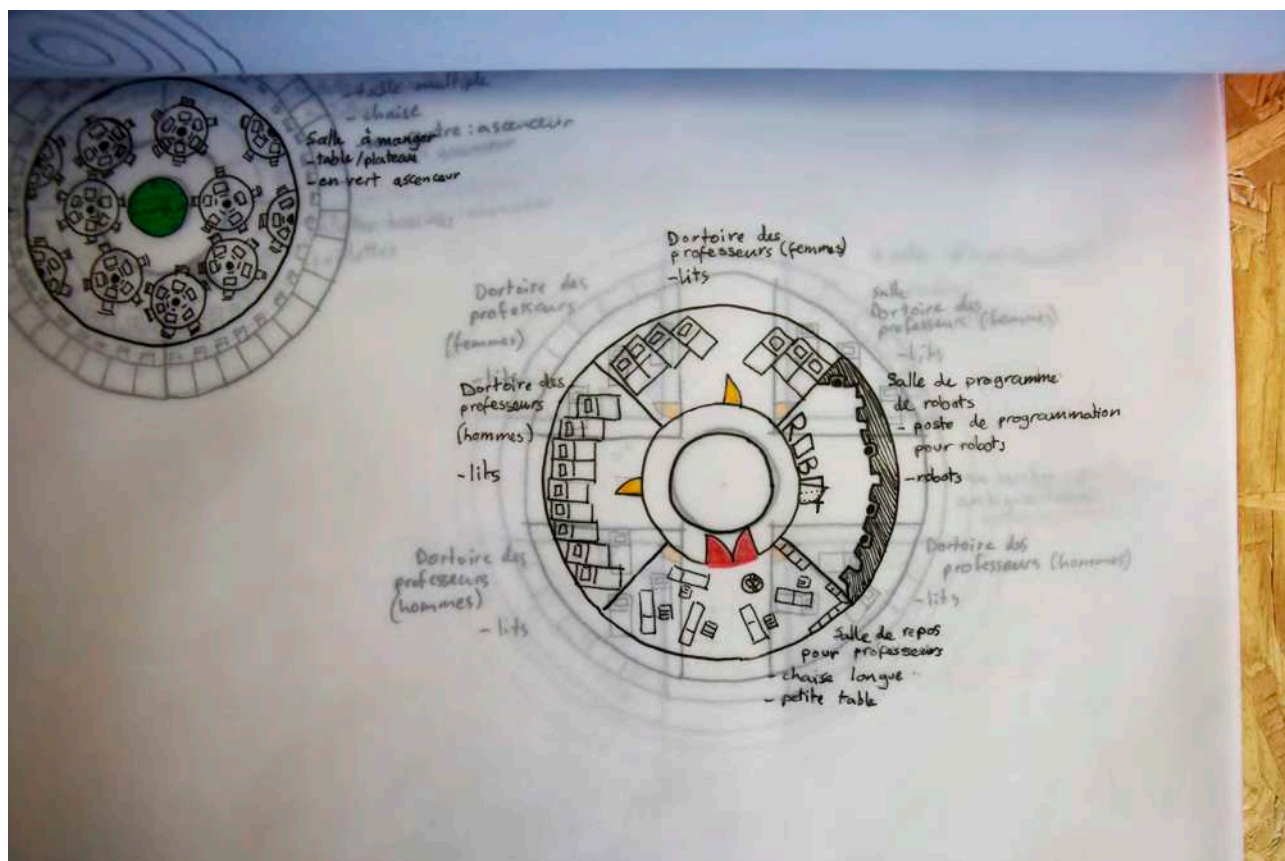
The project mobilized five visual art teachers who involved ten classes from different levels (teenagers aged between 13 and 16 and children between 7 and 9 years). In each class, during several weeks of work on different projects, the pupils were able to ‘formulate solutions, ideas and critiques of contemporary school. Starting from their everyday experiences as users, the pupils formulated formal and organizational proposals to reappropriate school’ (*microsillons*, 2009–2010h, i).

A teacher in one of the schools asked the pupils of six classes of *septième*, *huitième* and *neuvième* année (12–15 years old) to invent, in small groups, a utopian school, with a precise plan of the building, an introduction to its principles and a timetable.

He didn’t challenge the usual organization of the classroom, his own authority or the (un)democratic way in which the teacher gives assignments to her/his pupils. Nevertheless, through the exercise, he opened a frame in which the pupils could criticize schools in general, and their own school in particular.

Interestingly, among more than 40 utopian schools that resulted (in the form of small booklets that were presented in the exhibition), absolutely no mention is made of decision-making within the school, be it about defining the content of the classes, the general organization or disciplinary issues. The proposals sometimes go quite far in describing specialized curricula, learning rhythms and disciplinary issues, criticizing in particular the schooling system’s division into different levels in which the pupils and students are





Utopia and the Everyday. Between Art and Pedagogies. Students' proposals for a utopian school.

allocated according to their 'abilities' (*microsillons*, 2009–2010f), but all the pupils place themselves as virtual traditional school directors, proposing a programme and a set of rules that pupils have to follow without discussion. All the proposals are also keeping the organization of learning in a traditional class structure, time being split into small class units, one discipline and teacher following another.

The result of the exercise was of course strongly influenced by the discussion that the pupils had with their teacher during the project, and obviously more emphasis was put on the architectural than on the other aspects of those schools. Nevertheless, this example shows how deeply the pupils are rooted in the hierarchical school system and how difficult it can be for them to imagine an alternative in which they would be involved in a more democratic way.

Following a different direction, another teacher in the same school tried from the start to change the very structure of her teaching. With her class of *troisième année* (8–9 years old), she proposed to the pupils to organize a day of school during which they would decide the content. The exercise allowed her to value the competences of the pupils who would help to present their chosen subjects or activities, get used to facing a group and take some responsibility for the class. The planning of the day was a concrete exercise of democracy, as the programme had to be decided together. After a long discussion about the desires of everyone, about the goals of each activity, about the balancing of different type of content, but also about durations, learning rhythms, etc., a solution was found by consensus.

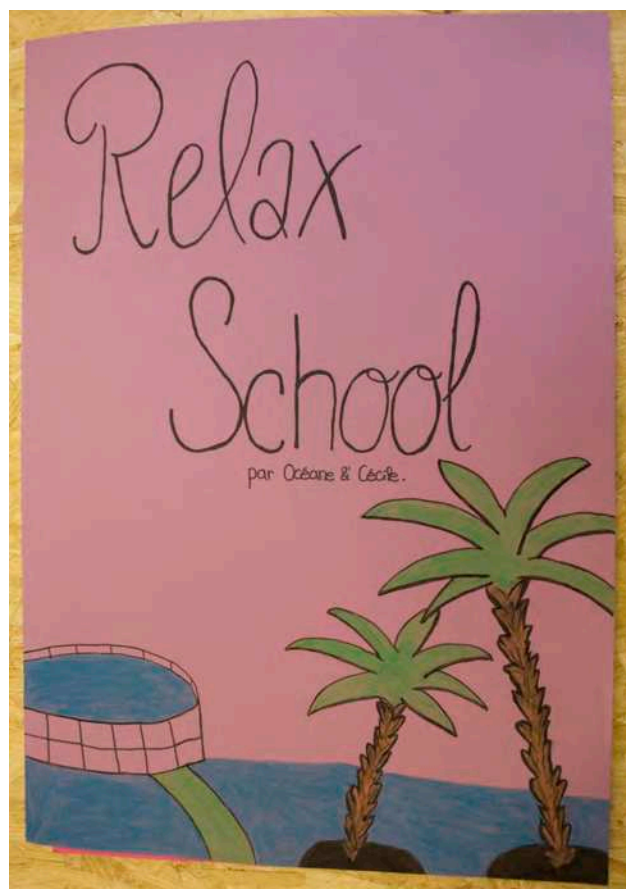
A third teacher proposed a more democratic way for the pupils to express what they wanted to do, simply by renouncing most of her authority as a teacher: she organized a series of classes in public space, in which she let her pupils do whatever they wanted within a delimited space. The only requirement was for the pupils to give in a notebook or portfolio documenting

‘Through the pupils’ works, open critiques toward school appear; lack of conviviality, spaces perceived as being too administrative, architectures that are not thought of as places for living, lack possibility to choose between different activities in self-expression through movement, theatre, sport or arts ... Concerning the courses’ organization, the pupils propose alternatives to the current system in imagining the creation of a specialized curriculum organized around certain themes or common passions. Almost all of them would like to suppress the current separation by levels (leading either to high school or to manual apprenticeship).’

Tilo Steireif (*Utopia and the Everyday*, Gazette #4) (*microsillons*, 2009–2010h–i)



Excerpt from a student's diary in the group that experienced a series of free outside classes proposed by a teacher in the project initiated by Norman and Steireif.



Cover of a students' group proposal for a utopian school. A large variety of proposals came out from what could be at first sight seen as a very 'close' exercise proposed by a teacher.

their experience at the end of the sessions. Those documents were also presented in the exhibition.

<sup>128</sup> See point 4.5.1.

In this last example, the vision of democracy and of anarchism was deliberately simplistic (the teacher was willing to experiment with a situation as different as possible from the one she is usually working in) and produced effects that were not forecasted.<sup>128</sup>

In Norman and Steireif's project, bringing anti-academic thinking into the academy produced a very interesting effect, as it led the teachers and their pupils to critically interrogate their usual way of working and to find concrete ways to change it. Many discussions about practical ways to set up more democratic and horizontal modes of exchange took place between the artists and the teachers during the preparation of the show. When the show was open, a group of current students in pedagogy joined the discussions.

Even if the experience was a parenthesis inside their school curriculum, it certainly left some traces in the teachers' and the students' minds.

In our own projects, working over a longer time with the participants, we are willing to extend the effect of those kinds of practices and – in describing them carefully – to explore more deeply how classroom relationships might be changed.

### 3.2.3 Communicating the democratic dimension of a project in the art institution

The director of Le Centre was very interested in the subject matter and in the collaborative process that *Utopia and the Everyday* proposed. Nevertheless, when the time came to advertise the project, it was difficult to change the institution's habits (especially regarding the way artists are presented) and to make visible that a collaborative process in which democratic exchange



Invitation	Recherche	Invitation à co-signer le projet	Participation d'enseignants, en collaboration avec la HEP de Lausanne	Travail avec les élèves
<b>Nils Norman</b>	<b>Centre International de Recherche sur l'Anarchisme</b>  <b>Marianne Enckell</b>  <b>Frédéric Deshusses</b>	<b>Tilo Steireif</b>	<b>Nicole Goetschi Danesi</b>  <b>John Didier</b>  <b>Carmen Zimmermann</b>  <b>Aude Ramseier</b>  <b>Claire de Buren</b>  <b>Jérôme Bichsel</b>	<b>Une classe de 24 élèves</b> Collège de Béthusy, Lausanne <b>Une classe de 12 élèves</b> Collège La Planta, Chavannes près-Renens <b>Une classe de 9 élèves</b> Collège du Verney, Puidoux <b>Une classe de 22 élèves</b> ESGE, Genolier <b>Une classe de 25 élèves</b> Établissement secondaire, Cossonay <b>Cinq classes, 84 élèves, sept enseignants</b> ESGE, Genolier  <b>Deux élèves de l'école de L'Humanité, Hasliberg Goldern</b>

*Utopia and the Everyday. Between Art and Pedagogies.* Label for the project initiated by Nils Norman.

Very very difficult moment: we learn that in fact, Le Centre thought that our project would last only the first four days (instead of two months) of the show ... Misunderstanding about how we would use the space ... misunderstanding about the project: nobody from Le Centre team actually read the documents we produced ...

Excerpt from the *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* project diary.



was constantly negotiated led to the creation of the work, rather than the individual expression of a single artist.

In the exhibition *Utopia and the Everyday*, instead of having a traditional label with the name of the artist, title and date, we presented the three collaborations with labels including every participant on the same level, in a graphically horizontal way. The artist's and everybody else's names were positioned on the line according to the moment when they entered the project. The artist's or art educator's name would come first only because she/he was at the beginning of the process.

When the director visited the exhibition, she asked us to change the horizontal label, arguing that the public wouldn't understand who the artists were and wouldn't be able to assign a given work to a name (concerned that if too many parameters were changed simultaneously in the project, the visitors wouldn't understand the proposal).

Claire Bishop (2009: 3), when discussing authorship in artistic work involving collaboration with groups, underlines the difficulty of escaping the individualism of the art world:

Even the most open-ended projects are still circumscribed by an artistic identity, and inscribed within a chain of previous or similar co-authored projects. Even when artists make a point of including participants' names as co-authors, it is still the singular artist as motivator and facilitator that provides the work's identity. This is what differentiates collaborative projects in the sphere of contemporary art from the more anonymous tradition of community arts.

We recognize the difficulty of resisting the convention of the individual signature (even though in our case it is still a collective one, as *microsillons*): even though the projects are usually also presented outside of the usual art exhibition spaces, our own website and publications are often the only

## Image–Mouvement

Forum and Exhibition “Atlas. Truths, Details,  
Intervals and the Afterlives of the Image”  
Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève

Vernissage and Interview with Katya García-Antón  
(Director, Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève)  
Geneva / Switzerland, December 8, 2010

Video: Heinrich Schmidt

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Video interview of the Centre director, presenting *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* as a key innovation for the *Image – Movement* Biennale (Vernissage TV, 2010).



*En commun.* One of the groups working on its article.

sustainable interface in which the projects are presented, and therefore they are strongly identified with us. We don't see it as a problem as long as we make sure that the way in which the project is signed and the collaborators are mentioned reflects as honestly as possible the different roles. In order to do so, and because each project's structure is different from the others, a specific solution is found each time (though a common point is that we never sign a project alone, the possibility of distributed authorship being a key component to a *horizontal* cultural production).

<sup>129</sup> Shor (1992: 36–37) shows how students working with a teacher practising democratic authority question the content of official textbooks and how this relates to their own cultures and places in society.

### 3.3 Generating content together. The *En commun* example

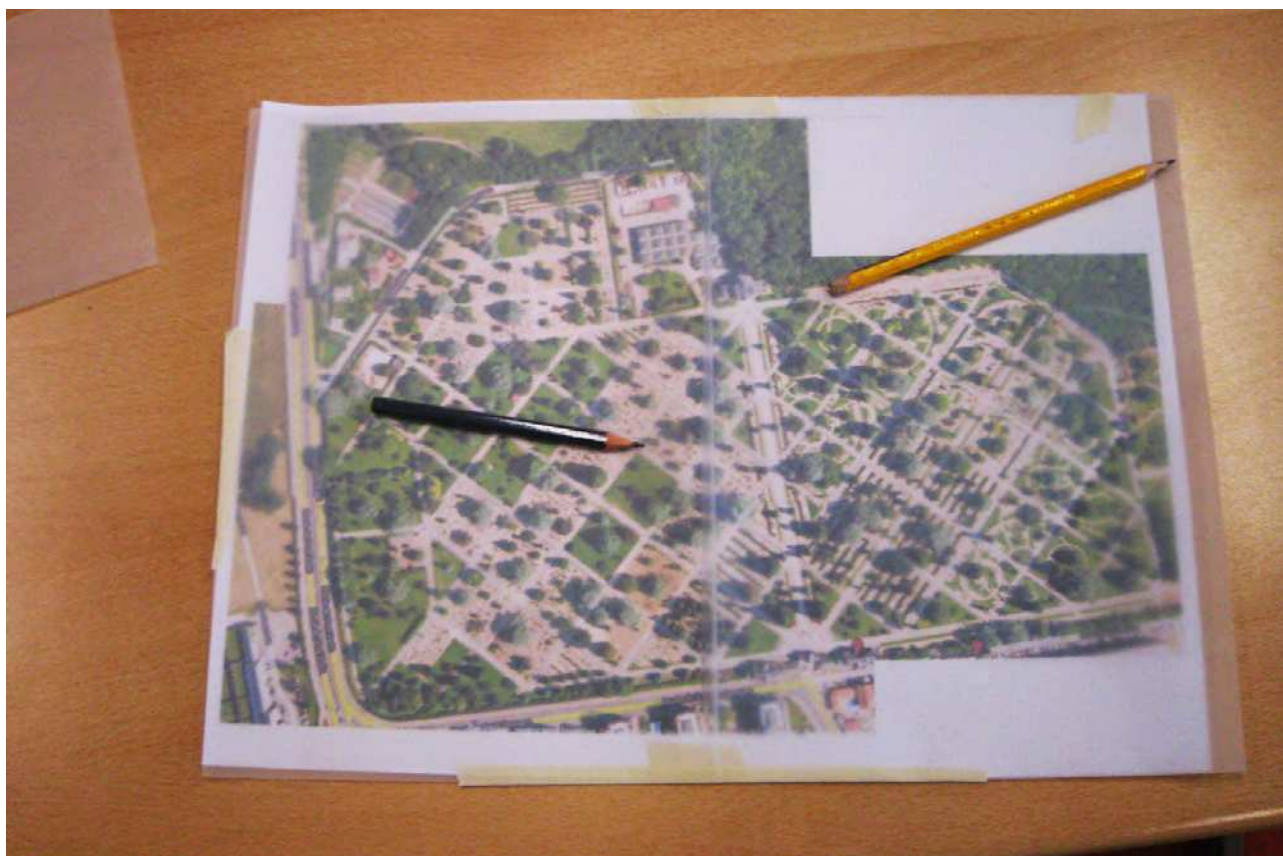
#### 3.3.1 Generativity

Ira Shor (1996: 46) uses Freire's conception of 'generativity' to describe the way he decides the curriculum content with his students, based on what emerges in assignments, writings and class discussions, rather than proposing a plan in advance:

These self-selected issues are 'generative themes', in a Freirean sense, because they were generated out of student experience and writing, based on their perceptions of their social lives, good for generating critical discussion about later issues.

Generating content together is key in developing a critical mind: when everything is not given in advance, the participants in a learning group can begin to question not only what they would like to do in the future, but also the validity of what they were given to learn in the past.<sup>129</sup>

The idea of generative themes, leading to the co-generation of content, has been central in all of our projects and is key to a horizontal process: the artist (like the teacher) is not the only one authorized to deliver content and to produce meaning from it. On the contrary, a condition of co-generation is a



*En commun.* Mapping work by the participating pupils.

more democratic relationship, and a more participatory group dynamic. To set the conditions for co-generation, we try to develop collaborations in which we are not simply delegating the realization of a pre-defined plan but rather opening a space where the people we collaborate with bring their own knowledge and competences, and actively propose ideas or transform an initial proposal.

Valorizing everybody's competences – including the ones often excluded from the school or art contexts – and inventing ad hoc modes of working together rather than imposing contents and rules top down is key in this process. This valorization can help reduce the social reproduction of inequalities by schools, and we have noticed on several occasions, discussing with the teachers involved, that our projects offered opportunities for students having difficulties with the school curriculum to activate specific competences and thereby to increase their confidence and their will to get involved in learning.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1979: 17) show how education 'paradoxically most highly rewards the art of remaining aloof from "academic" values and disciplines', and how social conditioning determines this faculty of detachment (like *ironic casualness*) toward traditional school content (1964: 20). Having the pupils/students bring their own extra-curricular interests to the centre of a project gives an equal opportunity to all to develop the ability to distance themselves from the official school discourse, instead of reserving that practice to a given social category.

This points toward a direction radically different from the idea of reducing social inequalities through facilitating access to the *official* culture, through the 'democratization of culture', still a central idea to many gallery education projects today. Official culture is a form of authority: it is validated by an institutional hierarchical system and is aimed at being inculcated into as many people as possible. Conversely, *generativity* seeks a more horizontal model of exchange around culture, because it allows experience to be





shared and generated, bottom up.

Ideally, the co-generation process should open a real knowledge exchange and also – because it drastically differs from the usual school classes or workshops – propose a new experimental model actively involving people in the conception and realization of a common object rather than consuming pre-packed knowledge.

*microsillons* seeks to establish cultural democracy, rather than a democratization of culture. As conceived by André Malraux,<sup>130</sup> the democratization of culture favours the encounter with art and its ‘limitless radiance’ – its faculty to talk by itself to anybody<sup>131</sup> – and elides sociological resistances, cultural inequalities and symbolical violence. As scholars and practitioners including the stage director Jean Caune (2006) have demonstrated, the *démocratisation culturelle*, which has been widely applied in France following Malraux’s initial input, is limited to the idea of facilitating encounters with artworks and failed to transform social inequalities regarding culture. The concept has therefore been challenged since the 1970s.

Following the reflections that came to the forefront in May 1968, and in parallel to the work of the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu on the role of culture in the reproduction of social hierarchies,<sup>132</sup> *l’action culturelle*<sup>133</sup> will provide an alternative. Claiming the need to transform the world through culture, cultural action seeks to *unveil reality and raise consciousness*. It recognizes the existence of a dominated culture and works toward the promotion of the voicing of groups that are silenced.<sup>134</sup> In this context, the cultural worker, ‘[d]enounces the delusion of cultural democratization and paves the way to cultural democracy that implies individuals’ emancipation through the development of their creative potentialities’.<sup>135</sup>

This idea of a *démocratie culturelle* appeared in 1972 during a UNESCO colloquium, and the final declaration calls for ‘realizing the conditions of a “cultural democracy” including, in the perspective of decentralization and

<sup>130</sup> Malraux was the first French cultural minister, from 1959 to 1969. The founding decree of the cultural ministry, written by Malraux himself, doesn’t mention the term ‘*démocratie culturelle*’ but gives to the ministry the mission to ‘make accessible the capital artworks of humankind, and first of France to as many French people as possible, to ensure a large audience for our cultural heritage and to favour the creation of art and of the spirit which enriches it’ (my translation). See: Todd (2001: 428).

<sup>131</sup> See: Caune (1999: 47).

<sup>132</sup> See in particular: Bourdieu & Chamboredon (1968), Bourdieu & Passeron (1979), Bourdieu (1979).

<sup>133</sup> See: Charpentreau (1966).

<sup>134</sup> See: Caune (1999: 179–181).

<sup>135</sup> Caune (1981: 9). My translation.



**Cet article** est une fiction imaginée par les élèves pour évoquer la Terrasse du Troc à travers un angle original : la manifestation vue par une chauve-souris habitante du Bois de la Bâtie. Il s'agit du journal intime d'Odette, Caryl Schönbachler, naturaliste et spécialiste des chauves-souris. Il leur a fourni de nombreuses informations sur ce mammifère volant qui compte plus de 900 espèces différentes dans le monde, dont une trentaine en Suisse. Les informations sur la Terrasse du Troc leur ont été transmises par Madame Chantal Bermond, collaboratrice de la manifestation.

Des informations complémentaires ont été trouvées dans le numéro hors-série «La chauve-souris sort de l'ombre» de Terre et Nature, août 2008.

## Le journal d'Odette la chauve-souris

Ces pages sont extraites d'un document exceptionnel, retrouvé au Bois de la Bâtie. Il s'agit du journal intime d'Odette, chauve-souris de l'espèce des pipistrelles et habitante du bois de la Bâtie depuis quelques d'années. Nous vous livrons ici quelques pages de ce document, qui évoquent notamment la Terrasse du Troc.

### Lundi

Aujourd'hui je suis allée chercher à manger après avoir piqué un petit somme. Je dormais à moitié, ou je sais, ce n'est pas une excuse. Il faut dire que, comme tu l'auras déjà remarqué, cher journal, je suis très maladroite. Et donc, comme j'étais fatiguée, je me suis cognée contre un arbre pendant que je pourchassais une mouche, malgré l'excellente vision en 3D que me procure mon sonar à ultra-sons. Et là, chose étrange, une affiche était placée au-dessus de moi, ou il était écrit «La Terrasse du Troc». C'était écrit que c'est une manifestation où des artistes sont invités à faire des projets, on peut entendre des contes, écouter des concerts... Au fait, j'avais déjà dit que Monsieur Hibou donnait des cours de lecture et d'écriture. J'ai d'ailleurs réussi mon diplôme !

Enfin, bref, j'aimerais bien participer à cet événement, je vais me renseigner sur la date et l'horaire.

### Mardi

J'ai réussi à me renseigner sur la date grâce à Monsieur Duranard. Ce sera du 22 juillet au 15 août. Bon, je ne peux pas trop m'ennuyer aujourd'hui, journal, car je suis attendue pour une petite randonnée avec mes amis du Club Nocturne.

C'est un club qui réunit les autres animaux de la forêt qui vivent la nuit, comme M. Hibou et Mme Chouette, Mme Croac. Peut-être qu'ils aimeraient venir avec moi à la Terrasse du Troc ?

### Mercredi

Malheureusement mes amis du Club Nocturne n'ont pas voulu m'accompagner. Ils disent avoir peur des humains. Je n'en vois pas la raison pourtant. Ils sont gentils, d'organiser des fêtes pour qu'on puisse s'y rendre ! Donc j'ai décidé d'y aller toute seule. Après tout, je suis assez grande et je n'ai pas besoin d'eux pour prendre des décisions.

En allant là-bas, je me suis souvenue avoir déjà entendu d'étranges bruits l'année dernière à la même période. Madame Myrondelle m'avait d'ailleurs laissé entendre qu'il y avait une fête entre humains.

J'ai réussi à dénicher le programme du festival ! Je vais aller faire pour un petit tour à une lecture de contes, qui m'a l'air très intéressante. J'espère que personne ne trouvera trop bizarre qu'une chauve-souris adulte assiste à cet événement. J'ai toujours eu ce côté enfantin, j'adore les histoires. Je te raconterai ce que j'ai entendu là-bas quand je reviendrai.

### Jeudi

J'ai vraiment apprécié cette soirée ! Je ne vais pas pouvoir tout te raconter car il y avait trop d'histoires différentes. Je les ai toutes beaucoup aimées ! Sinon, tu ne sais pas la nouvelle ? J'ai rencontré Madame Chantal Bermond. C'est une collaboratrice de la Terrasse du Troc et elle a gentiment accepté de répondre à mes questions. Sais-tu d'où vient ce nom de «Terrasse du Troc» ? Je l'ai appris à cette occasion, le troc c'est un système d'échange, qui n'implique pas l'idée d'argent. A la Terrasse, les artistes et les différentes personnes qui viennent à la manifestation, les publics, échangent leurs savoirs, des souvenirs, des moments. Et la première édition ayant eu lieu sur les rives couvertes de Saint-Jean, à Genève, a donné le mot «Terrasse». Elle m'a parlé du projet d'un artiste qui a installé des haut-parleurs dans les arbres du Bois de la Bâtie, et m'a proposé de participer. Pourquoi pas...

Je te laisse, car avec Madame Croac, nous allons nous rendre à la Terrasse pour un concert ce soir. J'ai entendu dire que M. Chauve-Souris viendrait sûrement et tu sais à quel point il me plaît.

### Vendredi

Waouh ! C'est le mot ! Hier j'ai vraiment passé une soirée magnifique. Le concert était vraiment super. Je suis allée avec Mme Croac m'asseoir vers le bar mais l'odeur de barbecue nous dérangeait, ce n'est pas vraiment notre tasse de thé les grillades, nous c'est plutôt mouches, moustiques... alors nous sommes allées plus loin. Monsieur Chauve-Souris est venu m'aborder. Je ne te raconte pas l'état dans lequel j'étais, je haïssais, je rougissais, bref, l'horreur ! Il m'a invité à danser mais d'un seul coup, alors qu'il allait m'embrasser, il s'est mis à pleuvoir, un vrai déluge ! Des gens sont restés pour danser mais moi et Monsieur Chauve-Souris avons décidé d'aller nous réfugier au sec.

### 10 mois plus tard...

J'ai tellement de choses à te raconter. D'abord, pardon de t'avoir un peu délaissé. Tu n'imagines pas à quel point je suis heureuse ; j'ai épousé M. Chauve-Souris. Et cette année, je pourrai retourner à la Terrasse du Troc avec Deborah. Tu ne devineras jamais qui c'est ! C'est ma fille.

pluralism, a direct intervention of the concerned people'.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>136</sup> Déclaration d'Arc-et-Senans (1972). My translation.

Embodied in the concept of cultural democracy is the will to use culture as a space to activate democracy, rethinking the hegemony of a single 'official culture' and the role of 'the public' in art production. This strongly informs our own practice.

### 3.3.2 Co-generation in *En commun*

*En commun* is in many regards representative of our projects: working long term with a small group, making a project *from* culture rather than *about* it (in addressing critical themes), and developing a visual object that will be publicly presented.

In *En commun*, when pupils and students became journalists, it was a way to encourage them to conduct research and develop their own ideas. We imagined that working around a park that most of them already knew at least as well as we did would lead them to think about their personal knowledge and experiences of the place.

We began by opening a setting to which each participant could bring her/his own ideas and interests. One of our first steps was to discuss what this park represented for the pupils and to record the different activities they were practising in it. Their answers were used as starting points to introduce a series of topics related to the general theme of the Commons, sometimes critical topics that are usually not discussed in state schools, such as privatization or Creative Commons.

Next, we invited them to think about a theme that they would be interested to work on. Here, we had a series of pre-defined ideas to fuel the discussion when needed, but the openness was kept in order for themes to be generated from the discussion. For example, an initial idea to work on the





### Le cimetière Saint-Georges

qui borde le côté ouest du Bois de la Bâtie, est l'un des plus grands cimetières de la ville de Genève. En rencontrant Monsieur Coulin – collaborateur au Service des Pompes Funèbres, Cimetières et Crématoire de la ville de Genève – les élèves ont pu discuter du fonctionnement d'un tel lieu, de son caractère éminemment collectif, de son importance pour la communauté. Ils ont également pu découvrir un usage étonnant de ce cimetière, pendant la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale.

Les sources suivantes sont venues compléter les informations recueillies lors de la rencontre :

- « Genève : Juifs, musulmans et chrétiens au cimetière Saint-Georges », dans : 24 heures, 18 juillet 2002.
- <http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cimetière>
- [www.ville-geneve.ch/plan-ville/centres-tuneraies-cimetieres/cimetiere-saint-georges](http://www.ville-geneve.ch/plan-ville/centres-tuneraies-cimetieres/cimetiere-saint-georges)

## LE CIMETIÈRE SAINT-GEORGES

### HISTOIRE ET FONCTIONNEMENT



Le cimetière (du grec ancien "koimētērion", lieu pour dormir, dortoir) est en général, depuis le début du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle en Occident, divisé en concessions. Pendant longtemps, une concession pouvait être donnée ou vendue à une famille. Aujourd'hui, cela devient très rare, par manque de place.

Au cimetière du Bois de la Bâtie, le cimetière Saint-Georges, les concessions des tombes durent 33 ans et avant, elles duraient 20 ans. Il y a plusieurs types de sépultures.

Vers la fin de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale, il y a eu un potager dans le cimetière. Parce qu'on manquait de nourriture pour les Genevois on a décidé d'utiliser certains des grands espaces du cimetière pour les cultiver. Aujourd'hui, on ne sait plus où était situé ce potager exactement. Il n'en reste aucune trace et des tombes occupent très certainement son ancien emplacement.

Il y a suffisamment de place dans le cimetière à l'heure actuelle. Cependant, pendant 13 ans, à cause du changement de la durée des concessions, il n'y aura pas de désaffectation donc aucune tombe n'arrivera à échéance et ne pourra être remplacée : il n'y aura que des nouvelles tombes.

Quand une personne décède, on l'enterre dans le premier quartier en exploitation. Les quartiers sont les zones rectangulaires qui divisent le cimetière. Les enfants sont séparés parce que c'est une habitude qui leur est restée du siècle dernier. Les concessions ce sont des tombes que l'on peut renouveler. Les tombes sont disposées les unes à côté des autres, numérotées dans l'ordre. Il y a des secteurs différents pour chaque type de religion. Il y a aussi des tombes de cendres pour les personnes incinérées. Dans certains quartiers, dédiés à des concessions, les tombes ne sont pas alignées, mais reprennent les formes de jardins qui existaient avant que le lieu ne soit un cimetière.



### RENSEIGNEMENTS PRATIQUES

Comment s'y rendre

Depuis le centre-ville, prendre le bus 10 en direction d'Onex-Cité. Arrêt : "Cimetière".



### Horaires d'ouverture

Tous les jours de 7H30 jusqu'à 19H.

Il y a des gardes qui surveillent de l'accès au cimetière. Ils veillent à ce que personne n'entre avec des chiens ou des véhicules. Il n'y a pas de système de surveillance dans le cimetière; les portails se ferment de manière automatique en fin de journée. Pour éviter que les gens ne restent bloqués à l'intérieur, un interrupteur permet d'ouvrir la porte depuis l'intérieur.

Il y a une petite loge à l'entrée pour les personnes qui désirent acheter des fleurs pour en mettre sur sur les tombes de personnes proches.



### Photos

Il est interdit de prendre des photos dans le cimetière, pour protéger la vie privée des personnes et leur anonymat.



### Nourriture

Il est strictement interdit de manger dans le cimetière. Vous trouverez une Migros et quelques restaurants dans les environs.



### A NE PAS MANQUER

On ne peut pas décorer les tombes comme on le veut car il y a un règlement général (il y a 45 communes dans le canton donc 45 règlements différents) qui dit que l'ensemble des choses qui se trouvent dans le cimetière ne doit pas choquer, que l'on doit respecter de manière générale le lieu de repos qu'est un cimetière. C'est pourquoi rien de vraiment frappant ne semble sortir d'une série de tombes uniformes. Pourtant, il y a quelques particularités à ne pas manquer dans ce cimetière.

Les tombes des "stars" sont généralement au cimetière des Rois. Mais il y en a quelques-unes au cimetière Saint-Georges, comme celle de Ferdinand Hodler. Vous pourrez aussi voir l'avenue des aviateurs, où des pilotes des débuts de l'aéronautique suisse sont enterrés. Vous pourrez trouver quelques autres curiosités pendant votre balade, comme par exemple une roulotte en pierre sur la tombe d'un membre d'une famille de forains.

Pour plus d'infos, adressez-vous à l'accueil à l'entrée du cimetière.

Réalisé par C.R., C.F., S.P., G.R.C.



park zoo became in one group a proposal to write a 'bat diary', and the idea of writing a 'travel guide' to the park cemetery emerged.

From that point, we asked the pupils to be journalists (in groups of three to six pupils for each article) and to create content about the selected topics. We took the position of *facilitators*,<sup>137</sup> trying to be resources for them by discussing their written and visual proposals, helping them to organize field meetings and to get the most out of them, editing their texts ...

One of the most obvious, yet fundamental, results of the co-generative process has been to bring a collective work dynamic, a particular ethical environment, into a context where individual (and often competitive) work was the rule.

Three key points appeared as enablers – if not conditions – to co-generation: finding a position regarding the ownership of knowledge different from the one of the teacher, allowing the project to develop over a long time and working locally.

#### a) Claiming ignorance

In our projects, we never present ourselves as specialists but rather as cultural workers, with our own set of known and unknown subjects. We often insist that, depending on the subject, we may be as ignorant as the participants about it (as was the case with the park) and that therefore the experiences and expertise of everyone is required. We noticed that this position can help the emergence of questions and material from the students, because they can see that their participation is not merely wished for, but is a condition of the project.

We have found that this position of presenting ourselves as non-specialists on a theme (amateur video, graphic design or more recently theatre)<sup>138</sup> has

<sup>137</sup> Following the psychologist Carl Rogers, who presents the facilitator as someone who, among other things, 'sets the initial mood', '[clarifies] the purposes of the individuals [...] as well as [...] of the group', 'relies upon the desire of each student to implement those purposes', 'make[s] easily available the widest possible range of resources for learning', 'regards himself as a flexible resource' (Rogers, 1969: 164–166).

<sup>138</sup> In a project not presented in the dissertation, realized in 2013 with the Groupe l'Aventin. See: Groupe l'Aventin (2014).

We will first remain as low profile as possible, to really use the text as a starter, to listen ...

Excerpt from the *Lectures autour du graphisme* project diary.

We rethink the project. Because we don't know the field very well, we want to propose a poly-centred view on it, and open a dialogue rather than propose something too fixed. We also want to share our methodology with practitioners and students from other fields.

Excerpt from the *Lectures autour du graphisme* project diary.

A lot of preparation: very attentive reading, research of images, videos, examples. But everything is meant only as potentially being used, if the discussion slows down.

Excerpt from the *Lectures autour du graphisme* project diary.

helped us to establish a kind of complicity with the participants, proposing an equal exchange of knowledge rather than providing a validated knowledge.

As Freire and Shor (1987: 14) point out, in a dialogical exchange, ‘the teacher re-learns the objects through studying them with the students’, in a ‘dynamic approximation’.

Kreisberg (1992: 82, 175), reflecting on *assertiveness* and *vulnerability*, shows how for the teacher to embrace change means not hiding behind the assertiveness which is usually presented as a top quality for teachers. In our own projects, dealing each time with different themes, contexts, people and techniques, we are always put in that position of vulnerability and we are transparent with participants about our competences and our need to build alliances with the people usually working with them (teachers, educators ...).

The acceptance of a partial ignorance of a theme by the organizer of a project can not only facilitate dialogue, but also be a pedagogical asset, reinforcing the potential of self-organization and, crucially, breaking with the idea of the teacher as the holder of a single and universal truth. Hughes Lenoir (a teacher and researcher in educational sciences who worked around the question of libertarian pedagogies and self-organization in educational contexts)<sup>139</sup> has written about the difficulty, but potential richness for educators, of working in fields that they don’t master:

the most difficult thing maybe for a teacher is to accept the risk not to know, to accept that the group might propose and select a theme about which the facilitator has no competence. This is an argument to reinforce the self-organisation logic. Indeed, this relative endangerment is in fact a real chance because it makes it possible to break with the shared illusion of omnipotence. It authorizes the facilitator to finally be a learner among learners and to show, eventually, that group work and collective intelligence can lead to a quality production, without the intermediation of the teacher. (Lenoir, 2009)<sup>140</sup>

<sup>139</sup> Basing his analysis in particular on Carl Rogers’ *Freedom to Learn*, a text in which Rogers says: ‘Self-initiated learning which involves the whole person of the learner – feelings as well as intellect – is the most lasting and pervasive’ (Rogers, 1969: 162).

<sup>140</sup> My translation.



The idea that the educator/facilitator should accept themes that she or he is not familiar with opens a reflection about the articulation between the dominant or hegemonic culture and other cultural elements, brought by the pupils, students or participants.

Raymond Williams (1977: 123), in his analysis of the processes of cultural struggle, talks about *emergent cultural elements*, positioned as alternatives to the dominant culture:

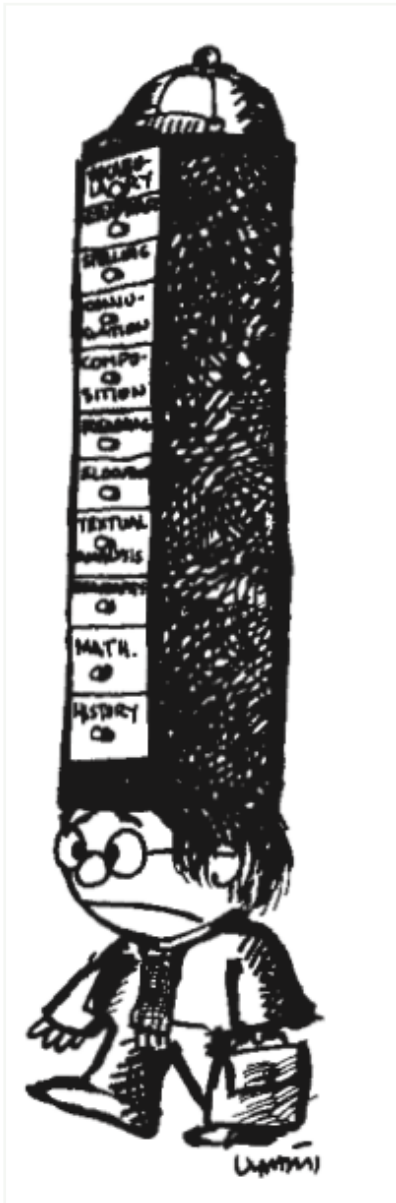
By 'emergent' I mean, first, that new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationship are continually being created. But it is exceptionally difficult to distinguish between those which are really elements of some new phase of the dominant culture [...] and those which are substantially alternative or oppositional to it: emergent in the strict sense, rather than merely novel.

In order to integrate such elements into an educational process, there is a need to understand how they interact in complex and variable ways with official culture (Stuart Hall (1981: 236) talks about *incorporation, distortion, resistance, negotiation and recuperation*).

More importantly, the site of tension created between official culture and those other elements is constitutively political and can be an arena where cultural hegemony is questioned and countered, if we build on Stuart Hall's comment (1981: 239) about popular culture:

Popular culture is one of the sites where this struggle for and against a culture of the powerful is engaged: it is also the stake to be won or lost in that struggle. It is the arena of consent and resistance. It is partly where hegemony arises, and where it is secured. It is not a sphere where socialism, a socialist culture – already fully formed – might simply be 'expressed'. But it is one of the places where socialism might be constituted. That is why 'popular culture' matters.





Ceccon, Claudius (Harper et al., no date: 58).

Through our projects – tactically taking advantage of the political interest of the art institution for projects involving ‘other audiences’ – we have the opportunity to insert popular or emergent cultural objects into the official art institutions, thereby initiating new dialogues and ruptures. Opening this type of reflection through practice can be a way to counter the lack of experience in Cultural Studies in the Academic field in the French-speaking context,<sup>141</sup> and in Switzerland.<sup>142</sup>

Hannah Arendt presents the mastery of a given disciplinary knowledge as a ‘legitimate source of [...] authority’ (Arendt, 1958: 182) allowing the teacher to avoid having to use a compulsive authority. Our practice of temporary involvement with groups and of working across disciplines separates us from the kind of expertise that Hannah Arendt sees as necessary to overcome the ‘crisis in modern education’.

Nevertheless, our experience in being open to unpredictability, to making links between elements (artworks, theories, people – including specialists on given subjects – or institutions), to finding solutions to run a project in common and to communicate it, is know-how that usually helps us avoid resorting to the ‘compulsive authority’ Arendt is talking about.<sup>143</sup>

Moreover, when the philosopher Jacques Rancière (2004) uses, in *Le Maître ignorant*, a text widely discussed in the fields of art and pedagogy,<sup>144</sup> the example of Jacotot (a French teacher who successfully led non-French-speaking Flemish students to learn French just by asking them to read a bilingual edition of Fenelon’s *Telemaque*), he severely contradicts Arendt’s view. One can question the validity of the example, as well as its real relevance for any work on the pedagogical field today. Nevertheless, as Bishop (2012: 50) points out, Rancière’s interest in this example doesn’t reside in the successful accomplishment of learning French but in the presumption of an equality of intelligence between the teacher and the students. If this example has spoken so much to the many people who have quoted it,<sup>145</sup> especially during the ‘educational turn in curating’ described

<sup>141</sup> In the introduction to his study about Cultural Studies in French-speaking areas, Boulou Ebanda de B’béri (2010:1) emphasized the lack of work done by French-speaking scholars in this field: ‘[...] analytical production in French on what we could poorly translate as “Études critiques de la culture”, or what is more correctly called “Cultural Studies” stayed almost inexistent, while Anglo-Saxon people have been seriously considering, for almost three decades now this analytical perspective on everyday practices and on their relationship to meaning production’ (my translation).

<sup>142</sup> In 2002, The Swiss Society for Cultural Studies (no date) was founded, with the mission of giving more weight to Cultural Studies, acknowledging the lack of academic recognition in Switzerland. In the following years, a few Cultural Studies University programs started (Center for Cultural Studies (no date) at the Bern University (2008), Master in Kulturwissenschaften (no date) at the Luzern University (2011). In the art Universities, the CCC programme (2004) at the HEAD in Geneva recurrently referred to Cultural Studies and the Birmingham School in their leaflets, and the Institute for Cultural Studies in the Arts was founded in 2003 at the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste.

Lack of time to self-reflect, to think better about our own position in the project and about the way we can, as a collective, use our different voices differently from the usual single voice of the teacher ... Under time pressure, we tend to split work more between the both of us ... This is more efficient but the interest of working as a collective is weakened. Less time = less horizontality, also internally.

Excerpt from the *En commun* project diary.

above, it is because it proposed a strong and liberating counter-model to the education most people have experienced.

In *En commun*, presenting ourselves as partially ignorant of the theme we proposed was at first destabilizing for the participants, but it allowed us to avoid a teacher–pupil relationship, helping them become co-generators rather than content consumers. In the process, they also began to think in more critical terms about the traditional relationship they had developed with teachers so far.

#### b) Time for horizontal exchanges

In most of our projects, we have emphasized the long-term dimension of our collaborations. Developing a really collaborative process, in our case, involves organizing a series of first contacts, meeting the group several times in different venues (and having enough time to gather feedback for thinking about the upcoming sessions according to them), working on a public presentation, and meeting again to debrief at the end. In all that process, we must be as flexible as possible, in order to be able to respond to unpredictable developments resulting from the collaborative process. As unpredictability characterizes genuine dialogical exchange,<sup>146</sup> allowing sufficient time is a key condition for more horizontality.

If *En commun* is an example of a long-term project, we still experienced it as a situation where time was lacking. Under time pressure, the dialogical interaction with the groups, but also, as we will see, between us, is strongly diminished. We could sum this up in the simple equation ‘less time = more authority’. Approaching deadlines, we become more authoritarian, tend to do more things ourselves and reduce the dialogue with the group, reducing space not only for failure but also for interesting, unexpected things to be co-generated.

<sup>143</sup> For the artist (and Director of Adult and Academic Programs in the Department of Education at the Museum of Modern Art) Pablo Helguera (2011: 54): ‘The expertise of the artist lies, like Freire’s, in being a non-expert, a provider of frameworks on which experiences can form and sometimes be directed and channeled to generate new insights around a particular issue.’ Helguera refers here to Myles Horton’s claim: ‘If I’m the expert, my expertise is in knowing not to be an expert or in knowing how I feel experts should be used’ (Horton & Freire, 1990: 130).

<sup>144</sup> See for example: Campbell (2006); Schneider (2006); Sternfeld (2010).

<sup>145</sup> See point 1.4.3.

<sup>146</sup> See point 3.5.3.

Installation. We hire painters, to be less stressed and to be able to focus on the texts.

Excerpt from the *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* project diary.



The time pressure was partly self-created because our professional situation requires us to present 'successful' results (for example, popular exhibitions with press coverage) within the given deadline, in order to find possibilities for new projects, and partly linked to our different partners' plannings.

In *En commun*, especially toward the end of the project, we couldn't afford the pupils to be 'unproductive' for too long and had sometimes to give them precise assignments for the article production to go forward. In that process, the best practical solution that we found was when one *microsillons* member or teacher worked with each of the groups and took care of the assignments to be realized.

In that process of splitting, we totally lost an interesting specificity of our work: the fact that pupils/students hear our two voices (often three when a teacher is involved) – voices that are sometimes contradictory – challenging the unquestioned one of the sole teacher.

And, again through timing issues, the self-organized pupil groups clearly became less horizontal, under the 'surveillance' of adults. In the group I worked with, I had to propose an idea for the illustration, to assign drawing jobs to each participant and make sure they were realized, propose the layout, edit the texts, etc. Instead of being able to exchange knowledge and to look for each one to learn new skills, the need for efficiency led me to assign to each member of the group a task that she/he was more familiar with.

With more time at disposal, the work could have been done through a trial and error process, being much more valuable as pedagogy, because the pupils would have found their own ways to realize the tasks. They would have learned more skills and would have gained experienced from any mistakes.

Assigning each adult one specific group was also an issue with regard to



*microsillos*' internal dynamic. Even though we do split some technical tasks according to specific competences, we closely follow each step of our projects and constantly communicate about them. Therefore, a text (even a title), an exhibition, a video, a webpage, etc., is never the result of the idea of one or the other, but the result of a deep exchange. Here, splitting the tasks in order to work faster made it almost impossible to discuss, debate and inform each other about the content of any given article. Once the articles and papers were designed, it was problematic to comment on them: comment wouldn't have been anymore a way to improve the object but a plain and direct criticism.

Therefore, the lack of time led to less horizontality not only toward the participants, but also in our internal dynamic.

In the critique of the historian and art critic Hal Foster (1995: 306) about the artist as ethnographer, the usual lack of time is pointed out as a key problematic issue for the possibility, when working with a community, to reach any real effect:

Consider this scenario, a caricature, I admit. The artist is contacted by a curator about a site-specific work. He or she is flown into town in order to engage the community targeted for collaboration by the institution. However, there is little time or money for much interaction with the community (which tends to be constructed as ready made for representation). Nevertheless, a project is designed, and an installation in the museum and/or a work in the community follows. [...] despite the best intentions of the artist, only limited engagement of the sited other is effected.

With experience, we became increasingly conscious of the need to be realistic in terms of time needed to develop a specific proposal, not only to receive a salary proportionate to the actual working hours, but also to avoid as much as possible the decreasing of horizontality described above. We consider that our long-term approach should be pursued and also that we



should communicate with financial partners and institutions about the value of developing projects over time and of not necessarily expecting direct results. To do so, the interest in 'slowing down', which currently seems to reach a broader audience, could be an argument. As for the Free/Slow University Warsaw (no date), who used the motto of 'Freedom through slowness' to react against the 'attempts to impose one [pace] through a race of projects and an endless parade of applications', the idea of a 'slow research'<sup>147</sup> could be discussed and supported, emphasizing how the ethic of collaboration can be transformed according to the speed at which an experimental research project is run.

### c) Working locally

Intuitively, we have favoured collaborations in the Geneva context, on a local level that we have known for years. This allows us to improve our understanding, project after project (in a dynamic close to the spiral described above<sup>148</sup>), of the people we are working with and of the issues that interest them. In addition, we see an 'ethic of proximity' in the projects we realize close to our living place, in the multicultural context of Geneva. Unlike a recurring tendency (that we sometimes followed in the past)<sup>149</sup> of collaborative projects looking to involve 'Others' (the unknown and distant one, the exotic one, the one in need ...), we share with the artist and educationalist Jef Geys a growing interest in working with people 'close' to us.<sup>150</sup>

Understanding a given context and developing a pedagogical strategy from a precise location is key to a generative approach, as Shor (1992: 46) develops it:

The literacy teachers did not invent thematic material on campus and then take it to a neighbourhood class. They did not impose a standard text or a basal reader designed far away. Instead, these projects developed curricula

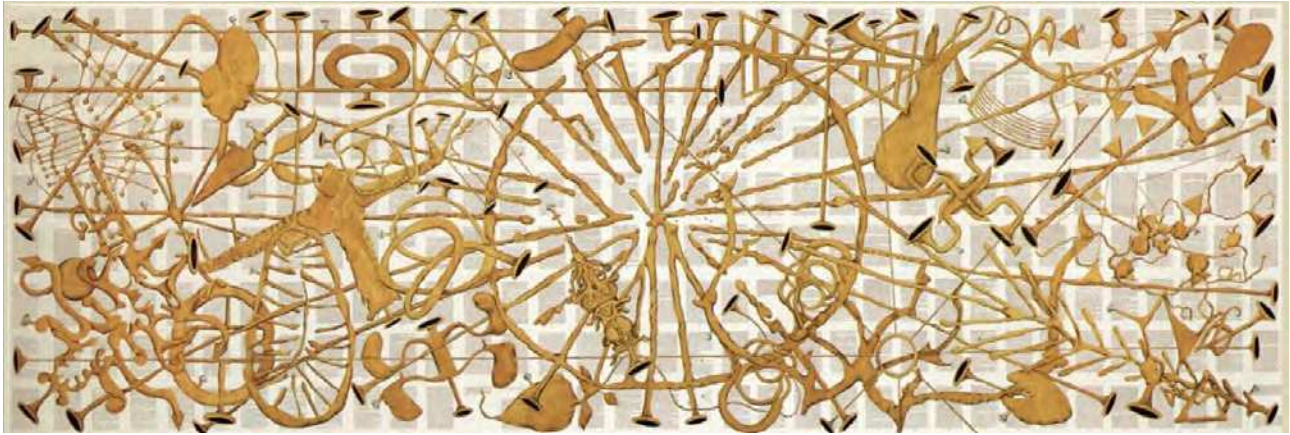
<sup>147</sup> There have been recently many discussions about the idea of a 'Slow Science', with scientists pointing out the necessity of slowing down the current speed imposed by the increasingly privatized financing structures and claiming the importance of having time to read, to discuss with peers, to dialogue with other disciplines, to make mistakes. See in particular the Slow Science Academy (2010) and A Slow Science Manifesto (no date).

<sup>148</sup> See point 1.5.1.

<sup>149</sup> Working with people with 'special needs' (particularly in *La surface des choses* and *Lieux communs* (*microsilons* 2008)), or accepting invitations in remote contexts such as Warsaw, where our conference about 'Fly-in Fly-out' workshop culture was a self-reflection on our role in such contexts. See: *microsilons* (2010)).

<sup>150</sup> See: 'Introduction to artists and projects mentioned in the thesis' on the *Blackboards were turned into tables* website (2014).

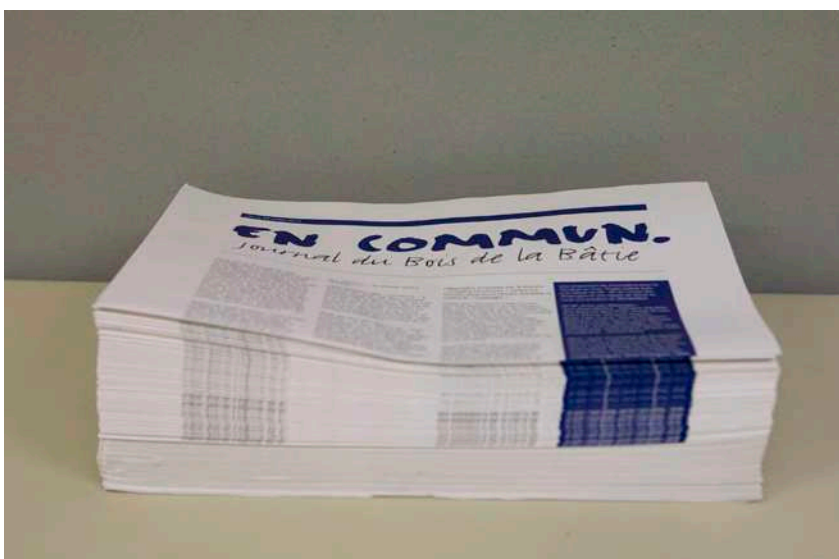




Tim Rollins + K.O.S. (1987–1988) *Amerika: For Thoreau*. Paint on book pages on canvas, 180 × 530cm (Garrels, 1989–1990, p.33).

We propose to list a series of elements for the wall but we finally don't have time to do so. We decide together to send, along with the minutes of the session, a list of visual and textual elements to be completed by all participants. From there, we will produce a draft for an installation, a draft that we will send as a digital document to all the participants, to be discussed by email before the next session. Good feedback process in the next days. We easily arrive at a nice proposal.

Excerpt from the *Lectures autour du graphisme* project diary.



*En commun*. Distribution of the journal in Geneva.

from student culture by researching local issues and language in the students' communities. From the many linguistic and sociological items researched in students' neighbourhood, the educators selected some key concerns – generative themes expressed through single generative words.

Repeating experiences in a similar context, a context in which we are also involved as everyday citizens, helps us to deepen our understanding of it<sup>151</sup> and to be able to imagine more easily points of entry to start a generative process.

### 3.3.3 Producing visual/artistic objects as a result of generativity

When the artist Tim Rollins describes his work with K.O.S.,<sup>152</sup> a group of kids with whom he produced collective paintings and other artworks, he says:

'The making of the work is the pedagogy' [...] . 'The art is a means to knowledge of the world. That's why our project is so different from regular school – the kids are immersed in production – cultural production'. (Wallace, 1989–1990: 39)<sup>153</sup>

Similarly in our case, if the process itself is the most important part of the projects, this process has to include the production and public presentation of objects, in a broad sense. This is a vital part of our pedagogy. It is part of a collective learning about how to make a position and to take advantage of strong exhibitionary forms to communicate it. It's the development of a collective voice, and the necessary negotiation within a group to publicly speak together that is valuable. In *En commun*, the challenges that the participants experienced within their groups and with the whole class were, for example, to find ways to make decisions together. Selecting one idea or one graphical element rather than another, while being conscious that the content had to be communicable to an audience, opened discussions about what an audience is and who was to be addressed with the project, and

<sup>151</sup> Helguera, discussing the issue of working locally, says: 'Most successful SEA [Socially Engaged Art] projects are developed by artists who have worked in a particular community for a long time and have an in-depth understanding of those participants.' He believes that those projects 'like exotic fruit, usually travel poorly when "exported" to other locations to be replicated' (Helguera, 2011: 20).

<sup>152</sup> See: *Blackboards were turned into tables* website (2014).

<sup>153</sup> Tim Rollins, quoted by Michele Wallace.

Feeling of a 'poor' installation for such a long work. Form that clearly tends toward a more traditional 'artist's artwork' than usually in our projects. This allows us to question the reason of our perception of the work as 'poor'. This also allows us to test the commentaries of the visitors on a new kind of form.

Excerpt from the *La surface des choses* project diary.

I see this project as an example of the work we have done so far, revealing different issues and frustrations. Thinking about those issues, finding ways to reduce that frustration in developing new methodologies and discourses is the centre of my PhD.

Excerpt from the *En commun* project diary.



*En commun. microsillons* intervening in the students' work: one of the points of reflection in the project.

about what the participants' responsibilities as public speakers were. There were also issues about limiting the production of some groups or individuals in order that they would not dominate the collective content, to take into consideration what others had written and avoid repetition, etc.

<sup>154</sup> This difficulty of identifying the problems was in part what led me to keep a 'thicker' description of the following projects.

Producing a collective artwork is usually not easy. Learning to identify one's competences inside a group, to accept that one's ideas might not be accepted by the group, to leave space for the others to express, are examples of things learned during the production. The satisfaction of having done something successful together is another.

Finally, producing an object together and making it available through the distribution channels of cultural institutions is also an alternative mode of art production, a collaborative and inclusive one involving people who are usually not socially authorized to speak publicly. Claire Bishop (2012: 245–246), in her study of artists dealing with pedagogical issues, mentioned the usual lack of 'visual and conceptual rewards of these projects', the difficulty of 'communicating them to others' because 'their dominant goal seemed to be the production of a dynamic experience for participants, rather than the production of complex artistic forms'. In that regard, producing visually and conceptually strong forms through a co-generative process is also a way to communicate (and to provoke questioning) about the projects.

### 3.3.4 Thinking about the subsequent project

Despite the satisfaction of having produced together a newspaper with the classes and the positive feedback we received from the schools and the festival organizers, *En commun* also led to some frustration regarding the degree of participation, the level of 'co' in 'co-generation'. Partly because of the time issues and partly because of reasons that were less clear,<sup>154</sup> we felt obliged to direct the participants too often and too much.

We will work as a team, in a democratic way. Everyone will be involved in all levels of the project, including conception. Altogether, we will work about two days a week on the project. We will meet on a one-afternoon-per-week basis, and then work more during the realization part of the project.

Excerpt from the *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* project diary.



From that frustration emerged the desire to experiment with another type of structure and, in the following project, structural collaboration issues were addressed more consciously from the very beginning of the conception.

### 3.4 Networks as a way to horizontally conceive and run a collaborative art project? *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*

#### 3.4.1 A networked conception

As we were simultaneously working on our PhD research and taking part in a research group in which we studied the project through the angle of horizontality, we had in *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised. Amateur Videos from 8mm to 2.0*, for the first time, a meta-reflection on power relationships from the outset. Also for the first time, I carefully recorded each step of the process from the very beginning, in a thicker description.

In this project, looking to increase the degree of co-generation, we decided to raise the collaborative process to the level of the project's conception. Instead of arriving, as in *En commun*, with a structure to propose to the participants, we wanted to already be in a collaborative dynamic during the conception phase.

We first thought of involving a whole group of participants (all the pupils from a class, for example) in that process, but as including too many people in the conception of a project might not have been realistic in the time available, we followed the advice of the *Kunstvermittlung in Transformation* group and opted for the in-between form of a *Conception team* which would work in a fully horizontal way.

Because we had to present a concept to Le Centre before we could form this group and to propose the project to potential members of that conception team, we had to write a pre-concept in advance. This pre-concept consisted



We also have the idea – because of the subject – to build a network rather than a 1–1 (us and one group) collaboration ... Therefore, we will involve several different groups. Idea of polyphony vs single voice.

Excerpt from the *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* project diary.

of working collaboratively around videos external to the art field. Although the will to develop a collaborative work was rediscussed afterwards within the conception team, it might have been a first limit to horizontality within the teamwork. Nevertheless, this compromise allowed us to make it possible to experiment with our proposal in the institution, even though the director found our proposal 'too open', whereas for us it was already too closed.

<sup>155</sup> We initially sent an open invitation to the Bern University of the Arts students to work with us on the project and decided afterwards to use the 'intern' status to engage the interested people, as it made it possible for them to integrate their work with us in their official curriculum.

This format of the conception team was challenging to the institution's official hierarchies as the members of the conception team were hired under different positions by the institution: Marianne Guarino-Huet and myself were still hired as 'responsible for the gallery education projects', Christina Gasser as a temporary worker, and Lea Fröhlicher and Helen Bauman as non-paid interns.<sup>155</sup> In addition, our experimental will was not easy to reconcile with the institution's own expectations. It was especially difficult for the institution to recognize (and to make fit with its usual communication system) the necessity, in our quest for horizontality, for the outcome not to be defined in advance.

The initial network composed of the team's members grew quickly, as the project developed in expanding, from this initial kernel, to a whole web of collaborations: each member of the conception team using her/his contacts, knowledge of different local fields and linguistic competences to involve several groups in the project.

### 3.4.2 Computer database as a pedagogical tool?

In parallel to the development of this network of participants, the conception team imagined a structure that would organizationally and formally echo this web of groups involved. The computer database quickly appeared as an interesting solution to gather the inputs from groups that were located in different cities and that wouldn't have the opportunity to meet at any point in the project because of timing and financial issues.

Nice questions, good participation: some categories we hadn't thought of are found by the students. Good examples are found on the Internet. Difficult for them to comment on their choices, to identify questions linked to their examples ... Some groups didn't really understand the idea of 'amateur videos' and proposed off-topic videos.

Excerpt from the *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* project diary.

The pupils find some interesting things, they give their comments, but many of them are still not completely understanding what is the final goal of what they are doing.

Excerpt from the *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* project diary.

We invited a web designer<sup>156</sup> to produce a specific database tool to collect the content produced by the different groups and to make it public on the Internet as well as during the exhibition that was planned at the end of the project. He developed a website using a Content Management System based on the open source structure MODx.<sup>157</sup>

<sup>156</sup> Emmanuel Piguet, who is based in Geneva and who develops websites mainly in the cultural and non-profit fields.

<sup>157</sup> MODx (no date).

This structure could have allowed the participants to directly upload their content (a selection of and comment on amateur videos). Because of timing issues (for the database structure to be ready and for the participants to learn how to use it), the conception team finally collected the data offline and uploaded it after the end of the class sessions.

Nevertheless, the platform was presented in advance to the participants and they filled in the exact same fields that they would have completed online. The web link to see the result was also communicated to them afterwards.

Just as it would have been online, no editing or control of the content was done before the upload. If an ethical problem had appeared in a contribution, the conception team could have moderated afterwards.

The artist and writer Trebor Scholz (2004), who investigates global media activism, in discussing the potentials of new media for art education states (following Natalie Jeremijenko, an artist and engineer) that

the main challenge [is] to teach the use of web-based resources, not for convenience, but for restructuring of participation, and for engaging students in the primary role of the academy: to produce, underwrite and validate the information commons.

In *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*, we shared this will to reflect with the participants about how the structure we proposed for them to use was changing the way in which they were usually taught and confronted by information.



En commun. Reflection on the commons (notes about 'community', 'public/private', 'piracy', 'creative commons' ...).

Though the exchange with the participants sometimes remained quite superficial, the collection of commented amateur videos gathered in the database was fully satisfactory and interesting in its diversity as well as in the way the videos were put into perspective by the participants.

<sup>158</sup> My translation.

This experiment interrogated the potential of computer networks to transform the power relationships at play in the pedagogical process and opened for us new thoughts for future projects, one of them being linked to a specific kind of networked tool: the wiki.

### 3.4.3 Toward a wiki pedagogy?

Hardt and Negri (2009: 357) – like Scholz (2004), who insists that ‘networks are not by default open, horizontal and global’ – warn that ‘a series of myths [...] characterized the enthusiasm of some of the early writings about the political implications of networks: that networks cannot be controlled, for example, that the transparency of networks is always good, and that the cybernetic swarm is always intelligent’. Adding to this warning, Matteo Pasquinelli (2014: 174) uses the interesting image of a whirlwind to describe how horizontal networks of knowledge production are always interconnected with vertical hierarchies of traditional knowledge and of material networks, reminding that: ‘A network is never flat and horizontal.’<sup>158</sup>

In the pedagogical context, one should bear in mind both the efficiency of computer networks and the necessity of not considering them as universally positive or as strictly horizontal. But one must consider the profound changes that the Internet is bringing (and could bring) to education. Suoranta and Vadén (2007), discussing how the wiki logic transforms the very nature of knowledge and the idea of its transmission, say:

The existence of the ‘edit’ button already indicates a subtle but profound epistemological shift: knowledge comes with a past and a future; it is not





immutable. [...] With the 'edit', 'history', and 'discuss' buttons, information on a wiki page is obviously a collective process, not an individual's possession. This epistemological shift, together with the proliferation of wikipedias, will have dramatic effects on education and learning.

For the authors (Suoranta & Vadén, 2007: 149), Wikipedia is already replacing traditional 'content delivery' lectures, and the future uses of computer networks will challenge the need for the teacher or the campus. As the critical theorist Kellner (2004: 10) thinks, imagining a pedagogy freed of its information-delivery mission might make us glimpse, thanks to the 'technological developments of the present era', the realization of the radical re-visioning of a horizontal, non-banking education argued for 'by Dewey and in the 1960s and 1970s by Ivan Illich, Paulo Freire, and others who sought radical educational and social reform'.

When Illich (1972: v) described the educational system as a structure inevitably and irreparably reproducing a capitalist unequal social system, and proposed to replace schools with an education inside other existing structures, his envisioning of an educational network ('educational webs which heighten the opportunity for each one to transform each moment of his living into one of learning, sharing, and caring') appears to be very close to what is being realized through the new communication technologies.

Discussing the potential of the new information technologies for education (and putting the idea of the learning community at the centre of their work), Holmes, Tangney, FitzGibbon, Savage and Mehan (2001) advocate for a *communal constructivism* in which students would not only produce their own knowledge but would also engage in constructing knowledge for their learning community. Their idea has been used – in an article called *Wiki Pedagogy* (Fountain (no date)) – as an illustration of the pedagogical potential of the wiki. One could indeed imagine how a wiki structure used in a pedagogical context could be a way to transform the relationship to knowledge, the way it is produced and exchanged, as well as a tool to

# Die Einsamkeit des Youtube-Menschen

Im Genfer Centre d'Art Contemporain geht man dem Einfluss bewegter Bilder auf unser Leben nach: Die Leute verkriechen sich hinter ihnen.

GENF, im Januar  
In Berlin wollte die Biennale-Kuratorin Katrin Rhomborg im letzten Jahr die Kunstwelt näher an die Realität rücken. Der Blick aus dem Fenster des Museums sollte garantieren, das „Was draußen wartet“ – so der Titel der diesjährigen Berlin Biennale – in die Ausstellungsräume zu holen. In Genf, im Centre d'Art Contemporain, kann man jetzt eine ganz andere Blickrichtung verfolgen. Orientierung bietet nicht die Wirklichkeit, sondern die Welt, die direkt in unsere Wohnzimmer eingezeichnet ist – als Bild.

„Image-Movement“, kurz I-M, nennt sich diese neue Plattform. Sie will das Verhältnis der Genfer Biennale für Video, Film und Multimedia bewahren und sich gleichzeitig von dieser unterscheiden: „I-M ist keine Biennale oder Festival, sondern eine Plattform, die das bewegte Bild fortlaufend im Rahmen von Ausstellungen, Foren oder Workshops thematisiert“, sagt die Kuratorin Katya Garcia-Antón in ihrer Eröffnungsrede. Sie nimmt die globale „Bild-Bewegung“ als künstlerische und kulturelle Praxis ernst und liefert damit vermutlich einen wesentlichen Beitrag zum Verständnis unserer Lebenswirklichkeit, als es Rhomborgs Fingerzeig nach draußen vermochte – schließlich vermittelt sich das Draußen nicht nur im Ausstellungsraum als Bild; es wird durch das Bild gleichermaßen konstituiert. Das zumindest ist die Behauptung, die in einem kleinen Raum gleich neben der Eingangstür des ehemaligen Fabrikgebäudes aufgestellt wird.

So hat hier eine Studentengruppe der Hochschule der Künste von Bern die Geschichte des Amateur-Videos zurückverfolgt. Sie beginnt in den dreißiger Jahren mit dem privaten Gebrauch der Kamera – im familiären Bereich –, führt über die Amateur-Aufnahmen des Kennedy-Attentats von Abraham Zapruder und mündet in den omnipräsenten Youtube-Beiträgen. Unbekannte Privatpersonen emanzipieren sich binnen Sekunden „from zero to hero“, werden vom Bürger zum Journalisten, zum Popstar. „The revolution will not be televised“, so lautet der Titel dieses kleinen Ausstellungsprojekts, und man fragt sich, wer dieses You von Youtube eigentlich ist, das sich, bewaffnet mit Kamera und Internet, am heimatischen Schneidertisch zum Souverän der Geschichte erhebt.

Und was machen die Künstler? Im Centre d'Art Contemporain versam-



Sie schaut uns in die privaten Augen – ohne öffentliches Interesse: Beispiel aus der Genfer Video-Schau.

Foto: Antje Stahl

melt Katya Garcia-Antón dreizehn künstlerische Positionen unter dem Ausstellungstitel „Atlas. Truths, Details, Intervals and the Afterlives of the Image“. Man zückt ein wenig zusammen im Schatten dieser Termini, die die Kuratorin auf den Bilder-Atlas „Mnemosyne“ des Kunsthistorikers Aby Warburg zurückführt.

Der zurzeit in allen Lagern wiederentdeckte Warburg hatte Bilder von Artefakten aus unterschiedlichen Zeiten und von unterschiedlichen Orten auf Bildtafeln vereint, um das Nachleben („Afterlife“) der Antike im Bildkanon der Renaissance zu dokumentieren. Es entstand der Bilder-Atlas „Mnemosyne“, den Kuratoren wie Roger M. Buergel dazu missbrauchen, formale Analogien als kuratorisches Leitprinzip zu deklarieren: „Migration der Form“ nannte es der künstlerische Leiter der Documenta und präsentierte Bilder ohne Werkangaben, entführte sie aus ihrem historischen Kontext und verließ sie dort, wo sie ohnehin nach Peter Weibel heute durch die Technologie der Fernüber-

tragung und den Anstieg der Bild-distribution stehen: im Erfahrungsraum der „Ortlosigkeit und der Bilderfülle“ – wo sie als visueller Schlamm zerfließen.

Anders ist es in Genf. Otolith, die für den diesjährigen Turner-Preis nominierte Künstlergruppe aus England, führt uns in ihrer gleichnamigen Videoarbeit „Otolith I“ (2003) in ein fernes Zeitalter, an einen fernen Ort. Der Mensch, seiner Schwerkraft beraubt, ohne Bodenhaftung, in einer Kapsel irgendwo im All und zurückgelassen mit der Frage: Woher komme ich? Die Antwort führt ihn zurück auf die Erde, in eine Geschichte, die sich allein über Bilder rekonstruieren lässt. Die Künstler verknüpfen für diese Fiktion dokumentarisches mit privatem Filmmaterial. Die von der Erde und Geschichte isolierte All-Kapsel wird zur Metapher des Traumas einer Generation. Das You der Youtube-Welt verharrt vor seinem Computer, bereit, mit der Webcam die Welt zu erobern, und doch völlig unfähig, sich zu einem realen Kollektiv zu formen.

Diese Kritik am Rückzug ins Private prägt die Ausstellung, und als ob sie performativ gegen diese Vereinsamung angehen wollten, treten die Künstler immer häufiger als Künstlerkollektive auf – nicht als Konterfei sozialistischer Avantgarden, sondern als Gegenbewegung zur heutigen radikalen Personalisierung. Wie die Otolith Group arbeiten auch die Künstler Ayreen Anastas, François Bucher und Rene Gabri mit dem Rohmaterial des Films „Chronique d'un été“, den der Soziologe Edgar Morin und der Anthropologe Jean Rouch 1960 in Paris und St-Tropez drehten. In dem Film geht es darum, wie sehr das Wissen, dass eine Kamera läuft, das Handeln der Menschen bestimmt. Ob also Kameras durch ihre bloße Anwesenheit Menschen so steuern, dass eine cineastische Abbildung von Realität gar nicht mehr möglich ist. Eine im Youtube- und Facebook-Zeitalter existentielle Frage.

ANTJE STAHL

Image-Movement: Atlas. Truths, Details, Intervals and the Afterlives of the Image. Bis zum 23. Februar im Centre d'Art Contemporain in Genf. Es gibt keinen Katalog.

**The Revolution Will Not Be Televised. Amateur videos from 8mm to 2.0. Stahl, Antje (2011) Die Einsamkeit des Youtube-Menschen. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. 26 January, p.34.**

connect not only between the current students but also with former and future members of a community.

A teacher named Heather James (2004a), aiming to reach a similar 'communal constructivism', discussed her attempts to use a wiki as a pedagogical tool in her classroom and, having the feeling that she failed in her attempt, summarizes her mistakes as follows:

The failure, really, is that I missed the opportunity to share the essence of the experience I am having collaborating on communal wikis. Instead, I merely slapped wiki technology onto a tried and true training method.

The use of a wiki in the classroom (or of the blog, which is closer to what was developed in *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*), as underlined by James, should involve letting the participants control the whole content and structure, rather than simply 'filling the gaps' (James, 2004b):

To really use a blog to its fullest potential, the participants need to be writing their own posts and making comments on each other's pages. To really use a wiki, the participants need to be in control of the content – you have to give it over fully.

There is a need to reconsider the whole teaching structure according to a wiki logic, rather than simply use new technologies in the existing context. Contrary to what happens on a wiki, in *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* the content was produced by small independent groups and didn't have the potential to be transformed afterwards by a larger community. Nevertheless, through the database structure we built for the project, the traditional teaching method experienced by the groups involved did change quite profoundly: after a part of the introduction about the project and about amateur video, the students were left alone in producing, in a non-monitored way, content for the database that would be made public. We were simply there to make the proposal and to help when needed.



For Renée Fountain (no date), autonomy is key in the realization of the pedagogical potential of the wiki and the use of what she calls ‘horizontal assemblages’. The author also underlines that ‘Wiki pedagogy is literally — and figuratively — “in-the-making”’, seeing it both as a way to co-generate knowledge and as a potential that still needs to be realized. Participating in the realization of this potential, building on *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* experience, could be a future work for *microsillos*.

### 3.5 Unpredictability as a condition for a horizontal exchange? *La surface des choses*’ ‘U’ structure

#### 3.5.1 Designing collaborative structures more horizontally

In the first three projects presented in this chapter, a common point was that, each time, a quite well-defined frame was proposed to the participants, as a structure in which they were invited to generate content. In those frames, different strategies were developed to reach some degree of horizontality.

Striving for more horizontality in a school context (as in the two first examples and partly in *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*) is a big challenge, as the hierarchical structure is deeply rooted in the system. From the classroom architecture to the teacher’s training, through the curriculum design, disciplinary rules and the grading system, everything is mainly organized around the idea of transmission of existing knowledge owned by the teacher.

Many critical educators emphasize the importance of involving the pupils/ students in thinking about the structure of their teaching. Henry Giroux (1989: 148), for example, has emphasized how critical pedagogy should consider a reflection on the pedagogical structure itself and on how the form of the dialogue participates in the production of the content as being fully part of the knowledge production. Herbert Read (1958: 277) already





proposed, in *Education through Art*, that elaborating rules together with the children could improve intellectual development:

The adult's relation to the child must always be that of a collaborator, never of a master.

Co-operation is essential to intellectual no less than moral development. For the laying down of ready-made rules we must substitute the elaboration of rules through experimentation and reflection [...] .

Ira Shor also proposes to change the power relationship structure of the college he is working in.<sup>159</sup> He explains (in his *Utopia* class)<sup>160</sup> how, rather than impose a set of rules, he would negotiate a contract with his students at the beginning of a class (1996: 75). Those contracts would regulate attendance, class participation and the grading system.<sup>161</sup> They would come with an 'after-class group',<sup>162</sup> where a few students (rewarded by academic credits to do so) would critically rethink each session once it was over, practising a 'right to protest'.

In the projects presented above (except for the two experiments of co-planning a day of class and of classes held outside run by two teachers in *Utopia and the Everyday*), such a discussion on the rules and more generally the structure of the teaching couldn't be central, because we were bound to the school's rules (represented by the teachers that worked with us) and because we couldn't spend enough time with the groups to start our work with a long meta-reflection about the institutional context and about the structural nature of our exchange.

Therefore proposing clear structures, like a newspaper or a database, that differ from what the participants are used to at school allowed us both to show other possible modes of organization (showing that frontal teaching is only one option among others) and to propose a compromise between the usual class and a fully self-organized model, where the participants might have been blocked by too much novelty at once – a phenomenon that we

<sup>159</sup> The College of Staten Island, City University of New York.

<sup>160</sup> The theme of the class is Utopia, meant both as a term to define the selected readings and discussion subjects and to describe a series of experiments held in the classroom.

<sup>161</sup> Shor (1996: 71) says he is readapting an existing strategy to the context he is working in: 'Learning contracts are not unfamiliar in education. Often, they are used in adult environments where faculty serve as facilitators for self-directed, mature student.'

<sup>162</sup> See the description of those after-class groups in point 4.4.



could observe in the past and that critical pedagogues are often discussing. Shor (1996: 188) warns, for example, that a dialogue dynamic can end up brutally when not enough time is taken to make a transition between a traditional teaching setting and a radically new proposal, or when ‘students could not speak to a big new idea requiring time for digestion’. Kreisberg (1992: 164–165) also mentions the difficulty of setting up a more horizontal relationship in a non-progressive environment: ‘it is extremely difficult to build accepting and mutually respecting groups of students in a culture in which competition and individual success is promoted and in which domination is the predominant mode of relationship’.

### 3.5.2 *La surface des choses* ‘U’ structure

In *La surface des choses*, working outside the school environment, we had both the time and the institutional freedom to be more ambitious in collaborating to define the nature of the exchange. Therefore, we decided from the beginning that the participants would be involved not only in the production of the content but also in the conception of the very structure of the project. This was an attempt to overcome a dilemma at the heart of our practice: the need to define a frame in order for more horizontal dynamics to take place.

Before beginning to work with the group of visually impaired people on *La surface des choses*, we discussed with Raphaël Julliard this will for a very open collaborative process, where the parameters of the collaboration would be defined together with the participants. The image that we had in mind was the one of a letter ‘U’: the participants, at one branch of the ‘U’ would have their own knowledge and experiences of art and vision and, on the other branch, we would as well. We envisioned the organization of a discussion platform, in which each would bring her or his own ideas, in parallel, before coming together at the point where the two branches meet. If it was planned that the beginning of the process (‘the branches in parallel’ part) would be



discussed and negotiated with the participants, the second part (the ‘meeting point of the branches’) was thought of as the real moment of crystallization of the collaborative process, which would be fully co-imagined in its structure and content.

<sup>163</sup> See point 4.2.2.

<sup>164</sup> That was later used in management theories.

During the first session, the image of the ‘U’ was presented to the participants who were first surprised by the idea (being used to taking part in cultural events in which they are placed more in the position of individual cultural consumers), but quickly enthusiastic toward the fact that they could bring as much content as us, in a dialogical exchange.

The frequency, venue and time of the sessions were decided together, as well as the decision not to limit the project in time to begin with. The way the session would be run was also decided together. This led in particular to the organization of a series of exhibition visits and to the idea that each participant would at some point bring an object to start a discussion. Looking back at the idea of the ‘U’, after my theoretical research went deeper, and after the experiment, I believe that we underestimated the fact that no ‘personal’ discourse, no ‘authentic’<sup>163</sup> or fixed position, really exists, and that any discourse is the product of the exchange rather than existing autonomously. Follett (1998: 25–26), in her analysis of collective thinking,<sup>164</sup> described this as follows:

We see [...] that we cannot view the content of the collective mind as a holiday procession, one part after another passing before our mental eyes; every part is bound up with every other part, every tendency is conditioned by every other tendency. It is like a game of tennis. A serves the ball to B. B returns the serve but his play is influenced as largely by the way the ball has been served to him as it is by his own method of return. A sends the ball back to B, but his return is made up of his own play plus the way in which the ball has been played to him by B plus his own original serve. Thus in the end does action and reaction become inextricably bound up together.



We would like to affirm once again that we had no pre-conceived idea of the final project and that it is from our discussions – in August precisely – in listening to you and in synthesizing, as well as possibly the different ideas of everyone, that we came up with this proposal.

Excerpt from the *La surface des choses* project diary. *microsillons'* answer to a participant.

So the 'U'-shaped image of two independent branches running in parallel without any intersection before meeting at a given moment is certainly not reflecting accurately what happened in the course of the project. But it was nevertheless a simple image that helped all of us in the group to remember the importance of including both sides equally in the process, and keep in mind this junction point that had to be found and defined in its content.

<sup>165</sup> See point 4.3.3.

After more than one year of almost monthly meetings, the decision was taken that the meeting point would be to produce together an art installation and to make it public in an exhibition. The roles of the different members of the group in that process (including our own) were decided together.

Thus, the participants were included in the reflection about the *modus operandi* of our collaboration, criticized it at some point<sup>165</sup> and participated in changing it. They stated at the end that the continuous exchange about the structure of our collaboration, although it led to some unpleasant moments, had been the central interest of the project for them.

### 3.5.3 Unpredictability

Through the process of *La surface des choses* and the reflection on co-designing the structure of a project, the question of unpredictability was reaffirmed to us as being inextricably bound to horizontality, being both its condition and its result.

A project aiming at not merely transmitting an existing knowledge but drawing from the participants' knowledge must accept the unpredictability of what will be brought by every participant: this is the condition of a process that is truly more *horizontal*. A flexibility in the power structure must make it possible for the project to be re-organized according to those unpredictable elements. If a project cannot change direction following the inputs of the participants, these are merely there to realize a pre-conceived plan and



the word ‘collaboration’ or ‘horizontality’ doesn’t make sense anymore. *La surface des choses* was imagined and run according to this principle.

<sup>166</sup> See point 3.3.2.

The notion of unpredictability has always been at the core of our practice. As we’ve seen, ‘sillons’ refers to a ‘furrow’ and we chose this name with the idea that, through our projects, we would not claim to directly change something but rather to dig a small furrow in which something, something undefined, could potentially grow later on. One could say that we are developing exchanges in which we open a space – plough a furrow – but in which we are not planting any seeds ourselves, simply providing the possibility for our collaborators to do so and having the potential surprise of what comes out of it.

This position differs radically from the reproductive gallery education projects in which the discourse is pre-written and delivered. As Nora Sternfeld (2010) mentions, unpredictability can be a key element in attempts to overcome knowledge reproduction:

I want to examine the traditional tasks of education as well as the possibility of thinking about the educational as something that overcomes the function of reproducing knowledge and becomes something else – something unpredictable and open to the possibility of a knowledge production that, in tones strident or subtle, would work to challenge the apparatus of value-coding.

For allowing this unpredictability, time is a crucial element:<sup>166</sup> allowing unexpected things to transform an initial proposal means having a variable time structure that can be adapted.

In all of our projects, to different degrees, the results didn’t match with our initial ideas, but were transformed by the collaborative process. In some, the roles of the participants changed during the process (in *Lectures autour du graphisme*, for example, some became actively involved in the production



of the visual display after the reading group was over). Others were never made public because we had the feeling that no communicable outcomes were produced.<sup>167</sup>

Seeking a horizontal relationship with participants requires keeping the final result open. Ideally, even though it can be difficult to realize in an institutional context, the possibility of failure (or to put it in other words, of having to stop a project without any visible outcomes) should remain open. Irit Rogoff, defending the idea of 'potentiality' in the academy, emphasized the importance of the possible non-realized:

So thinking 'academy' as 'potentiality' is to think the possibilities of *not doing*, *not making*, *not bringing* into being at the very centre of acts of *thinking*, *making* and *doing*. It means dismissing much of the instrumentalizing that seems to go hand in hand with education, much of the managerialism that is associated with a notion of 'training' for this or that profession or market.

This idea of the *possible/impossible* couple is also central in Janna Graham's discourse and practice: the strong idea of the *Center for Possible Studies* (a space related to the Serpentine Gallery which develops links with the Edgware Road neighbourhood in London)<sup>168</sup> is that a study can emerge, without having been programmed in advance, from the desires of artists and of different entities of the neighbourhood, as a 'study that is not yet constituted and emerges only through relations formed between artists and transversal constituents ...' (Graham, 2010: 129). There is also a possibility that they simply don't happen.

Those considerations of the importance of the potential *non-happening* bring us to consider, following Derrida (2005: 29), that the possible only exists in relation to the impossible:

For a possible that would only be possible (non-impossible), a possible surely and certainly possible, accessible in advance, would be possible, a futureless

<sup>167</sup> In particular a project around the work of the artist Pamela Rosenkranz at Le Centre (Rosenkranz, 2010), in which many tracks were investigated to finally lead to nothing convincing for us, even though a group of children was involved in a lively experiment.

<sup>168</sup> See: Graham (2012) and 'Introduction to artists and projects mentioned in the thesis' on the *Blackboards were turned into tables* website (2014).



We feel the necessity of producing a 'nice object', in the given deadlines, to keep our credibility and to be hired again for such projects. This is a big limitation to the idea of an experimental collaboration: in a real experimentation, failure should be an option ... It's not really one here, and this leads us to do the work that the participants are not doing, rather than letting things go.

Excerpt from the *En commun* project diary.

possible, a possible already set aside, so to speak, life-assured. This would be a programme or a causality, a development, a process without an event.<sup>169</sup>

<sup>169</sup> Derrida also develops in the same page the concept of *peut-être* (maybe/can be/perhaps).

This conception takes us far from what are often the institutional requirements of securing, through collaborative education projects, instant visibility and results in terms of the number of people reached. In that context, considering the 'impossible' as being as important as the possible, and claiming the necessity of space for the unpredictable is crucial. Following the Marxist theorist and philosopher Rosa Luxemburg (1940: 46), the trial and error process, generalized to the whole population, with its countless improvisations, is even the very condition for a vivid democracy to exist:

Only experience is capable of correcting and opening new ways. Only unobstructed, effervescing life falls into a thousand new forms and improvisations, brings to light creative new force, itself corrects all mistaken attempts. The public life of countries with limited freedom is so poverty-stricken, so miserable, so rigid, so unfruitful, precisely because, through the exclusion of democracy, it cuts off the living sources of all spiritual riches and progress. [...] The whole mass of the people must take part in it. Otherwise, socialism will be decreed from behind a few official desks by a dozen intellectuals.

Claiming ignorance<sup>170</sup> and using the fact of being at least two (and usually more) as interlocutors to the group, also shows to the participants the relativity of our knowledge and the openness of the process: if a proposal is made, the group can imagine that it was discussed already between us, that it is therefore not a single truth and that it can be discussed again. It also happens that we disagree, in front of the group, on a specific issue, on a method to adopt, on a piece of information ... This can be at first destabilizing for the participants, who would sometimes (especially in a school context) expect a unique 'order', a finger pointed in a single direction. It can also be read sometimes as a weakness in the project or in our

<sup>170</sup> See point 3.3.2.

Working with a network of participants makes the question of essentialism less problematic. But it becomes more difficult to address everybody in an adequate and differentiated way.

Excerpt from the *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* project diary.

organization, but is in fact a real strength for the larger collaborative and unpredictable dynamic we are trying to set up.

Throughout our projects, our perspective has been close to that of Illich (1972: 26), when he says that teaching can only take place when partners use their critical minds to creatively rethink their already existing knowledge and that it is dependent on the ‘surprise of the unexpected question which opens new doors for the inquirer and his partner’.

In *La surface des choses*, we insisted on the polysemic dimension of art and on the variety of possible perceptions. We visited exhibitions of artworks about which we didn’t have any particular knowledge and tried to exchange with the participants about our experiences. Some were surprised at first because they would have expected a specialized discourse about them, but at the end of the project, one of the positive outcomes that the participants noticed is that they were less intimidated by contemporary art and that they understood that a unique ‘correct’ discourse or lecture key for a given artwork never exists. This understanding helped them to be more confident about their own discourses and to be more willing to collaborate.

#### 3.5.4 Unpredictability to avoid essentialism?

Throughout the projects, and more specifically in *La surface des choses*, we have identified a paradox: we work on a *micro* dimension with small groups to design tailor-made projects, addressed specifically to each group, but this leads to the danger of *essentializing* the group, of conceiving an activity based on stereotypes, of reducing the complex and ever-changing identities of people to a given specificity. The pedagogy researcher Sharon Todd (1998: 241) points out the ‘danger of installing a causal connection between difference and identity in such a way that invites an overdetermined view of the subject’.



Carmen Mörsch (2009c: 102) identifies in gallery education practices more generally a similar paradox:

the question of how to plan in advance with a particular interest group in mind, without cementing any identity ascriptions. [...] this dilemma is unsolvable, for it generates a conflict that is fundamentally at the heart of gallery education.

The risk would then be to follow the marketing-oriented model of ‘audience targeting’, central in many cultural institutions today. Moreover, the risk would be not to be able to involve the participants in a real dialogical process, because our stereotypes would short-circuit the exchange.

Jorge Ribalta (2004), former director of the Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art (MACBA) who thought there about the possible implication of social partners in the museum, grasps this paradox in saying that if ‘we have to allow different and non-hierarchical uses of the museum for [...] different publics’, there is a danger of ‘giving to the public what it is supposed to expect, taking for granted the pre-existence of such publics [...] and thus ensuring the reproduction of the existing social order’. Against this tendency that he compares to marketing strategies, he proposes to consider that ‘the public does not pre-exist as a predefined entity that has to be attracted and manipulated. Rather it is constructed in open, unpredictable ways in the very process of the production of discourse and through its different means and modes of circulation.’

From all the projects I’m presenting here, *La surface des choses* is the one where this paradox of targeting is the clearest: forming a group of people sharing a situation of visual disability is a form of *essentialization*. Our goal was to open a dialogue about perception, specifically the non-visual perception of visual art. We wanted to avoid our project being a pilot project for the institution to target a new possible audience (developing, for example, activities around touching or smelling, such as exist in many museums). In this project, it was important that the outcomes shouldn’t be linked to



Paradox: we are arriving at a project in which the essentialist dimension decreases (anybody, visually impaired or not, could have participated) and a participant accuses us of forgetting that their handicap is a difficulty for them in realizing the project.

Excerpt from the *La surface des choses* project diary.

an essentialized, pre-conceived idea of what the group was. We saw generativity and the space left for unpredictability as a way to avoid developing an activity targeted on a pre-conception of the participants' lives or conditions. Beginning the project with no defined goal, outcome or schedule was a way to ensure the possibility of integrating the unpredictable elements of the process in the project, to take into consideration the participants' individual and collective desires, in an attempt to reduce the effects of having selected the participants according to a shared physical criterion.

The first session deconstructed certain *clichés*: few partially sighted people read Braille; viewing problems don't necessarily make people use their other senses in a more accurate way; the category of 'visually impaired person' doesn't make much sense, as the specificity of each person's vision problem makes comparison difficult. Following the feminist researcher in pedagogy Mimi Orner (1992: 78), who recalls that binary oppositions such as teacher/student, voice/silence or oppressor/oppressed have historically led to essentializing the terms and 'privileging the first over the second', we learned here to avoid considering too rigidly separate groups.

The will of the participants – the 'desire lines' they draw, to quote the beautiful image used by Janna Graham (2012: 21) – were at the centre of the project. A success of the project has been to transform the binary view of the group that we could have at the beginning and to build over time a more horizontal relationship with participants whom we learned to know in their differences and specificities.



### 3.6 Rethinking conflict in pedagogy and democracy: *Lectures autour du graphisme*

#### 3.6.1 On the necessity of conflicts in horizontal processes

To continue my reflection about the political dimension of ‘working together’ and about the possibility of using the space of collaborative art projects to think and practice more horizontal forms of democracy, the notion of *conflict* appears as central.

In a horizontal environment, space must be left for conflict to happen because every opinion must have the possibility to be spoken. This is crucial to getting rid of a structure where a single authorized speaker delivers undisputable content, and crucial toward reimagining democratic exchanges. Rethinking the role of conflictual situations in the pedagogical process is part of a move toward a more radical form of democracy. The political philosopher Chantal Mouffe (2000: 13) developed the concept of ‘agonism’ to describe a political exchange that would promote a form of adversity – of conflict<sup>171</sup> – in order to renew democratic life and to prevent antagonisms.

I propose to distinguish between two forms of antagonism, antagonism proper – which takes place between enemies, that is, persons who have no common symbolic space – and what I call ‘agonism’, which is a different mode of manifestation of antagonism because it involves a relation not between enemies but between ‘adversaries’, adversaries being defined in a paradoxical way as ‘friendly enemies’, that is, persons who are friends because they share a common symbolic space but also enemies because they want to organize this common symbolic space in a different way.

Ruitenbergh (2009: 275), a close reader of Mouffe, points out that, even though Mouffe’s conception of an agonistic public sphere goes way beyond the field of education, this field still plays a crucial role in ‘the preparation of citizens for the role of political adversary’.

<sup>171</sup> Ruitenbergh (2009: 272) says that for Mouffe: ‘Political conflict is [...] not a problem to be overcome, but rather a force to be channeled into political and democratic commitments.’ Mouffe is followed by Claire Bishop (2004: 66) who, when talking about Relations Aesthetics, says: ‘a democratic society is one in which relations of conflict are sustained, not erased. Without antagonism there is only the imposed consensus of authoritarian order – a total suppression of debate and discussion, which is inimical to democracy.’

We insist on what the project brought to us: the experiment was useful for the whole group who enjoyed experimenting with the U structure, with its limitations, its friction points ...

Excerpt from the *La surface des choses* project diary.

The difficult moments, the conflicts finally appear to the participants as the central interest of the project. They insist on the importance of the human dimension.

Excerpt from the *La surface des choses* project diary.

We have been willing, since the beginning of our collaboration, to overcome the idea of gallery education as a ‘mediation’;<sup>172</sup> the conflicts that occur during the projects can be considered as being in many ways more interesting than a ‘happy consensus’ and are signs of a vital and open dialogical process.

### 3.6.2 Conflicts in critical pedagogies

In dialogical pedagogies, conflicts are recognized as a positive or even necessary element for any real democratic exchange. Freire underlined the necessity of conflict to change an existing situation, considering that conflict is intrinsically linked to human beings and that trying to escape from conflict equals preserving an unequal society. Because it takes place in a world of conflict, education must be tactical!<sup>173</sup> For Freire’s close collaborator Moacir Gadotti (1979: 7), education is not only dealing with conflicts but is in itself an act of transgression and disobedience always being ‘more or less against education’, so being intrinsically a place of conflict.

Considering conflict as a key element in pedagogy, bell hooks (1994: 40), who deconstructed the idea of the classroom as a ‘safe space’ to ‘learn in harmony’, points out the difficulty of actually integrating those ideas in the usual school context because the teachers lack ‘strategies to deal with antagonisms in the classroom’ (hooks, 1994: 31).

Mary Louise Pratt (1991: 39), in her article *Arts of the Contact Zone*, describes how a class designed to open the horizon of US university students beyond western culture was the most difficult yet most interesting teaching she had been involved in, because it challenged the idea of school as a unifying and pacifying force; it challenged ‘[the] lecturer’s traditional (imagined) task [of] unifying the world in the class’s eyes by means of a monologue that rings equally coherent, revealing, and true for all, forging an *ad hoc* community, homogeneous with respect to one’s own words’. She

<sup>172</sup> As seen in point 1.4.1, the usual term used in French to describe gallery education projects is ‘médiation culturelle’, and the term (with its roots in the law vocabulary) contains the idea of solving a conflict. The choice of this wording (over ‘éducation’, for example) emphasizes the idea that a ‘general audience’ would have a problem with high culture, or more generally be in a situation of deficit, and that this problem should be solved in an effort at democratization.

<sup>173</sup> Freire (1998: 45) says: ‘There may not be life or human existence without struggle and conflict. Conflict shares in our conscience. Denying conflict, we ignore even the most mundane aspects of our vital and social experience. Trying to escape conflict, we preserve the status quo.’



We select the texts, with the idea of showing a diversity of approaches and points of view, to generate a lively debate.

Excerpt from the *Lectures autour du graphisme* project diary.

explains how the conflict ('rage, incomprehension, and pain') was intrinsically part of the process and led to 'moments of wonder and revelation, mutual understanding and new wisdom – the joys of the contact zone'.<sup>174</sup>

Finding such strategies not only to deal with conflicts but also to produce some productive ones has been an interest for us in several projects.

### 3.6.3 Experimenting with constructive conflicts in *Lectures autour du graphisme*

In a project like *La surface des choses*, conflicts have paved the way, with some participants willing to leave the project, criticizing each other through our intermediary, criticizing our methods, etc. Most of those conflicts were of an interpersonal nature, which is to be expected when the roles and relationships are in constant negotiation. Toward the end of the project, the notion of intellectual conflicts that can emerge from the different readings of an artwork also appeared. The participants saw this conflicting dimension as the most enriching element of the project and some said that if after the project they were to stay outsiders of contemporary art (still not really understanding or enjoying it), they realized how it can be a space for debate and for 'critical thinking rather than celebration'.

In the following project, *Lectures autour du graphisme*, we took that observation as a starting point and put the idea of producing intellectual conflict at the centre of our conception. We began to think about the possibility not only to deal with conflict in an interesting way when it occurs, but also of provoking it, of creating a space of discontent, a place where different ideas and positions can be in dialogue – even noisily – to create what could be called agonistic situations.

In this project, our intention was to invite participants with different backgrounds (art, design, critical theory, journalism and sciences), imagining

<sup>174</sup> Pratt (1991: 40) sees those conflictual contact zones as strengthening the importance of 'safe houses' that are 'horizontal, homogeneous, sovereign communities with high degrees of trust, shared understandings, temporary protection from legacies of oppression', with the idea that groups living under a legacy of subordination can use those safe houses 'to construct shared understandings, knowledges, claims on the world that they can then bring into the contact zone'. Within *microsilons*' projects, I'm not considering working with homogenous groups at any point, not opposing horizontal/safe zones with contact zones, but rather see a horizontal environment as a condition for conflicts to become fruitful.

During the discussion, which turns around the question of how to efficiently fight against the hegemonic discourses promoted by advertisement, one of the university student states that he wants to defend advertisement as a space of interesting creations and of enjoyment. The discussion has then to be redirected, going 'one step back' in the argumentation, to explain things that would be taken for granted in between people from the same field.

Excerpt from the *Lectures autour du graphisme* project diary.

a heated debate among people sharing different points of views on design. Our text selection was also going in that direction, choosing, for example, Hal Foster's *Design and Crime*, which we had witnessed in the past provoking a very passionate discussion,<sup>175</sup> and a rather polemical text by Max Bruinsma<sup>176</sup> (stating, for example, that contemporary art is a sub-category of design).

<sup>175</sup> In the frame of a colloquium organized by the HEAD: AC|DC *Art contemporain Design contemporain* (2007).

<sup>176</sup> Bruinsma (2007).

<sup>177</sup> See: Raunig, Ray & Wuggenig eds. (2011).

The effect of our strategy was limited by the fact that, because the group was made of a maximum of ten people (including us) only, the diversity of the group was sometimes challenged when some participants didn't take part in the session. During two out of the three sessions, the non-art student participants were too few not to be isolated during the debates.

Nevertheless, during the first session the rhetorical conflicts that we sought took place: as some of the art students were discussing details about how to efficiently fight the hegemonic discourse of advertising in the street, some journalist students brought the debate a step back and simply asked them to explain the reason why advertisement should be fought, seeing it first as a space for creativity. This led to some heated debates where both sides had to position themselves and to clarify their positions in a way that they were not used to, because the questions and argumentation were coming from another field, another vocabulary and another position. The art students had, for example, to find a way to simply introduce the idea of the *critique of creativity*<sup>177</sup> to students who saw only positivity in creativity and who saw their interlocutors as the quintessence of creative people. On the other side, the journalism students developed an argumentation about the complex links between the advertisement and the press, and about the necessity of advertisement to support the journalist profession.

The conflict led not only to a rhetorical exercise but also to building complexity into each position and to finding new ways to communicate about her or his field of practice. Once the participants found their own positions within the group, a real horizontal exchange did take place, because each



one, to articulate her or his position, spoke from her or his own field of competence, instead of waiting for a single specialized voice to speak. The experiment showed a strong pedagogical potential, in the directions both of learning how to simplify content for non-specialists and of developing democratic exchange.

The graphic proposal presented on the wall as the result of this first session was organized around the motif of a snake biting its own tail. It symbolized both the instant recuperation of any critique of advertisements by the advertising system and the digestion of the conflicts that fuelled our discussion.

That experimental small-scale project reinforced our will to deal with the idea of conflict that we see as constitutive of a non-banking education and of a more democratic collaborative practice.





## 4. QUESTIONING 'HORIZONTALITY'

### 4.1 Deromanticizing 'horizontality'

<sup>178</sup> See end of point 2.2.

So far, I have been cautious to present 'horizontality' as a horizon rather than a reachable goal. In this chapter, in part continuing the reflection I began on unpredictability and drawing from poststructuralist and feminist thinking, I will try to identify the limits of the notion of 'horizontality' and of other connected terms often used together in critical pedagogy. I will in particular discuss the difficulties that can arise when trying to apply a horizontal structure. I will also try to identify concepts and tools to produce more horizontal pedagogical exchanges, without being trapped into a fiction of *total horizontality*.

If we have discussed already the progressive and necessary changes that more 'horizontal' models can bring to art practices, pedagogy or politics, we must also point out their use in non-progressive contexts.<sup>178</sup>

'Horizontal' itself is not an intrinsically progressive concept and, as the film maker Florian Schneider (2010) points out, it can even be a key element for new managerialism in the neo-liberal context:

Under the banner of 'self-education', the effort, the costs, and the resources needed to perform an efficient system of control are outsourced to the individual. Obviously, this goes along very well with the praise of chivalries such as horizontalism, flat hierarchies, charity, and sharing. Teamwork and a flattering notion of 'collaboration' have turned out to be key components of a renewed educational managerialism. In a society of control, the postulate of lifelong learning challenges traditional views of radical, emancipatory pedagogy in both institutional and non-institutional contexts. What was formerly known as 'progressive' may all of a sudden and without warning turn out to be repressive, or indeed, vice-versa.



Education has always been a key site for political struggle and can be seen as a tool to create the conditions for social change, aiming at a 'less hierarchical, more radical democratic social order', as Giroux (2000: 356) suggests,<sup>179</sup> but also as one to mould the ultimate neo-liberal worker. If flat hierarchies are used as a way to deregulate the relationships between the workers (in constant individual competition), to use an unpaid and highly replaceable workforce along with the paid workers, to get rid of working hours limitations, if as Boltanski and Chiapello (1999) showed<sup>180</sup> the artist in his capacity to work transversally is becoming a model for an adaptable and creative worker, 'horizontalité' cannot simply be set as an enviable horizon.

Therefore, one must always contextualize one's work and clarify one's goals, to avoid overestimating the possibility of achieving them, or their political transformative potential. Critical concepts can be reappropriated to defend purposes their initiators would not support.

Using the deconstructive discourse of post-structuralism can help us here to be less naïve concerning our terms and actions, to clarify our position against romanticization of 'horizontalité' and the non-progressive applications of the term.

#### 4.2 Circulating power. About Foucault's conception of power

My research on 'horizontalité' is intrinsically linked to power relationships. Here, a reflection about the nature of power is yet to be made. In this regard, the writings of Foucault are helping to define more precisely what power is and how it performs.

Foucault (1980d: 98) emphasized the relational nature of power, the fact that power is something that is exercised rather than held:

Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather something

<sup>179</sup> Giroux discusses here Stuart Hall's call for cultural politics and the pedagogical imperatives resulting from it.

<sup>180</sup> See more specifically the chapter 'A l'épreuve de la critique artiste' in: Boltanski & Chiapello (1999: 501–576).



which only functions in the form of the chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target. They are also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application.

<sup>181</sup> My translation.

One way this conception challenges the traditional understanding of power is that, following that definition, power is not simply applied top down, but in a more complex way: 'in order for there to be a movement from above to below there has to be a capillarity from below to above at the same time' (Foucault, 1980c: 201). Because 'power in its exercise goes much further, passes through much finer channels' (Foucault, 1980b: 72), no one is simply ruled by power but everybody can use power in different kinds of relationship, as 'each individual has at his disposal a certain power' (Foucault, 1980b: 72).

Foucault (1980c: 198) goes as far as saying that the power doesn't exist as such but that power only exists through a cluster of more or less hierarchical relationships.

Using the term *governmentality* to describe those power relationships, Foucault shows how they are shaping political power at the level of the 'lower' structures (between individuals, inside family structures ...); how, for example, a certain kind of relationship must exist in the lower structures for democracy to be possible.

Roughly, democracy, as a political form, can only exist if, at the level of individuals, of family, of everyday [...] a certain type of power relationships is taking place. This is the reason why a democracy cannot happen anywhere. (Foucault, 1994b: 751)<sup>181</sup>





Foucault (1980a: 39) talks about a power exercised ‘within’ the social body rather than ‘from above’. The very inspiring part of this analysis<sup>182</sup> is that, first, working at transforming power relationships at the lowest level (for example, in a classroom) is not only a way to work toward a broader change but might also be the better way to do so. Second, because everybody has some power ‘at their disposal’, everyone can transform the relationship she or he is part of.

For *microsilons*, working at the micro-level of the pedagogical exchange is a way to imagine a kind of transformation that could be, to use Foucault’s term, capillary – that is, from the bottom toward the top.

#### 4.2.1 To empower?

I have discussed so far how developing more horizontal modes of collaboration could be a way to strive for a more egalitarian and democratic society. According to that reflection, horizontal structures can certainly be seen as a way to empower the pupils/students or the participants of a collaborative art project.

A confirmation seems to come from the way critical pedagogy discourses, supporting the idea of a dialogical pedagogy, have defended the idea of ‘giving more power’ to people, a rhetoric inherited partly from Paulo Freire and his idea of pedagogy as liberation.<sup>183</sup>

Giroux (1988: xxxii) says, for example, that schools should be regarded as ‘democratic sites dedicated to forms of self and social empowerment’. hooks and Mesa-Bains (2006: 73) describe a more egalitarian educational system as a way to empower disadvantaged people, saying that ‘we have to share our resources and take direction about how to use our privilege in ways that empower those who lack it’. Carolyn Shrewsbury (1993) in a text aiming at offering a panorama of feminist pedagogies (where she mentions her tie with

<sup>182</sup> Which is very close to Hardt and Negri’s idea that biopolitics, because it concerns every aspect of our lives, also make it possible for struggles to happen at every level. ‘Since in the imperial realm of biopower production and life tend to coincide, class struggle has the potential to erupt across all the fields of life’ (Negri & Hardt, 2000: 403).

<sup>183</sup> Freire did not claim that the educator would free her or his pupils; rather, he imagined liberation only as a collective and horizontal process (through education in particular). He says: ‘Nobody frees anybody else; nobody is freed alone; people free themselves together’ (Gadotti (1994: 52) summarizing Freire).



Freire's work) named *empowerment* as one of the key concepts in this field and underlined that – through empowerment – power is becoming a positive rather than negative force (Shrewsbury, 1993: 10).

<sup>184</sup> Robert J. Parkes (no date: 5) talks about a misreading of Foucault in critical pedagogy literature.

Nevertheless, although it is still common to see educators and artists using the empowerment rhetoric today, the idea of empowerment has been criticized for at least 30 years.<sup>184</sup> Many of those critics, in particular feminist writers, have drawn from Foucault's circular conception of power.

In 1989, Elisabeth Ellsworth (1989: 298) summarized those critics and directly attacked the key principles of critical pedagogies:

I want to argue [...] that key assumptions, goals, and pedagogical practices fundamental to the literature on critical pedagogy – namely, 'empowerment', 'student voice', 'dialogue', and even the term 'critical' – are repressive myths that perpetuate relations of domination. [...] when participants in our class attempted to put into practice [...] empowerment, student voice, and dialogue, we produced results that were not only unhelpful, but actually exacerbated the very conditions we were trying to work against [...].

Several other feminist thinkers developed similar critiques. Carmen Luke (Luke & Gore, 1992), Jennifer Gore (1992) and Mimi Orner (1992), for example, insisted that power exists only in action, as a relation. Gore (1992: 57) sums up the contradiction between this conception of power and the idea of empowerment in saying: 'Another major shortcoming of constructions of empowerment in critical and feminist pedagogy discourses is that they conceive of power as property, something the teacher has and can give to students.'

The researcher in psychology Valerie Walkerdine (1992: 17–19) explored the consequences of the use of the empowerment rhetoric. She sees rationalism and the monitoring of the development through a pedagogy conceived as a science as having become, progressively since the nineteenth century,

‘A discussion-assessment ends the day. The pupils enjoyed being free and practice manual activities, but they had the feeling of spending too much time inactively listening at the beginning of the workshop. For some of them, it was difficult to understand what was expected from them.’

*Utopia and the Everyday, Gazette #2 (microsillons, 2009–2010d-e)*

a substitute for frontal authoritarianism in schools, and leading to another kind of domination rather than empowerment or liberation. She says: ‘The ultimate irony is that the child supposedly freed by this process to develop according to its nature was the most classified, catalogued, watched and monitored in history’ (1992: 18). Moreover, she points out that the idea of empowerment constructs a fiction that puts the teachers, especially the female ones, in an impossible position. Having integrated the idea of a need to empower each and every learner,<sup>185</sup> in a ‘concept of nurturance’, the teacher is then trapped into a structure with an unreachable goal, into an ‘impossible fiction’, and constantly feels in a failure position (1992: 19–20).

<sup>185</sup> About the individual dimension of the process, see also the notion of *pastoralism*, in point 4.3.2.

<sup>186</sup> Shor (1996: 14) uses the term ‘Siberian syndrome’ to describe how many of his students would stay at the back of the classroom and simply not take part in any discussion.

Gore (1992: 68) synthesizes what should result from those observations in saying that teachers claiming empowerment should be ‘more humble and reflexive in [their] claims’, and work with ‘humility, skepticism and self-criticism’.

From Foucault’s observations about the circularity of power and from its re-reading by feminist poststructuralist thinkers, giving power to other people to create a horizontal structure – especially when the structure is designed and imposed top down – seems neither realistic nor productive. If one cannot give power to others by relinquishing some oneself, designing a horizontal structure doesn’t guarantee a rebalancing of power, a more egalitarian exchange. Therefore power relationships developing in structures that are meant as horizontal should be carefully studied and tackled in their unstable and contradictory dimension, if a more egalitarian relationship is sought.

#### 4.2.2 Giving a voice?

If looking for a more dialogical relationship in a collaborative project, one might imagine that the participants shouldn’t be silent. Yet, one would often quickly realize when working with people that some of them prefer to remain silent than to be heard.<sup>186</sup> On a more metaphorical level, many socially





engaged projects in art or pedagogy are trying to involve people considered as being ostracized and are meant as a way to bring back those subjects to the centre of the discourse. Therefore, a recurring idea in the field of critical education and of artists developing socially engaged practices is to 'give a voice'.

We have often discussed the claim of 'giving a voice' in our own projects and, at the beginning of our practice, we tended ourselves to use that rhetoric,<sup>187</sup> claiming to make the voices of people we would collaborate with heard inside institutions usually hermetic to non-specialized discourses.

In the course of our practice (and in part through this PhD research) we became more and more critical toward this idea and are trying both to rethink the idea of silenced people and to imagine in which arrangement voices can be spoken.

Indeed, a very similar critique to the one about empowerment has been developed, also by poststructuralist feminist thinkers, about this idea of 'giving a voice' that was first supported by earlier feminist artists and thinkers.

In the early 1970s one of the tools used by feminist groups to practise new forms of exchanges was the *consciousness-raising group*. The Feminist Art Program,<sup>188</sup> a militant feminist teaching programme which was active between 1970 and 1972 at the Cal State University in Fresno and in the California Institute of the Arts in Los Angeles, made this format central to its art teaching.

One of the basic structures of the women's movement, [consciousness-raising] is a group process in which each woman shares and bears witness to her own experience in a non-judgmental atmosphere. It is political tool because it teaches women the commonality of their oppression and leads them to analyse its causes and effects. (Wilding, 1977: 10)

<sup>187</sup> In our portfolio in 2007 (available at the time on our website), we wrote, in the introduction text: 'It is therefore essential, for us, for people we are working with to have the possibility to have their voices heard inside the institution. We consider the act of speech as a true emancipation, able to profoundly change the relationship of the individual with the institution' (my translation).

<sup>188</sup> About the Feminist Art Program, see: Chicago (1975); Meyer & Wilding (2010); Schapiro (1972); Wilding (1977); Wilding (2009).



Feminist Art Program Workshop with Judy Chicago, 1973 (Wilding, 1977: 32).

The exact way in which the consciousness-raising groups were run certainly varied, but the overall process was described as follows by the West-East Coast Bag in the early 1970s (WEB, 1972):

Select a topic

Go around the room, each woman speaking in turn. Don't interrupt, let each woman speak up to 15 minutes and then ask questions only for clarification.

Don't give advice, don't chastise, don't be critical.

Draw generalizations after everyone has spoken, or, before that, go around the room and talk again.

Draw political conclusions – if you can.

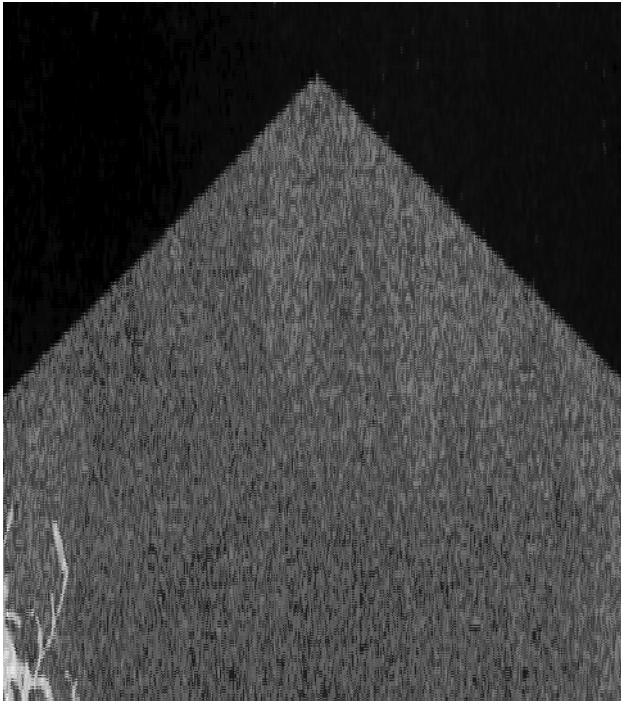
Keep the group below 10 women.

In order to develop trust and confidence, don't repeat what has been said in the meeting or talk about members outside the group.

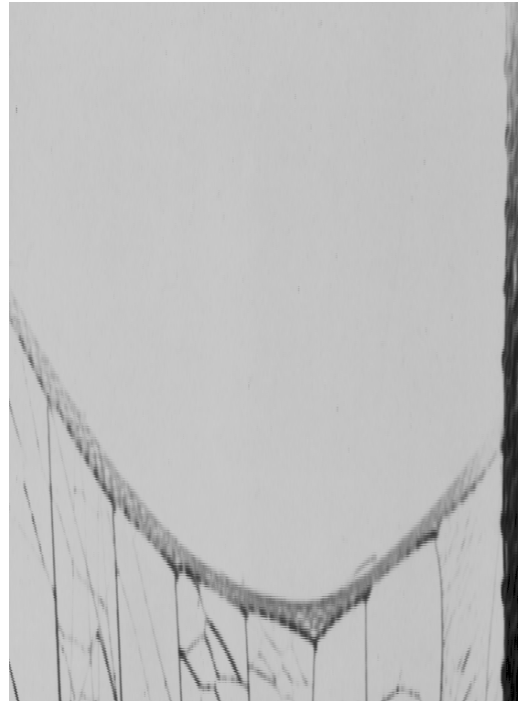
This is not a therapy, encounter or sensitivity group situation.

The form itself of the small discussion group was a strong political choice. The feminist and anarchist writer Cathy Levine (no date, original work 1979) explains that founding collectives was, for women's movements, a way to create 'a revolutionary culture consistent with our view of the new society', and says that the small group 'is more than a reaction; [it] is a solution'.

Faith Wilding (1977: 13), who was a student in the Feminist Art Program, notices how the consciousness-raising process had a strong impact on art production and on transforming the teacher–students relationship. She explains that, once the consciousness-raising process began, most of the



Miriam Schapiro and Judy Chicago on the cover of the *Womanhouse* exhibition (*Womanhouse*, 1972) catalogue (Raven, 1996: 50).



Wilding, Faith, Crocheted environment, installation at *Womanhouse*, Los Angeles, 1972 (Broude & Garrard, 1994: 62).

students started to use autobiographical elements as a starting point to their work, somehow making any other assignments or directive useless. Miriam Schapiro (1972: 268) emphasized that power relationships were transformed through that process in which the personal (through sharing it with the group) was becoming political (in the tradition of *Women's Liberation technique*)<sup>189</sup> and in which collective solutions could then be thought of. She explains how power, instead of moving unilaterally from teacher to students, was moving in a more circular way (something that was formally echoed by the recurring use of sitting in circle to discuss a selected topic).

<sup>189</sup> For an introduction to the movement, see for example: Freeman (1972).

<sup>190</sup> See in particular: Wilding (1977: 107).

<sup>191</sup> Receiving about 10,000 visitors. See: Meyer, Hale & Wolverton eds. (2011: 91).

Through this process, the feminist pedagogues aimed not only to find new forms of pedagogical exchange, forms in which the voices of all participants were made central, but also to make it possible for those voices to be heard outside. For Chicago and Schapiro, one of the main goals of the Feminist Art Program was to propose a platform in which female students could develop feminist art and have the chance to exhibit it, in a context where very few female artists were given as models to them.<sup>190</sup> The famous *Womanhouse* exhibition, in 1972, which was a huge popular success<sup>191</sup> and is considered as a key moment for feminist art, was one of the most visible outcomes of this process.

The use of personal testimony as a starting point to a critical process is still important for many critical and feminist pedagogues. bell hooks (1994: 148), for example, who specifies that '[c]oming to voice isn't just the act of telling one's experience' but 'using that telling strategically – to come to voice so that you can also speak freely about other subjects', says:

Personal testimony, personal experience, is such a fertile ground for the production of liberatory feminist theory because it usually forms the base of our theory making. While we work to resolve those issues that are most pressing in daily life [...], we engage in a critical process of theorizing that enables and empowers. (hooks, 1994: 70)



Pupils working with trafo.K conceiving the actualization of the Feminist Art Program's *Womanhouse*.



Nevertheless, as said, later feminists deconstructed the idea of *giving a voice* and of *personal voice*. The question of authenticity is at the centre of the debate. While earlier feminist thinkers were calling for speaking *real experiences*, the newer generation is questioning the very possibility of an individual 'authentic voice'.

Mimi Orner (1992: 80) shows how poststructuralist thinking can challenge the conception of a fixed identity:

Poststructuralist discourse throws into question the transparency, authenticity and self-referentiality of language embedded in calls for student voice. 'Liberatory' educational strategies, which 'allow students to find their own voices, to discover the power of authenticity' [...], are inadequate in a poststructuralist framework [...] .

She underlines the changing and incoherent dimension of the voice and, therefore, the impossibility of talking about 'one's voice' as a fixed entity. For her, discourses about student voices, in the humanist tradition, usually consider voices as the ones of 'fully conscious, fully speaking, "unique, fixed and coherent" selves' and therefore ignore 'the shifting identities, unconscious processes, pleasures and desires not only of students, but of teachers, administrators and researchers as well' (Orner, 1992: 79). According to Orner, quoting Ellsworth and Selvin, this leads to the fact that a voice is, at best, 'tentative and temporary given the changing, often contradictory relations of power at multiple levels of social life – the personal, the institutional, the governmental, the commercial' (Ellsworth & Selvin, 1986: 77).

Orner (1992: 87) also warns against the assumption that speaking would be positive for the student in any situation and underlines the fact that silence cannot be presented merely as the symbol of oppression.<sup>192</sup> She brings the reflection onto a more directly political level in questioning the interest of powerful structures for 'giving people a voice',<sup>193</sup> wondering who

<sup>192</sup> From a critical pedagogy standpoint, the student is not necessarily silenced because she or he would be socially oppressed. Shor (1992: 93–96), for example, rather sees the explanation of the silence in the pedagogical structure, the antidialogic styles of teaching. Orner (1992: 87–88) emphasizes the fact that silence can be a resistance strategy.

<sup>193</sup> Orner (1992: 87) concludes: 'An analysis of whose interests are served when students speak is needed.'



is benefiting from the talk of ‘the oppressed’ and: ‘How is the speaking received, interpreted, controlled, limited, disciplined and stylized by the speakers, the listeners, the historical moment, the context? What use is made of the “people’s voice” after it is heard?’ (1992: 76). To continue Gore’s point on powerful groups’ demand for ‘authentic voices’, one could argue, in the case of the Feminist Art Program or of the consciousness-raising groups in general, that the voice was *taken* by the women, rather than *given* by powerful groups. Nevertheless, the question of the reception of those voices, of the interest of the teachers and schools in those formats, cannot remain un-problematized, hidden behind the humanist idea of an ‘authentic voice’.

Rethinking the idea of giving a voice might go through rethinking the way in which voices are interconnected. Ellsworth (1989: 324), for example, proposing a more humble but for her more realistic educational exchange than the claim of ‘giving a voice’, uses the term ‘alliances’ and suggests that a way to address the learner could be to say:

If you can talk to me in ways that show you understand that your knowledge of me, the world, and ‘the Right thing to do’ will always be partial, interested, and potentially oppressive to others, and if I can do the same, then we can work together on shaping and reshaping alliances for constructing circumstances in which students of difference can thrive.

So she proposes a relationship that is horizontal in the way that all parties involved understand the partiality and relativity of their positions.

Alecia Youngblood Jackson (2003), with the idea of ‘rhizovocality’, is pushing further the reflection about the interconnection of voices. In an article written in 2003, the author first maps the history of women’s emancipatory research in the 1980s and 1990s, where feminist researchers traditionally presented women as silenced and tried to ‘give voice’ to them, in an emancipatory attempt to recover their authentic voices. According to her, because of the struggle women had to go through to be able to speak, their voices were



then presented by those researchers not only as equally as true as men's but as 'more true' (Youngblood Jackson, 2003: 696).

Following Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (the author of *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, a founding text for post-colonialist theories)<sup>194</sup> and her critique of how western feminist intellectuals essentialized the voices of the *subalterns* as authentic and as representative of all native people (Spivak, 1988: 283–284), Alecia Youngblood Jackson (2003: 700) continues to criticize the idea of authentic voice and leans on Derrida, who believes that language is so unstable that meaning is endlessly deferred.<sup>195</sup> With this poststructuralist view of language, again, voice can no longer express an absolute, ideal, essential meaning and is always partial, and unstable.

Then, she borrowed from the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari the image of the rhizome, because she thinks it captures the heterogeneity and performative dimension of voice. She coined the term *rhizovocality*, to state that, like rhizomes, voices cannot claim authenticity because they don't have a single origin, and because they are organized in interrupting threads (Youngblood Jackson, 2003: 707).

*Rhizovocality* is not authentic, doesn't have a clear point of departure or arrival, and, which bring us back closer to the term of 'horizontality', is non-hierarchical. Therefore, if we follow the author, one cannot give voice to someone else, as voices are not interconnected in a rational and hierarchical way.

In *microsillos*' projects, we have now definitely left aside the idea of 'giving a voice', and when we are proposing to work collectively on an object, it is a way to go beyond the idea of collecting voices – let alone authentic ones. Participatory art pieces have often proposed devices to collect 'voices' (often in a written form).<sup>196</sup> In those projects, the structure is usually conceived by the artists and the users are activating it, bringing in bits and pieces of their lives, supposed to be interesting by the simple fact of being 'real'. On the

<sup>194</sup> Ellsworth (1989: 209) summarizes Spivak's position as follow: 'Gayatri Spivak calls the search for a coherent narrative "counterproductive" and asserts that what is needed is "persistent critique" (Spivak, 1988: 272) of received narratives [...]'.  
  
<sup>195</sup> See for example: Derrida (1982).  
  
<sup>196</sup> See for example: Ono (2007) (ongoing series from 1996), Neuenschwander (2003) and (2005).



contrary, we are opening frames in which collective *narrations* are favoured (the individual voices appearing between the lines) and in which a theme or a scenario is at the centre, rather than the ‘life of the participants’.

When we developed *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised. Amateur video from 8mm to 2.0*, we intended the computer network structure to present the participant voices in a network, in a rhizome. Through that computer platform, we provided the structure for different voices to interact in a rhizomatic way – without hierarchy (the conception team produced some of the data that was mixed with the participants’ data). Especially because it was used in a rather static way, this practical example only scratches the surface of Youngblood Jackson’s concept. Nevertheless, the parallel between the computer network organization and the idea of *rhizovocality* is partly why I want to explore more in the future the potential of computer network theories in transforming the pedagogical relationship, especially in the context of collaborative art projects.

### 4.3 Non-frontal forms of power

#### 4.3.1 Informal hierarchies

The idea, defended by Foucault, of power as circulating in more complex ways than simply from top to bottom, invites us to consider that ‘horizontal organization’ cannot be a synonym for ‘suppression of all power relationships’.

Diefenbach and Sillince (2011), in their study of organization types in business environments, notice that there are a series of discourses in entrepreneurship theory (especially since the year 2000) about ‘postmodern organization’ based on the ideas of hierarchy-flattening, of team work between managers and employees, and of cross-departmental knowledge-sharing. But they argue that those discourses do not reflect reality and





Ceccon, Claudius (Harper et al., no date: 81).

that ‘despite all organizational change toward flatter and postmodern organizations, hierarchical order is quite persistent. [...] hierarchy is much more widespread than thought’ (Diefenbach and Sillince, 2011: 1515). They show that in business environments promoting flatter structures, *informal hierarchies* occur, sometimes not only replacing formal hierarchies but adding to them. In that context, the idea of ‘horizontality’ becomes repressive and can be seen as a tool to manipulate employees to make them get more involved, accept more tasks and responsibilities, be more flexible.

<sup>197</sup> As seen, Pastoralism was one of the themes discussed in *Utopia and the Everyday's* documentary section. See: *microsilons* (2009–2010a).

This analysis can be widened to a larger field than business environments. Nunes (2005: 297), for example, describing the structure of activist organizations (in particular around the Social Forums of London (2004) and Porto Alegre (2005)), argues the ambiguous nature of ‘horizontality’:

We speak of many networks and open spaces, but only one horizontality. It is clear that the latter is a principle rather than a reality: [...] ‘Networks’ and ‘open spaces’, therefore, are also ambiguous by nature [...].

For Jeffrey (2005: 257), an anthropologist specializing in globalization who analyses organizational structures of social movements, one must not romanticize ‘horizontality’ but must consider it as existing only at some degree, always intertwined with some hierarchical, vertical structures. He reminds us that ‘[h]orizontal relations do not suggest the complete absence of hierarchy, but rather the lack of formal hierarchical designs’ and that ‘[t]his does not necessarily prevent, and may even encourage, the formation of informal hierarchies’.

#### 4.3.2 Pastoralism

Pastoralism is a mode of governance that implies a hidden, non-coercive power structure which is applied with the help of institutions and which is ostensibly meant to be for the people’s own good.<sup>197</sup> When, in ancient



Roman society, power was traditionally exercised through the conquest of land and through being bad toward one's enemies, pastoralism introduced the idea of power based on a social group rather than a territory and on the will to be good toward that group (Foucault, 1999: 121). Therefore, Foucault (1999: 122–123) describes pastoralism as a *benevolent (bienveillant)* power.

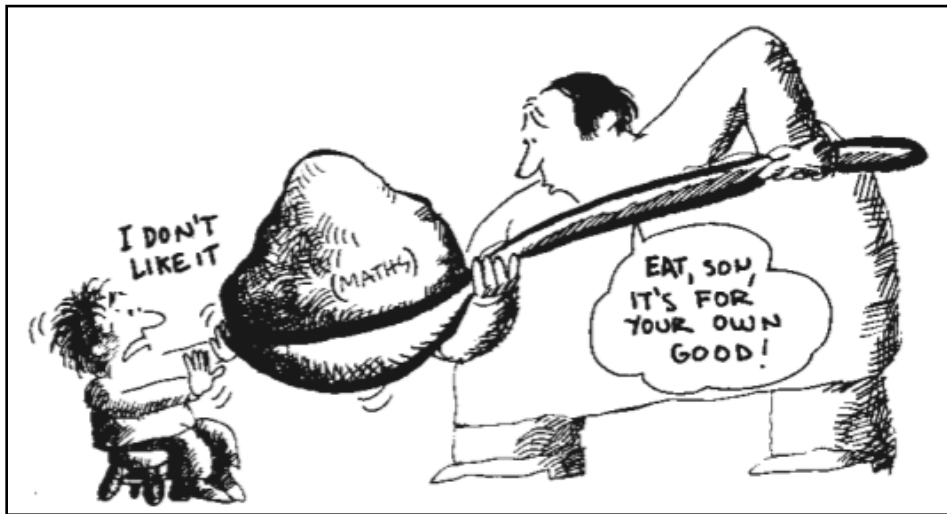
<sup>198</sup> See point 4.2.

<sup>199</sup> For a description by Foucault of the interest of the Christian church in controlling the individual consciousness, see: Foucault (1994a: 375).

the shepherd does not rule over a territory, he rules over a multiplicity of individuals, he reigns over sheep, cows, animals. [...] And it is this power which is the distinctive pastoral power. [...] pastoral power does not have as its principal function doing harm to one's enemies; its principal function is doing well for those over whom one watches. [...] It is not a triumphant power, it is a beneficial power.

Foucault sees pastoralism (bringing us back to Walkerdine's idea of 'the impossible fiction of knowing each child')<sup>198</sup> as an inherently individualistic power. For him, the most important feature of pastoral power is that the good shepherd, unlike the king directing a geographical and human ensemble, takes care of each individual. His main task is to ensure the salvation of each individual (Foucault, 1999: 124). This is only possible if the shepherd knows each of his flock individually and follows all of them for their whole lives, in showing them how to act (Foucault, 1982: 214). To have each individual in the flock under continuous surveillance, a series of mechanisms, including confession, are developed and used. These mechanisms are often invisible and can seem to be less problematic than usual control methods, as they are always presented as being 'for the individual's own good'. Foucault describes them as 'small, humble and almost sordid mechanisms', putting the individuals at the centre in order for them never to escape surveillance, control and correction (Foucault, 1978: 550). In the genealogy of those mechanisms (including in institutions such as schools), Christian techniques play a central role with the consciousness-directing, soul-caring and consciousness examination.<sup>199</sup>

Similar mechanisms might be, consciously or not, used in educational



Ceccon, Claudius (Harper et al., no date: 55).

contexts. Mimi Orner (1992: 83), talking about how consciousness-raising groups or 'talking circles' have been used in feminist pedagogy, draws a parallel between the Christian confession and those formats:

Foucault's description of the panopticon raises questions regarding the hidden curriculum of the 'talking circle' – the long cherished form of the democratic classroom. [...] Foucault's analyses of the all-knowing confessor and the regulatory and punitive meanings and uses of the confessional bring to mind curricular and pedagogical practices which call for students to publicly reveal, even confess, information about their lives and cultures in the presence of authority figures such as teachers.

<sup>200</sup> Interestingly, the image of the teacher as a guide is not always meant in a negative sense, even by very progressive thinkers. Shotton (1993: 202) presents as an ideal that teachers in the Free Schools 'were not to be directors, only guides and enablers'. Schneider (2006), on his side, is proposing to come back to the linguistic root of 'pedagogue', to see him more as someone who accompanies the child to the school than as a teacher.

Some teachers might be fully conscious about the problematic dimension of gathering students' confessions; when bell hooks (1994: 21) describes her use of personal experiences in her pedagogy, for example, she explicitly mentions that she would not 'expect students to take any risks that I would not take, to share in any way that I would not share'. Including the teacher or not, the talking circle provides a tool for the educator to collect, consciously or not, information about her or his pupils/students and to use them in the pedagogical process.

Foucault insists on the fact that *pastoralism* is not merely a remote mode of governance linked to the rise of Christendom but that, on the contrary, the modern state was born in integrating the principles of pastoralism, in particular its individualistic dimension (Foucault, 1982: 214–215). Because of the accuracy of the concept to analyse the contemporary condition, and because, as socially engaged artists and teachers, we confront the idea of working 'for the good of others', pastoralism can be a tool to deepen the analysis of a collaborative art project and of the relations of power that it produces, a tool to go beyond an apparent 'good will', to identify control mechanisms beyond the claim for 'horizontality'.<sup>200</sup>

New ideas coming from Helen and Lea, and kept:

- Have a split screen, on the external wall of the space (our exhibition will be in a kind of box), to make a dialogue between the content of the database and some theory, keywords, etc. ...
- Don't work only with school groups but also with community centres and other groups.
- Have groups not only from Geneva but also from the Bern/Solothurn area, so the German-speaking members of the conception team can hold the workshops in German.

Excerpt from the *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* project diary.



### 4.3.3 Non-frontal authority in *microsillons*' project

Those thoughts about *empowerment*, giving a voice, and about non-frontal forms of power preclude considering an apparently horizontal structure as a synonym of an egalitarian exchange. They helped me to analyse more deeply the power relationships at play in our projects. I will here present two examples of how non-frontal forms of authority took place in our projects.

#### a) The limits of 'horizontality' within a conception team

In *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*, we have seen the shortcomings of proposing a less hierarchical relationship in 'giving up some of our power' to collaborators. Being the ones having the power to conceive our projects, we consciously wanted to give up some of that power to a group of collaborators – the conception team. A mistake might have been to build some kind of fiction of equality, instead of recognizing our differences (in terms of experience, institutional recognition, salaries, etc.) and to build *alliances* taking them more into consideration.

The process – especially at the beginning – was quite encouraging, though: we set up working rules and schedule, defined a common methodology emphasizing the idea of a democratic process, specified together a field of research, shared all work documents on a common remote hard drive, developed a concept in which the ideas of all members (as well as co-generated ideas) were taken into consideration, and decided to involve groups of participants connected to the different members of the team. More importantly, we organized some rotation in the different roles: the same person could document and assist one session and lead the following one. In addition, all decisions were taken by consensus, avoiding the exclusion of minorities that can occur in formal voting.

Nevertheless, as the project evolved, some limits to achieving a really

I feel a bit alone on that part (and in a way too authoritarian, deciding some of the changes myself ...) because of time stress, language ... *microsilions* do the spelling check, the layout and the last writings almost alone. All texts were not written really seriously (problem of not being fully concerned when it not 'one's own project'?).

Excerpt from the *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* project diary.

One of our interlocutors from a school seems to be surprised and puzzled that I speak most of the time in presenting the project (suspicion about our collaborative and gender dynamic?). The others are less used to that kind of situation ...

Excerpt from the *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* project diary.

I worked a lot to prepare and run the introduction day in Zürich.  
I'm about to leave to Poland for a conference, just before coming back in Geneva for the opening ... I'm very tired. Link between less horizontality and the increase of stress and fatigue, including outside of the project?

Excerpt from the *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* project diary.

horizontal process appeared. Several observations led us to realize that an informal hierarchy was in place within the Conception team:

- The hosting institution could never really integrate the horizontal dimension of our project and would address any demand to *microsillons* only. At the beginning of the project, when Le Centre's collaborators addressed us, we made sure to transfer all the information to the whole group and to formulate our answer together. But toward the end of the project, when time pressure increased, this became difficult and we had sometimes to answer quickly in taking decisions ourselves.
- In our relationship with the different partners (schools, community centres, university), when presenting the project to them, some members, less used to discuss on that level, didn't get involved vocally and a strategy to more carefully share speaking time was not developed. It was therefore difficult for some partners to understand the co-conceived dimension of the project.
- Many of the texts that the university students wrote for the timeline were handed in late and were edited/translated by *microsillons*, without time for the whole group to discuss the final versions.
- During the whole process, *microsillons* continued to be part of the research cluster *Kunstvermittlung in Transformation*, discussing the project with its peers, without the rest of the team.
- Being more involved in the project (being part of the collective which initiated it, being paid permanent employees of the institution, having discussed the project in a research group, in our PhD researches ...) means that in case of failure, *microsillons'* members will be more exposed. The responsibilities and the risks within the conception team could not really be shared horizontally, as we are

Too slow to meet the deadlines ... Difficulty to ask from others what I'm committed to do (extra hours, weekends ...). This might lead me to impose, through a workload disparity, too much for the project. Some more 'directiveness' (that could be decided collectively) at the beginning (share tasks, produce text alone ...) might be useful to avoid strong authoritarianism at the end ...

Excerpt from the *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* project diary.

Last minute invitation made to Lea and Helen for a conference to present *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* (no time to think about the format before). They look proud and happy that we thought about them to take part and that the project is going forward. Short but dynamic and funny four voices bilingual presentation ... echoing well the theme of polyphony that we discussed a lot during the project. Importance of involving collaborators also in the post-project narration ... even though it's not always easy to mobilize them afterwards.

Excerpt from the *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* project diary.

not working from the same positions at the beginning. Therefore, the involvement of each member tended to be variable.

<sup>201</sup> My translation.

A final dimension is the money issue. Despite our attempts to change that, Helen Bauman and Lea Fröhlicher couldn't be paid by the institution for their work (they were reimbursed for their travel, though). If this follows some logic, as their internship was part of their studies, the unbalanced situation with the rest of the team affected our relationship and was an obstacle to 'horizontalité'. The philosopher and economist Cornelius Castoriadis (1979: 314), calling for a self-organized society, insists that differences of salaries are part of the hierarchical system, and are incompatible with the political model he is promoting:

There are no objective criteria that can justify a hierarchy of salaries. No more that it is compatible with a hierarchy of command, a self-organized society is not compatible with a hierarchy of salaries or incomes.<sup>201</sup>

In many situations, including when working with school groups, being the only ones receiving payment makes our relationship toward the notion of 'horizontalité' complex: we are calling for a more dialogical relationship but might be the ones benefiting the most from it in a symbolic and financial way.

During their end-of-year jury at the Bern University of the Arts, Lea Fröhlicher and Helen Bauman presented the project and discussed their participation. Despite a very positive feedback about the experience, they underlined the feeling that 'horizontalité' was not achieved in the process. They especially missed being more involved in the discussions with Le Centre and confirmed our feeling that our positions were too different at the beginning for a full egalitarian exchange to happen.

Being the ones to work in Geneva (Lea Fröhlicher and Helen Bauman travelled to Geneva especially for our group sessions), in direct and daily contact with the institution, being the ones who designed the pre-concept,

‘As a conclusion, I would add that I felt more and more ill at ease in the process (of producing an exhibition together), as a visually impaired person. I felt a bit like a ‘guinea pig’, not understanding well, finally, why I was there, as if my handicap was precisely a handicap, here, to realizing what was expected from me!’

Excerpt from the *La surface des choses* project diary. Letter of a participant.

At the beginning of the process, one of the techniques we imagined with the participants was for each of us to come to the meeting with an object of our choice and to discuss it, through any kind of discourse. The goal will be to discuss, starting from each proposed object, the dynamics at play in the objects’ selection, dynamics that are crucial in terms of contemporary artistic creation. The goal is not to judge each one’s choices but to focus on the criteria that led us to choose a specific object rather than another one.

Excerpt from the *La surface des choses* project diary.

Objects brought: piece of wood (to talk about Pinocchio), piece of glass (to talk about the Don Bosco Church in Brazilia), a family picture, a painting ... Personal stories are shared and a space of confidence is building up. Through the process, getting out of the personal to open to something else becomes increasingly difficult.

Excerpt from the *La surface des choses* project diary.

being the ones who invited the students from the HKB to participate, *microsillons* was certainly more authoritarian – even in a diffuse way – than we had wanted or planned to be.

During the whole project, *microsillons* tried to protect the rest of the team from some institutional issues, because Le Centre was in the middle of a crisis involving the committee and the Union. This was done with the idea that the team could concentrate on the project itself. Looking back, it was a mistake not to give the whole team a chance to be involved in dialogue with the institution (in particular concerning the exhibition schedule, the place of presentation of the project and its integration into the exhibition graphic standards). The tendency to artificially separate ‘content’ and ‘institutional questions’ was another mistake in our strategy.

#### b) Feeling like a guinea pig

During *La surface des choses*, the open structure allowed all participants to be involved in the conception of the project and all decisions were taken by consensus, including the one of working on an art installation. Nevertheless, at the end of a very long process of open discussions, even though everybody agreed on the installation’s proposal and no remarks or hesitations were spoken by the participants, one of them, who had been very involved since the beginning, suddenly decided to step out of the project. The participant wrote us a very tough (yet polite) email, raising the difficulty of taking part in the work on the installation and talking about an increasingly blurry feeling concerning the project, having the impression of being a ‘guinea pig’ and not understanding her role anymore.

If such a letter was difficult to accept regarding our involvement in the project, our attention to the interpersonal relationship and to the participants’ involvement, it helped us to think more about the unsaid, about the possibility of the participants feeling that they are not equal partners in a





*La surface des choses.* Participants presenting objects they selected, to start a dialogue.

project.

The image of a *guinea pig*, even if it was apparently not shared by other participants,<sup>202</sup> is certainly partly accurate if we think about how the structure we developed included observing how a collaborative process could evolve – in a way that is somehow close to the monitoring (based on scientific thought discourses and methods) described by Walkerdine.

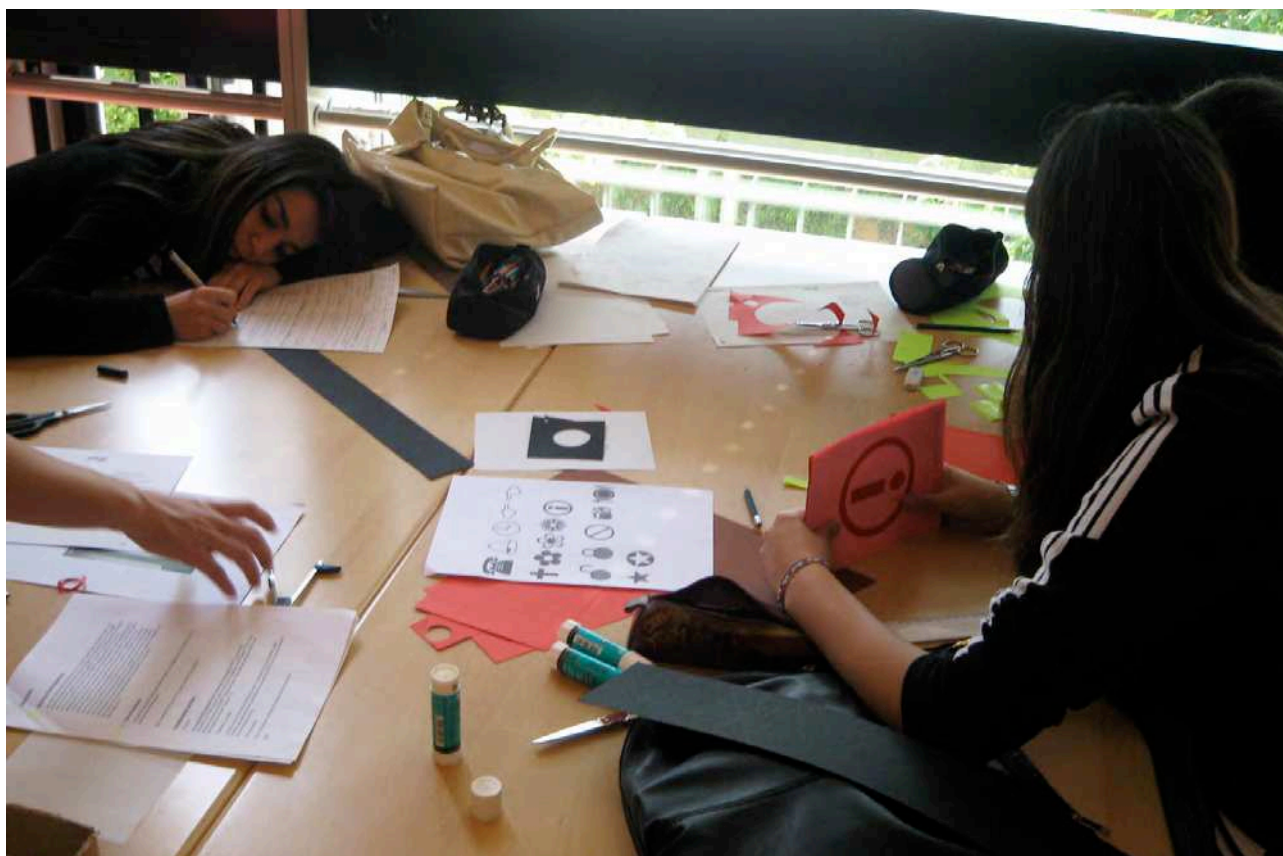
<sup>202</sup> A discussion with the other participants confirmed that the feeling of being 'guinea pigs' was at no point a shared one, that they saw the installation project as the result of co-decisions rather than as something imposed by us and that they decided as fully capable co-workers to go in that direction.

Moreover, in the frame of the friendly relationships we had within the group, some of our proposals might be compared to some of the Christian techniques described by Foucault. For example, early in the process, the participants brought objects from home and commented on them. The exercise was meant as a way both to invite everybody to speak freely and also to begin to think (in regard to our analysis of the non-visual part of contemporary art) about the links between a physical object and a discourse. Nevertheless, this worked also as a personal presentation, as some of the participants took the opportunity to raise issues such as religious beliefs or personal traumas. The participants' choices of objects and discourses on that day contributed to fixing in our minds some views and to assigning expectations of different degrees to each of them.

In the next *microsillons*' projects, when collecting personal information and thoughts – a process that is usually very rewarding in term of class life, exchange, and brainstorming toward a collective production – it will be necessary to be more conscious about the dynamics that it produces.

#### 4.4 Imposing 'horizontality'?

If power can neither be retained nor given away, if voices cannot be given, if hierarchies still exist even in hidden or invisible forms, how can we, as artists working collaboratively, actively work toward a more horizontal exchange? Instead of trying to *empower*, or to pretend to set a fully horizontal structure,



*En commun.* Pupils working in a small group. Difficulty for some participants to work collectively.

a more modest but yet productive move can be to make the power structure visible and to try to use existing positions of authority as a way to initiate transformations toward more horizontal exchange (even if imposing 'horizontality' might first sound an oxymoron). This can be a way to reflect with the participants about a given situation and to emphasize that the existing power structure is not unchangeable.

<sup>203</sup> See point 3.5.1.

<sup>204</sup> Shor's observation could be compared to Freire's idea of *Radical democratic directiveness*. See: Shor & Freire (1987: 171–172).

Ira Shor reflects on the idea of 'negotiating authority' (Shor, 1996), describing how he would negotiate with his students the classroom rules, including the critical points of attendance and grading. For him, this process of negotiation that he also calls 'power-sharing', 'shared authority' or 'cogovernance' (Shor, 1996: 59), is a direct way to practise democracy in the classroom. Shor's proposal of negotiating power (for example, as we've seen,<sup>203</sup> through the contracts he develops with the students or through after-class groups where students can openly criticize what happened during the preceding class) is coming not from the teacher pretending to leave her or his authoritarian position, but from using that very position to make it possible to open a space of negotiation in which decision-making will be shared. For him, the teacher 'has leadership responsibilities but [...] codevelops the class, negotiates the curriculum, and shares decision making with the students, using her or his authority in a cooperation manner [...]' (Shor, 1992: 87). Shor underlines the paradox<sup>204</sup> that the teacher is the one trying to impose a more democratic exchange and that the students (because it is too demanding for them, because they believe in traditional authority, or because they are lacking trust in the teacher's sincerity in the negotiation process) do not necessarily call for it or enjoy it: 'my invitation of power-sharing to students is an unsolicited attempt to distribute some authority to people who are not expecting it, to negotiate a mutual relationship with a group that has not asked for mutuality' (Shor, 1996: 19). He summarizes his position in saying: 'My best course of action has so far been to use my authority to organize a transformation of authority, step by step' (Shor, 1996: 20).

Kreisberg (1992) identifies a similar paradox. His concept of a *power with*



(as opposed to a *power over*) invites us to consider the possible positive dimension of power.<sup>205</sup> The interesting dimension of this apparently quite binary opposition is the way Kreisberg sees *power with* and *power over* as existing in parallel, always being articulated together. Kreisberg gives the example of an 'unwilling actor' being 'coerced' into cooperation' through the 'initial use of power over' (Kreisberg, 1992: 66).

Finally, the paradox of using authority to work toward a less authoritarian pedagogy also finds an echo in Henry Giroux's conception of 'emancipatory authority'. For Giroux (1989: 137–138), 'authority' can be rethought outside of its usual dominant meaning. Key in Giroux's proposal (1994: 162) is that authority must not be suppressed (because it would mean 'to renounce the responsibility of politics, struggle, and commitment as educational projects') but rather reinvested with a new conception and constantly re-interrogated. Above all, for him, defining one's position toward authority is a way for the teacher to make her or his political/pedagogical stand visible, and for the learners to critically think about their own positions toward the existing authority system, a necessary step for making of pedagogy a political act (Giroux, 1994: 162–163).

Giroux's analysis is strongly attacked by Elizabeth Ellsworth (1989: 307), who sees it as a contortion revealing the impossibility for critical pedagogy of reconciling poststructural views with the idea of empowerment. It is also criticized by the feminist researcher in pedagogy Barbara Thayer-Bacon (2006: 105–106), according to whom Giroux is reproducing a modernist vision of teaching because he proposes an emancipation that presupposes a hierarchically higher teacher deciding to emancipate and because the teacher would somehow (because of his background and education) always dominate the process in trying to make it more collaborative.

In a way, those critics are only confirming what Shor, Kreisberg and Giroux have pointed out: there is an unsolvable paradox in trying to impose a different kind of pedagogical exchange into a system where the classical

<sup>205</sup> He bases his analysis on the pioneer thinking of Mary Parker Follett, which shows striking similarities with Foucault's: 'Power is not a pre-existing thing that can be handed to someone. We have seen again and again the failure of power "conferred". The division of power is not the thing to be considered, but the method of organization which will generate power' (Follett, 1942: 110).





hierarchical structure is hegemonic. The danger is that this paradox is immobilizing. Yet it is a central issue to keep in mind when developing projects, both to find practical *ad hoc* solutions to work toward more horizontal exchange and not to be naïve about the discourse that we produce around those projects.

Key to Shor's and Giroux's conceptions is the need to make power relationships more visible, as a precondition for transformative action. This idea of making transparent, of unveiling, should be tackled cautiously,<sup>206</sup> keeping in mind that the participants of a project are not passive elements, are not ignorant of the system they are part of and are contributing to produce.

In *En commun*, our strategy was based on a reflection about the paradox described above and on the idea of making the power structure more visible. In *Lectures autour du graphisme*, the question of attendance was crucial and opened discussions about the paradox of making attendance compulsory for horizontal exchange to take place.

<sup>206</sup> In a chapter discussing paranoid readings and the related logic of 'unveiling', Eva Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003: 143–144) says: 'I have been arguing, these infinitely doable and teachable protocols of unveiling have become the common current of cultural and historicist studies. If there is an obvious danger in the triumphalism of a paranoid hermeneutics, it is that the broad consensual sweep of such methodological assumptions [...] if it persists unquestioned, unintentionally impoverish[es] the gene pool of literacy-critical perspectives and skills. The trouble with a shallow gene pool, of course, is its diminished ability to respond to environmental (e.g. political) change.'

#### 4.4.1 The editor-in-chief paradox in *En commun*

In *En commun*, we confronted a situation where the two classes involved were used only to traditional top-down teaching and where working habits and decision structures couldn't be suddenly changed just for our project. Usually, the pupils or students we collaborate with quickly identify the specificity of the collaborative process and establish a relationship with us different from that with their teachers, most of them being relaxed, talkative, curious and not afraid of not having 'the right answer'. Nevertheless, practising co-decision means taking some distance regarding the usual working habits and requires some time for practice. Even though the project was rather long for an artists' intervention in a school context, it was too short for us to spend much time with the pupils in preliminary reflection and

Difficulty to take part in the brainstorming. Some say that it's too difficult for them to take part in the production, not being artists and not knowing contemporary art.

Excerpt from the *La surface des choses* project diary.

The journalist students seem neither to be used to working for a 'creative' project nor, more surprisingly, for projects that will actually be made public. They are surprised at first but very enthusiastic afterwards.

Excerpt from the *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* project diary.

training about alternative ways to exchange and produce knowledge.

Therefore we tried to imagine an intermediary solution in which the roles would be well defined, in which we wouldn't pretend to get rid of our authority position but in which we would use it to impose a relationship that would differ from the teacher–pupil one, in attributing more responsibility to the pupils and in favouring collective work.

We assigned the participants precise tasks and made the power structure visible in telling them 'you will be journalists and we will be editor-in-chief'.

A recurring pattern that we observed in several of our former projects is the shift from a positive dialogic energy at the beginning (when we usually work on thematic introductions and discussions) to a blockage in the phase of actual co-production of an object, where the participants often had difficulties finding their roles and were stressed about not being able to 'do right'.

This structure was also a way to try to overcome this, in assigning from the beginning very clear roles to the pupils.

Our goal was to make them produce as autonomously as possible articles that would come from their own ideas, interests and desires, but we felt that in this situation the best approach would be to design and impose a hierarchical structure from our position of authority. We still imagined that this structure could be transformed in the course of the project, according to the group will.

We noticed, when developing our projects in a school context (whatever the ages of the participants), that working in groups, self-organizing, working transdisciplinarily and writing creatively are not highly valued in the Swiss school system. Proposing all of a sudden a project involving all those aspects would most certainly have challenged the participants' 'habitus'.<sup>207</sup> Changing the existing pedagogical environment, as Lenoir (2009) points out in analysing self-organization in schools, doesn't come either without

<sup>207</sup> For the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, the concept of *habitus* is a set of moral concepts and behaviours that structure our social practices. School participates in the construction of that *habitus* in pupils and students but it is also itself constituted by the habitus of each person linked to it. In this project, the existing *habitus* of individual work seemed to be deeply rooted in each learner and in the school system. Nevertheless, for Bourdieu, the notion of *habitus* is not deterministic but an unpredictable, creative and always moving set, adapting constantly to new situations. Therefore we can hope for transformations during the course of a project and beyond. Kraus and Gebauer (2002: 78). Translated in English in: Mörsch ed. (2009b: 337).



institutional resistances or without difficulties in changing the participants' minds deeply marked by 'ten, fifteen, twenty years of systematic dressing'.<sup>208</sup>

<sup>208</sup> My translation.

So, paradoxically, keeping a hierarchical structure – one that is a bit different (including in the wording) from the one they are used to, that is made visible and not taken for granted, but that is attributing to the participants a clear position – might help to approach this experimentation in a more confident and positive way.

<sup>209</sup> See point 3.3.4.

Although, as we've seen,<sup>209</sup> the self-organization that we called for within the journalist groups didn't work as well as we would have liked and we had to intervene more than we wanted, the general structure of the project was well accepted and helped the pupils to understand what was expected from them. This was particularly visible in the way they handled the organization and the running of the interviews.

<sup>210</sup> Limiting horizontality for the sake of agency can also be seen in other situations. Pleyers (1999: 105–106), analysing the structure of alter-activist networks, points to the difficulties of reconciling 'horizontality' and efficiency: 'sooner or later, each group is confronted by the dilemma between everybody's participation and strong internal democracy on one side and, on the other, the need for efficiency. This leads, in most of the networks, to more flexibility in the application of the self-organization principles, to avoid turning them into a rigid dogma [...]' My translation.

If 'horizontality' was de facto limited in that project,<sup>210</sup> some fruitful discussions could be started with the pupils about the hierarchical structure that we proposed, its similarities to and differences from their usual class structure, about their roles in the pedagogical process and about the interest of collective work (in particular in writing and drawing, two activities especially considered as being intrinsically individual). Therefore, we consider that using our position of authority, making it visible and discussing it, was an efficient way to introduce the possibilities of a different, more dialogical pedagogical exchange.

#### 4.4.2 Being there to experience a horizontal pedagogy. The difficulty of forming a group for *Lectures autour du graphisme*

Introducing the idea of co-generating the content of his class to new students, Ira Shor emphasizes what this means in terms of involvement; responding to a student with whom he was arguing on the question of



attendance, he explains why a class based on co-generation cannot work like any other class (where attendance might only be a formality), saying: 'I have a lot to say but only in dialogue, after I hear what [the students] think about any subject.'

In a classroom, as in a collaborative art project where a co-production of knowledge is sought, the participants' involvement in the dialogical process is a necessity. When education at every level is increasingly fragmented into 'modules' and 'credits', one might wonder how to spend time together and to build what bell hooks (1994: 9) calls a 'learning community', to create knowledge through exchange rather than collecting pre-formatted information and validations of hours worked.

For *microsillons*, this tension between the will for participants to freely co-generate content and the need for them to be present to do so is central. When working in a school we have had to follow the school's rules of compulsory attendance and participation, which inevitably made the relationship less horizontal. In *En commun*, for example, some of the participants didn't willingly decide to work on the project and some obviously considered it as just 'another school assignment'.

In *Lectures autour du graphisme*, we worked with busy higher-education students on a voluntary basis (meaning not being able to grant them academic credits, as we did for some in *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*), and constituting the group, as well as securing attendance, was a real problem.

After working on several projects involving captive audiences (*En commun*, *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*, among others), we wanted to develop a project in which the participants would take part on a voluntary basis and to observe a possible shift of dynamic.

A group of ten people (including us) was finally gathered, which could have



Beginning of March: contact with the participants. Difficult because of the voluntary dimension (that we are precisely interested in here). Lack of diversity in the group in some sessions: too bad. The difficulty is not to keep interest from one session to the other but more to convince people to take part 'for free', without academic credits, money or a big visibility.

Excerpt from the *Lectures autour du graphisme* project diary.

A student from the Lab EPFL/ECAL in Lausanne is interested. She asks us to be more precise about her role, to make sure she will be useful in the group. We answer to her, propose to pay for her transportation. No answer.

Excerpt from the *Lectures autour du graphisme* project diary.

been a good size for discussing texts, debating different positions and thinking about graphical ways to make our experience visible to a larger audience. Nevertheless, the fact that only two participants attended all three sessions and that we were only four including ourselves for the last session was a strong limitation to our initial will to provoke fruitful debates based on a variety of viewpoints.

The participants all seemed to enjoy the discussions and provided us with good reasons when they missed some sessions. Our observation here, applying more generally, is that people gravitating around the cultural field are overbooked with projects and different kind of events (and training for some of them), making it difficult for them to join such projects.

When a project like this one is not rewarding financially or academically, and not much symbolically either (the exhibition remained rather confidential and was signed collectively), the competition with all the other activities of the participants becomes difficult.

Our will to co-generate with fully involved people led us to work with people who committed voluntarily. But making that exchange possible was complicated, especially working on multiple sessions.

Working with 'captive audiences' (in state schools, for example) remains a way to broaden the constituency beyond artists or people already interested in our approach, even though forced attendance is in tension with egalitarian dialogue.

#### 4.5 Structuring 'horizontal'?

A similar paradox to the one of imposing horizontality can be seen in the idea of designing a structure for a horizontal dynamic to happen. Can 'horizontal' take place in a situation simply defined by interpersonal equal

During the classroom sessions, we had to propose very defined frames in order for the pupils to do something ... Many ideas came from us (the main frame, the themes ...). The feeling sometimes of a kind of fake collaboration, of manipulation. Lacking time and working methodologies to really set up an exchange as we would like ... Our goal is maybe too ambitious.

Excerpt from the *En commun* project diary.

The difficulty of collaborative art production always lies, for us, in the search for a good balance between the space of freedom opened for the participants and the frame that needs to be set for a project to be possible. It's a matter of being able to meet deadlines and to come to a result, but also simply to make the exchange of ideas possible. It is true that this frame can lead to moments of frustration, but it is for us necessary (even in such a small group), for something to happen.

Excerpt from the *La surface des choses* project diary. *microsillons'* answer to a participant.

relationships (in what could be called a structureless way), or are more defined structures needed to make the exchange possible or productive?

In *The Tyranny of the Structurelessness*, the writer and political analyst Jo Freeman (no date, original work 1972) draws the history of 'structureless groups' – even though she begins by observing that 'Structurelessness' is organizationally impossible'. She shows how presumably totally open structures (feminist discussion groups, for example), refusing to define roles and refusing to admit that power relations exist, are unable to help when an action is sought.

Women had thoroughly accepted the idea of 'structurelessness' without realizing the limitations of its uses. People would try to use the 'structureless' group and the informal conference for purposes for which they were unsuitable out of a blind belief that no other means could possibly be anything but oppressive. (Freeman, no date, original work 1972)

From her practical experience, the author unfolds many reasons why such 'informal' and 'unstructured' groups cannot work for an action beyond a collective discussion. She does not advocate a return to traditional forms of organization but refuses to reject them, making instead a counter-proposal: the *Lot System* (Freeman, no date, original work 1972).

This structure (that the author describes as being applicable to many situations) aims to be politically effective. Among the seven principles of the *Lot System* presented by Joreen (delegation, responsibility toward people who delegated authority, distribution of authority among as many people as possible, rotation of tasks, allocation of tasks along rational criteria, frequent diffusion of information and equal access to resources), the rotation of tasks seems especially relevant here. I have discussed how pretending to totally suppress hierarchy was always a fiction and considered theoretical attempts to reconcile the search for a more horizontal relationship with a practical applicability. Here, the simple idea of rotating roles seems to

Helen is an observer (to prepare for sessions she will hold with other groups with Lea (and without us)).

Excerpt from the *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* project diary.

*microsillons* is away (research session in Luzern) but the team meets, makes decisions and goes forward in the project. Very happy with the dynamic. Lots of confidence, good implication of everybody, good balance.

Excerpt from the *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* project diary.

*microsillons* takes a good part of the realization in charge but the roles are clear, defined together ... and the possibility is open for any of the participants to take part as much as us.

Excerpt from the *Lectures autour du graphisme* project diary.

provide a useful model. If it might be difficult to imagine an exchange of roles between someone officially in charge, such as the teacher, and other participants, a model like that of the La Borde clinic in the 1970s (where both a dehierarchization and an undisciplined creativity were promoted)<sup>211</sup> shows that such a rotation is not only possible but can have a strong transformative effect (here, a therapeutic one) on the individuals. Jean-Claude Polack (no date), who worked in the clinic from 1964 to 1976, writes:

Rigidity and repetition factors, status, must be reduced by the rotation of tasks, the diversity of functions, the multiplicity of investments. How to allow schizophrenic people not to consider themselves as rejects or masters of the world, if doctors and instructors continue to consider themselves as savants or protectors of the norm?<sup>212</sup>

Joreen's analysis – concerning the rotation of tasks – could find parallels in anarchist theories. Bakounine (1871: 10) would, for example, consider the unsteady dimension of function as constitutive of a non-hierarchical order.<sup>213</sup>

no function is petrified, fixed, or stays irremediably attached to any one person. Hierarchical order and promotion don't exist, so yesterday's commander can become a subordinate today.<sup>214</sup>

Nevertheless, *The Tyranny of Structurelessness* has been criticized by some anarchist writers, such as McQuinn, who see the text as dismissing too quickly the possible efficiency of a 'structureless' action. For McQuinn (2002–2003: 5), even though anarchists wouldn't be good at dealing with too big structures, 'libertarian organizations can and have accomplished everything necessary for individuals and communities to live in free, egalitarian, convivial societies'. Moreover, the author claims that, despite being small and informal, those organizations have always used some elements of formal organization, whenever it was necessary. She shows interest in the Lot System and claims that anarchists or libertarian groups are capable of using it efficiently, and that delegation, rotation of tasks or

<sup>211</sup> See: Bishop (2012: 273).

<sup>212</sup> My translation.

<sup>213</sup> One could say that in such a system hierarchies exist on practical grounds but that the place of everyone in this hierarchy is constantly changing, ensuring equality.

<sup>214</sup> My translation.



## L'UTOPIE À L'HEURE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT

**Egalement au Centre** d'art contemporain, «Utopie et quotidienneté», une proposition des médiateurs Microsilons, présente trois projets d'artistes dont les pratiques incluent des stratégies pédagogiques. Didactique, mais pas prémâché: il faut accorder du temps à l'expo pour en saisir les tenants et aboutissants.

Le collectif autrichien trafo.K a travaillé avec l'architecte viennoise Gabu Heindl et l'Ecole allemande de Genève. Le résultat est une maquette et quelques panneaux qui parlent de traduction, d'interprétation et de relecture – le tout réalisé par des élèves ados parfois très critiques envers l'art contemporain. La deuxième proposition, de l'urbaniste étasunien Damon Rich, fondateur du collectif Center for Urban Pedagogy, et de l'artiste de Seattle Oscar

Tuazon, a la forme d'un terrain de jeu de taille adulte (mais qui n'en ravit pas moins les enfants visitant l'expo). C'est la cité genevoise du Lignon – son architecture, son histoire et son organisation sociale – qui a intéressé les artistes. Ils se sont directement inspirés de son plan pour l'une des constructions montrées au Centre d'art. Enfin, le Britannique Nils Norman et le Lausannois Tilo Steireif exposent le fruit de leurs recherches sur les éducations alternatives. Ils ont pour cela inventé un dispositif qui évoque la bibliothèque du Centre international de recherche sur l'anarchisme de Lausanne (CIRA). On y découvre un film sur le CIRA, les travaux de quelque 200 élèves autour de l'utopie et une minuscule salle de cinéma qui donne la parole aux élèves. Etonnant. SSG

Schellenberg, Samuel (2009) L'utopie à l'heure de l'enseignement. *Le Courrier*, 10 December.

## Utopies pédagogiques, c'est possible

### Artistes et citoyens en action au CAC de Genève

La «médiation culturelle» est un concept passablement ésotérique. Il décrit les activités pédagogiques qui fleurissent dans tous les musées, en particulier dans ceux qui présentent l'art contemporain. De quoi s'agit-il? De visites organisées avec les commentaires éclairés des spécialistes, d'audioguides mis à la disposition des visiteurs? Est-ce un bourrage de crâne, la légitime explication de ce qui demande à être expliqué ou alors tout autre chose?

Le Centre d'art contemporain (CAC) de Genève présente, sous le titre *Utopie et quotidienneté*, le résultat de trois collaborations entre des artistes internationaux, des écoles, le Centre international de recherche sur l'anarchisme et la Haute Ecole pédagogique de Lausanne, ainsi que des habitants de la cité du Lignon à Genève. Des espaces de jeu, des vidéos, les traces des travaux réalisés à l'école et la démonstration qu'on est plus près de la pédagogie proprement dite, d'une initiation à l'autonomie et à une réflexion critique sur l'information, que d'œuvres d'art à contempler. Tout autour des installations, des

panneaux exposent les différentes doctrines pédagogiques progressistes qui ont eu une immense influence jusqu'aux années 1980 et qui semblent oubliées aujourd'hui.

Utopies pas mortes! C'est ce que semble aussi affirmer ironiquement, dans une autre exposition du CAC, l'immense lombric construit par le groupe genevois KLAT, fiction délirante du peuplement futur de la planète ou dérision de l'obsession du recyclage. **Laurent Wolf**

**KLAT et Utopie et quotidienneté.** Centre d'art contemporain, 10, rue des Vieux-Grenadiers, Genève. Mardi 11-18h. Jusqu'au 7 février 2010.

Wolf, Laurent (2009) Utopies pédagogiques, c'est possible. *Le Temps*, 11 December.



frequent diffusion of information are practices accomplished daily in many libertarian groups. (McQuinn, 2002–2003: 5–6)

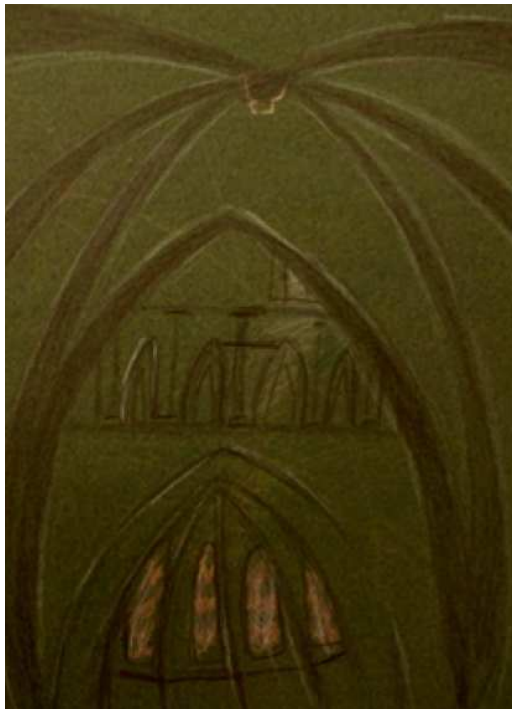
In *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*, the rotation of roles within a conception team, inside a well-defined structure (the schedule, the number of hours spent by each one in the project and the final goals were clearly set from the beginning), appeared either possible or difficult. We considered their degree of possibility as an indicator of the success in our search for more horizontal exchanges. When, for example, Helen Bauman or Lea Fröhlicher (officially hired as interns) would take charge in a session with a group and we would act as assistants/facilitators, or when a group meeting took place without us and led to important decisions, we all discussed it as a very successful outcome of our 'conception team' structure.

As Joreen states, a structureless group cannot exist, which makes the reflection about experiences of ways to organize and to interact even more important. It can lead to an attempt to find a mode of collaboration for each specific situation that corresponds to our ethical considerations (co-producing democratically, integrating every willing participant) and meets our practical needs (present projects publicly, meet the deadline, get support to continue our work ...).

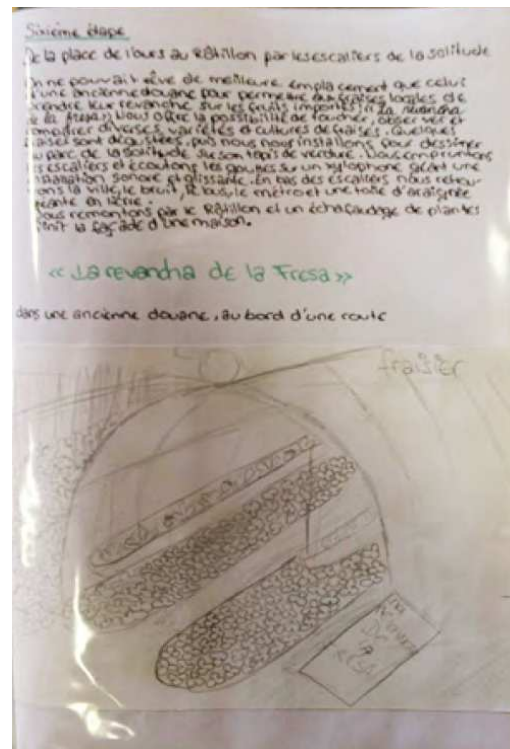
#### 4.5.1 Repetitive outcomes: openness and lack of variety in *Utopia and the Everyday*

If Joreen mentions the difficulty of a 'structureless' organization resulting in concrete action, we observed that an absence of structure could also affect the inventiveness and variety of the production resulting from a project.

One of the most interesting outcomes of the *Utopia and the Everyday* experience was the discussion that took place among the teachers involved in the project organized by Nils Norman and Tilo Steireif about the necessity



*Utopia and the Everyday. Between Art and Pedagogies.* Excerpts from two students' diaries in the group that experienced a series of free outside classes proposed by a teacher in the project initiated by Norman and Steireif. Repetitive results despite a very open proposal.



*Utopia and the Everyday. Between Art and Pedagogies.* Excerpts from two students' diaries in the group that experienced a series of free outside classes proposed by a teacher in the project initiated by Norman and Steireif. Repetitive results despite a very open proposal.

of framing a pedagogical activity in order to get varied and interesting results.

The teachers involved in the project were more or less radical in the way they stepped aside from their usual way of working. Some kept a very vertical relationship with their pupils, setting them precise tasks and grading the work. Others established a more free relationship, involving the pupils in deciding the content of the class and not controlling the results.

During a visit to the exhibition with teachers in training, Tilo Steireif noticed that, paradoxically, the teachers who tried to flatten the relationship in allowing more freedom to their pupils (in particular the teacher who, for one session a week during seven weeks, held her art class in different spaces outside school and basically let the pupils do what they wanted) came up with what he qualified as plain and repetitive results, focusing on the same short selection of objects. On the contrary, the ones who asked very precise things of their students (here: imagine transforming something in your school's architecture, draw a realistic plan of your proposal and, from there, imagine a utopian school) made it possible for the pupils to be more actively involved in a creative process and led to a larger variety of ideas.

This could illustrate that a strong frame is always needed and that libertarian or anarchist pedagogy is not fruitful if it challenges too much the usual way in which teachers set the pedagogical structure. Nevertheless, it can be misleading to draw such conclusions from a single short-term experiment in an unchanged school environment. The pupils are accustomed to being told precisely what to do and are more at ease concentrating on the content of the proposal when the form of the exchange remains untouched than when confronted with an unfamiliar situation. In that case, a lot of energy is expended by the pupils in trying to see the limitations of that new 'open frame', and organizing is difficult for them. Self-organization, collective work, self-motivation, curiosity toward new subjects and forms do not come simply from erasing the school system for a few sessions.





*Utopia and the Everyday. Between Art and Pedagogies.* Student's architectural proposal for transforming an existing school building.



Student's architectural proposal for transforming an existing school building.

Using a structure to ease involvement and exchange is a recurring discussion in our projects; when our proposal is not clear enough or not framed enough at the beginning, a very unilateral and authoritarian decision has often to be taken at one point to bring the elements back together, to refocus the work and to be able to produce the final object.<sup>215</sup>

<sup>215</sup> See point 3.3.4.



## 5. CONCLUSION

### 5.1 State of the reflection

Working toward more horizontal relationships is crucial today, because it can promote collective practices, critical thinking and a culture of political dialogue when a neo-liberal ideology promoting individual competition, efficiency and consumption is dominant.

I mentioned that ‘horizontality’ is not a method to apply but a horizon; ‘Horizontalism is perhaps best understood as a guiding vision’, as Juris (2005: 257) says. This horizon, this vision, is always to be balanced with everyday work and with the paradoxes encountered daily. ‘Horizontality’ shouldn’t become an immobilizing myth but a tool to self-critically think one’s practice in a given context. One must be conscious of the paradoxes at play in collaborative practices, striving to transform power relationships and tackle one’s work with modesty and a sense of daily agency. A *performative*<sup>216</sup> conception of ‘horizontality’ might be useful in that process. The artist or teacher willing to develop a more horizontal relationship is not reproducing any ‘critical teaching model’, but performs, with all the people involved, a series of actions to adapt to a given context. Those actions can include: discussing the role of the participants, negotiating the content with them, rotating tasks, signing together, imposing a frame ... Recognizing the level of interpersonal relationship as key for seeking a more horizontal exchange is also acknowledging the importance of the performative dimension of the dynamic between the people involved.

Dialogue can then be considered as unstable, constantly renegotiated, and the progressive transformation of the authoritarian relationship between a teacher, an artist or a gallery educator, and a group can be sought through a series of micro-transformations, using tactically the specificities of every

<sup>216</sup> Judith Butler (1997, 2000) plays an important role in the discourse about performativity. Garoian, in two distinct books, shows how both pedagogy (1999) and the museum (2001) are performed spaces. About the links between gallery education and performativity, see: Landkammer et al. eds. (2010).





unique situation.

The concepts that my investigation about ‘horizontality’ led me to discuss – empowerment, emancipatory authority, power *with*, expert authority, Lot System, rhizovocality, wiki pedagogy – appear to reconcile the utopia of ‘horizontality’ with the practical imperatives of educators and, by extension, of artists dealing with pedagogy. Yet they also raise new issues, shortcomings and paradoxes.

Poststructuralist thinking encourages us to recognize the gaps and incoherences that are inherent to any discourse and not to try to promote a single narrative around a given question. Thereby, my research is not leading to a general method but helps to identify key issues in each of *microsillons*’ specific collaborations and to address them in a self-critical, complex and situated way.

My research showed both that ‘horizontality’ is not intrinsically good and that striving for horizontal relationships doesn’t mean simply getting rid of all hierarchies.

Suissa (2010: 62), in her analysis of anarchism in education, shows that anarchists are not opposed to authority but find forms such as ‘authority of competence’ acceptable. She concludes her analysis in saying:

the important point to note is that the anarchist acceptance of certain kinds of authority as legitimate is sufficient to reject the extreme libertarian claim that education *per se*, as conceived as a form of human interaction necessarily involving some kind of authority, is morally illegitimate.

Although some forms of authority are inevitably at play even in the most apparently horizontal structures, those forms can be legitimate and productive, working toward more transparent, more accountable and more negotiable power relationships.



Horizontal working relationships enable power relationships to be discussed and transformed according to the desires of the people concerned, by allowing within a group the possibility of rotating tasks and roles in the hierarchy. Participating in working toward such a change through collaborative educational art projects is meaningful for different reasons.

First, both the art class in the school curriculum and the gallery education activities within the art institutions are spaces of relative freedom for experimentation. Through the interest of many progressive pedagogues for the art medium, or through the critical theory studies of some gallery educators, a tradition of critical thinking exists in those spaces. This tradition is an asset when trying to rethink the conditions through which art and knowledge are produced and shared.

Second, working toward 'horizontality' means rethinking individual competition, and authorship. Making art (an activity considered by many as essentially individualistic) together, informed by the history and the contemporary practice of collective production in that field, is a practical way to address this issue and to experiment with a non-competitive alternative to individualist culture.

Third, the faculty of art to produce inspiring symbols enables artists and educators to imagine that democratic experiments at a laboratory scale could reach a bigger audience, open debates and become meaningful for others.

Fourth, the intrinsic unpredictability of many art practices<sup>217</sup> complements a pedagogical practice not based on the transmission of pre-existing knowledge. Art practices are therefore a very good example of a knowledge *en devenir* that cannot be transmitted top down.

Finally, a matter of strategic importance: educational art projects can often be financed more easily than others. Many art practices, including some of

<sup>217</sup> One can think about a whole range of artistic strategies throughout art history that deal with or even provoke unpredictability: playing with randomness, provoking accidents, exploring the unconscious, doing research-based projects ...



the most research-driven and critical, have to be self-financed and therefore might be difficult to maintain, or institute, in the long term. Art projects involving a pedagogical dimension can find institutional support, and can therefore play a 'game within the game',<sup>218</sup> being a critical agent with some institutional visibility.

<sup>218</sup> See the text by Beatrice von Bismarck (2005), in which the author is emphasizing how a long-term connection with an art institution makes it possible to develop a 'game within the game', using and expanding institutional critique strategies.

## 5.2 Toward the next projects

Because of their unpredictable dimension (which often goes along with unstable goals) and because the human factor is at the heart of the process they generate, measuring the success of our projects is a complex task. Unlike a scientific process in which the reproduction of the experiment and the comparison of the results is key, each project here produces its own unique results, complicating attempts to identify recurring patterns.

Gathering continuous feedback from the participants in the project diaries is an attempt to record evidence of the benefits for participants of taking part, and how the projects were meaningful to them. But we identified two main difficulties in this process. First, it's a challenge to find a format which allows the protagonists to talk about their experience in a free and critical way. Second, benefits for the participants can happen years after the projects in many unpredictable ways and are therefore difficult to observe.

Nevertheless, squarely facing this difficulty is a way to use testimonies not simply as a way to advertise the projects but as a way to critically rethink and enhance them. In her reflection about evaluation in the field of participatory gallery projects and arts projects, Emily Pringle (2010) writes:

there exists a second understanding of evaluation, which argues that, rather than judging the success of programme outcomes or performance, it should instead constitute a 'rendering' of a project from inception to close. Within this model the focus is on the construction and 'telling' of the story of the project





and the sharing of experiences. The emphasis shifts, therefore, towards an understanding, not only of what was accomplished during a project, but also what it meant to the participants. [...] Evaluations of this nature can be identified as having a 'developmental' perspective.

In accordance with this analysis, the observations gathered during each project, and the thinking they induced in my thesis, transform the next projects.

'Horizontality' is sometimes presented as a synchronic and spatial axis in opposition to a diachronic and historical one. Hal Foster (1996: 202) writes that many artists 'work horizontally, in a synchronic movement from social issue to issue, from political debate to debate, more than vertically in a diachronic engagement with the disciplinary forms of a given genre or medium' and sees a danger in the possible loss of a certain historical deepness through the process. About the two axes he defines – a horizontal one following a spatial logic (one that not only maps a site but also works in terms of topics, contexts and so on) and a vertical temporal one – he says:

The two axes were in tension, but it was a productive tension [...] . Today, as artists follow horizontal lines of working, the vertical lines sometimes appear to be lost.

I have tackled 'horizontality' through the prism of power and never meant it as a synonym of a synchronic, spatial or transdisciplinary concept. Nevertheless, I'm interested in Foster's argument because *microsillons'* practice is about mapping sites, selecting topics and designing frames in varying contexts, which does entail a risk of losing temporal depth.

This argument shows the importance of being informed about the history of collaborative art practices, as well as about how emancipatory pedagogies were used by artists and critical gallery educators. Making knowledge about it available for peers in the field is crucial. Moreover, this reflection

Disappointment of a participant that the project ends and will not be reconducted. Very hard for him.

Excerpt from the *La surface des choses* project diary.

is for me a reason to reaffirm the importance of working locally (making the understanding of the historical context easier) and over a long term (considering the past, present and future of the groups involved, following the effects of a project after its realization and imagining recurring collaborations).

In traditional gallery education, as in many collaborative art practices, a recurring tendency is to work with 'others', with people that are considered as being in deficit (of access to culture, of social integration, of physical abilities). In that conception, 'horizontality' would then be a way to reach a more egalitarian situation in *raising* them from their position of deficit.

To avoid developing projects serving such a problematic discourse (which Hal Foster (1995: 302–303) calls *ideological patronage*), it is crucial, in *microsillons'* work, to emphasize local networks and work with people living close to us, in their difference.

In addition to focusing on the local, finding ways to finance and realize very long-term projects makes it possible to develop a transitional process toward other kinds of relationship, to value correctly the unexpected dimension of collaboration and to work toward institutional micro-transformations.

I see the continuation of my research through reading and writing and, above all, through doing research-driven art projects. Doubts and enthusiasm are always intrinsically linked when thinking about *microsillons'* past or future projects: doubts, because refusing to accept any given concept, method, action or discourse leads to a constant rethinking; enthusiasm, because transformations can be observed, because the joy of working together is transmitted to the people *microsillons* is working with, because surprises happen and transform the everyday, because the desire to demand more is heard.

## Another Roadmap Blog

Toronto working group –  
Proyecto Latin@



Welcome to the  
Blog of Another  
Roadmap



Barcelona  
working group



Yogyakarta  
working group



Kampala working  
group

### FEATURED

#### Welcome to the Blog of Another Roadmap



Arts Education is being discussed and represented in diverse contexts, forums and platforms – however, research reflecting arts education practices in different socio-political contexts internationally, informed by critical reflections concerning the history and presence of Western hegemonial education and concepts of art in the framework of post-colonial studies is still missing.

Combining research and practise, researchers working in the framework of **Another Roadmap** aim to broaden the concept of “arts education” by conducting research about arts education practices in various fields including, but not limited to, art education in schools, art in social context, art activism, community arts, gallery education, artists in schools, social justice work, etc.

This Blog informs about the international network of research groups whose joint work towards **Another Roadmap** is based on critical analyses of cultural policies concerning arts education and accompanied by their practices and experiences working in arts education. Apart from presenting the history of the network, [research groups and their practices](#) are portrayed and information given about [how to join the network](#).

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#### Archives

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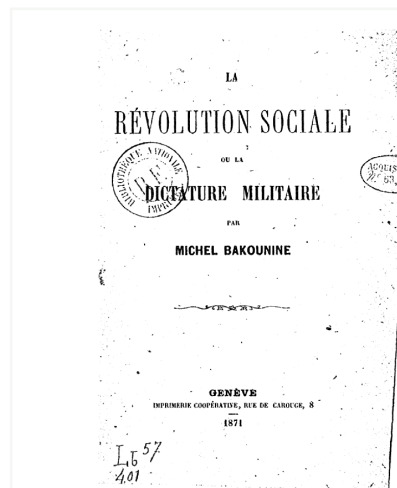
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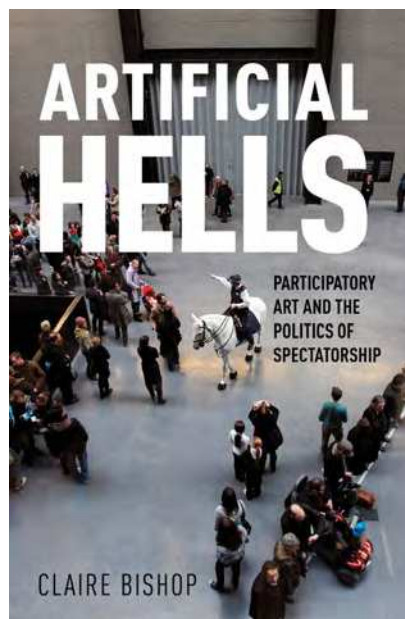
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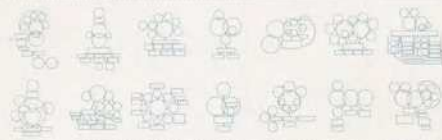
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socialisme

**SOCIALISME**  
OU BARBARIE

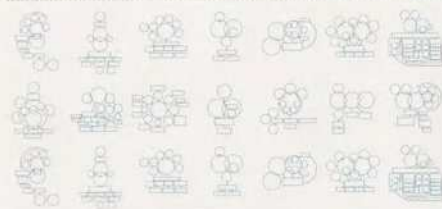
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## TRANSDUCTORES

Pedagogías colectivas y políticas especiales  
TRANSDUCERS collective Pedagogies and Special Politics



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Ode Project / Paloma Group United / CityArt / PLATFORM / AIX / Flatline / Workshop /  
Atelier d'architecture autonome / The Center for Urban Pedagogy / KUNSTHAUS / TRANSDUCTORES /



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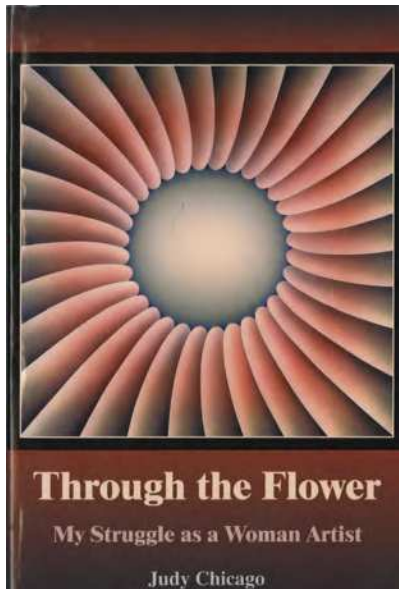
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**ABZ**[Home](#)[Back](#)

THE ABZ OF THE COPENHAGEN FREE UNIVERSITY

**MOVEMENTS**

Black Mountain College, New Experimental College, Drakabygget, the Spontaneous University, New York Free University, London Anti-University, Berlin Kritischer Universität, Detroit Artists' Workshops.

**UNHAPPY CONSCIOUSNESS**

A motor running in the background.

**DESIRE**

They never mentioned that learning could be a matter of a 'desire to' or a 'desire for'. No. They left it so that we did not know what our desires could be until it was too late, until we desired the job and became emotionally attached to it.

**SUBJECTIVITY**

Become one, become many. I and I.

**MASS INTELLECTUALITY**

With the Copenhagen Free University we have opened a discussion about who and what define knowledge today and the relationship between knowledge and life. Our work is based on the understanding, that knowledge is social and that all forms of human activity carries a level of knowledge. As Antonio Gramsci wrote in his prison diaries from 1932: "All are intellectuals [...], but not all have the function of the intellectual in society".

**CONTESTATION**

Strike and disappear.

**FELLOW TRAVELLERS**

The Copenhagen Free University is a sphere of interest arising from the material life we experience and will always already be politicised before any citizenship. Our scope is both local and global, looking for fellow travellers around the corner and around the world.

**MESS**



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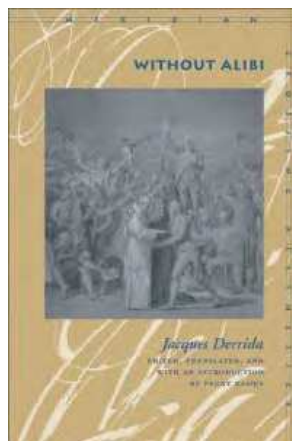
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*Why Doesn't This  
Feel Empowering?  
Working Through the Repressive  
Myths of Critical Pedagogy*

ELIZABETH ELLSWORTH  
*University of Wisconsin, Madison*

*Elizabeth Ellsworth finds that critical pedagogy, as represented in her review of the literature, has developed along a highly abstract and utopian line which does not necessarily sustain the daily workings of the education its supporters advocate. The author maintains that the discourse of critical pedagogy is based on rationalist assumptions that give rise to repressive myths. Ellsworth argues that if these assumptions, goals, implicit power dynamics, and issues of who produces valid knowledge remain untheorized and untouched, critical pedagogues will continue to perpetuate relations of domination in their classrooms.*

*The author paints a complex portrait of the practice of teaching for liberation. She reflects on her own role as a White middle-class woman and professor engaged with a diverse group of students developing an antiracist course. Grounded in a clearly articulated political agenda and her experience as a feminist teacher, Ellsworth provides a critique of "empowerment," "student voice," "dialogue," and "critical reflection" and raises provocative issues about the nature of action for social change and knowledge.*

In the spring of 1988, the University of Wisconsin-Madison was the focal point of a community-wide crisis provoked by the increased visibility of racist acts and structures on campus and within the Madison community. During the preceding year, the FIJI fraternity had been suspended for portraying racially demeaning stereotypes at a "Fiji Island party," including a 15-foot-high cutout of a "Fiji native," a dark-skinned caricature with a bone through its nose. On December 1, 1987, the Minority Affairs Steering Committee released a report, initiated and researched by students, documenting the university's failure to address institutional racism and the experiences of marginalization of students of color on campus. The report called for the appointment of a person of color to the position of vice chancellor of ethnic minority affairs/affirmative action; effective strategies to recruit

*Harvard Educational Review* Vol. 59 No. 3 August 1989  
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The Return of the Real

Hal Foster



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Michel  
Foucault

*Power /  
Knowledge*

Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977



fig. 102

Edited by Colin Gordon

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# WOLNY UNIwersYTET WARSZAWY

FREE/SLOW UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW

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CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AND KNOWLEDGE FACTORIES:  
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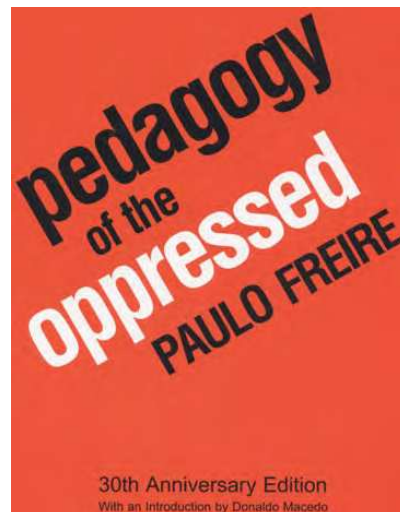
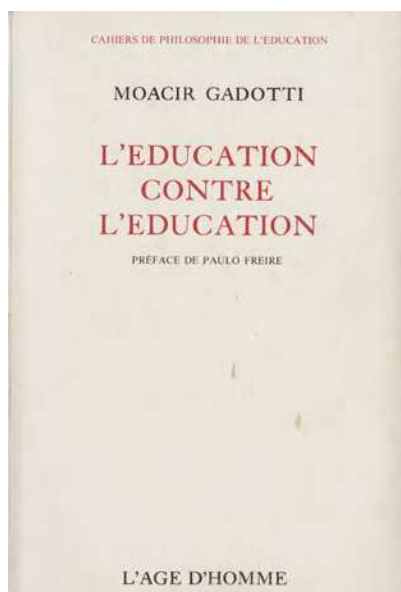
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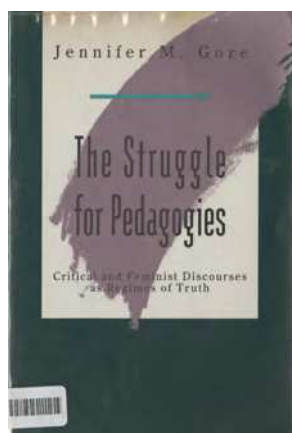
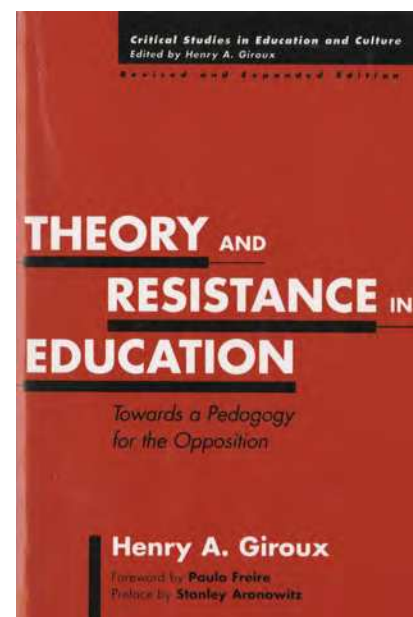
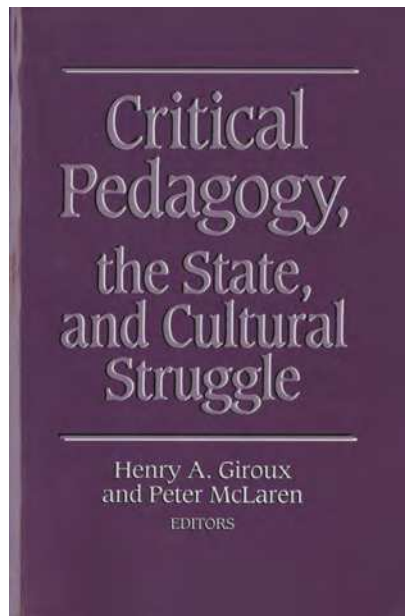
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**common** wealth  
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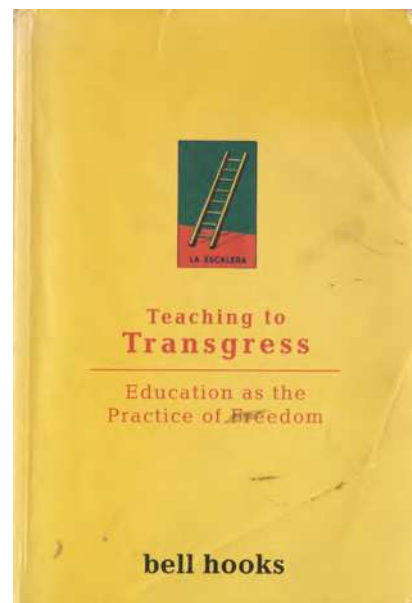
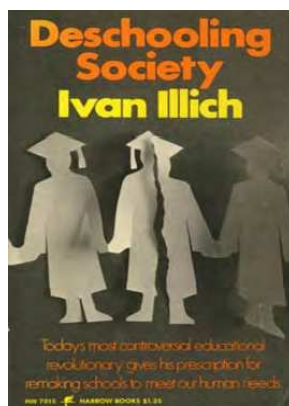
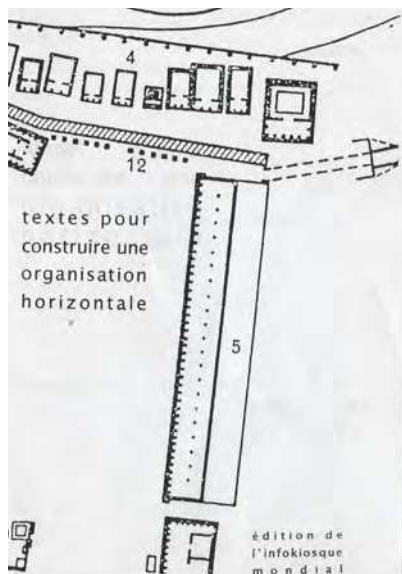
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## Aiming for communal constructivism in a wiki environment

Submitted by [heather](#) on May 27, 2004 - 19:07

Referring to my post about [my failure using wikis](#) in the classroom Stephen Downes said "I wish I understood just how the exercise turned into a failure" at: [Stephen's Weblog](#)

I see now, that I never described the process in any detail. I mention that I developed a formula, but hadn't shared it. Nor did I elaborate on why I perceived this as a failure.

The failure, really, is that I missed the opportunity to share the essence of the experience I am having collaborating on communal wikis. Instead, I merely slapped wiki technology onto a tried and true training method. I never got to 'that level'... I'm putting that in [scam pages](#) because I know there's something wrong about making value judgements about learning situations... I just can't articulate it yet.

### How I learn on a wiki

The essence of my experience on CommunityWiki has been collaborative document editing, and the wonders of hypertext: in a very '95 sort of way. Sharing and learning there has shown me how you need to develop ideas in a group through rhizomes- linking out from existing topics. As a newcomer you begin to understand the established community's shared knowledge, and you learn where you can introduce your voice in the discussion.

Your words then become absorbed by the group, and 'refactored' as they say in wiki-speak. And as others come to understand your ideas, it becomes their own, and new thoughts spring from your page, in a very liberal sense: new links. The wiki, in a constructionist sense, becomes "an object to think with". Issues of ownership become blurry yet the social support and feedback system still provides a sense of accomplishment and pride.

This the experience I wanted to model and share with my participants. I feel that this process is a great tool for communal constructivism, a concept which I am highly influenced by the lecturers on my course:

"What we argue for is a communal constructivism where students and teachers are not simply engaged in developing their own information but actively involved in creating knowledge that will benefit other students. In this model students will not simply pass through a course like water through a sieve but instead leave their own imprint in the development of the course, their school or university, and ideally the discipline."

You can read more about communal constructivism here, in a - [Communal Constructivism](#)

[Students constructing learning for as well as with others](#)

So in some ways, the bar for me has been raised 'above' the level of finding handy tools to deliver course material. I'll describe now how I used the wiki in the classroom, and how it was a failure...

### How I used the wiki in a classroom

I was conducting a workshop on visual design for non-experts. We used a wiki for presentation and in-class exercises. I have since discovered this practice is used elsewhere, and there's even a catchy name for it: [WikiPage](#)

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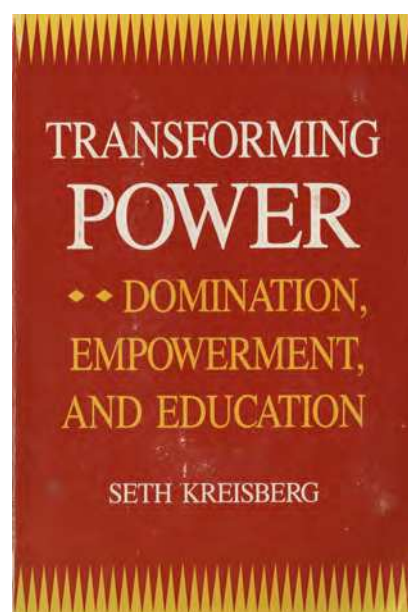
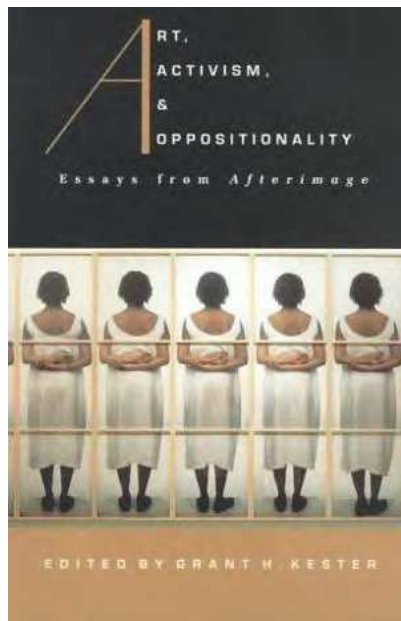
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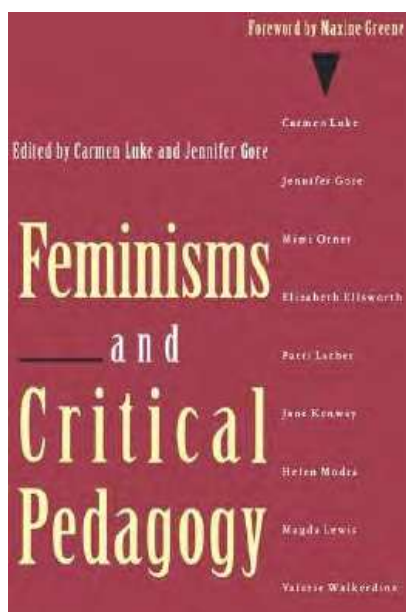
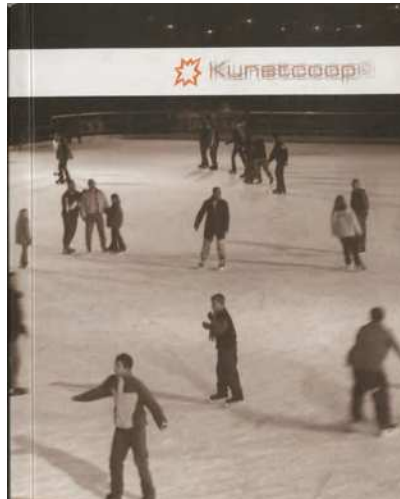
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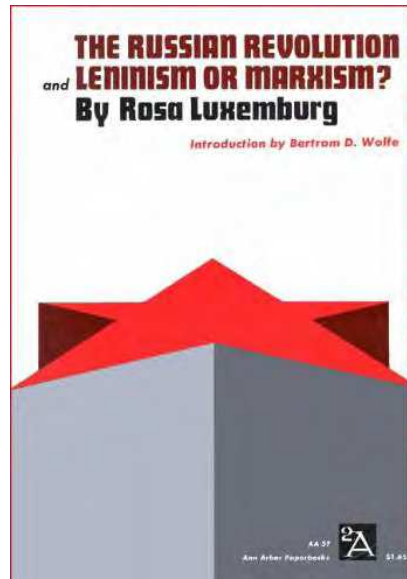
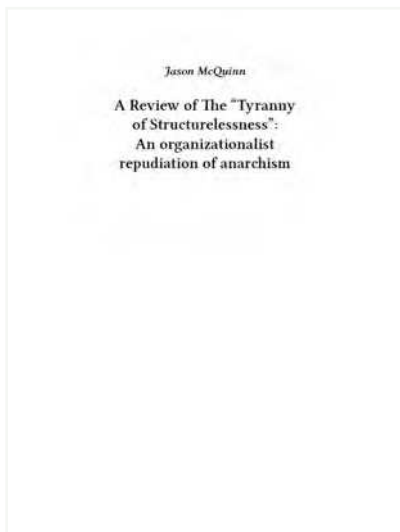
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## GAZETTE #2

• WHO TRANSLATION •

«Vos collègues et le studio d'architecture ont pu voir E et G. Ils nous ont dit de continuer nos développements, mais un groupe d'élèves de l'École Alexander de Genève, après un 12 ans,

[illegible][illegible]

Un troisième point, majeur de la typologie de l'innovation, il s'agit des différents aspects généraux pour un commerce. Les divers paramètres identifiés en classe nous permettent de réaliser un tableau de profil pour chaque point modal des réseaux d'acteurs en de quatre degrés : les relations ont moins ou plus de poids. À partir de ces photographies, nous avons de fait obtenu quatre types de réseaux, les plus récents à être réalisés à ce jour.

Après cette introduction, un véritable débat s'est déroulé au sujet du Centre d'Art Contemporain Québec. Les débats ont porté sur divers aspects de notre mission pour faire l'histoire de l'art contemporain, tels qu'il se présente dans le présent et l'avenir. Nous avons eu la chance d'être invités par Nicolas Hult, conservateur et directeur de la Biennale de Stockholm.

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## **KULTURA WARSZTATÓW „FLY-IN FLY-OUT”**

Rozpoczynając od omówienia własnych doświadczeń, kolektyw microsilions przedstawił model warsztatów „fly-in fly-out”.

Pragniemy zainicjować debatę o jego wpływie na powstawanie projektów. Chcemy zidentyfikować zmianę natury współpracy spowodowaną uwarunkowaniami produkcji. Zapytać o rządzącą projektem ekonomię i jej możliwą alternatywę.

Od 2005 roku kolektyw edukacyjno-artystyczny microsilions realizuje niezależne lub też instytucjonalne projekty współpracy, zapraszając rozmaitych uczestników.

Metodologia działania kolektywu podlega nieustannym przemianom w imię elastyczności, której wymagają konkretne przypadki. Jedynie kilka cech jest niezmiennych: projekty angażują niewielu uczestników, działających wspólnie przez kilka miesięcy i prezentujących na koniec publicznie wyniki swojej kolektywnej pracy.

W skład microsilions wchodziły tylko dwie osoby, jednak każdy projekt realizowany jest z zewnętrznymi współpracownikami (artystami, projektantami, socjologami, aktywistami, historykami, nauczycielami). Kluczem do realizacji projektów jest znajomość lokalnego kontekstu, zatem poprzedzać je musi długotrwała budowa sieci skupiającej nauczycieli, ośrodki socjalne i stowarzyszenia, prowadzona w celu wyłonienia odpowiednich grup i współpracowników do każdego projektu.

W 2009 roku kolektyw microsilions złożył Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej w Genewie (gdzie realizował kilka projektów edukacji artystycznej)

*microsillons* (2009–2010f) Utopia and the Everyday. Between Art and Pedagogy, Gazette no.3. *microsillons* website [Internet]. Available from: <<http://www.microsillons.org/utopieetquotidiennete/visite16b.html> > [Accessed 27 March 2015].

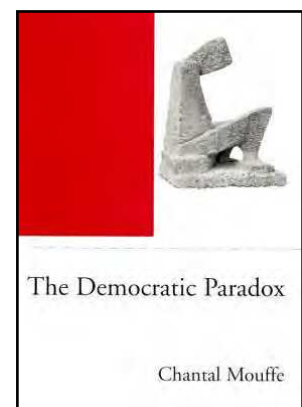
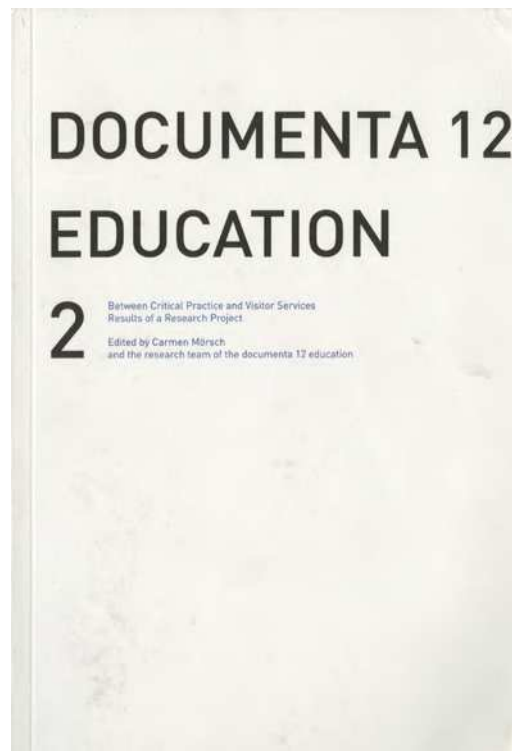
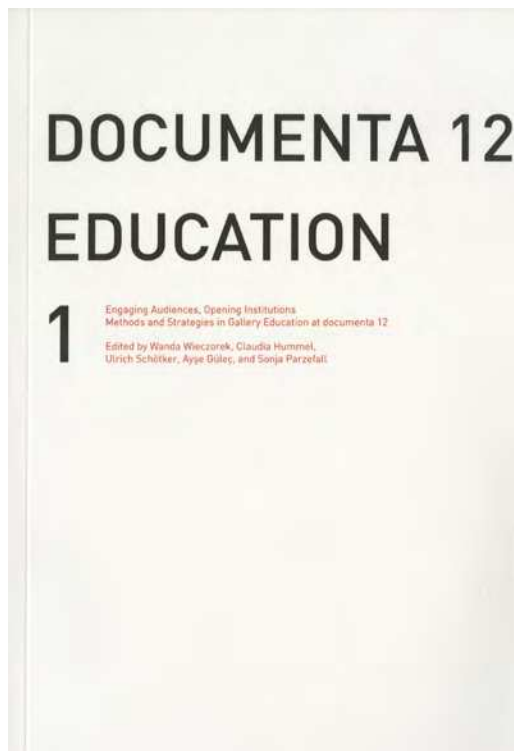
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## Networks, Open Spaces, Horizontality: Instantiations

Rodrigo Nunes

### An Epilogue To Be Read First

We speak of many networks and open spaces, but only one horizontality. It is clear that the latter is a principle rather than a reality: like a Kantian regulative idea, it hovers above the particular instantiations of networks and open spaces that we can experience, enjoying the ambiguous status of both means and end. 'Networks' and 'open spaces', therefore, are also ambiguous by nature: on the one hand, they are what we perceive as the conditions of possibility of horizontality, the means by which it can be achieved; on the other, they are only partial actualisations of the idea they make possible – and make possible not only as instantiation, but also as idea, since it is only within the horizon of a politics of networks and open spaces that horizontality becomes a means and a goal.

What I intend to do in the following lines is to explore a few conceptual tools to examine a particular instantiation of the idea of open space and its relationship to network organising; or rather, to examine a shifting 'ecosystem' of networked politics and open space-organising, that of the relationship between the WSF, the Youth Camp, and autonomous spaces in the Social Forum process, starting from the end: where they are now.

This text stems from the necessity of providing some theoretical insight into the other article I have contributed to this issue (on the history of the Youth Camp), since there was a lot of historical ground to cover there, it left a few questions unanswered and a few contributions only outlined, without further analysis. This is why I return to the end of that story to start again.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These articles are also related and complementary to Jeff Jurk's article on autonomous spaces in this issue; not only do we share similar interests in the Social Forum process, we also share a lot of our experiences and conclusions.

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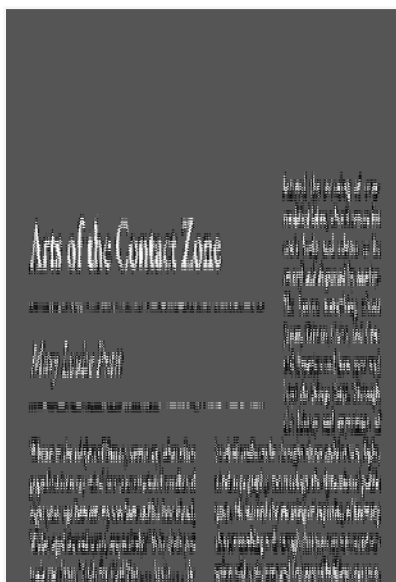
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## Horizontalité et efficacité dans les réseaux altermondialistes

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LA STRUCTURE D'OPPORTUNITÉ POLITIQUE, l'accès aux subventions étatiques et la visibilité médiatique ne sont certainement pas étrangers aux déclinaisons contemporaines de ce que Robert Michels (1971) nommait la « loi d'airain de l'oligarchie », selon laquelle l'organisation d'un mouvement, d'un syndicat ou d'un parti conduit systématiquement à l'institutionnalisation du mouvement et à l'émergence d'une oligarchie. Pour une organisation de la société civile, l'accès aux subventions publiques, important dans des pays comme la France ou l'Allemagne, ou aux ressources de fondations internationales est par exemple conditionné à l'existence d'une structure stable apte à s'insérer dans certains champs de politiques publiques (éducation permanente, coopération au développement...) ou capable de répondre aux appels d'offre. Une certaine structuration apparaît ainsi indispensable pour accéder à des moyens matériels et humains qui permettent de soutenir la cause défendue d'une manière plus efficace ou d'avoir davantage d'influence dans la sphère publique ou au sein du mouvement altermondialiste.

Cette tendance à l'institutionnalisation est bien présente dans les organisations altermondialistes. Cependant, malgré l'ampleur de certains événements altermondialistes, l'évolution de la structure organisationnelle de ce mouvement reste largement basée sur des réseaux relativement autonomes ne s'est pas globalement dirigée vers une

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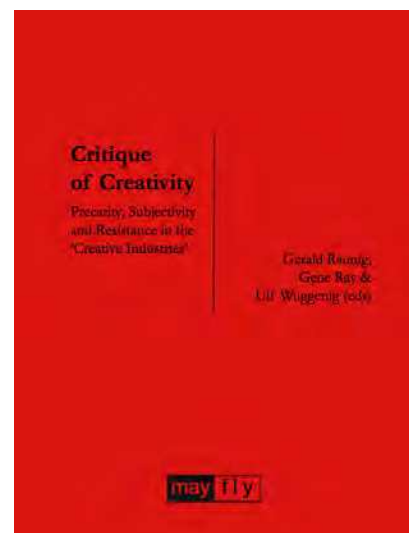
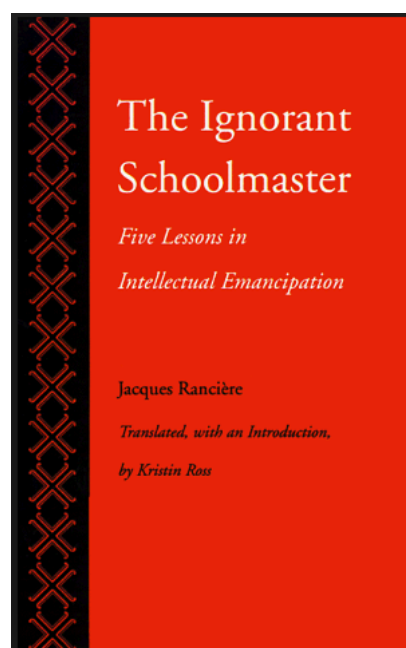
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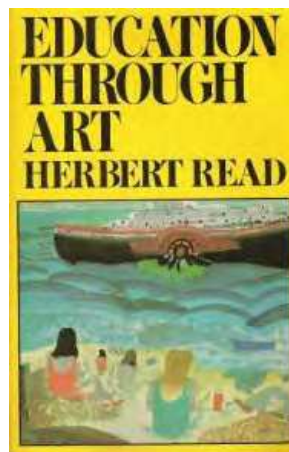
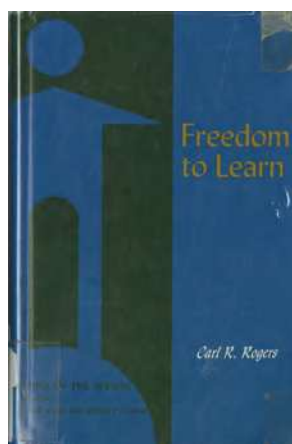
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Irit Rogoff

Turning

We have recently heard much about the "educational turn in curating" among several other "educational turns" affecting cultural practices around us.<sup>1</sup> Having participated in several of the projects emerging from this perceived "turn," it seems pertinent to ask whether this umbrella is actually descriptive of the drives that have propelled this desired transition.<sup>2</sup>

My questions here firstly concern what constitutes a "turn" to begin with? Are we talking about a "reading strategy" or an interpretative model, as was the understanding of the "linguistic turn" in the 1970s, with its intimations of an underlying structure that could be read across numerous cultural practices and utterances? Are we talking about reading one system—a pedagogical one—across another system—one of display, exhibition, and manifestation—so that they mudge one another in ways that might open them up to other ways of being? Or, are we talking instead about an active movement—a generative moment in which a new horizon emerges in the process—leaving behind the practice that was its originating point?

Secondly, it seems pertinent to ask to what extent the hardening of a "turn" into a series of generic or stylistic tropes can be seen as capable of resolving the vicinities that underwrote it in the first place? In other words, does an "educational turn in curating" address education or curating at precisely the points at which it urgently needs to be shaken up and made uncomfortable?

Delving into these questions is made more difficult by the degree of slippage that currently takes place between notions of "knowledge production," "research," "education," "open-ended production," and "self-organized pedagogies," when all these approaches seem to have converged into a set of parameters for some renewed facet of production.<sup>3</sup> Although quite different in their genesis, methodology, and protocols, it appears that some perceived proximity to "knowledge economies" has rendered all of these terms part and parcel of a certain liberalizing shift within the world of contemporary art practices.

Journal #0

11 / 2008

Julietta Aranda, Brian Kuan Wood

Autos Videokle

Editorial

Ones First:

Take a Deep Breath

Boris Groys

The Obligation to Self-Design

Brian Kishida

Los Angeles: The Invention of Public Weather

Richardson Lebar

Conditioned Contemporaneity (Reartikulacija, Part 1 of;

summit

non-aligned initiatives in education culture

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irit rogoff: academy as potentiality

The thoughts presented here have to a large extent been developed through an extensive conversation we have been having around the "Academy" project, an exhibition-symposium project supported by the Barbara Art Fund, the Hamburg Kunsthafen, Munka Anders, the Van Abbe Museum, Eindhoven, and the Department of Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths College. This conversation initially involved, among others, Sam De Baele, Rob Stone, Charles Esche, Angelika Nollert, Dieter Roelstraete and Florian Schneider. It is at times a bit difficult to tell whose thoughts are whose, but that too is in the spirit of "Academy."

Right Now

Occasionally in class I find myself saying "I have no idea" to my slightly disbelieving students. This is not a false profession of ignorance or an unbecoming modesty but a genuine expression of the fact that I do not know, in terms of structured knowledge, how to get to where I need to be. It seems to me that the urgent questions and the bodies of knowledge I have at my disposal do not fully and produce a route by which to get, arguments and modes of operating, merge seamlessly. And so it would seem that the lack of "academy" of education, is not to affect this seamless merger but to understand this productive disjunction and its creative possibilities. That subjects and knowledges do not live in a simple state of productive harmony, is the unspoken dimension of the contemporary debate on education, unspoken because it counters the aims to uniformly institutionalise education towards a set of predetermined outcomes. As phenomena of these spaces and assemblages of "academy" we are forever caught in a, hopefully productive, tension between knowing where we might want to go, being empowered by the sense that we have every right to embark on this journey and equally being aware that that we might lack the tools we need or the strength of spirit demanded by any journey into unknown territory. This "I Can't / Can't" dilemma is at the heart of my understanding of "Academy as Potentiality" which I hope to unfold here.

video documentation

- One or two things we know about pedagogy
- History Lesson: Short introduction into a brief history of non-alignment
- Learning from Architecture: Exhibition, Bologna
- Urgent Thought: Hegemony, Deferral, Migration
- History Lesson: Black Audio Film Collective
- "Student" opening ceremony
- Urgent Thought: Urgency, Plurality, Self-Organization

image gallery

- Backstage
- Open
- Workshop with Koenig, Esther & John Alcorn
- History Lesson with Koenig, Esther and John Alcorn
- History Lesson with Koenig, Esther and John Alcorn
- Exhaustion and Koenig/Hempel
- Exhaustion
- Urgent Thought



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Florian Schneider

## (Extended) Footnotes On Education

What follows is a series of loose considerations and fragmented thoughts relating to debates that have emerged over the past few years around the topic of education. On a rather abstract level, they are intended to reference discussions and struggles presently taking place in other fields; in another, more concrete sense, they might be of preliminary use in developing criteria for practical interventions in a situation widely perceived to be in crisis.

### 1. Learning

We learn nothing from those who say: "Do as I do." Our only teachers are those who tell us to "do with me," and are able to emit signs to be developed in heterogeneity rather than propose gestures for us to reproduce.<sup>1</sup>

In the preface to his first, seminal work *Difference and Repetition*, Gilles Deleuze articulates the challenges of pedagogy in a vivid, precise fashion. Deleuze claims that everything that teaches us something emits signs, and every act of learning is an interpretation of these signs or hieroglyphs. Using the example of learning how to swim, he points out that in practice we manage to deal with the challenge of keeping afloat only by grasping certain movements as signs. It is pointless to imitate the movements of the swimming instructor without understanding them as signs one has to decode and recompose in one's own struggle with the water.

Such repetition is no longer that of the Same, "but involves difference—from one wave and one gesture to another, and carries that difference through the repetitive space thereby constituted."<sup>2</sup> The potential of such an approach to teaching and learning is huge: as soon as a notion of learning is decoupled from the possession of knowledge, as soon as difference is liberated from identity, repetition from reproduction (or resistance from



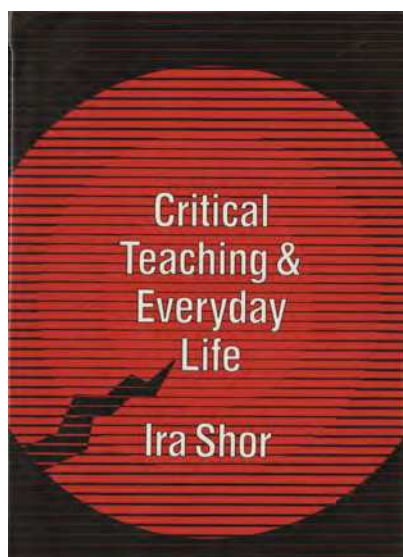
Witt Pöggendorf  
"Education Actualized" –  
Editorial

Heinz Siemund  
*Unglamorous Tasks: What  
Can Education Learn from  
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*Artistic Education of the  
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Fred Moten and Stefano Harney  
*Debt and Study*

Drusilla Lunde  
*Mourning Bologna*



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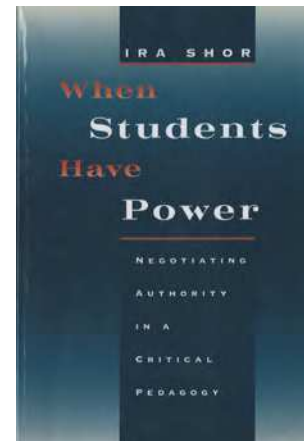
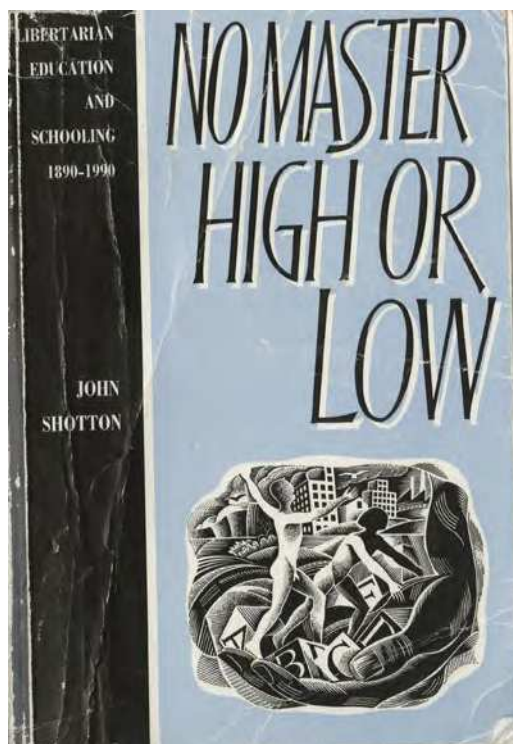
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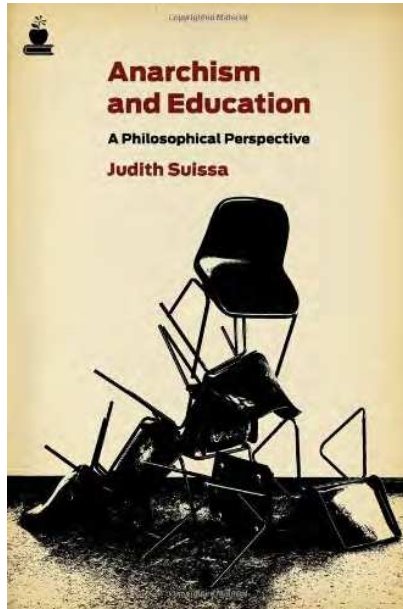
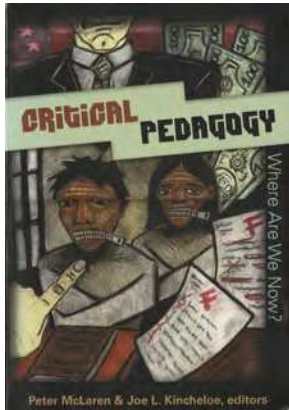
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learning desire

Perspectives on Pedagogy,  
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edited by Sharon Todd

# L'autogestion dans les systèmes éducatifs

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Colin Ward and Anthony Fyson

# ***STREETWORK***

*The exploding school*



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## Rhizovocality

ALECIA WOUNGBLOOD JACKSON  
Appalachian State University

In this conceptual paper, the author offers a rethinking of the concept of voice in qualitative research informed by feminist, postcolonial, and poststructural theories. Using Deleuze & Guattari's (1987) figurations of the rhizome, the responses of voice in feminist and postcolonialist qualitative research are mapped to invent a concept of voice, rhizovocality, that equates voice as excessive and transgressive yet unrepresented. This mapping begins with early feminist emancipatory research that assumed an authentic, silent woman's voice as need of liberation. Then, the author moves into dilemmas of power that emerged from critiques of problematic representations of voice within feminist research. The third section of the paper is a postcolonial feminist response to imperial uses of voice in feminist research, and the final part is a feminist deconstructive critique of voice in qualitative research. The article concludes with an argument for rhizovocality as a conceptual, deconstructive tool for working the limits of voice in qualitative research.

### Introduction

The concept of voice in feminist qualitative research has a long and variegated history of deployment. In this paper, I seek to map that deployment and to offer a different way of conceptualizing and representing voices in qualitative research that draws from feminist and deconstructive paradigms. The challenge of this mapping lies in the limits of the linear space of graphic writing, for voice in feminist qualitative research does not have a linear, hierarchical history with simple and ordered originating, culminating, or terminating points. The various deployments, critiques, and reconfigurations of voice in feminist research are circular, inter-connected, and deterritorializing. Therefore, the mapping I offer in this paper does not seek to reveal what voice means in feminist qualitative research but what it does – how voice functions, what enables it to function in certain ways, and what it produces.

Deleuze & Guattari's image of the rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), composed of plateaus, intensities, and multiplicities connected to other multiplicities by underground stems, is a helpful figuration<sup>1</sup> to consider not only how to "read" this text but also how to imagine the function of voice in feminist qualitative research. As Deleuze & Guattari (1987) describe them, rhizomes do not have fixed origins like the roots of a tree; they are numerous – multiplicitous, adventitious – and connect in nonlinear assemblages to other things. This text constitutes an assemblage and must be read as such; in this text there are "lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata and territories, but also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 3). Imagine,



Wilding, Faith (2009) *Don't Tell Anyone We Did It!* [Internet]. Available from: <[www.faithwilding.refugia.net/donttell.pdf](http://www.faithwilding.refugia.net/donttell.pdf)> [Accessed 25 June 2011].

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## APPENDICES

# UTOPIA AND THE EVERYDAY

27.11.2009—14.02.2010

Opening Thursday 26th November, 6pm – 9pm

Open from Tuesday to Sunday, 11am – 6pm

The exhibition is closed between 24th December 2009 and 1st January 2010

## CENTRE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN GENÈVE

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### G A Z E T T E # 1

"UTOPIA AND THE EVERYDAY. BETWEEN ART AND PEDAGOGY"

"UTOPIA AND THE EVERYDAY. Between art and pedagogy" is a Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève project, conceived by the *microsilions* collective in collaboration with the Centre's director, Katya García-Antón. This ambitious, experimental project aims to open a debate, in Geneva and Switzerland, about the role of artists in education, both within and outside artistic institutions. It draws on the practice of artists and collectives for whom a reflection about teaching methods lies at the heart of their work, and explores points of contact between art and education.

The exhibition also proposes avenues for reflection on the role of mediation (a practice associated with the educational mission of artistic institutions) as a discursive movement in which constructive criticism

of these institutions can take place: a laboratory on culture and society rather than as a means to reduce misunderstanding between works of art and the audience.

Three artists or collectives were invited to develop projects with local partners, and the fruit of their work will be presented during the exhibition, which takes place from 27 November 2009 to 14 February 2010, on the second floor of the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève.

The three partnerships were as follows:

– trafo.K (Vienna) and Gabu Heindl (Vienna), in collaboration with 8. Klasse of Deutsche Schule Genf.

– Nils Norman (London) and Tilo Steireif (Lausanne), in collaboration with the HEP (Haute Ecole Pédagogique) of Lausanne

and the CIRA (Centre International de Recherche sur l'Anarchisme).

– Damon Rich (New York) and Oscar Tuazon (Paris), in collaboration with the inhabitants and associations of Le Lignon.

Besides the results of these partnerships, a number of earlier projects undertaken by other artists will be presented in documentary form. They will be structured around a series of questions based on educational theory, which will be brought to life in the space.

#### GUIDING?

What is the role and position of the teacher towards the learner? Should he be a leader, a guide, or simply one who accompanies, a facilitator? In his analysis of pastoral power, the philosopher Michel

Foucault showed how Christianity had generalised a new style of government, based on pastoral power. The shepherd, or guide, directs a herd of individuals to whom he intends well. To accomplish his goal, he plays, notably, the role of teacher. Even if pastoralism may have been transformed, the traditional perception of the teacher remains close to that of guide. Can other types of teacher-learner relationship be tested through the means of art?

### MAKING A PROFIT?

How do artistic practices such as those presented here position themselves with regard to the art market? While some artists see their collaborative work as a means to free themselves from the commercial system of art, others "use" this system to gain financial and institutional support for a project with a teaching dimension. This raises the question of the status of works and their authorship: can an artist alone gain the benefit of a work created as a result of a collaboration? The question of capital also arises, in a different manner, in relation to the position of artists concerning the acquisition of knowledge. The current crisis in the capitalist system offers the opportunity to examine the short-term risks of an education based on accumulating knowledge, the worst means of which is the learning by rote of a maximum of information, to the detriment of full understanding and the critical distance necessary to best employ it. What tools do we need to develop in order to escape from the logic of what Paulo Freire qualified as "bankable education"?

### LIBERATING?

Does the practice of art or teaching provide the means to emancipate, liberate and "give power"?

For a militant intellectual such as bell hooks, education should lead to emancipation and the practice of liberty. Other thinkers, in contrast, believe that notions of "empowerment" and "emancipation" are myths which do a disservice to the practice of teaching, notably because they do not clearly define what the learner is to be emancipated from, nor against what or whom he would gain power. The idea of emancipation runs, in varying guises and terms, through numerous artistic projects with a pedagogical dimension.

### STANDARDISING?

At a time when the trend to standardisation spares neither education systems nor cultural policies, the question of the standard model is of increased relevance. What value is a standard in the educational and artistic domain? Who produces the models and how are they applied? Is experimentation that has no motive to profit from the reproduction of its results still possible? While the academic model tends to reproduce a structure and impose it from the top down, in a hierarchical system, many artists defend the idea of a ceaselessly renewed experimentation, which responds to situations as they arise.

A group of students from the Masters research programme CCC, of the Haute École d'Art et de Design de Genève, join in this reflection in presenting their research into "Education Nouvelle", a movement born in Geneva, and examining the possibility of a potential "distributive pedagogy".

### DESCHOOLING?

And what if schools are not the best forum for "learning"? Looking beyond the idea of a school which applies alternative teaching principles, some have imagined

a society where education takes place through society, in which artistic institutions would be a place of exchange, and the learner-teacher relationship would be repeatedly reviewed, and themes covered going far beyond the usual core subjects taught in school. This is the idea put forward by Ivan Illich in "Deschooling society", in which he makes a very harsh critique of schools, arguing that they reinforce social inequalities. How should an artistic institution position itself with regard to the school system?

This "Gazette", replaces the usual invitation card. The format recalls the importance of the self-produced publications of innovative teaching methods; of the printing press, which occupies a central place in the teachings of Célestin Freinet; of manifesto articles that feature on the internet site of Copenhagen Free University, and of the "Journal of Consciousness" of the Feminist Art Program. During the course of the exhibition, three supplementary gazettes will be produced for visitors, to bring complementary information on the ideas and development of the three collaborative projects.

A second leg of the exhibition, presenting the work of new partnerships, will take place in July 2010 in the Kunstmuseum of Thoun.

A publication on the project is planned for 2010.

Institutional partners:

Kunstmuseum Thun, Research-Based Master Programme CCC – Critical Crosscultural Cybermedia, HEAD – Genève, Deutsche Schule Genf, HEP Lausanne.

With the generous support of: Pro Helvetia, SIG, Loterie Romande, Fonds d'art contemporain de la Ville de Genève (FMAC).

In partnership with Theillard Traiteur, Le Courier, Pernod Ricard Swiss et Baboo.

The Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève is supported by the City of Geneva.

Editors: microsilons. Graphic design: Mass

# UTOPIE ET QUOTIDIENNETÉ

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### G A Z E T T E # 2

« WILD TRANSLATION »

*« Wild translation » est le résultat d'une réflexion menée par trafo.K et Gabu Heindl, autour de l'exposition en cours de développement, avec un groupe d'élèves de l'Ecole Allemande de Genève âgés de 13 ans.*

La proposition se base sur une série de « traductions » qui amènent ici à penser des moyens d'aborder des sujets complexes avec des élèves, par le biais de l'art. Les élèves interprètent à leur manière, dans le cadre d'un workshop, sept projets présentés dans l'exposition. Leurs propositions sont intégrées dans l'exposition puis réinterprétées, ou « traduites » à nouveau par les médiatrices, sous forme de questions sur leur propre pratique qui viennent s'inscrire dans un dispositif conçu par l'architecte Gabu Heindl.

Lorsque les médiatrices de trafo.K ont été invitées à collaborer à *Utopie et Quotidienneté*, la première idée a été de réaliser à Genève l'un des volets de *Flic-Flac*, un projet qui, suivant le format du workshop, permet d'aborder les notions de féminisme et de genre. Dès sa première visite à Genève fin août 2009, le collectif viennois a par ailleurs émis le souhait de travailler en allemand. Une collaboration avec une classe germanophone de la Deutsche Schule Genf a ainsi été mise en place. Lors d'une première rencontre avec Madame Noëlle Hubert, professeure de dessin à l'école allemande, il a été décidé de collaborer avec une classe de huitième et de réorienter la proposition du collectif pour permettre une adresse plus spécifique à ses élèves.

Un nouveau projet, autour de la question de traduction, a alors été élaboré spécifiquement pour ce contexte. Lors d'une première séance en classe mi-septembre, le collectif a présenté le projet aux élèves, puis introduit les notions d'« utopie » et de « quotidien ». Les étudiants ont ensuite été invités à prendre des photographies polaroid de leurs endroits préférés dans l'école, en réfléchissant à des utilisations fictives de ces lieux, inventant de nouvelles règles d'usage.

Après cette introduction, un workshop de trois jours a été organisé au Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, fin octobre, suivi d'une dernière séance de travail quelques jours avant l'ouverture de l'exposition. trafo.K a été assisté dans ce projet par Noëlle Hubert, enseignante, et Sarah Stocker, médiatrice.

Voici un court journal de bord de cette collaboration.

## MARDI 28 OCTOBRE, MATINÉE

Dans l'espace d'exposition vide, les 28 élèves s'asseyent en cercle. trafo. K propose, sur une série de cartes, des œuvres d'art conceptuelles qui posent des questions liées à la langue, la parole, l'écrit et qui prennent parfois la forme de consignes. Chacun est invité à prendre une carte, à se présenter et à parler de l'œuvre choisie. trafo.K complète les interventions par des informations supplémentaires.

Les polaroids réalisés par les élèves lors de la séance d'introduction à la Deutsche Schule, où chacun avait photographié son lieu favori dans l'école, sont alors discutés.

Des groupes sont constitués en fonction des lieux préférés : cafétéria, bibliothèque, salle de sport, casiers... Chaque groupe cherche dans l'espace d'exposition un endroit qui représenterait une traduction du lieu choisi à l'école, puis invente ses propres règles d'utilisation liées à cet endroit. Les groupes se mettent ensuite en scène dans ces espaces, suivant leurs règlements. De nouveaux polaroids sont réalisés.

## MARDI 28 OCTOBRE, APRÈS-MIDI

Les membres du collectif microsillons, commissaires d'Utopie et Quotidienneté, réalisent une visite guidée de la future exposition, dans les espaces encore vides. Les élèves ont pour consigne de s'imaginer et d'esquisser les différents éléments de la future exposition. microsillons présente

ensuite une documentation supplémentaire sur les projets qui seront exposés.

## MERCREDI 29 OCTOBRE, MATINÉE

La journée commence par une Visite au MAMCO, dans l'Appartement (dans lequel sont rassemblées des pièces issues de la collection d'œuvres d'art minimal et conceptuel de Ghislain Mollet-Viéville) où le groupe assiste à une présentation par Karine Tissot, responsable du Bureau des Transmissions du MAMCO. En demi-groupes, les élèves découvrent l'art minimal et conceptuel et discutent sur la place que l'art occupe dans leur vie, l'idée qu'ils s'en font... Chacun choisit une œuvre et la présente au groupe.

MERCREDI 29 OCTOBRE, APRÈS-MIDI  
trafo.K propose de diviser la classe en sept groupes. Chaque groupe travaillera à l'interprétation de l'un des projets qui sera présenté dans *Utopie et Quotidienneté*: les diagrammes de George Maciunas, le Musée Précaire Albinet de Thomas Hirschhorn, le Feminist Art Program de Fresno, les peintures de Tim Rollins + K.O.S., la relecture de l'histoire de REPO-history, le travail de Nils Norman et Tilo Steireif sur l'éducation libertaire et anarchiste, le projet de « terrain de jeu pour adultes » de Damon Rich et Oscar Tuazon. Les groupes travaillent alors de manière autonome (aidés par Noëlle Hubert et Sarah Stocker) pour développer leurs propres propositions, à partir des œuvres étudiées. Ils vont à tour de rôle présenter

l'avancée de leur projet au « bureau de consultation » ouvert, dans une pièce annexe, par trafo.K et Gabu Heindl.

## JEUDI 30 OCTOBRE, MATINÉE ET APRÈS-MIDI

Le travail en groupe continue. Les élèves précisent leurs idées et travaillent sur des maquettes et des objets pour l'exposition. Au travers de leurs propositions, ils se réapproprient des thèmes et des formes investies par les artistes.

Une discussion-bilan clôt la journée. Les élèves ont aimé être libres et avoir des activités manuelles, mais ils ont l'impression d'avoir passé trop de temps à écouter, inactifs, au début du workshop. Certains ont eu du mal à comprendre ce qui était attendu d'eux.

## JEUDI 19 NOVEMBRE, APRÈS-MIDI

La semaine avant le vernissage, alors que le dispositif d'exposition conçu par Gabu Heindl est déjà en place, les élèves reviennent le temps d'un après-midi au Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève pour discuter de l'accrochage de leurs travaux. Par petits groupes, ils rediscutent leurs projets avec trafo.K, et apportent quelques modifications de dernière minute.

Ce travail est dédié à Charlotte Martinz-Turek, disparue accidentellement pendant le projet.

microsillons et Sarah Stocker,  
19 novembre 2009

Invitation	Contact avec la Deutsche Schule Genf via la professeure d'arts visuels	Invitation à co-signer le projet, conception du dispositif de présentation des travaux des élèves	Invitation à assister et documenter le projet	Workshop avec les élèves de la classe de 8. de la DSG
trafo.K	Noëlle Hubert	Gabu Heindl	Sarah Stocker	Madelaine Alber, Alan Philippe Bietenholz, Anna Böhme, Isabella Brauns, Antonia Egli, Marc Florin, Madeleine Frank, Barbara Hinrichs, Rewert Hoffer, Justin Hug, William Meylan, Christian Müller, Claudio Müller, Sebastian Müller, Karl Pelster, Orsolya Pokoradi, Leo Prinz, Corinna Reinhardus, Victoria Rötger, Marla Schulz, Christoph Sommer, Maximilian Stamm, Tim Steindel, Mathieu Teicht, Frederick Thümmel, Carolin Tröster, Antoine Véry, Eric von Damnitz, Nora Zeifelder

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### G A Z E T T E # 3

*Nils Norman et Tilo Steireif réalisent dans l'espace d'exposition une construction qui évoque la bibliothèque du Centre International de Recherche sur l'Anarchisme de Lausanne. Ils y présentent le fruit de leurs recherches sur les éducations alternatives, ainsi que les travaux de près de 200 élèves de 8 à 16 ans, réalisés avec leurs enseignants, autour de la notion d'utopie.*

Une classe en arts visuels propose de définir l'utopie sur la base de modifications d'une maison (classe de John Didier). Une classe de 3<sup>e</sup> année fait exploser les horaires ordinaires de leur enseignante (Aude Ramseier) le temps d'une journée et propose un programme «idéal»: yoga, foot, chinois, sciences expérimentales... Une autre classe étudie pendant sept semaines les arts visuels lors des promenades théma-

tiques, toujours hors les murs (Nicole Goetschi Danesi). Enfin, deux projets tournent autour de l'architecture et de l'utopie (Claire de Buren et Jérôme Bichsel), recherchant une dynamique de groupe et intégrant une démarche critique. Un film réalisé par Tilo Steireif montre que les écoles alternatives existent, au travers de deux exemples: l'école du CEIS (à Rimini, initiée par Margherita Zoebeli avec le soutien de l'OSEO) et l'Ecole d'Humanité de Goldern (école alternative basée sur la pédagogie de Paulus Geheeb). Deux élèves résidentes de cette dernière école (Saskia et Luise, 15 ans) réalisent des photographies et des interviews. Carmen Zimmermann réalise des portraits d'élèves qui évoquent les métiers qu'ils rêveraient d'exercer à la sortie de l'Ecole. Un film documentaire présente, sous le titre *Pédagogie libertaire, utopie et*

*écrits de lycéen-ne-s* les archives de la bibliothèque du CIRA (Centre international de recherches sur l'anarchisme) qui alimentent toute l'exposition. Le projet s'inscrit dans un contexte politique où deux initiatives populaires pour une école plus compétitive (votation genevoise du 17 mai 2009 et du 25 janvier 2010 dans le canton de Vaud) marquent l'actualité.

Lorsque le centre d'art contemporain a proposé à Nils Norman de participer à l'exposition Utopie et quotidienneté, celui-ci avait l'intention de mettre en évidence une partie des archives du CIRA (Centre International de Recherches sur l'Anarchisme) basé à Lausanne. C'est lors de son premier voyage au CIRA avec *micro-sillons* au mois de mai 2009 qu'il m'a proposé de créer un groupe de travail

mettant en pratique certaines idées des pédagogies alternatives, l'un des thèmes de prédilection de la bibliothèque du CIRA. Le projet allait mobiliser cinq enseignant·es en arts visuels (dont une étudiante de la Haute Ecole Pédagogique de Lausanne), faisant participer dix classes du secondaire (adolescent·es âgées de 13 à 16 ans) et une du primaire, avec une classe de 3<sup>e</sup> année (enfants de 8-9 ans). Mon intervention en classe a permis de faire découvrir aux élèves, par le biais de reportages que j'ai réalisés, des utopies réalisées, l'école CEIS de Rimini (Centro Educativo Italo-Svizzero) et l'Ecole d'Humanité de Goldern. Chacune des écoles se distingue nettement de l'école obligatoire par la suppression des notes et la recherche de l'autonomie de l'enfant dans ses activités. Ces deux établissements se préoccupent du libre mouvement des enfants et des adolescent·es. Elles se soucient de ce que leurs identités soient construites par leurs propres occupants (partage des tâches quotidiennes, idée de communauté au sein de l'école, aide mutuelle dans les apprentissages...).

Des références aux écoles alternatives (*nouvelles, actives, modernes*) sont intégrées dans notre dispositif, comme des exemples qui proposent une autre définition de l'école et renvoient à un questionnement fort sur son rôle dans la société (anti-utilitariste, anti-autoritaire, humaniste, démocratique). La bibliothèque, construite en trois parties, représente un espace de vie où se côtoient simultanément le jeu et le travail. A

gauche, on découvre la bibliothèque du CIRA avec un film qui présente nos sources principales sur l'école alternative et l'utopie (entretiens avec Marianne Enckell et Frédéric Deshusses). Au centre, on découvre les travaux d'élèves. A droite, un espace cinéma met l'accent sur la voix des élèves (description des projets, utopies personnelles et critique de l'école actuelle). Ces films présentent l'ensemble des projets réalisés par les élèves pour cette exposition.

Vu sous l'angle de l'utopie, la discipline des arts visuels s'affirme comme une démarche critique et réflexive, posant une question fondamentale : quelles conditions faut-il mettre en place pour être bien à l'école ?

Ayant travaillé en groupe puis, pendant plusieurs semaines, à un projet personnel, les élèves sont alors capables de formuler des solutions, des idées et des critiques sur l'école actuelle. En partant de leurs expériences quotidiennes en tant qu'usager·es, les élèves énoncent des propositions formelles et organisationnelles, pour se réapproprier l'école.

Le travail plastique a été dirigé de manière académique par les enseignant·es durant trois à sept semaines selon les classes, à raison de une à deux périodes par semaines. Deux enseignantes ont modifié le cadre scolaire de manière géographique ou temporelle : la première en organisant six promenades dans la ville, la seconde en éclatant l'horaire et le contenu des cours d'une journée ordinaire

d'école. Il est à noter que la plupart des travaux seront évalués pour répondre aux exigences de l'institution scolaire.

Au travers des travaux des élèves, des critiques ouvertes de l'école apparaissent : manque de convivialité, espaces perçus comme étant trop administratifs, architectures peu ou pas pensées comme des lieux de vie, manque d'activités à choix en expression corporelle, théâtre, sport, ou arts... En ce qui concerne l'organisation des cours, les élèves proposent des alternatives au système actuel, par la création de filières spéciales centrées sur une thématique ou une passion commune. Pratiquement toutes et tous aimeraient éliminer les filières dans leur forme actuelle (séparation par niveaux qui préparent soit au gymnase/collège, soit au diplôme soit à l'apprentissage). Ils/elles proposent également d'avoir plus d'enseignant·es pour personnaliser la relation d'enseignement et pour que l'élève soit mieux accompagné. Certains élèves ont proposé de mettre en place un système de conseil de classe régulier avec les élèves et le directeur (ce dernier aurait un rôle d'organisateur et coordinateur). Les discussions sur l'utopie menées à travers les arts visuels, ont permis aux élèves de se rendre compte que toute idée portait en elle un lien au réel, au quotidien et qu'il fallait se donner les moyens de réfléchir, de discuter si l'on veut que l'école ne fonctionne pas uniquement comme un système administratif quelconque.

Tilo Steireif,  
novembre 2009

Invitation	Recherche	Invitation à co-signer le projet	Participation d'enseignants, en collaboration avec la HEP de Lausanne	Travail avec les élèves
Nils Norman	Centre International de Recherche sur l'Anarchisme	Tilo Steireif	Nicole Goetschi Danesi	Une classe de 24 élèves Collège de Béthusy, Lausanne
	Marianne Enckell		John Didier	Une classe de 12 élèves Collège La Planta, Chavannes près-Renens
	Frédéric Deshusses		Carmen Zimmermann	Une classe de 9 élèves Collège du Verney, Puidoux
			Aude Ramseier	Une classe de 22 élèves ESGE, Genolier
			Claire de Buren	Une classe de 25 élèves Établissement secondaire, Cossonay
			Jérôme Bichsel	Cinq classes, 84 élèves, sept enseignants ESGE, Genolier
				Deux élèves de l'école de L'Humanité, Hasliberg Goldern



# UTOPIE ET QUOTIDIENNETÉ

27.11.2009—14.02.2010

Vernissage le jeudi 26 novembre, de 18h à 21h

Ouvert du mardi au dimanche de 11h à 18h

Fermeture de l'exposition du 24.12.2009 au 12.01.2010

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### G A Z E T T E # 4

«LE LIGNON TRIPLE BEAM»

*Damon Rich et Oscar Tuazon proposent dans «Utopie et quotidienneté» une maquette grandeur nature d'un «terrain de jeu pour adultes». Cette sculpture pratique est pensée comme une proposition faite aux résidents du Lignon d'adopter une nouvelle aire de jeu au cœur de leur quartier. Reprenant le plan de site (récemment classé) du Lignon, elle opère comme un «paysage pédagogique», encourageant de nouvelles relations entre l'environnement architectural et les inventions quotidiennes des résidents.*

En qualité de directeur artistique et membre fondateur du Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP), Damon Rich a été invité à proposer un projet pour Utopie et Quotidienneté. Il a ensuite souhaité inviter Oscar Tuazon, autre collaborateur régulier de CUP. Le Center

for Urban Pedagogy est une organisation sans but lucratif basée à Brooklyn, qui a pour but le développement de la participation de chaque citoyen dans la planification urbaine et dans le design communautaire.

Lors d'une première visite à Genève mi-juin, Oscar Tuazon a fait un tour de Genève, en posant un regard spécialement attentif sur l'architecture et l'urbanisme de la ville. Après cette première prise de contact, il a pris la décision, avec Damon Rich, de développer une réflexion autour du Lignon, ensemble architectural moderniste et cité autonome dans la banlieue de Genève.

Une première recherche sur le Lignon, son histoire, son organisation sociale, son plan architectural et sa représentation médiatique a alors été menée.

Ensuite, par le biais d'un questionnaire rédigé par les artistes, des informations ont été recueillies auprès d'associations, de personnes ayant participé à la construction de l'ensemble architectural et de résidents.

Les questions adressées étaient les suivantes :

1. Pourquoi le Lignon a-t-il été construit ?
2. Pourquoi les bâtiments ont-ils la forme qu'ils ont ?
3. Pourquoi le Lignon est-il si grand ? Pourquoi y a-t-il quelques grands bâtiments plutôt que beaucoup de petits ?
4. Pourquoi le Lignon a-t-il perdu des habitants ?
5. Quelles sont les qualités du Lignon, en terme de construction et de communauté ?
6. Quelles sont les choses qui ont besoin d'être améliorées ?

Voici quelques extraits des réponses qui ont été récoltées :

*L'idée de quantité était centrale. Le Lignon est grand car le manque de logements était grand.*

Louis Payot,  
l'un des architectes du Lignon.

*Il fallait des appartements. La crise du logement était encore plus importante au moment de la construction dans les années 1960 qu'aujourd'hui.*

Jean-Michel Bovier,  
Mandataire du Comité  
Central du Lignon.

*Le Lignon est un projet quelque peu mégalo : construire le bâtiment le plus long d'Europe. C'est une grande maison, tout le monde habite dans la même grande avenue.*

Tamara Zaslavsky, Ivan Stuker,  
Théa Modis, Stéphane Olmos,  
animateurs des Jardins Robinson

*Le grand bâtiment crée réellement une barrière très nette : il y a l'intérieur et l'extérieur du Lignon ! Il y a une seule entrée et sortie, en passant sous la tour, comme on le ferait pour entrer dans un château fort.*

Liliana Dias,  
réalisatrice, habitante du Lignon.

*L'idée de base était d'utiliser un minimum de terrain, afin de conserver un parc aussi grand que possible à la disposition des habitants. De plus l'idée d'éviter les vis-à-*

*vis en raison de la magnifique vue sur le Salève et le Jura imposait le choix d'immeubles contigus, s'adaptant à la configuration du terrain.*

Claude Budry, ingénieur lors de  
la construction du Lignon

*La particularité du Lignon : une seule route d'accès, tous les déplacements des habitants, enfants compris, se faisant sur des chemins piétonniers, hors de la circulation, d'où la tranquillité des parents, toutes les places de jeu sont situées hors circulation.*

Claude Budry, ingénieur lors de  
la construction du Lignon

*Beaucoup d'habitants sont là depuis la construction des bâtiments. Les loyers sont protégés contre l'augmentation. Aujourd'hui, leurs enfants sont partis mais eux gardent le même grand appartement, qui coûte beaucoup moins cher que s'ils en reprenaient un petit. Il n'y a presque pas d'appartement libres au Lignon.*

Jean-Pierre Garnier, Président  
du Comité Central du Lignon

*Le Lignon est une ville à la campagne. C'est un lieu idéal pour les enfants qui peuvent aller dans la forêt, jouer sur les berges du Rhône, au Jardin Robinson et qui vont à l'école du Lignon. On peut se balader, courir, faire du VTT. Il y a trois aires de jeux pour les enfants et quatre aires de rencontre, de plus en plus fréquentées...*

Bernadette Gherardi, employée au  
Comité Central du Lignon

*En arrivant au Lignon avec ma famille, nous avons mis deux mois à nous habituer au silence. Aujourd'hui encore, je suis surprise d'être réveillée par le coq.*

Liliana Dias, réalisatrice,  
habitante du Lignon.

*Les gens, à Genève, ont tous la même idée préconçue du Lignon. En reproduisant les stéréotypes liés aux Cités en général, l'équation généralement posée est CITÉ = DANGER / LIGNON = GRANDE CITÉ = GRAND DANGER.*

*Il faut changer l'image du Lignon, il faut que ses habitants prennent la parole pour le présenter de manière positive, pour rompre avec les stéréotypes de la presse.*

Justin McMahon, réalisateur,  
ancien habitant du Lignon.

*L'idée de terrain de jeu pour adultes me semble très intéressante : le Lignon est comme un puzzle géant, avec des éléments architecturaux qui s'emboîtent, des bâtiments-blocs, une église carrée... On pourrait penser que les architectes étaient des adultes qui jouaient !*

Justin McMahon, réalisateur,  
ancien habitant du Lignon.

microsillons,  
25 novembre 2009

Première invitation	Proposition de collaboration avec son directeur artistique	Invitation à collaborer et co-signer le projet	Recherche et interviews	
Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP)	<b>Damon Rich</b>	<b>Oscar Tuazon</b>	<b>Jean-Pierre Garnier</b> Président du Comité Central du Lignon <b>Jean-Michel Bovier</b> Mandataire du CCL <b>Bernadette Gherardi</b> Employée au CCL  <b>Tamara Zaslavsky</b> <b>Ivan Stuker</b> <b>Théa Modis</b> <b>Stéphane Olmos</b> Jardins Robinson	<b>Louis Payot</b> L'un des architectes du Lignon  <b>Claude Budry</b> Ingénieur pendant la construction du Lignon  <b>Liliana Dias</b> Réalisatrice Habitante du Lignon <b>Justin McMahon</b> Réalisateur Ex-habitant du Lignon

# EN COMMUN.

## Journal du Bois de la Bâtie

Alors que la Terrasse du Troc s'installe cette année encore au Bois de la Bâtie, nous avons été invités par sa directrice artistique, Laura Györök Costas, à développer un projet impliquant des jeunes élèves. Une recherche sur le Bois de la Bâtie et son histoire, nous a amené à définir comme cadre de réflexion l'idée de bien commun. En 1868, des frères, du nom de Turrettini, ont acheté des parcelles de terrain pour les offrir à la ville, à condition que le lieu reste pour toujours un lieu de promenade publique. Quels sont aujourd'hui les usages, officiels ou "braconnés", qui sont faits de ce bien public ?

Autour de cette question, nous avons proposé à deux classes, l'une du Cycle d'Orientation Montbrillant et l'autre de l'École des Allobroges, de réaliser ensemble un journal où chacun pourrait s'exprimer sur un sujet en lien avec le Bois de la Bâtie. Suivant le thème de cette cinquième édition de la Terrasse du Troc, "l'esthétique écologique" – qui évoque l'idée d'une œuvre créée en utilisant les éléments trouvés sur un lieu donné – ce journal se nourrit donc du Bois et de ses usages. Il propose une réflexion sur le territoire complexe du Bois de la Bâtie et invite à réfléchir aux multiples utilisations qui, au fil des années, ont ancré ce lieu bien connu des genevois dans son environnement urbain, entre nature et culture.

Alors que nous assistons à une privatisation de l'espace public, que les brevets sur le vivant et la marchandisation de biens de première nécessité, tels que l'eau, sont monnaie courante, il nous semble pertinent de discuter de ce qui devrait être partagé par tous, qu'il s'agisse de biens matériels ou immatériels.

Pour Antonio Negri, le commun porte en lui un potentiel de changement réel et peut nous aider à imaginer des alternatives au néo-libéralisme et à son mépris envers la Res Publica.

« (...) partout où des luttes se sont déroulées contre l'Empire, elles ont mis en lumière un phénomène sur lequel elles ont beaucoup investi : la conscience nouvelle que le bien commun est décisif dans la vie comme dans la production, bien plus que le « privé » et le « national » pour utiliser ces termes vieillis. Seul

le « commun » se dresse contre l'Empire. »

Cette question des « communs » a été abordée avec les deux classes sous un angle historique, afin de bien appréhender la dimension fluctuante de cette notion et son évolution au fil du temps. En effet, si ce terme désigne ce que nous partageons au sein d'une même communauté, cette zone de partage est mouvante et en constante redéfinition.

Ainsi, partant des notions de « Res Publicae » et de « Res nullius » du droit romain, nous avons discuté des banalités et des taxes dont il fallait s'acquitter, au Moyen-Âge, pour utiliser des infrastructures telles que les fours ou les moulins, appartenant aux seigneurs mais cependant nécessaires à toute la communauté.

A certains moments de l'histoire, le peuple a essayé de revendiquer un usage plus direct des biens communs, imaginant un projet de société nouvelle. La Commune de Paris, en 1871, par exemple, pendant laquelle les travailleurs se sont soulevés contre l'Etat et ont proposé – dans un système qui n'a duré que trois mois avant d'être réprimé – que le peuple gère directement la ville, les écoles, les institutions...

Plus tard, la révolution russe, en appliquant les préceptes du communisme, qui revendique la fin de la propriété privée, a mené à la création de l'Union Soviétique et, à sa suite, à celle d'autres Etats s'appuyant sur la même politique.

Nous nous sommes demandé ce qu'est un bien commun dans la société contemporaine. La tendance actuelle à la privatisation des écoles, des services de santé ou des énergies est forte. Quelles peuvent en être les conséquences ? La privatisation du vivant est une autre source de réflexion et d'inquiétude : génome, semences, peuvent-ils faire l'objet d'une mainmise de quelques grandes multinationales, sans qu'il n'y ait de participation du peuple à la prise de décisions pourtant vitales ? Faire bon usage du bien commun, c'est aussi comprendre qu'il faut gérer ce bien, que rien n'est inépuisable. Quelles ressources naturelles devons nous défendre pour le futur ?

Sur le plan de la propriété intellectuelle, nous avons évoqué

l'alternative proposée par la licence « Creative Commons » contre les brevets dans leurs formes actuelles et contre le « Copyright ».

Notre tour d'horizon s'est conclu par une discussion sur les pirates, des mers d'abord, pour qui l'idée de partage des biens et de communauté prévalait au sein d'un même équipage. Pirates informatiques ensuite, par le biais du Parti Pirate, qui revendique « un Internet libre, sans aucune licence, dans une société ouverte » au sein d'une formation politique officielle et reconnue, notamment en Suède, où est né ce parti.

Depuis le mois de mai 2010, les deux classes ont été impliquées dans les différentes étapes qui ont mené à cette publication, des discussions sur le thème du travail à la visite d'une imprimerie, en passant par la préparation et la réalisation d'entretiens ainsi que, bien entendu, la conception des articles eux-mêmes. Un soin spécifique a été porté à la dimension visuelle, primordiale pour un journal s'inscrivant dans le cadre d'une manifestation artistique et culturelle. Collages, dessins, cartographie : chaque groupe a travaillé selon un format différent.

Au fil des pages de ce journal, nous vous invitons à partager la vision sur la Terrasse du Troc d'une chauve-souris, à découvrir ce qui pousse dans les jardins familiaux qui bordent le Bois, à partir à la découverte de ses sous-sols et de ses habitants, y compris les plus inattendus, et à "braconner" quelques informations inédites en passant.

microsilons

Une proposition de microsilons pour la Terrasse du Troc. Projet réalisé avec une classe de 5P - 6P de l'école des Allobroges et une classe de 9ème du cycle d'orientation de Montbrillant.

5P-6P, école des Allobroges :  
Yann Alves Moreira, Valentino Candido, Ana Reita Da Silva Pinto, Florian Ernest, Yoann Etheve, Florence Haymoz, Bryan Irigo Cueva, Tamara Kovacevic, Stephane Lindin Carrion, Sara Marques Rosa Fernandes, Mirko Negro, Paul Pattusch, Ana Catarina Pedrosa Da Cruz, Ramata Sow, Ejona Stojkaj, Ibrahim Suka.  
Enseignante : Jessica Aguet

9ème, Cycle d'orientation de Montbrillant :  
Gabriel Bird, Joaquim El Sayed, Christel Ferraira, Fabio Giammarresi, Roxanne Merlin, Diana Miranda Da Venda, Yasmin Paes Batista, Sara Pereira, Dayanara Ponce Carriel, Céline Rocha Cerqueira, Cristel Rodriguez, Sofia Rodriguez, Talita Rossi, Gabriela Silva Oliveira, Anaelle Stoppini.  
Enseignante : Valentina Pini

Remerciements :  
La Fédération Genevoise des Jardins Familiaux, l'entreprise Parmentier et ses employés, le Service des Pompes Funèbres, Cimetières et Crématoire de la Ville de Genève, l'association Stop Suicide et ses employées, le Service des Espaces Verts et de l'Environnement de la Ville de Genève et le Parc Animalier du Bois de la Bâtie, Monsieur Cyril Schönbächler, le Service de la Voirie de la Ville de Genève, l'équipe de la Terrasse du Troc, Monsieur Che Huber et Noir sur Noir.

Avec le soutien du  
Département de l'Instruction Publique, de la Culture et du Sport  
et du  
Département de l'Intérieur et de la Mobilité, direction générale de la Nature et du Paysage

Imprimé à 5000 exemplaires à Genève en juillet 2010  
Graphisme : Ramon Valle  
Imprimeur : Atar



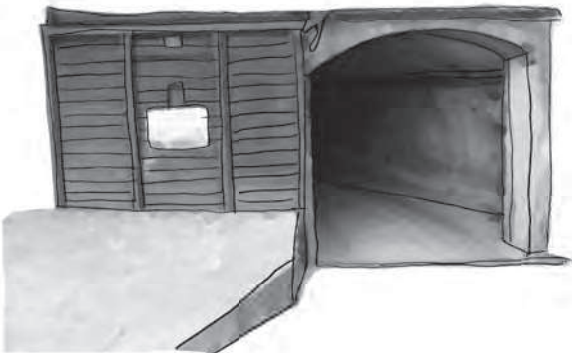


**Dans des galeries** souterraines dont l'entrée se situe à la rampe Quidort, se trouve une champignonnière. Le sous-sol étant un bien public inaliénable, l'entreprise qui utilise les galeries ne jouit que d'un droit d'exploitation, obtenu par l'acquisition d'une parcelle en surface. Les élèves se sont intéressés à la champignonnière mais également aux usages inédits qui ont été fait de ce sous-sol. Outre une rencontre avec un employé de l'entreprise Parmentier, des questions posées par téléphone à Monsieur Parmentier, l'article "La champignonnière de la rampe Quidort n'accueille plus de fêtards" (dans : La Tribune de Genève, 5 mars 2010) a été consulté.

## LE BOIS DE LA BÂTIE

# LA CHAMPIGNONNIÈRE QUIDORT

LA CHAMPIGNONNIÈRE SITUÉE À LA RAMPE QUIDORT 4 – OÙ ÉTAIENT ORGANISÉES DES FÊTES – EST MAINTENANT RÉSERVÉE AUX CHAMPIGNONS. DANS CETTE CHAMPIGNONNIÈRE, ON FAIT POUSSER PLUSIEURS SORTES DE CHAMPIGNONS DONT UNE PARTIE EST VENDUE DANS LES COMMERCE GENEVOIS.



POUR FAIRE POUSSER LES CHAMPIGNONS, IL FAUT UN ENVIRONNEMENT SOMBRE ET 80 À 82 % D'HUMIDITÉ DANS L'AIR. DU MYCÉLIUM, BASE DU CHAMPIGNON, EST PLACÉ DANS DES BOTTES DE PAILLE QU'ON LAISSE DANS LES GROTTES POUR QUE LES CHAMPIGNONS POUSSENT. APRÈS DEUX SEMAINES, LES OUVRIERS FONT UNE PREMIÈRE RÉCOLTE. DEUX SEMAINES, PLUS TARD, ON FAIT UNE SECONDE RÉCOLTE, OBTENUE À PARTIR DU MÊME MYCÉLIUM, ET DES MÊMES SACS DE PAILLE. UNE TROISIÈME ET DERNIÈRE RÉCOLTE SERA FAITE AVANT QUE LES SACS NE SOIENT REMPLACÉS.

CETTE CHAMPIGNONNIÈRE EST EXPLOITÉE DEPUIS UNE SOIXANTAINÉ D'ANNÉES. PENDANT QUELQUES MOIS, L'ANNÉE DERNIÈRE DES FÊTES Y ONT ÉTÉ ORGANISÉES (VOIR L' EXTRAIT DE L'UN DES FLYERS À DROITE). MALHEUREUSEMENT, CECI N'EST PLUS POSSIBLE CAR CERTAINS VOISINS ONT PORTÉ PLAINTÉ. D'APRÈS LE PROPRIÉTAIRE, CES FÊTES NE CAUSAIENT PAS DE RÉEL DÉRANGEMENT.



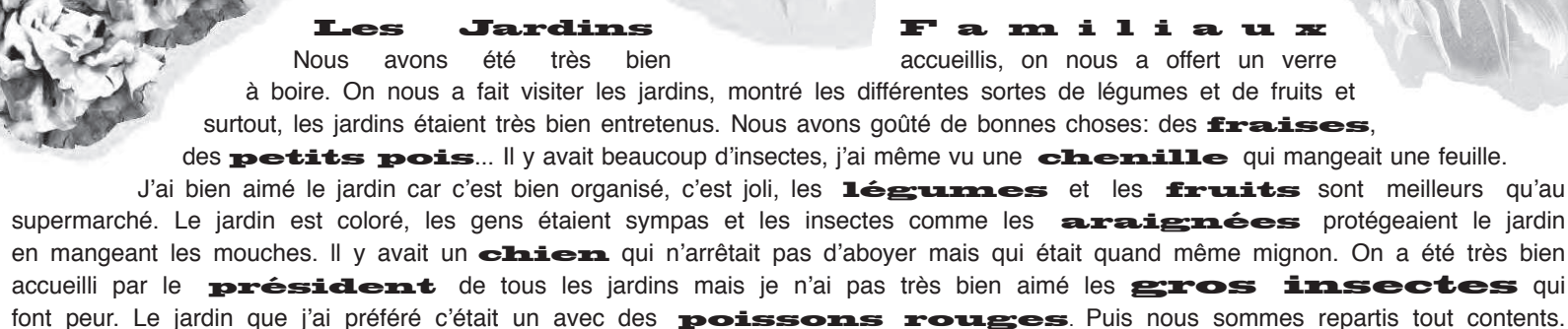
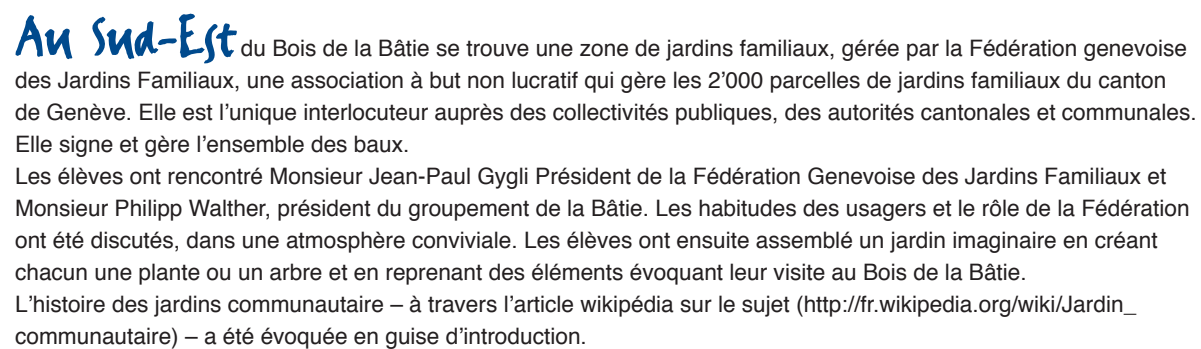
ON RÉCOLTE CHAQUE SEMAINE 200 KG DE CHAMPIGNONS À LA RAMPE QUIDORT ET QUATRE TONNES À LA PETITE-GRAVE. LES PREMIÈRES RÉCOLTES SONT IMPORTANTES, PUIS LA QUANTITÉ DIMINUE LORS DES DEUXIÈMES ET TROISIÈMES RÉCOLTES SUR LES MÊMES SACS DE PAILLE. CES SACS, MÉLANGEANT PAILLE ET MYCÉLIUM NE SONT PLUS AUJOURD'HUI PRÉPARÉS DANS LES CHAMPIGNONNIÈRES, MAIS ACHETÉS À UNE AUTRE ENTREPRISE, PRÊTS À L'EMPLOI.

L'ENTREPRISE PARMENTIER PRODUIT TROIS SORTES DE CHAMPIGNONS DONT DEUX À LA CHAMPIGNONNIÈRE QUIDORT : LES PLEUROTÉS (ORIGINAIRE DE FRANCE) ET LES SCHITAKÉS (ORIGINAIRE D'ASIE). DES CHAMPIGNONS DE PARIS SONT CULTIVÉS À LA PETITE-GRAVE. LES CHAMPIGNONS SONT VENDUS À GENÈVE SOUS LE LABEL "GENÈVE RÉGION – TERRE AVENIR", DANS DES MAGASINS COMME MIGROS, MANOR, OU ENCORE DANS DES PETITES ÉPICERIES.



Réalisé par Anaëlle Stoppini, Gabriella Silva, Diana Miranda, Gabriel Bird.









**Cet article** est une fiction imaginée par les élèves pour évoquer la Terrasse du Troc à travers un angle original : la manifestation vue par une chauve-souris habitante du Bois de la Bâtie. Ils ont rencontré Monsieur Cyril Schönbächler, naturaliste et spécialiste des chauves-souris. Il leur a fournit de nombreuses informations sur ce mammifère volant qui compte plus de 900 espèces différentes dans le monde, dont une trentaine en Suisse. Les informations sur la Terrasse du Troc leur ont été transmises par Madame Chantal Bermond, collaboratrice de la manifestation. Des informations complémentaires ont été trouvées dans le numéro hors-série «La chauve-souris sort de l'ombre» de Terre et Nature, août 2008.

## Le journal d'Odette la chauve-souris

Ces pages sont extraites d'un document exceptionnel, retrouvé au Bois de la Bâtie. Il s'agit du journal intime d'Odette, chauve-souris de l'espèce des pipistrelles et habitante du bois de la Bâtie depuis quelques d'années. Nous vous livrons ici quelques pages de ce document, qui évoquent notamment la Terrasse du Troc.

### Lundi

Aujourd'hui je suis allée chercher à manger après avoir piqué un petit somme. Je dormais à moitié, oui je sais, ce n'est pas une excuse. Il faut dire que, comme tu l'auras déjà remarqué, cher journal, je suis très maladroite. Et donc, comme j'étais fatiguée, je me suis cognée contre un arbre pendant que je pourchassai une mouche, malgré l'excellente vision en 3D que me procure mon sonar à ultra-sons. Et là, chose étrange, une affiche était placée au-dessus de moi, où il était écrit « La Terrasse du Troc ». C'était écrit que c'est une manifestation où des artistes sont invités à faire des projets, on peut entendre des contes, écouter des concerts... Au fait, t'avais je déjà dit que Monsieur Hibou donnait des cours de lecture et d'écriture. J'ai d'ailleurs réussi mon diplôme !

Enfin, bref, j'aimerais bien participer à cet événement, je vais me renseigner sur la date et l'horaire.

### Mardi

J'ai réussi à me renseigner sur la date grâce à Monsieur Durenard. Ce sera du 22 juillet au 15 août. Bon, je ne peux pas trop d'écrire aujourd'hui, journal, car je suis attendue pour une petite randonnée avec mes amis du Club Nocturne.

C'est un club qui réunit les autres animaux de la forêt qui vivent la nuit, comme M. Hibou et Mme Chouette, Mme Croac. Peut-être qu'ils aimeraient venir avec moi à la Terrasse du Troc ?

### Mercredi

Malheureusement mes amis du Club Nocturne n'ont pas voulu m'accompagner. Ils disaient avoir peur des humains. Je n'en vois pas la raison pourtant. Ils sont gentils d'organiser des fêtes pour qu'on puisse s'y rendre ! Donc j'ai décidé d'y aller toute seule. Après tout, je suis assez grande et je n'ai pas besoin d'eux pour prendre des décisions.

En allant là-bas, je me suis souvenue avoir déjà entendu d'étranges bruits l'année dernière à la même période. Madame Hirondelle m'avait d'ailleurs laissée entendre qu'il y avait une fête entre humains.

J'ai réussi à dénicher le programme du festival ! Je vais aller faire pour un petit tour à une lecture de contes, qui m'a l'air très intéressante. J'espère que personne ne trouvera trop bizarre qu'une chauve-souris adulte assiste à cet événement. J'ai toujours eu ce côté enfantin, j'adore les histoires. Je te raconterai ce que j'ai entendu là-bas quand je reviendrai.

### Jeudi

J'ai vraiment apprécié cette soirée ! Je ne vais pas pouvoir tout te raconter car il y avait trop d'histoires différentes. Je les ai toutes beaucoup aimées ! Sinon, tu ne sais pas la nouvelle ? J'ai rencontré Madame Chantal Bermond. C'est une collaboratrice de la Terrasse du Troc et elle a gentiment accepté de répondre à mes questions. Sais-tu d'où vient ce nom de 'Terrasse du Troc' ? Je l'ai appris à cette occasion, le troc c'est un système d'échange, qui n'implique pas l'idée d'argent. A la Terrasse, les artistes et les différentes personnes qui viennent à la manifestation, les publics, échangent leurs savoirs, des souvenirs, des moments... Et la première édition ayant eu lieu sur les voies couvertes de Saint-Jean, à Genève, a donné le mot 'Terrasse'. Elle m'a parlé du projet d'un artiste qui a installé des hauts-parleurs dans les arbres du Bois de la Bâtie et m'a proposé de participer. Pourquoi pas...

Je te laisse, car avec Madame Croac, nous allons nous rendre à la Terrasse pour un concert ce soir. J'ai entendu dire que M. Chauve-Souris viendrait sûrement et tu sais à quel point il me plaît...

### Vendredi

Waouh ! C'est le mot ! Hier j'ai vraiment passé une soirée magnifique. Le concert était vraiment super. Je suis allée avec Mme Croac m'asseoir vers le bar mais l'odeur de barbecue nous dérangeait, ce n'est pas vraiment notre tasse de thé les grillades, nous c'est plutôt mouches, moustiques... alors nous sommes allés plus loin. Monsieur Chauve-Souris est venu m'aborder. Je ne te raconte pas l'état dans lequel j'étais, je bafouillais, je rougissais, bref, l'horreur ! Il m'a invité à danser mais d'un seul coup, alors qu'il allait m'embrasser, il s'est mis à pleuvoir, un vrai déluge ! Des gens sont restés pour danser mais moi et Monsieur Chauve-Souris avons décidé d'aller nous réfugier au sec.

### 10 mois plus tard...

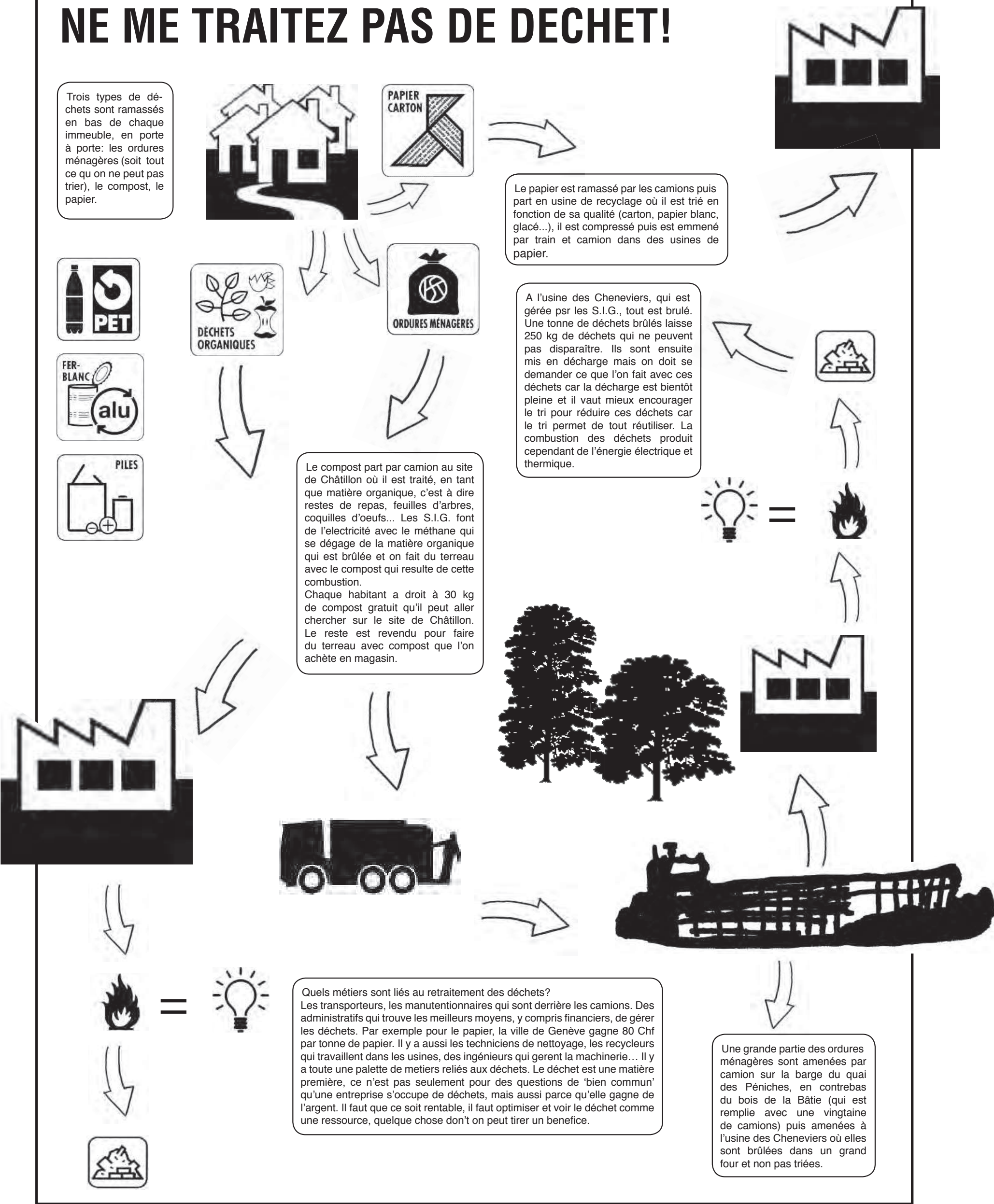
J'ai tellement de choses à te raconter. D'abord, pardon de t'avoir un peu délaissé. Tu n'imagines pas à quel point je suis heureuse : j'ai épousé M. Chauve-Souris. Et cette année, je pourrai retourner à la Terrasse du Troc avec Deborah. Tu ne devineras jamais qui c'est ! C'est ma fille.





**Quai des Péniches**, au pied du Bois de la Bâtie, se trouve la barge qui transporte nos déchets ménagers (ou du moins une grande partie) vers l'usine d'incinération des Cheneviers. La mission de l'usine des Cheneviers, qui est gérée par les S.I.G., est de traiter et valoriser les déchets urbains, agricoles, industriels et spéciaux en provenance, en priorité, des zones définies par le Plan cantonal de gestion des déchets dans le respect des principes du développement durable. Nous avons rencontré Monsieur Jean-Marc Robiani, collaborateur du service de la Voirie de la Ville de Genève, sur le site François Dussault, centrale pour toute la ville de Genève des camions de ramassage des déchets. Des informations complémentaires ont été trouvées sur les sites Internet suivants : <http://www.ville-geneve.ch/themes/environnement-urbain-espaces-verts/proprete-recyclage/recyclage-dechets-menagers/> <http://www.sig-ge.ch/corporate/l-entreprise-sig/notre-patrimoine/les-cheneviers/index.lbl>

# NE ME TRAITEZ PAS DE DECHET!



Réalisé par Roxanne Merlin, Sofia Rodriguez, Joaquin El Sayed

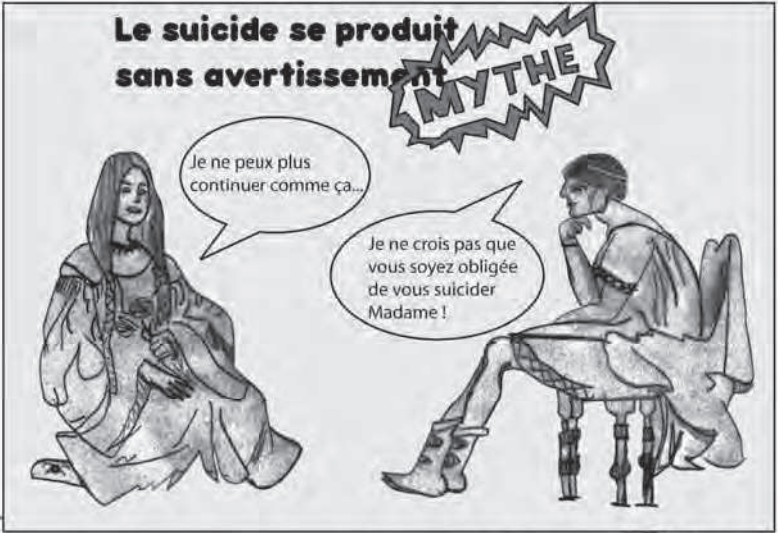




**Situé non loin** du Bois de la Bâtie, le Pont Butin a la réputation, sans que l'on connaisse réellement la véracité de ces on-dit, d'être un pont duquel l'on se suicide. Comment les usages détournés – réels ou supposés tels – de la voie publique peuvent-ils mener à la création de mythes et de légendes urbaines, circulant dans une ville ? Pour tenter d'en savoir plus sur ce pont et sur la question du suicide en général, les élèves ont réalisé une interview avec Magalie Chanson, Juliette de Montmollin et Anne-Marie Trabichet, collaboratrices de l'Association Stop Suicide. Ils ont également consulté de nombreux documents sur le site Internet de l'association ([www.stop-suicide.ch](http://www.stop-suicide.ch)). A partir de leurs recherches, ils ont travaillé à la création d'affiches de prévention.

### Pont Butin: du mythe à la réalité

Le pont Butin, à tort ou à raison, a la triste réputation de “pont des suicidés”. L'association Stop Suicide – fondée il y a une dizaine d'année par des jeunes choqués par le suicide d'un de leurs camarades – a écrit en 2004 une lettre au Maire de la commune de Lancy pour demander qu'une prévention efficace soit faite au Pont Butin. L'association préconisait, en se basant notamment sur des expériences réalisées sur des ponts canadiens, que des cabines téléphoniques et des affiches de prévention proposant des numéros d'aide d'urgence soient installées sur les lieux. La demande est restée sans suite. Si l'association ne travaille plus spécifiquement aujourd'hui sur le Pont Butin, elle continue à traiter le problème des ponts en général, dans son travail sur les multiples mesures de protection qu'elle tente de favoriser. Par ailleurs, l'association fait un important travail de prévention sur Internet, dans les écoles, dans les maisons de quartier ou auprès d'un plus large public, notamment lors de la Journée mondiale de prévention du suicide qui a lieu chaque année, le 10 septembre. Par ailleurs, les adolescents peuvent trouver de l'aide 24/24h en appelant le Centre d'Etude et de Prévention du Suicide au 022 382 42 42.



Réalisé par Ejona, Ibrahim, Mirko, Sara et Stephane.





**Le cimetière Saint-Georges**, qui borde le côté ouest du Bois de la Bâtie, est l'un des plus grands cimetières de la ville de Genève. En rencontrant Monsieur Coulin – collaborateur au Service des Pompes Funèbres, Cimetières et Crématoire de la ville de Genève – les élèves ont pu discuter du fonctionnement d'un tel lieu, de son caractère éminemment collectif, de son importance pour la communauté. Ils ont également pu découvrir un usage étonnant de ce cimetière, pendant la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale.

Les sources suivantes sont venues compléter les informations recueillies lors de la rencontre :

- « Genève : Juifs, musulmans et chrétiens au cimetière Saint-Georges », dans : 24 heures, 18 juillet 2002.
- <http://fr.wiktionary.org/wiki/cimetière>
- [www.ville-geneve.ch/plan-ville/centres-funeraires-cimetieres/cimetiere-saint-georges](http://www.ville-geneve.ch/plan-ville/centres-funeraires-cimetieres/cimetiere-saint-georges)

# LE CIMETIÈRE SAINT-GEORGES

## HISTOIRE ET FONCTIONNEMENT



Le cimetière (du grec ancien “koimêtérion“, lieu pour dormir, dortoir) est en général, depuis le début du XIXe siècle en Occident, divisé en concessions. Pendant longtemps, une concession pouvait être donnée ou vendue à une famille. Aujourd’hui, cela devient très rare, par manque de place.

Au cimetière du Bois de la Bâtie, le cimetière Saint-Georges, les concessions des tombes durent 33 ans et avant, elles duraient 20 ans. Il y a plusieurs types de sépultures.

Vers la fin de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale, il y a eu un potager dans le cimetière. Parce qu’on manquait de nourriture pour les Genevois on a décidé d’utiliser certains des grands espaces du cimetière pour les cultiver. Aujourd’hui, on ne sait plus où était situé ce potager exactement. Il n’en reste aucune trace et des tombes occupent très certainement son ancien emplacement.

Il y a suffisamment de place dans le cimetière à l’heure actuelle. Cependant, pendant 13 ans, à cause du changement de la durée des concessions, il n’y aura pas de désaffectation donc aucune tombe n’arrivera à échéance et ne pourra être remplacée : il n’y aura que des nouvelles tombes.

Quand une personne décède, on l’enterre dans le premier quartier en exploitation. Les quartiers sont les zones rectangulaires qui divisent le cimetière. Les enfants sont séparés parce que c’est une habitude qui leur est restée du siècle dernier. Les concessions ce sont des tombes que l’on peut renouveler. Les tombes sont disposées les unes à côté des autres, numérotées dans l’ordre. Il y a des secteurs différents pour chaque type de religion. Il y a aussi des tombes de cendres pour les personnes incinérées. Dans certains quartiers, dédiés à des concessions, les tombes ne sont pas alignées, mais reprennent les formes de jardins qui existaient avant que le lieu ne soit un cimetière.



## RENSEIGNEMENTS PRATIQUES

### Comment s’y rendre

Depuis le centre-ville, prendre le bus 10 en direction d’Onex-Cité. Arrêt : “Cimetière”.



### Horaires d’ouverture

Tous les jours de 7H30 jusqu’à 19H.  
Il y a des gardes qui surveillent de l’accès au cimetière. Ils veillent à ce que personne n’entre avec des chiens ou des véhicules. Il n’y a pas de système de surveillance dans le cimetière; les portails se ferment de manière automatique en fin de journée. Pour éviter que les gens ne restent bloqués à l’intérieur, un interrupteur permet d’ouvrir la porte depuis l’intérieur.  
Il y a une petite loge à l’entrée pour les personnes qui désirent acheter des fleurs pour en mettre sur sur les tombes de personnes proches.



### Photos

Il est interdit de prendre des photos dans le cimetière, pour protéger la vie privée des personnes et leur anonymat.



### Nourriture

Il est strictement interdit de manger dans le cimetière. Vous trouverez une Migros et quelques restaurants dans les environs.



### A NE PAS MANQUER

On ne peut pas décorer les tombes comme on le veut car il y a un règlement général (il y a 45 communes dans le canton donc 45 règlements différents) qui dit que l’ensemble des choses qui se trouvent dans le cimetière ne doit pas choquer, que l’on doit respecter de manière générale le lieu de repos qu’est un cimetière. C’est pourquoi rien de vraiment frappant ne semble sortir d’une série de tombes uniformes. Pourtant, il y a quelques particularités à ne pas manquer dans ce cimetière.

Les tombes des “stars” sont généralement au cimetière des Rois. Mais il y en a quelque-unes au cimetière Saint-Georges, comme celle de Ferdinand Hodler. Vous pourrez aussi voir l’avenue des aviateurs, où des pilotes des débuts de l’aéronautique suisse sont enterrés. Vous pourrez trouver quelques autres curiosités pendant votre balade, comme par exemple une roulotte en pierre sur la tombe d’un membre d’une famille de forains. Pour plus d’infos, adressez-vous à l’accueil à l’entrée du cimetière.





**Une visite** au Parc animalier du Bois de la Bâtie nous a permis de rencontrer Monsieur Schacher, collaborateur du Service des Espaces Verts et de l'Environnement de la Ville de Genève, qui nous a gentiment accueilli et expliqué son travail de surveillance et de soin des animaux ainsi que les spécificités du parc animalier et sa missions de conservation d'espèces rares. A l'origine, le parc animalier est une initiative d'un jardinier du Bois, qui, dès 1945, installe quelques abris provisoires pour accueillir des animaux locaux blessés. Devant le succès rencontré, la ville crée, dans les années 80, le parc que nous connaissons maintenant et qui présente la faune régionale, les animaux de la basse-cour, ainsi que certaines espèces helvétiques en voie de disparition.

Des informations avaient, avant la visite, été récoltées sur le site suivant : <http://www.ville-geneve.ch/themes/environnement-urbain-espaces-verts/parc-animaux-bois-batie/>

## Parc Animalier du Bois de la Bâtie.

Extraits de l'entretien avec Monsieur Schacher.

### Quels sont les animaux en voie de disparition que l'on peut trouver dans le parc animalier ?

Les bouquetins, par exemple, moins menacés maintenant mais qui l'étaient beaucoup plus quelques dizaines d'années en arrière, les chouettes chevêches, les tetras-lyres, les moutons d'Engadin... Nous faisons partie de ProSpecieRara, qui est une fondation en Suisse qui s'occupe de toutes les espèces menacées, plantes et animaux. Nous essayons de protéger ces espèces.

Les cornes des bouquetins font jusqu'à 1m20 à l'extérieur. En ce moment, ils sont en train de perdre leurs poils d'hiver, ils sont en fin de mue. Les bouquetins se reproduisent bien en captivité. Savez-vous que leur 'montagne' cache en fait les anciens réservoirs d'eau de la ville de Genève? Il existe plusieurs projets pour aménager ces réservoirs, mais pour l'instant, c'est vide. C'est très grand. Nous on aimerait faire un local pour stocker notre matériel. On pourrait aussi faire un nocturama. Le problème est que c'est très humide et il n'y a qu'un accès.

Vous voyez la tête d'une marmotte, là haut? Elles se reproduisent bien aussi. elles font les trous que vous voyez dans les rochers, on espère que les arbres vont tenir encore car elles font des galeries partout. Elles dorment tout l'hiver, elles mangent de mars à septembre, elles prennent 2,5 kg (sur 5 kg). L'hiver, elle dort et son rythme cardiaque passe à 4 pulsations par minutes. Dans leur terrier, elles font comme des appartements, avec des pièces pour les excréments, des salles pour dormir... Elles ne mangent plus et ne boivent plus pendant 5 mois.

Dans cet enclos se trouvent des vaches qui sont des espèces suisses rares, elles disparaissent parce qu'elles ne correspondent plus aux critères: des animaux pour la boucherie ou pour donner du lait, avec un bon rendement, 40 litres de lait par jour, par exemple. Ces vaches là (vache réthique, vache d'Hinterwald) sont moins «rentables». Nous essayons de garder l'espèce en vie.

Ici, c'est un tetra-lyre, avec comme des sourcils rouges. C'est très menacé en Suisse comme le coq de bruyère et le grand tétra. Ils viennent du Jura surtout. Le problème, c'est qu'ils doivent se protéger et se ménager pour survivre en hiver et, avec les skieurs et les promeneurs partout, ils ne sont pas tranquilles pour vivre et se reproduire et sont en voie d'extinction.

Les chouettes chevêches vivent habituellement dans les vergers et elles disparaissent parce que les vergers, où les rongeurs qui constituent leur alimentation sont très présents à cause des fruits, disparaissent.

### Que se passe-t-il si les animaux qui vivent en liberté dans le bois viennent dans le parc animalier ?

On laisse certains animaux s'installer ici, comme les canards. Des rats, des souris, rentrent et on ne peut pas gérer leurs allées et venues. On est très vigilants sur l'aspect sanitaire, les maladies qu'ils peuvent faire rentrer dans le parc et transmettre aux autres animaux. Les hérons viennent naturellement aussi. Pendant les épidémies de grippe aviaires on a rentré les volailles pour ne pas qu'elles soient contaminées par d'autres oiseaux. On a construit des volières. Dans l'idéal, on devrait fermer l'étang, couper l'arrivée d'eau... mais c'est impossible.

Le parc est resté ouvert, les gens pouvaient venir mais on leur déconseillait de ramasser des plumes. On a jamais eu de cas de grippe ici au parc, on a fait faire des tests pour s'en assurer pendant la durée de l'épidémie.

### Pourquoi l'entrée au parc est-elle gratuite ?

Parce que c'est un cadeau de la ville, dont dépend le SEVE, via les impôts, qui finance ce parc, pour le plaisir des familles genevoises.

### Quel est le coût d'un tel parc?

Plusieurs dizaines de milliers de francs pour les animaux (nourriture, entretien...) auxquels il faut ajouter les salaires. C'est relativement modeste, parce que ce sont des animaux locaux. Si on était un grand zoo, type Bâle, avec un budget de plusieurs millions par an, avec des animaux exotiques, on devrait faire payer mais ce nest pas le cas et ce n'est pas le projet.

Les paons vous font un peu peur? il n'y a pas de raison, ils ne sont pas dangereux, ils vous suivent parce qu'ils veulent de la nourriture,un morceaux de pain... Ils dorment dans les arbres, ça leur permet d'échapper aux renards. Ils sont vulnérables quand la paonne pond ces oeufs, car le nid est au sol et elle préfère protéger ses petits et se faire manger que de fuir le renard. Au mois de juillet aout, le paon mâle perd ses plumes et il les récupère au long de l'hiver pour être le plus beau au printemps pour la période de reproduction.

On perd jusqu'à une trentaine de volatiles par an à cause des renards! Entre mi-avril et fin mai, quand les petits sont en pleine croissance, ils ont besoin de plus de nourriture et ils viennent ici, sans se soucier du monde, pour essayer d'attraper des animaux. C'est la période un peu critique, on doit faire attention!

### Pourquoi les visiteurs n'ont-ils pas le droit de toucher les animaux ?

On peut toucher certains animaux., comme les chèvres naines. C'est avant tout pour des questions de sécurité. Un animal est imprévisible, c'est difficile de savoir comment il va réagir. Nous travaillons sur un projet ou les enfants pourront aller avec les animaux en présence d'un gardien. C'est notre responsabilité que tout se passe bien. On ne sait pas non plus comment les gens agissent avec les animaux, s'ils leur donnent à manger... on doit faire attention.

Ici, on donne beaucoup de responsabilité au visiteur, il y a parfois des incidents. Par exemple, des gens abandonnent des lapins, avant les vacances, c'est pour ça qu'il y a des lapins au parc. C'est grave d'abandonner un animal, nous on préfère qu'on nous appelle et parvenir à trouver une bonne solution avec la personne.



**THE REVOLUTION WILL NOT BE TELEVISED**

Vidéos amateur de 8 mm à 2.0



## THE REVOLUTION WILL NOT BE TELEVISED

Vidéos amateur de 8 mm à 2.0

En 2010, 35 heures de vidéos sont ajoutées sur *YouTube* chaque minute. La moitié de ces vidéos sont commentées, évaluées ou recommandées par les utilisateurs. En 2007 déjà, 87% des propriétaires de téléphones portables équipés d'une caméra déclaraient utiliser cette fonction.

Bien plus que le simple reflet d'une évolution technique, ces chiffres témoignent d'un changement fondamental : la division entre producteurs et consommateurs d'images en mouvement est remise en cause et une nouvelle figure émerge, celle du *prosumer*.

Il est de plus en plus difficile de séparer image professionnelle et image amateur et la circulation des vidéos est de plus en plus complexe. La chronologie ci-après ne présente pas la vidéo amateur comme un champ fermé et statique mais expose ses liens avec le cinéma, les médias traditionnels, la politique...

Si les téléphones portables et les caméras numériques nous laissent saisir de manière ludique des images de nos vies quotidiennes, ils permettent également de documenter des événements ignorés par la presse écrite et audiovisuelle, ou de dénoncer des situations politiques intolérables, comme nous avons pu l'observer encore récemment lors du Printemps arabe. En 1970, pointant du doigt les médias de masse qui ignoraient la dégradation des conditions de vie dans les quartiers pauvres, Gil Scott Heron écrivait la chanson : "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised".

Cette publication présente la recherche menée sur la vidéo amateur, entre 2009 et 2011, dans le cadre des projets de médiation du Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, par Helen Bauman, Lea Fröhlicher, Christina Gasser et le collectif microsillons, en collaboration avec un groupe d'étudiants du Master en sciences de la communication et des médias du département de sociologie de l'Université de Genève et leur enseignante, Katharina Niemeyer.

Cette recherche – qui a été présentée fin 2010 sous la forme d'une installation au Centre, dans l'exposition "Image – Mouvement" – prend également la forme d'un site Internet ([www.therevolutionwillnotbetelevised.ch](http://www.therevolutionwillnotbetelevised.ch)) regroupant des exemples de vidéos amateur sélectionnés et commentés par huit groupes, entre 2009 et 2011. Après une introduction sur la vidéo amateur, les participants ont sélectionné sur l'Internet des exemples illustrant une série de catégories définies ensemble. Ils ont ensuite commenté leurs choix. Le site est évolutif et consultable en ligne.



## **Le repas de bébé**

En 1895, les frères Auguste et Louis Lumière mettent au point une caméra capable d'enregistrer et de projeter des images animées, utilisant une pellicule 35 mm.

Pendant l'été 1895, pour tester son invention, Louis Lumière tourne de courtes séquences qui présentent des vues de sa famille et de ses proches, comme *Le repas de bébé*, qui consiste en un plan montrant Auguste Lumière et sa femme, en compagnie de leur fille qui prend son déjeuner.

Ainsi, les premières images filmées ont pour sujet des scènes similaires à celles qui seront au centre des films amateur pendant des décennies.

## **Contexte d'émergence du film amateur**

Si le film amateur se décline aujourd'hui en sujets très variés, il s'est longtemps confondu avec le film de famille. Eloigné de toute forme de critique ou d'émancipation, il répondait alors aux normes sociales de valorisation de la famille nucléaire.

A la fin du XIXe, aux USA, on assiste à un changement radical dans la manière d'aborder le travail. La rationalisation de son mode d'organisation permet aux classes moyennes de tirer parti de la transformation de leur quotidien et de découvrir le temps des loisirs.

Peu après, l'avènement du 16 mm puis du 8 mm rend possible, pour les plus aisés, la captation sur film de ce nouveau mode de vie. Cette nouvelle pratique se définit autant en termes sociaux et économiques qu'en termes technologiques ou esthétiques.

Quelques fabricants d'équipement ont monopolisé le marché, standardisé les formats et progressivement établi le 35 mm comme le format professionnel et les 16 et 8 mm comme les formats amateur.

Ce mouvement a aussi mené à un système de distribution qui dicte des normes professionnelles et qui définit ainsi ce qu'est un produit professionnel, méritant une audience nationale.

**1891**

Kodak démarre la production des caméras 35 mm.

**1923**

Apparition du 16 mm.



## L'enfant comme sujet (1920-1930)

Beaucoup de séquences montrant des enfants ont comme principe "le premier" : les premiers pas d'un enfant, sa première coupe de cheveux, son premier anniversaire, etc. Dans les années 1930, la documentation et la mise en scène des jouets d'enfants est aussi un important sujet. Celui-ci perd cependant de son importance au fil du temps.

Les enfants en bas âge sont rarement seuls devant la caméra. Souvent, l'enfant est, pour ainsi dire, présenté par un adulte à la caméra. Dès que les enfants ont dépassé le stade de nourrisson, l'important n'est pas seulement de les amener devant la caméra, mais aussi de les y garder. Des enfants sont ainsi présentés dans des parcs pour bébé ou dans des chaises hautes. Les enfants qui sont déjà capables de suivre des instructions sont souvent filmés immobiles.

Les scènes les plus prisées sont celles dans lesquelles les enfants font une petite action, comme montrer quelque chose, chanter une chanson ou saluer de la main. Dès qu'ils sont en âge de comprendre le film comme situation de spectacle, ils peuvent se conduire en "star", se mettre en scène ou être mis en scène. Dans ces "séquences de stars", les enfants participent activement. L'enfant est ainsi pleinement reconnu comme sujet filmique.

## Gestes et poses typiques dans le film de famille

Il existe deux mouvements de main récurrents dans les films de famille.

Le premier est un signe de "bonjour" de la main. Agiter sa main de gauche à droite semble être un geste inévitable dans le film de famille, comme si, lorsque la caméra est en marche, il y avait une sorte de "contrainte à se dire bonjour". Ce geste est non seulement destiné au caméraman, mais aussi au public.

Le deuxième est un geste qui consiste à désigner (le plus souvent avec l'index tendu) un objet que la caméra devrait filmer : de belles fleurs, un panorama ou des animaux. Ces gestes ne sont que rarement dirigés vers quelqu'un. Ces deux gestes typiques attirent les regards et réclament l'attention du spectateur.

Dans le film de famille des années 1930, les poses font surtout référence au théâtre, au long-métrage ou à la pantomime. La pose favorite du film de famille de l'époque était la pose dite "de photographie", où le sujet se tenait immobile devant la caméra, dans une posture rappelant des images existantes. Par ailleurs, très vite, être filmé semble être mis en relation avec la possibilité de devenir célèbre. C'est ce qu'illustre l'exemple de la publicité *Kodak*, parue dans le *Zürcher Illustrierten* en 1930, qui disait : "Trouvez la star de cinéma dans votre famille !"

### 1923

Fondation de la première association de film amateur en Angleterre. Très tôt, les réalisateurs de films amateur se regroupent dans des clubs et des associations.

### 1932

Apparition du 8 mm et de son système de projection.

## Le film de famille dans les années 1930

Dans les années 1930, ce sont surtout les familles bourgeoises qui possèdent une caméra. Les personnes filmées font, en général, partie du cercle des proches. La majorité de ces films sont produits durant le temps des loisirs, avant tout par les pères de famille. Certaines activités quotidiennes, comme le ménage ou le travail rémunéré, sont rarement filmées.

Les sujets favoris du film de famille étaient, et sont toujours, les enfants et les vacances. Le film de famille sert à conserver les moments dont on aimerait se souvenir. Ce sont surtout des moments heureux et insoucians qui sont filmés. Il y a une série de sujets qui n'apparaissent quasiment jamais, comme les tensions, le malheur, la séparation et la mort. Certaines situations ou gestes peuvent cependant suggérer des conflits, comme par exemple un enfant qui pleure ou quelqu'un qui se détourne brusquement de la caméra.

## La vidéo amateur et le *Found Footage*

La méthode du *Found Footage*, qui consiste à assembler des extraits de films de différentes sources pour en créer un nouveau, n'est pas nouvelle. Initialement créés à partir de matériel analogique, ces films sont de nos jours constitués principalement de matériel digital. Les plateformes virtuelles de vidéo comme *YouTube* sont une source d'emprunt pour les cinéastes et les artistes.

Depuis les débuts du cinéma, les pellicules de film s'assemblent par montage. Dans les années 1920 et 1930, au temps du dadaïsme, les artistes ont beaucoup expérimenté en faisant des assemblages inhabituels d'images et de films, sortant les extraits de leur contexte initial. Du nouveau montage issu de ces différents extraits (tirés de longs-métrages, d'émissions télé, d'archives ainsi que de films d'amateurs) sont nés des rapports novateurs entre forme et contenu. Le fait que les cinéastes et les artistes réarrangent du matériel vidéo déjà existant a également contribué à une redéfinition de la notion d'auteur.

Au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, à l'ère du Web 2.0, les films utilisant la technique du *Found Footage* sont de plus en plus souvent réalisés à partir de vidéos amateur privées et anonymes. Les plateformes virtuelles comme *YouTube* donnent aux cinéastes et artistes un accès facile et gratuit à un matériel varié provenant du monde entier. Par ces pratiques, de nouveaux dialogues entre vidéo amateur, oeuvre d'art et cinéma s'établissent.

### 1934

Le premier club suisse de film amateur est fondé à Zurich.

### Oliver Stone, *JFK* (1991)

Dans son film *JFK*, Oliver Stone insère le film d'amateur de Abraham Zapruder, unique film montrant l'assassinat de John F. Kennedy. *JFK* raconte la tentative du juge Jim Garrison de clarifier les circonstances de l'assassinat du président américain en 1963. Le scénario s'appuie sur le livre de Garrison et sur sa théorie selon laquelle Lee Harvey Oswald n'aurait pas agi seul mais n'aurait été qu'un pion dans un vaste complot contre l'Etat.

#### 1963

L'assassinat de J. F. Kennedy est filmé par un amateur. Les images font le tour du monde.

## Quand la télé devient télé-réalité

*Loft Story*, *Secret Story*, *Star Academy*, toutes ces émissions de télé-réalité qui inondent actuellement le paysage audio-visuel ne sont pas arrivées du jour au lendemain sur nos écrans. De 1967 à 2010, ce genre a beaucoup évolué et il a progressivement conquis les télévisions du monde entier. La télé-réalité s'est même imposée comme un moyen de garantir une importante audience et donc, un gain économique conséquent.

C'est en 1967 que la télé-réalité débute. L'émission allemande *Aktenzeichen XY... Ungelöst* propose au public de jouer les détectives et de résoudre des affaires. Mais là où la télé-réalité rejoint la vidéo amateur, c'est dans le principe même de filmer des individus, le plus souvent anonymes, dans leur quotidien. En 1973, les américains peuvent par exemple assister au divorce d'une famille californienne grâce à l'émission *An American Family*. La vie de famille a d'ailleurs souvent été le sujet de la télé-réalité, jusqu'à aujourd'hui avec *The Osbornes* ou *Hogan Knows Best*.

En 1999, *Big Brother* franchit une étape supplémentaire en enfermant des participants volontaires dans un lieu et en les filmant 24 heures sur 24. Le concept est un tel succès qu'il est exporté dans 70 pays et l'émission devient la référence de ce genre télévisuel. *Secret Story*, *Loft Story*, ou encore *Dilemme* en sont de simples dérivés. Et selon les dernières mesures d'audience, la télé-réalité a encore de beaux jours devant elle.



**1965**

Kodak lance le Super 8 qui devient rapidement le format de prédilection des cinéastes amateurs.

**1967**

Sony commercialise le Portapak, la première caméra portable permettant à un utilisateur seul de réaliser des enregistrements en extérieur.

### **Familienkino (1978)**

En 1978, à la télévision allemande, apparaît une émission nommée *Familienkino*. Durant deux ans, Alfred Behrens et Michael Kuball ont rassemblé pour les chaînes *NDR* et *WDR* plus de 100'000 mètres de pellicule provenant de films privés d'amateurs des années 1900 à 1960. A partir de ce matériel, ils ont réalisé les sept épisodes de l'émission *Familienkino*, diffusés entre décembre 1978 et janvier 1979.

A la suite de cette diffusion, une publication qui a pour titre *Familienkino – Geschichte des Amateurfilms in Deutschland* (Cinéma de famille. L'histoire du film amateur en Allemagne), a été produite.

### **Krzysztof Kieslowski, *L'amateur* (Camera Buff) (1979)**

Le héros du film *L'amateur* de Krzysztof Kieslowski, Filip Mosz, s'achète une caméra 8 mm pour filmer son bébé. Fasciné par sa nouvelle acquisition, son intérêt se porte ensuite sur des personnes en dehors du cadre familial. Dans l'usine où il travaille, son patron saisit l'occasion et le nomme chroniqueur officiel. Ses productions gagnent des prix dans des concours de films amateur. Ses compétences se développent, ainsi que son désir de filmer la réalité telle qu'elle est et non comme elle lui est dictée. Il se retrouve confronté à la censure et son supérieur est renvoyé à cause de ses films.

## Rodney King

Le 3 mars 1991, Rodney Glen King, un afro-américain, roulant en état d'ébriété au-delà des vitesses autorisées, est arrêté par des policiers du Los Angeles Police Department. Il refuse de coopérer et agresse les policiers présents. Ne réussissant pas à le maîtriser, ces derniers le rouent de coups. Le tabassage, qui dure presque deux minutes, est d'une rare violence. Il est filmé par George Holliday, un habitant du quartier.

Holliday fait d'abord part de ces images à la police, mais, face au désintérêt des forces de l'ordre, il les envoie à une chaîne de télévision locale. Elles seront reprises par les chaînes du monde entier, provoquant une indignation générale.

Les quatre policiers seront poursuivis par la justice et acquittés par un jury majoritairement composé de blancs, le 29 avril 1992. Ce verdict déclenchera les plus importantes émeutes raciales du XXe siècle aux Etats-Unis, émeutes qui feront 52 morts.

### 1983

Entre 1981 et 1983,  
le nombre de foyers  
américains possédant une  
caméra passe de 6% à  
28%.

### Catégorie "film personnel"

(1984, *FIAF*)

En 1984 apparaît au sein de la *FIAF* – L'Association Internationale du Film d'Archives – une nouvelle catégorie de films nommée "film personnel". Ce genre regroupe, selon la *FIAF*: "(...) des films produits non pas par une équipe mais entièrement réalisés par une seule personne. Il peut s'agir d'œuvres d'art, de travaux de recherche, de documents privés, d'imitations de films industriels, de journaux, de messages filmés, de films faits par des enfants, etc."

## America's Funniest Home Videos (AFHV)

L'humour a également sa place dans la vidéo amateur. Les années 1980 voient ainsi l'émergence d'émissions à contenu humoristique. C'est une émission japonaise, *Fun with Ken and Kato Chan*, produite par *Tokyo Broadcasting Company*, qui, la première, invitera les téléspectateurs à envoyer leurs propres vidéos à caractère humoristique. Dès lors, on observe un renversement : le consommateur de télévision devient producteur.

Véritable carton, le programme est repris aux Etats-Unis, en 1990, par la chaîne *ABC*, sous la forme d'un concours : le *America's Funniest Home Videos (AFHV)*. Chaque semaine, trois vidéos amateur étaient en compétition et 10'000 dollars en jeu. Le public de l'émission faisait office de jury et désignait le vainqueur. L'originalité et la fantaisie étant les critères clés, on assistait à une ribambelle de chutes, farces et fous rires. *AFHV* va alors connaître un boom retentissant : l'audience et le taux de participation au programme atteignent des sommets. Bien plus, l'émission américaine ne manque pas de faire des émules : *You've been Framed* en Angleterre, *Drôle de vidéo* au Canada et bien sûr, le cultissime *Vidéo Gag* en France. Autant de programmes qui, au début des 90's, ont conforté le statut de la vidéo amateur comme véritable art populaire.

1995

Apparition des premières caméras numériques.

## The Real World

Créée en 1992, *The Real World* est l'émission de télé-réalité la plus longue de l'histoire : elle ne compte pas moins de 24 saisons (436 épisodes). Le principe sur lequel est construit le programme est simple : laisser à ses participants une totale liberté d'action, autant dans l'appartement qu'ils partagent qu'à l'extérieur. Les téléspectateurs peuvent constater l'immaturité de certains candidats et assister à des scènes plus ou moins mouvementées.

L'émission connaît un véritable succès et plus particulièrement la saison 3, *The Real World: San Francisco* (1994), grâce à la participation du candidat Pedro Zamora, l'une des premières personnes à revendiquer son homosexualité et à parler du SIDA dans un média populaire.



## Le *Dogme95*: une arme anti-Hollywood

Lancé en 1995 sous l'impulsion des cinéastes danois Lars von Trier et Thomas Vinterberg, le *Dogme95* se définit comme un mouvement cinématographique d'avant-garde. Le 13 mars de cette même année, les deux hommes publient *Le Manifeste du Dogme95*, ouvrage dans lequel ils se positionnent contre l'esthétisme du cinéma hollywoodien qu'ils jugent impersonnel et formaté.

Ensemble, Von Trier et Vinterberg établissent dix règles s'appliquant à un cinéma plus réaliste, sans artifices techniques, qu'ils nomment "vœux de chasteté". Deux nouveaux réalisateurs danois rejoindront le *Dogme95* par la suite, Soeren Kragh-Jacobsen et Kristian Levrig. Le collectif tente ainsi d'appliquer les "dix commandements" dans leurs propres œuvres et s'engagent notamment à respecter les règles suivantes :

La caméra doit être tenue à l'épaule. Tout mouvement ou immobilité faisable à l'épaule est autorisé. Le tournage doit avoir lieu là où le film a lieu. Le film doit être en couleur. L'éclairage spécial n'est pas acceptable. S'il y a trop peu de lumière, la scène doit être coupée, ou bien il faut monter une seule lampe sur la caméra. Les détournements temporels et géographiques sont interdits, tout comme les trucages et filtres.

Enfin, chaque film qui répond suffisamment à ces normes est estampillé d'un label officiel. Le mouvement prend fin en 2005, suite au retrait de ses deux fondateurs. *Les Idiots*, réalisé et tourné en vidéo par Lars Von Trier en 1998, figure parmi les œuvres les plus emblématiques du *Dogme95*, tout comme *Festen* (1998) de Thomas Vinterberg et *Lovers* (1999) de Jean-Marc Barr.

### 1996


La télévision tessinoise collecte et diffuse, depuis 1996, des films amateur.

### ***The Blair Witch Project (1999)***

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"21 octobre 1994. Trois cinéastes en herbe se réunissent un week-end pour tourner un documentaire sur une vieille histoire de sorcellerie, qui circule dans un coin perdu du Maryland..." A l'heure de sa sortie en salle, pour le public, le film a commencé depuis plusieurs mois déjà. En effet, dès 1998, de nombreuses rumeurs relatant la disparition de trois apprentis réalisateurs dans la forêt de Blair courent sur l'Internet. Selon ces rumeurs, les caméras des disparus auraient été retrouvées par hasard et auraient donné lieu au film *The Blair Witch Project*.

La prétendue authenticité des images a suscité une impressionnante curiosité auprès des spectateurs, faisant de ce film à petit budget (35'000 dollars) un succès du box office. Les réalisateurs ont voulu tirer le meilleur parti de cette contrainte financière, jouant avec une impression de réel, renforcée par les techniques employées lors du tournage. Equipés d'une caméra 16 mm noir-blanc et d'un caméscope couleur, les acteurs se filment eux-mêmes en suivant une feuille de route pré-établie. Durant le tournage, ils avancent seuls dans les bois, caméra à l'épaule et réagissent de manière quasi naturelle et spontanée aux événements et bruitages imposés par les réalisateurs. La caméra subjective et les plans très "amateurs" entraînent le spectateur dans un périple toujours plus sombre et inquiétant. Ainsi, sans effets spéciaux particuliers et à moindres frais, le sentiment de réel a suffi à créer une peur panique chez le spectateur.



### **Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan (RAWA)** ■■■■■

La *Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan* est une organisation féminine de résistance qui promeut le droit des femmes et dénonce les exactions commises sur les Afghanes. Depuis 1977, l'organisation s'implique politiquement et socialement, par des actions non-violentes, dans la lutte pour le respect des droits humains dans le contexte afghan. Depuis les années 2000, la RAWA filme en secret des tortures et des exécutions, pour alerter l'opinion internationale sur la situation des femmes sous le régime taliban. A partir de ces images, des films documentaires sont réalisés et diffusés sur des grandes chaînes de télévision occidentales.

### **“Don't try this at home”** ■■■■■

La phrase “don't try this at home” est fréquemment utilisée par les médias audiovisuels pour dissuader le public d'imiter des gestes dangereux qu'ils diffusent. Cette mise en garde est souvent liée à des images ayant une esthétique rappelant des images amateurs, comme si l'aspect “fait maison” incitait à la reproduction des faits et gestes présentés. L'émission archétypale du “don't try this at home” est certainement *Jackass* (diffusée sur MTV entre 2000 et 2002, puis adaptée pour le grand écran), un programme où les protagonistes se mettent en danger dans des cascades souvent ridicules, allant jusqu'à se blesser volontairement. Des messages appelant les spectateurs à ne pas tenter d'imiter ce qu'ils voient sont affichés non seulement au début et à la fin des émissions, mais également dans un bandeau défilant pendant le programme. Malgré cela, *Jackass* a été évoqué dans de nombreux cas où l'on a estimé que l'émission avait servi de source d'inspiration à de jeunes gens pour recréer des cascades qui avaient mené à des blessures, voire à des décès. On peut noter que *Jackass* est fortement imprégné de l'esthétique et de l'humour de la culture skate et que les skateurs ont depuis de nombreuses années utilisé la vidéo pour échanger leurs *tricks*, témoigner de leur maîtrise technique, présenter des manières inédites d'utiliser l'espace public, etc.

## Indymedia

Un *Independent Media Center* est une plateforme Internet sur laquelle des informations (textes, images, vidéos...) sont données par les utilisateurs, en temps réel, aux sympathisants des mouvements altermondialistes. Cette plateforme est basée sur l'idée d'une contribution de toutes et de tous, ainsi que sur un principe de copyleft et d'anonymat.

Le premier *Independent Media Center* est créé en 1999, autour des protestations contre l'OMC à Seattle. De nombreuses villes et régions se doteront ensuite de leur *IMC*, en lien avec des manifestations d'abord, puis de manière permanente.

*Indymedia* forme actuellement un réseau international qu'aucune société ne possède, qu'aucun gouvernement n'influence et qu'aucun donateur principal ne finance.

*Indymedia* entend couvrir les protestations anticapitalistes d'une meilleure manière que les journalistes traditionnels. Faisant partie d'un mouvement plus large de critique radicale de la presse professionnelle, de nombreuses personnes impliquées au début d'*Indymedia* ne cherchaient pas à être un contrepoint des médias de masse mais visaient à les remplacer.

### 2000

Pour la première fois, une vidéo est postée sur un blog.

### 2001

Les événements du 11-Septembre sont documentés par de nombreux amateurs se trouvant sur les lieux du drame.

## Journalisme citoyen

Le journalisme citoyen – ou *Citizen Journalism* – est un terme qui désigne la pratique du journalisme par des personnes sans formation spécifique à cette activité. On peut voir les pamphlétaires des XVIIIe et XIXe, ou les producteurs de fanzines et de radios pirates, comme des précurseurs du journalisme citoyen. Avec la démocratisation de l'Internet, cette pratique s'est développée de manière exponentielle.

En 1999, à la suite des manifestations contre l'OMC à Seattle, la plateforme *Indymedia* est créée (voir ci-avant). En 2004, lors des grandes conventions politiques aux Etats-Unis, des blogueurs se voient pour la première fois accrédités comme des journalistes. Différentes pratiques – visant à proposer une vision alternative à celle des *mass media* sur un événement ou à couvrir des événements ignorés par la presse – sont rassemblées sous le nom de *Citizen Journalism*. Ce terme est critiqué par de nombreux journalistes professionnels, qui pensent que seul un apprentissage rigoureux des codes déontologiques de la profession peut garantir une information valide qui mérite le nom de “journalisme”. Il est également parfois contesté par ceux-là même qui sont qualifiés de “journalistes citoyens”, qui notent l'imprécision du terme. Peut-on, par exemple, parler de “journalisme citoyen” lorsqu'un événement est filmé par hasard par des amateurs ? Alors que les médias de masse utilisent de nombreuses images filmées par des amateurs et que des journalistes amateur commentent des informations provenant des médias officiels, une analyse dépassant une opposition binaire amateur/professionnel et présentant de manière plus complexe la circulation des images semble être nécessaire.

### 2003

Les premiers téléphones portables avec une fonction caméra arrivent sur le marché.

## Médias professionnels et images amateur

Avec la possibilité de diffuser quasi instantanément des images et des vidéos sur des blogs ou des sites Web, tout un chacun peut désormais rendre public ses images quand bon lui semble. Jusqu'alors, les images d'amateurs n'étaient, en général, rendues publiques qu'en cas de carence de la presse. En l'absence de photographes professionnels, ces documents, parfois maladroits, valaient par la force de leur témoignage.

Avant l'avènement de l'Internet, il était rarissime que soit ébranlé le monopole des journalistes sur l'information. Avec la multiplication des documents amateurs, c'est une petite révolution qui s'impose aux médias et, aujourd'hui, chaque événement majeur est documenté et commenté par des personnes présentes sur place, professionnelles ou non. Lors du tsunami dans le Sud-Est asiatique, des centaines de vidéos et de photographies d'amateurs ont afflué vers les rédactions. La *BBC* recevra plusieurs milliers de courriers électroniques contenant des témoignages dans les semaines qui suivront. C'est ainsi que naîtra l'idée de développer, pour la première fois, une rédaction spécialisée pour gérer ces contenus générés par les utilisateurs.

### 2004

Le tsunami qui frappe les côtes de l'Océan Indien est filmé par de nombreux touristes.

### **Cyber-Bullying : Ghyslain Raza, *The Star Wars Kid* (2003)**

Les vidéos dites virales désignent des films qui atteignent rapidement une grande popularité sur l'Internet en étant diffusés sur des plateformes de vidéo ou sur des réseaux sociaux. La plupart du temps, elles véhiculent des contenus comiques et inoffensifs. L'exemple de Ghyslain Raza, connu comme le "Star Wars Kid", montre que les vidéos virales peuvent aussi avoir de graves répercussions sur la vie d'un être humain. En novembre 2002, ce Canadien de 15 ans se filme en train d'exécuter une chorégraphie de combat avec un sabre-laser *Star Wars* qu'il a bricolé. La vidéo est initialement réalisée pour un projet d'école, mais Ghyslain décide de ne pas la montrer en classe. La vidéo est alors volée par un camarade de classe qui la montre à trois autres élèves. Elle est ensuite digitalisée et mise à disposition sur l'Internet en avril 2003. Dans les mois suivants, la vidéo du *Star Wars Kid* est téléchargée des millions de fois et commentée avec des propos souvent humiliants. Elle est parodiée jusque dans des séries télévisées comme *South Park* ou *American Dad*. À cause de sa célébrité involontaire, le jeune homme doit quitter l'école et suivre un traitement psychologique. Sa famille porte plainte contre les quatre camarades de classe. Malgré l'obtention d'un arrangement qui assure un dédommagement à la famille, la vidéo du *Star Wars Kid* est toujours visible sur le Net, rappelant que les cybertraces sont difficilement effaçables.





## Le procès de Milosevic

Dans de nombreux cas, la vidéo amateur vient illustrer une nouvelle ou révéler un fait. Dans certaines situations, elle peut également servir de preuve à une cour. Lors du procès de Slobodan Milosevic et des haut-gradés de son régime, au *Tribunal pénal international pour l'ex-Yougoslavie*, des images vidéo ont été utilisées quasiment à chaque audience. Certains généraux serbes ont été reconnus coupables de crimes contre l'humanité sur la base de vidéos.

Milosevic et ses partisans contesteront la légitimité de ces preuves et Nico Varkevisser, vice-président du *International Committee to Defend Slobodan Milosevic* dira : "le fait que les images jouent un si grand rôle vient du fait que l'accusation s'est basée sur des images... réelles ou composées."

## 2005

YouTube est fondé par trois anciens employés de PayPal.

## Abigail Child, *The future is behind you* (2004)

*The Future is Behind You* est une fiction créée à partir de films de famille anonymes des années 1930 en Europe. Le film présente l'histoire de deux sœurs qui grandissent dans le spectre de l'histoire à venir. Abigail Child recherche dans le matériel récolté les histoires dans l'Histoire.



### **Playback-Cyber-Star : Gary Brolsma**

#### ***The Numa Numa Guy (2004-2005)***

Pendant l'été 2004, le morceau dance *Dragostea din tei*, du boys band moldave O-Zone, était en tête des charts européens. En décembre 2004, le jeune Gary Brolsma, du New Jersey, se filme avec une webcam alors qu'il interprète le hit en dansant et en bougeant les lèvres de manière synchronisée.

La vidéo du *playback* est d'abord publiée sur une page Internet puis distribuée comme pièce-jointe à des emails. Avec la création de *YouTube*, le téléversement et le téléchargement de vidéos est techniquement simplifié. Lorsque la vidéo de Brolsma arrive sur cette plateforme, la fièvre du *Numa Numa* (extrait des paroles du refrain) commence réellement. Brolsma, qui était déjà connu comme "Numa Numa Guy", déclenche avec sa performance un flot d'imitations et rend le genre du *playback* populaire dans les premières années de *YouTube*. On peut considérer ce phénomène comme une joyeuse célébration commune des nouveaux moyens de communication.

La série *South Park* proposera sa propre imitation de Brolsma et les magazines d'information américains parleront de ce phénomène Internet. Brolsma lui-même deviendra ainsi l'une des premières cyberstars.

## 2005

Suite aux attentats du 7 juillet, mise sur pied par la *BBC* du projet “Soyez nos yeux”, afin de récolter des images amateur – seules disponibles – des attentats dans le métro.

## 2006

*YouTube* est racheté par *Google* pour 1,65 milliards de dollars.

### Les attentats de Londres vus au travers d’images amateur

Le 7 juillet 2005 à Londres, quatre explosions ont touché les transports publics de la ville, faisant 56 morts et 700 blessés. Trois explosions ont eu lieu dans le métro, dans un intervalle de 30 secondes, à 8h50, tandis que la quatrième a eu lieu dans un bus à 9h47. Ces attentats ont été commis le lendemain de la désignation de Londres pour les Jeux olympiques d’été de 2012 et le jour de l’ouverture du sommet du G8 en Ecosse.

Alors que la matinée s’écoule et que la compréhension des événements se précise, les images transmises par les télévisions se concentrent sur les témoins et les blessés. Mais, l’accès au métro étant bloqué, les journalistes sont conscients des limites imposées à leur capacité d’illustrer les explosions souterraines. C’est pourquoi la *BBC* prend rapidement la décision de mettre en ligne sur son site un appel aux contributions amateur, avec les mentions : “We want you to be our eyes” (soyez nos yeux) ou : “We want your pictures” (nous voulons vos images). La première photographie prise à l’intérieur du métro est diffusée à la télévision. Il s’agit bien d’une image d’amateur, mais celle-ci n’a pas suivi le canal ouvert par la *BBC*. Prise à 9h25, elle est envoyée sous forme de message électronique à plusieurs destinataires.

Frappantes et sinistres, avec leur halo de lumière trouant l’obscurité, ces premières images de l’évacuation du métro seront choisies le lendemain pour la une de plusieurs journaux, dont le *New York Times* et le *Washington Post*.

### Real Fake : le blog *Lonelygirl15* (2006)

Le célèbre cartoon publié en 1993 par *The New Yorker*, qui portait la mention “on the Internet nobody knows you’re a dog” avait déjà pointé le problème de l’identité sur l’Internet. En juin 2006, à peine 13 ans plus tard, aucun internaute n’a soupçonné l’existence d’une équipe professionnelle derrière le journal intime vidéo de la blogueuse *Lonelygirl15*. Dans ses vidéos, Bree raconte d’une manière très touchante sa vie d’adolescente et ses conflits avec des parents très croyants. Elle est rapidement mondialement connue et acquiert un statut proche de celui d’idole de série TV. Les fans envoient plusieurs centaines de vidéos en réponse aux trente vidéos postées par *Lonelygirl15* entre juin et septembre. Cependant, assez rapidement, certains détails, comme la qualité cinématographique croissante des entrées, mettent la puce à l’oreille de quelques internautes qui seront à la source d’un large mouvement de scepticisme quant à l’authenticité du blog. On soupçonne *Lonelygirl15* d’être un produit de marketing d’une agence publicitaire et les vidéos envoyées en réponse de faire partie de cette stratégie publicitaire.

En septembre 2006, le vrai nom de *Lonelygirl15* est révélé, après que des blogueurs et des journalistes ont fait le rapprochement avec l’actrice néo-zélandaise de 19 ans Jessica Lee Rose. On apprend alors que le blog était un projet de trois jeunes cinéastes, qui ont connu un succès aussi immense qu’inattendu.

A la demande des fans, le blog a continué à fonctionner jusqu’en 2008, démontrant que le besoin de divertissement est parfois supérieur à celui de vérité.

### Person of the Year : YOU (2006)

En 2006, le magazine *TIME* choisit comme personne de l’année “You”, désignant ainsi les millions d’internautes inconnus qui, par l’apport de leurs propres contenus, participent à l’utilisation commune et au progrès de sites comme *Wikipedia*, *MySpace*, *Facebook* et *YouTube*, mais aussi de systèmes d’exploitation libres comme *Linux*.

La page de titre montre un écran d’ordinateur sur laquelle est ouverte une fenêtre vidéo ressemblant à celle de *YouTube*. A l’emplacement où devrait se trouver la vidéo est collé un papier miroitant. “You” signifie tout le monde, le lecteur, les cinéastes amateurs... Depuis 1927, la personne de l’année est l’une des couvertures favorites du *TIME*, désignant celui ou celle qui a été le ou la plus influente au cours de l’année. En 1982, l’ordinateur personnel avait été élu “machine de l’année”, remplaçant la “personne de l’année”.

## La vidéo amateur devient œuvre d'art

Le phénomène *YouTube* et les aspects démocratiques et collectifs liés aux nouveaux médias sont analysés de manière critique dans différentes œuvres contemporaines. De nombreux artistes se servent directement dans les plateformes virtuelles et recyclent les vidéos d'amateurs pour créer des films et des installations. Le recyclage de ces vidéos amateur trouvées sur le Net s'achève lorsque les résultats – les nouveaux montages – sont eux-mêmes rendus publics et mis à disposition sur ces plateformes. Aux côtés des musées, des galeries et de l'espace public, le cyberspace se révèle de plus en plus comme un nouvel espace de monstration pour l'art contemporain.

Chris Follows, par exemple, montre ses vidéos dans des galeries, mais aussi sur *YouTube*. Dans *71 Ranelagh Road* (2006), il transforme un ensemble de vidéos d'amateurs du monde entier, qui présentent toutes des espaces privés, en un intérieur étrange, inquiétant et global.

*Hello World! Or: How I learned to stop listening and love the noise* (2006) est une installation audiovisuelle de Christopher Baker qui connecte des vidéo-blogueurs des quatre coins du monde et mène une réflexion sur les médias démocratiques et participatifs, ainsi que sur le besoin élémentaire d'être entendu.

## Matt, héros de publicité

*Where the hell is Matt ?* Cela vous dit quelque chose ? Un jeune américain, Matt Harding, crée le buzz en dansant partout dans le monde. Sa première vidéo, en 2005, est visionnée des millions de fois grâce au phénomène de bouche à oreille. Le jeune homme, inconnu jusqu'alors, devient une star de l'Internet. Une marque de chewing-gum, *Stridegum*, lui propose de financer un nouveau voyage. Lancée en 2006, la deuxième vidéo de Matt Harding prend ainsi la forme d'un outil de marketing. La publicité s'empare de la vidéo amateur.

## **From Zero to Hero**

### **La vidéo amateur à la base d'une carrière**

Il n'est pas rare que des personnes ordinaires deviennent d'un jour à l'autre connues grâce à la vidéo, *YouTube* et la communauté Internet. La plupart des cyberstars doivent leur célébrité à un objet précis et sont vite oubliées. Il existe cependant des exemples où une vidéo amateur montrée sur l'Internet a été la première étape d'une longue carrière professionnelle. La chanteuse new-yorkaise Terra Naomi est la première à être parvenue à obtenir un contrat avec une maison de disques, après s'être fait connaître grâce à *YouTube*. Pendant l'été 2006, elle réalise une "tournée" *online* en publiant chaque jour une nouvelle vidéo musicale. Avec sa chanson *Say it's possible*, elle crée un hit qui déclenche une vague d'euphorie de par le monde ; les fans adaptent la chanson en sept langues et remettent ces différentes versions sur le Web. Terra Naomi devient célèbre et gagne, en plus d'un contrat avec une maison de disques, le premier *YouTube Award* pour la *Best Music Vidéo 2006*.

De même, la percée internationale de la hollandaise Esmée Denter a eu lieu grâce à *YouTube*. Encouragée par les vidéos musicales d'amateurs, elle commence en 2006, à 17 ans, à enregistrer ses performances avec une webcam et à publier ses vidéos dans l'intention de recevoir des commentaires. Ses vidéos, dans lesquelles elle reprend des chansons pop et soul connues, deviennent des succès. En neuf mois, elle atteint plus de 21 millions de clics. S'ensuivent des invitations pour des émissions de télévision, des enregistrements studio en Europe et en Amérique ainsi que des rencontres et duos avec beaucoup d'artistes renommés comme Justin Timberlake. En 2007, Esmée fait la première partie de la tournée européenne de Timberlake, devant 70'000 spectateurs.



**2007**

87% des propriétaires de téléphones portables munis d'une fonction caméra l'utilisent.

### **L'exécution de Saddam Hussein**

Fin 2003, Saddam Hussein est arrêté afin d'être jugé pour crime contre l'humanité. La sentence est annoncée par le Tribunal Pénal irakien le 5 novembre 2006. Saddam Hussein est condamné à mort par pendaison. Son exécution a lieu le 30 décembre 2006. Sur place, sa mise à mort est filmée par un témoin. On suppose que la vidéo, qui circule sur le net et qui a été diffusée sur plusieurs chaînes de télévision du monde entier, provient d'un téléphone portable.

Cette vidéo a suscité beaucoup de réactions, notamment de la Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'Homme qui a qualifié cette mise à mort de "réponse à la barbarie par la barbarie". La vidéo, de qualité médiocre, montre le visage du condamné détendu avant de s'égarer dans le décor des escaliers. Les dernières secondes zooment sur le visage de Saddam Hussein, déjà mort. Sur la toile, près de 2'500 vidéos répondent à l'appellation "Saddam Hussein".





## Révolution safran

Aux mois d'août et de septembre 2007, le gouvernement birman augmente brutalement le coût de plusieurs énergies : essence, diesel et gaz. Des manifestations pacifiques contre cette décision sont organisées et les bonzes – dans leurs habits couleur safran – participent au mouvement.

Aucun journaliste étranger n'étant autorisé à entrer dans le pays et l'information étant contrôlée par les médias gouvernementaux, des journalistes anonymes entreprennent de couvrir les événements de l'intérieur, illégalement.

L'utilisation de petites caméras digitales et de l'Internet comme un relais de diffusion a permis à un relativement petit nombre de citoyens birmans d'avoir un impact très grand sur l'opinion publique internationale.

Peu de Birmans ont accès à l'Internet dans leur pays et les autorités ont rendu inopérante une partie du réseau après les répressions violentes du 29 septembre 2007. Le Web a tout de même joué un rôle important dans la diffusion de l'information, notamment vers l'extérieur du pays.

Un organisme nommé *Democratic Voice of Burma*, dont la mission est de diffuser une information impartiale et indépendante a notamment réalisé, grâce à ces images tournées en secret, des reportages qui présentent à la fois la situation dans le pays et le quotidien des journalistes qui risquent torture et prison pour rapporter des faits. Sortis clandestinement du pays, ces reportages ont ensuite été proposés sur l'Internet et diffusés par satellite, d'Oslo vers les postes de télévision de Birmanie.

### **A quoi je sers ?**

Mademoiselle K, c'est du rock et c'est français. 2008 attend le second opus. Il est là. Prêt. Tellement prêt que pendant la diffusion du premier simple, on réaliserait volontiers un clip pour *Maman XY*, un autre titre sûrement moins médiagénique mais plébiscité par les fans. Seulement voilà, pour ça il faut une équipe de tournage, du matériel, du temps et... des fonds. Sauf qu'en ligne plus de 20'000 adhérents à la page officielle du réseau social bleu et blanc se pressent au portillon, qu'ils ont l'envie, quelques moyens rudimentaires et un peu de temps à tuer. Alors public, tu me le réalises ce clip ? Et il l'a fait ! 15 jours et un peu plus de 40'000 vues plus tard, 211 visions différentes sont publiées, prêtes à être sélectionnées, décortiquées et remontées avant une première projection à l'Olympia puis une mise en ligne officielle. Le cas n'est pas isolé : de plus en plus de professionnels font appel aux vidéastes amateurs, que ce soit pour réaliser leurs clips (Radiohead, Nine Inch Nails) ou des campagnes publicitaires. Souci économique, fidélisation des fans ou phénomène de société ? La question se pose légitimement. Les légendes punks rechignaient à apprendre la musique, tant que l'attitude y était et qu'un message émergeait de leur son. Il semble que ce soit un esprit qui tende à renaître de ces nouvelles pratiques où des amateurs œuvrent pour les professionnels. Les raisons ne sont plus les mêmes mais fi de la technique, ici seule la créativité paie !

### **Kutiman, *ThruYou* (2009)**

Le projet de musique et de film *ThruYou*, du musicien israélien Ohpir Kutiel, alias Kutiman, fait sensation dans le monde de la nuit. Durant deux mois, Kutiman a choisi sur *YouTube* des vidéos amateur qui montrent différentes personnes en train de faire de la musique, de rapper, de chanter et d'improviser. Il a ensuite rassemblé fictivement ces différentes personnes, qui ne se connaissent pas, pour former un groupe. Le résultat est un album *mashup* de sept chansons. Les instruments jouant la mélodie sont présentés dans le film. Les coupures entre les différentes séquences produisent un rythme visuel qui accompagne le *beat*. Lorsque Kutiel a publié *ThruYou* sur son site Internet, celui-ci n'a pas supporté le trop grand nombre de visiteurs. Certains fans ont cependant enregistré ses vidéos et les ont téléversées sur d'autres sites, dont *YouTube*. *ThruYou* y a atteint plus d'un million de clics en moins d'une semaine. Kutiman rend hommage aux séquences qu'il cite, en indiquant explicitement dans son projet le lien vers les vidéos d'origine. Ainsi, le réalisateur ne se met pas en avant comme seul artiste mais renvoie aux vraies stars de son projet : les musiciens et les vidéastes amateurs.

## **Happy Slapping**

Si la démocratisation de la caméra et des plateformes de diffusion de vidéo a permis à des citoyens muselés par des dictatures de communiquer avec l'extérieur ou à des femmes opprimées de parler de leur situation, elle a également engendré des dérives inquiétantes. Ainsi, le *Happy Slapping* (ou "vidéolynchage"), une pratique qui consiste à filmer l'agression physique d'une personne et dont les victimes sont loin de percevoir l'aspect "joyeux" présent dans la dénomination anglaise.

Cette pratique est apparue en Angleterre en 2005 et s'est ensuite répandue en Europe et en Amérique du Nord. En 2005 à Londres, deux jeunes immolent un homme pendant une séance de *Happy Slapping*. La même année en Irlande du Nord, des groupes de jeunes filment des attaques contre des équipes de pompiers. En 2006, dans les Yvelines, l'agression d'une enseignante est filmée avec un téléphone portable. En 2009, en Angleterre, un retraité est tué par deux jeunes qui filment la scène.

On peut légitimement se demander quel rôle joue la vidéo dans ces violences ; quand est-elle un moteur qui mène à des agressions et quand vient-elle se greffer à des attaques qui suivent un schéma déjà connu ?

## **Chatroulette**

Avec la généralisation des webcams et des connexions Internet à haut débit, le chat sur le Web fait aujourd'hui la part belle à la vidéo. Parmi les multiples interfaces existantes, l'exemple de *Chatroulette* est singulier.

Un étudiant russe de 17 ans a l'idée de créer ce site Web qui met en contact deux utilisateurs, au hasard, par vidéo. Le principe connaît un succès extrêmement rapide, à ses débuts en novembre 2009. Trois mois plus tard, le site enregistre 800'000 connexions journalières.

Malgré le nombre très élevé d'utilisateurs conjointement en ligne, l'utilisateur est très souvent mis en contact avec des personnes pratiquant des activités exhibitionnistes. Le site témoigne par là-même des limites d'une structure totalement ouverte, quasiment sans modération.

De nombreuses vidéos, présentant toute sorte d'utilisations de *Chatroulette*, ont été réalisées et sont accessibles sur des sites de partage de vidéos.

#### 2010

Le contenu de *YouTube* représente 10% du volume total de données sur l'Internet.

#### 2010

50% des vidéos de *YouTube* sont commentées, évaluées ou recommandées.

### La vidéo amateur dans la publicité

Avec la montée en puissance des sites de partage comme *YouTube*, et des réseaux sociaux tel que *Facebook*, les vidéos peuvent très rapidement être visionnées des millions de fois. On parle alors de "buzz" (voir ci-après). La publicité cherche à obtenir les mêmes résultats, parfois en utilisant des vidéos amateur, comme plusieurs exemples présentés ici en attestent.

Cependant, sur l'Internet, on ne peut pas tout maîtriser. Par exemple, le PDG de *Coca Cola* a annoncé qu'il ne contrôlait plus sa marque ni son image, lorsque des vidéos amateur montrant une réaction chimique créée par le mélange des bonbons *Mentos* avec la célèbre boisson provoquaient un buzz.

La vidéo amateur est devenue la cible des publicitaires, pour son aspect souvent original et intrigant, mais aussi parce qu'elle permet de toucher un public extrêmement large. Les agences de publicité se sont donc réapproprié l'esthétique de ces vidéos, jouant avec les consommateurs selon un principe de connivence et développant des campagnes basées sur un principe de *teasing*, où la marque reste inconnue, créant le *buzz* avant de se révéler.

**2010**

Chaque minute, plus de 35 heures de vidéos supplémentaires sont téléversées sur YouTube.

### **Le sexe amateur à l'ère du Web 2.0**

Depuis vingt-cinq ans, la vidéo amateur s'est imposée comme la force motrice de l'industrie pornographique. Récusant l'univers ultra-codifié du X traditionnel, de ses performances fictionnelles, de ses corps taillés au scalpel, le "porno amateur" se veut d'abord une représentation du réel, une vision plus authentique.

Boosté par l'avènement du Web 2.0, le cybersexe est désormais accessible à tous, en tout temps et partout. Avec 80% de parts de marché, l'amateur y est roi. Mais si l'Internet a popularisé le genre, il ne peut revendiquer sa paternité. Bien avant que les ébats de Paris Hilton ne fleurissent sur la toile, Marilyn Monroe enregistrerait déjà ses prouesses érotiques dans les années 1950.

Les célébrités le savent mieux que quiconque : exposer sa sexualité en public, c'est avant tout se mettre en scène, se signifier au monde à travers ce que Rosalind Krauss appelle une "clôture narcissique". La médiatisation totale du soi, intentionnelle ou non, abolit la frontière entre public et privé et offre à l'observateur une immixtion privilégiée dans l'intimité de l'Autre.

Eloignée du monde fictionnel, la pornographie amateur comporte des éléments assimilables à la vie de tous les jours ; des éléments de décor domestique, des protagonistes aux corps imparfaits, le tout filmé avec une qualité d'image souvent médiocre. Libérée des carcans du professionnalisme, elle permet au spectateur de s'identifier au spectacle qui lui est donné. Un spectacle d'autant plus attrayant pour le témoin qu'il ne lui est, dans certains cas, pas destiné.

**2010**

Il faudrait plus de 1700 ans pour regarder toutes les vidéos disponibles sur YouTube.

## **Buzz**

Le mot “buzz” (en français “bourdonnement”) est utilisé par les anglophones dès le XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle pour désigner une rumeur bruyante. Aujourd’hui, le terme est fréquemment lié au contexte du marketing. Faire un *buzz* consiste à engendrer un grand bruit autour d’un produit ou d’un événement, en un temps très court. La technique consiste à transformer le consommateur en vecteur du message, en lui faisant relayer l’information.

Par extension, le terme s’applique non seulement à une technique de marketing, mais aussi au visionnage d’un contenu précis par énormément de personnes sur un court laps de temps.

La révolution de l’Internet 2.0 a ouvert la possibilité de faire un *buzz* à tout utilisateur, que cela soit à des fins commerciales, auto-promotionnelles ou par simple plaisir. Avec l’arrivée de la vidéo numérique pour tous et de plateformes de diffusion comme *YouTube*, l’image en mouvement est devenue un format privilégié du *buzz*. Dépasant le bouche-à-oreille classique, le *buzz* circule aujourd’hui sur les réseaux sociaux et les blogs, accélérant sa diffusion et augmentant considérablement son volume sonore. De nombreux médias traditionnels se sont réapproprié le concept. Un bon exemple est *La Tribune de Genève* qui propose une section “buzz” sur son site Internet.

## **Projets collectifs liés à la vidéo amateur**

Des projets cinématographiques comme *Life in a Day* (2010) de Kevin Macdonald (réalisateur) et Ridley Scott (producteur) demandent la participation active des amateurs. Le contenu complet de ce film est produit par les utilisateurs, qui sont invités à documenter un jour sur la planète. Le 24 juillet 2010 plus de 80’000 personnes venant de 197 pays différents ont filmé un bref aperçu de leur vie quotidienne et téléchargé la séquence sur *YouTube*. Pendant qu’un groupe de professionnels s’occupe de monter les différentes séquences en vue d’un long-métrage, les contributions peuvent être visionnées en parallèle sur le Net. Une fois le long métrage achevé, il sera présenté, en janvier 2011, au *Sundance Film Festival* ainsi que sur *YouTube*.

## 2010

Le 17 décembre, des manifestations à Sidi Bouzid, en Tunisie, marquent le début du printemps arabe, dans lequel la diffusion de vidéos amateur jouera un rôle central.

## 2011

Le 22 octobre, peu après la mort de Kadhafi, des vidéos amateur montrant les derniers instants du dictateur circulent et sont diffusées rapidement par Al Jazeera. Ces images de déchéance semblent répondre aux années de propagande du régime.

## Fermeture des réseaux Internet et téléphone en Égypte

Le 27 janvier 2011, deux jours seulement après les manifestations qui marquent le début de la Révolution Égyptienne, le gouvernement prend la décision de couper l'ensemble des réseaux de téléphonie mobile et de l'Internet. Si d'autres gouvernements avaient auparavant bloqué l'accès à certains sites – notamment les réseaux sociaux – dans des périodes de troubles, c'est la première fois que l'on assiste à un acte aussi radical de censure.

Le gouvernement égyptien tente ainsi d'empêcher la circulation d'informations sur les événements, qu'il s'agisse d'éléments permettant leur organisation et facilitant le ralliement du plus grand nombre, ou de vidéos témoignant de la violence de la répression et de l'ampleur des manifestations.

Si les réseaux sociaux ont pu favoriser la répression dans certains cas (les autorités égyptiennes ont notamment réalisé des opérations de *fishing* sur des profils d'utilisateurs *Facebook* et *Twitter* pour tenter d'obtenir des renseignements sur les protestataires), la décision de fermer l'ensemble du réseau témoigne de la crainte des régimes autoritaires à l'égard des technologies informatiques, attestant de leur potentiel révolutionnaire. Blogs et réseaux sociaux ont permis de diffuser de l'information, notamment par le biais de vidéos amateur, avec une rapidité et une efficacité qui faisaient défaut aux médias traditionnels. Dans un reportage sur le rôle des nouveaux médias dans les révolutions arabes, la chaîne de télévision *Al Jazeera* dira : "alors que les informations et vidéos sur les protestations se répandaient comme un virus par le biais de *Twitter*, qu'une révolution se mettait en marche, les médias dominants commençaient à peine à rattraper leur retard".

Les réseaux sociaux, de par leur dimension virale – incontrôlable, fulgurante et sans frontières géopolitiques – ont fonctionné comme un important facilitateur des révolutions arabes.



### ***The Birds* – France 24**

Pendant la révolution de jasmin, la chaîne d'information *France 24* – qui a pour ambition de devenir une “CNN française” – voit ses audiences monter fortement dans les pays arabes. Pendant cette période, la chaîne a une présence très forte sur *Twitter*, se mettant en lien avec les vidéos amateur documentant les événements (notamment celles marquées du *hashtag* “#SidiBouزيد”). Pour célébrer la réussite, au niveau de l'audimat et de la politique, de l'alliance des médias traditionnels et des nouvelles technologies (fonctionnant comme une puissante alternative dans les pays où la presse officielle est muselée), *France 24* fait produire un film d'animation. Inspiré des *Oiseaux* de Hitchcock et du dessin animé *Le Roi et l'Oiseau* de Grimault, *The Birds* met en scène la chute des dictateurs tunisien, égyptien et libyen, attaqués par des oiseaux bleus évoquant le logo de *Twitter*.

### **Chine: une vidéo amène une remise en question sociétale et politique**

C'est une scène insoutenable, choquante. Le 13 octobre 2011, une caméra de surveillance filme un marché dans la ville de Foshan, en Chine. On voit une fillette se faire doublement écraser par une fourgonnette puis, dans l'indifférence générale, se vider de son sang avant d'être de nouveau écrasée par un véhicule pour finalement être traînée sur le côté de la route par une femme. Une vingtaine de personnes auront contourné la petite fille agonisante avant cette intervention. Yue Yue, la fillette, décèdera la semaine suivante à l'hôpital. Du premier chauffeur – qui admettra avoir roulé deux fois sur la fillette dans l'espoir de la tuer car cela lui coûterait moins cher que de devoir payer les indemnités d'une enfant vivante mais handicapée – aux passants indifférents, comment comprendre qu'un tel fait puisse se produire? Au-delà du drame personnel de cette fillette et de sa famille, la diffusion de cette vidéo sur l'Internet a suscité une prise de conscience de nombreux chinois sur les dysfonctionnements de leur société. Les prises de parole se sont multipliées pour dénoncer une montée de l'individualisme, mais aussi une justice arbitraire, qui accuse parfois les personnes se portant au secours d'autrui d'être responsables de leur infortune, les condamnant parfois au versement de lourdes indemnités. C'est bien la peur et non l'indifférence qui empêcherait la solidarité de s'exprimer. Suite à cet événement, une loi est à l'étude pour pénaliser la non-assistance à personne en danger.

Pourtant, dans ce dramatique accident, c'est bien la responsabilité des politiciens qui est mise en cause par un grand nombre d'intellectuels, de journalistes et de blogueurs. Ils dénoncent un régime qui, privant le peuple de tout pouvoir, l'exempte également d'avoir des devoirs et une conscience sociale. A travers les images de la petite Yue Yue et des débats nourris qu'elles ont suscités sur la toile, ce sont peut-être les droits de l'Homme qui vont progresser en Chine.

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## Impressum

### *Conception et réalisation du projet*

microsilons, Helen Baumann, Lea Fröhlicher, Christina Gasser.

### *Alimentation de la base de données*

- Enfants du Foyer Frank-Thomas, invités par La Maison de Quartier des Eaux-Vives. Avec Barbara San-Antonio, animatrice.
- Classe de l'école de commerce Aimée-Stielmann. Avec Sarah Girard, enseignante en arts plastiques.
- Étudiants du Master en sciences de la communication et des médias, département de sociologie, Université de Genève. Avec Katharina Niemeyer, enseignante.
- Classes 4aM et 4bM, Kantonsschule Solothurn. Avec Patricia Schneider et Ulrich Schneider, enseignants.
- Classes 3a et 3bm, Bezirksschule Biberist. Avec Filiz Bildik, enseignante.
- Jungendtreff Bronx (maison de quartier) / Jugendarbeit Länggasse Bern, groupe de filles et groupe de garçons. Avec Andrea Graziano, Florian Binder et Thomas Neuenschwander, animateurs.

### *Réalisation de l'interface de la base de donnée*

Emmanuel Piguet, Pablo Lavalley (graphisme)

### *Rédaction des textes*

Helen Bauman, Lea Fröhlicher, Christina Gasser, microsilons, Tamara Chavent ("L'exécution de Saddam Hussein"), Maxence Garin ("America's Funniest Home Videos"), Benjamin Keller ("Le sexe amateur à l'ère du Web 2.0"), Laura Maschio ("A quoi je sers ?"), Christophe Mettral ("Le Dogme95: une arme anti-Hollywood"), Yasmina Monteiro ("Quand la télé devient télé-réalité" et "The Real World"), Patrick Philippoz ("L'utilisation de la vidéo amateur dans la publicité" et "Matt, héros de publicité"), Julia Portier ("The Blair Witch Project").

### *Édition*

microsilons

### *Remerciements*

Barbara Bader et la Haute école des arts de Berne, Carmen Mörsch, German Silveira.

Le projet s'inscrit dans la recherche "Kunstvermittlung in Transformation", soutenue par le Fonds DORE (DO REsearch) du Fonds national suisse (FNS) de la recherche scientifique.

Publication réalisée dans le cadre des projets de médiation du Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève.

Avec le soutien du Fonds d'art contemporain de la Ville de Genève.





