

CALL FOR PAPERS

«piano **b**. Arti e culture visive»

Participation in artistic practices: methodology and experiences

Edited by Maria Giovanna Mancini, Emanuele Rinaldo Meschini and Roberto Pinto

Starting from the early publications that, at the dawn of the 2000s (Bishop 2006; Kester 2004), began to systematise some artistic practices that used dialogue, participation, and political activism as their primary means, international critical literature had to face up the proliferation of these participatory experiences. Mainly developed in urban areas and experimenting with new methodologies of action—programmatically interdisciplinary,—these practices have contributed to the subversion of traditional roles and profiles within the art system, suggesting a new vocabulary and new competencies for artistic practices in public space.

The interest in this kind of activity—not only among artists and designers but also among patrons—has encouraged the establishment of university programs and courses for curators aimed at training hybrid profiles able to develop cultural projects with previously marginalised communities.

The 2022 edition of *documenta*, curated by the Indonesian collective ruangrupa, provided a comprehensive overview of projects from all continents, particularly emphasising those from regions marginalised by the Western-centric art system. Considering the proliferation of participatory art practices since the 2000s, it can be observed that many artists systematically incorporate these practices into their work, often abandoning object-based art altogether. Examples include the work of Cuban artist Tania Bruguera, Rick Lowe's long-running *Project Row Houses*, and the work of the Austrian collective WochenKlausur. The independence of these practices from the dynamics related to the proper art system has often raised questions about their critical and methodological framing. The chronological limit—albeit porous—of the 2000s was chosen instrumentally to initiate a debate on current phenomenologies of participatory practices, rather than to contribute to a historical survey of the phenomenon.

Participation within artistic practice has become a specific discipline, resulting from a substantial intermingling with methodologies and practices derived mainly from anthropology, social sciences, urban planning, pedagogy, and theatre.

While art practice has developed its distinct form over the years, which is always open and processual, art criticism struggles to define and describe these working methods. On the one hand, the critique seems to be anchored in theoretical approaches of the 1990s; on the other hand, it is strictly directed towards a 'description' of case studies to avoid the risks of a prescriptive stance. In other cases, an art-historical approach seems to prevail through which these interventions are placed in an essentially historical-linear narrative (Bishop and Kester's early texts reconstruct the phenomenon from 'precedents' such as Russian Constructivism). However, these practices have shown a theoretical and practical openness that the historical method, while rigorous, cannot always fully enhance.

Starting from this reflection, the next issue of the Journal aims to initiate a debate on the methodologies employed in the analysis and documentation of participatory art practices.

Themes to be covered can be, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- The role of the art critic and art historian in the production of participatory works
- Participatory research methods
- Ways of presenting participatory acts in exhibitions
- The archiving and historicisation of participatory practices
- The persistence of forms of activism and antagonism since the 1990s
- The redefinition of public space
- Subjectivity and research methods in participatory practices
- Theories and practices in Italy

This issue will feature contributions from artists, as well as statements and interviews with the key figures.

References

Bishop C. (2012), *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, Verso, London.

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Charnley K. (2021), *Sociopolitical Aesthetics: Art, Crisis and Neoliberalism*, Bloomsbury, London.

Dietachmair P., Gielen P. (eds.) (2018), *The Art of Civil Action: Political Space and Cultural Dissent*, Valiz, Amsterdam.

Decter J., Draxler H., (eds.) (2014), *Exhibition as Social Intervention: 'Culture in Action' 1993*, Afterall, London.

Finkelpearl T. (2013), *What We Made: Conversations on Art and social Cooperation*, Duke University Press, Durham-London.

Kester G.H. (2011), *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context*, Duke University Press, Durham-London.

Kester G.H. (2004), *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London.

Miller J. (2016), *Activism vs. Antagonism: Socially Engaged Art from Bourriaud to Bishop and Beyond*, in «FIELD. A Journal of Socially Engaged Art Criticism», n. 3, Winter, <https://field-journal.com/issue-3/activism-vs-antagonism-socially-engaged-art-from-bourriaud-to-bishop-and-beyond>.

Submissions guidelines

From this issue onward, proposal selection will no longer be based on the evaluation of abstract, rather on the complete contribution (30.000/40.000 characters, including notes and spaces). Additionally, the submission process for proposal has changed.

Authors must submit their articles **via the journal's platform** using a 5-step proposal submission process.

The file containing the proposal text must not display author's name appearing below the title, in the notes, or in the bibliographic references (where it will be replaced with ***). Moreover, file properties must be devoid of names or other personal details, using the anonymization functions provided by various word processing programs (see instructions on how to [Ensure Double-Blind Review](#) for more information).

The anonymized contribution file must be uploaded during step 2 of the submission process. The text must conform to the [formatting guidelines](#).

Metadata entry will occur during step 3 of the process and must include the following information:

1. For each author: first name and last name, email, ORCID identifier (if available), institutional affiliation, country, and a brief biography (maximum 1000 characters, including spaces);
2. Title;
3. Abstract (maximum 1500 characters, including spaces);
4. Five keywords separated by semicolons;

Contributions can be written in Italian, English, and French. When submitting a contribution in Italian or French, the title and abstract must also be provided in English using the "Language of Forms" function on the platform.

Proposals submitted through other methods will not be considered.

Timeline

Proposals must be submitted by July 19, 2024. Each contribution will undergo a double-blind peer review process. If the judgments of the two referees are not aligned, the editors will decide (in dialogue with the curators) whether to proceed with the publication or to send it to a third referee. The editorial staff will reach out the authors to convey the outcome of the evaluation.

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