//Suzana Milevska

„Infelicitous“ Participatory Acts on the Neoliberal Stage

Participatory art’s promises and hopes for democratization of society

In an earlier text, “Participatory Art: A Paradigm Shift from Objects to Subjects” published in 2006, I addressed the paradigm shift from establishing relations between art objects and audiences to establishing relations between subjects (Milevska 2006), *(1) a shift that was also discussed under the notion of “relational aesthetics” (Bourriaud 2002: 9). **(*1) It should be noted that although similar shifts towards interaction between artists and audiences already took place in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, the term “participatory” focuses more directly on the subjects involved (Fontaine 2012).** **(*2) In this text, apart from looking at different types of participatory art and what they promise, I address different social limitations that hinder contemporary participatory art projects from fulfilling their potential.**

Revisiting the fulfillment of participatory art’s promises

Artists who initiate interactions with voluntary (and in some cases paid) participants in a variety of events and actions in the art context or in the public realm have developed different strategies. My aim in this text is to discuss the potentials and limitations of such strategies for social change and democratization. While the emphasis in relational aesthetics still rested predominantly on the evaluation of the active relationship between the audience and an artistic object (in contrast to the traditionally conceived passive reception of art), more recent participatory practices have shifted the focus of art discourse in yet another direction and called for other evaluation criteria. With the exception of artists who, although still listed as “relational,” use objects, such as ready-mades, for mediation of different concepts of participation, *(2) the newly proposed criteria do not necessarily link art production to aesthetic enjoyment and art objects. *(3)

Although I still find the shift towards participation relevant, in the ten years since I published my earlier text, the field of participatory art and the discourse on it has developed rapidly, and the overall influence of neoliberal politics on the cultural field has also changed. Therefore, I argue that today it is necessary to revisit participatory art and to reevaluate the extent to which it can and has fulfilled its main promises (Colouring in culture 2015).

Two types of participatory art practices

Many of the initial promises of participatory art and the high expectations connected to it seem overrated today, for example, its aim to erase the clear-cut and hierarchical division between artists (interpreted as experts and essential for the creation of the work) and audience members (interpreted as passive observers). Particularly relevant, but also difficult to evaluate is the aim of striving for democratic changes in society. This claim is saturated with authoritarian governance practices perpetuating inequality and hierarchies. Democratic changes were meant to be brought about through inclusion of diverse audiences previously not interested in art (the issue of “outreach”). However, such audiences’ lack of interest stems precisely from art’s elitist and intimidating social construction, which

can’t be overcome by individual projects. Also difficult to evaluate is participatory projects’ aim of revealing social injustice within cultural, social, and political structures.

In this respect, the question posed by Giorgio Agamben with regard to World War II concentration camps of what type of “juridical structure [is present] that such events could take place there?” (Agamben 1998: 166) (*5) is among the key questions asked by artistic practices with reference to injustices present in contemporary society. Albeit the question is merely rhetorical as artists hope to raise awareness of specific social injustices rather than bring about substantial changes. However, the question of whether art truly possesses such potential is currently more relevant than ever before and begs clearer articulation, as “participatory art” has become too general a term.

Among the many different categories for characterizing participatory art practices, those suggested by the art market researcher Alan Brown based on different media and professional designations remain especially relevant: inventive, interpretive, curatorial, observational, ambient arts participation, and politically driven participatory projects (Brown 2006). (*6) Another interpretation of participatory art’s call for dismantling social hierarchies can be linked to Niklas Luhmann’s theory of social systems, which focuses on questions of communication, the relationship between power and trust, and the construction of truth within “art as a social system.” *(4)

However, the crucial distinction is between two different types of participatory art projects: the first type, based on the various waves of artistic and curatorial/institutional critique, (see Möntmann 2009: 155-161; (*7) Alberro/Stimson 2009; (*8) Steyerl 2006 (*9)), is concerned with participation *within* the art system and deals with the relationship between the a) art institution–audience, b) artist–art institution (museum, gallery), c) artist–curator, etc. I see this first branch of participatory art as closely linked to and instrumental for institutional-critique.

Although still relevant, the limits of such art practices have already been pointed out by the common criticism that the outcome of institutional critique is reviving the art institutions, but does not lead to fundamental institutional change. *(5) Unfortunately, even though the main aims of participatory art stemmed from the need to deconstruct existing hierarchies between “high” and “low” art and culture and were therefore linked from the outset to institutional critique and other critical practices and discourses, it rarely manages to go beyond an individual-centered artistic practice and does not overstep an aesthetic-centered authority although it strives to become a means for expanding the art field’s projections, promises, and expectations. *(6)

The second type of participatory art practice deals with participation as a means for establishing a more democratic society in general—its main prerogative is therefore to foster more profound social and political changes that are not limited solely to changes within the art system. This more ambitious kind of participatory art induces the need to reflect on participation in the more general socio-political context of contradictions in contemporary democratic societies. My main claim in the earlier text from 2006 was that rather than looking at participatory art merely in the context of art history and curatorial practices, a perspective dominating art circles and literature on art at the time, a wider social analysis that includes philosophical, cultural, and socio-political theories of democratization of art and its institutional structures would facilitate a better understanding of participatory art and its

discourse. The critical responses to some of the more recent art projects that have claimed to use relational and participatory strategies, voiced by their participants, other artists, and activist initiatives confirm the need to challenge elitist and hierarchical structures in the context of conceptually and politically defined critical art practices. *(7)

This is not to say that all participatory art discourse is misconstrued, nor is it an attempt to criticize its emphasis on social and ethical values over aesthetic and formal components. Art theories are not always capable of locating the gaps between participation’s promise in theory and its shortcomings in concrete art projects in different contexts. I am actually interested in the promises and hopes raised by establishing certain unique relations with subjects in such projects, but it is not enough to locate them within the “laboratory conditions” of art galleries; instead, it is also vital to reflect on these projects in relation to both the real life of their participants and the general social context. Philosophical, political, and sociological theories are currently appropriated mainly through post-conceptual, socially and politically engaged art, or through art activism. However, similar art discourses and practices, such as community-based art projects, were produced by artists in the 1960s and 1970s, for example by Stephen Willats, and anticipated contemporary theory and practice. *(8)

Participation is a demanding activation of multiple relations that are initiated and directed by artists and often prompted by art institutions. These relations, however, often become objectified as they are limited to short-term projects and are subjected to the pressures of producing outcomes and reaching out to audiences, as reflected in numbers, etc. This is also linked to the tensions stemming from collaborative art practices, in particular regarding authorship and remuneration, which often create new invisible hierarchies between initiators and participants based on professional or other differences. While inviting the audience to actively participate, artists offering participatory projects create an interface that needs to be well-prepared in advance, and one that is highly contextualized within a specific social, cultural, and political environment.

The shift of focus from the reception of art objects to the more demanding and complex relations among subjects (e.g., artists, collaborators, invited or accidental participants, organizers, etc.) that are structured through the artistic procedures and strategies is tied to neoliberal policies. It happens as a kind of enforced response of art practice to a redefinition of the concept of community and the communitarian in the frame of neoliberal, multicultural policies and as a kind of follow-up to the social demands for inclusion. The shift focuses on marginalized groups of citizens who have been excluded mainly from their own social environment or from participation in public cultural life rather than from aesthetic objects.

Paradoxes and the production of new distinctions

I would like to point out a paradox: such a “participatory shift” in the arts simultaneously creates new hierarchies and differentiations, new fears and obstacles, and the political correctness principle governing such practices is often demotivating for artists who are not members of underprivileged or minority groups. *(9)

Some of the artists who have been engaged with participatory art practices and have involved underprivileged communities in their projects turn towards commercial and profit-driven artistic practices and continue to produce objects and cultural artifacts produced based on the previous collaborations. One of the reasons for this is that commercial galleries tend to ignore participatory art and art-for-

social-change practices, as such works are generally expensive to produce and difficult to present and tend to sell at art fairs and on the art market what is easier to sell: art objects—with the exception of those artists who work in these fields and have already become international stars and therefore possible “assets”. Paradoxically, by turning towards underprivileged groups, artists profiled as “participatory” actually also play into the hands of the market. Ironically, this creates a vicious cycle, which, at the same time recuperates the art market and perpetuates both the elitist non-for-profit and the commercial art system. In the case of participatory art these mechanisms of appropriation, recuperation and rejuvenation are, however, not easily recognizable because they are dictated by the rules and institutions of the political and economic systems rather than by the art system and its institutions.

The aims of having more open art institutions and involving the audience more profoundly in the process of artistic practice and production and fostering their participation produces new distinctions and “elites” by inviting the audience to become directly involved at different levels, because at the same time, the participants are not given equal credit in the various stages of the process, such as the presentation of results at future exhibitions, their participation in traveling exhibitions, or share in income from possible sales. The participation of audiences can lead to the development of more diversified art and cultural policies among curators and art administrators, and it can foster a greater awareness among the “elitist” museums and gallery audiences of the existence of “other” publics/participants. However, such “other” audiences often turn out to be difficult to control and manipulate, and are frequently excluded from any possible recognition (e.g., in the end, they are merely recorded on a documentary video).

Promises and the failure of promises

“Free education” provided by participatory projects is one of the justifications for expanding the program of educational museums and other art institutions. Apart from this positive aspect of participatory practices, they have also been the key model for perpetuating the use of free labor in the art industry, which led me elsewhere to propose a mandatory budgetary item in such projects that could be called a “participatory budget” (Milevska 2014). (*10) All this shows that the second type of participatory art is not necessarily more successful in terms of fulfillment of its promise, dubbed “felicitous acts” by J. A. Austin in the context of his Speech Act Theory.

According to Austin, the difference between what one says and what one does depends on the context and circumstances and hence the context can substantially affect fulfillment of a promise. *(10) The second kind of participatory art is thus even more reliant on the socio-political context than the first. Such projects’ “success” is also ever more resistant to a simple evaluation of their impact exactly due to the contradictions between the artistic and social positions, when the stage is not a theater stage in Austin’s terms, but instead, the general political arena determines the art projects’ influences. Therefore, I consider it more challenging to focus on the promises and the reasons for the failure of such promises in the second type of participatory art practices.

It is important to state that participatory art practices’ problems in fulfilling the promises of democracy and emancipation (in terms of calling for equality in terms of ethnicity, gender, class, race, sexuality, and disability) are directly linked to the context of the contemporary neoliberal society in which they operate. The artists’ initial expectations may be leveled by caution and a self-critical approach, whereby the impact of the projects is presented more realistically, but the rhetoric of many

participatory projects resonates with neoliberal political rhetoric. I would therefore like to locate the main reason for the failure of such a systemic “mission impossible” within the inner contradictions of contemporary democratic societies rather than in the organization or structure of such art projects. In whatever way participation is to be discussed in the context of art, it always necessarily refers to a certain “we” and to a specific identification with a particular community wherein members of different sub-groups (audience members, professional groups, homeless people, or children) become co-existing parts.

One part of this “we” is the artist, curator, art institution, or even the state (in some public art projects) that supposedly *cares* for the invisible, marginalized, or neglected “other” as the counter-part of the very same “we.” The problem with this imaginary “we” is that it almost always exists for the period of the particular art event, with rare examples where the artists create self-sustainable projects that continue even when they leave. Long term participatory projects that do not function only for the duration of the exhibitions, but are planned well in advance in terms of structure, organization, projected aims, and also secure funding for all project participants have much better chances of achieving their expected goals or declared promises.

Addressing the “we”: Democratization and neoliberalism

For me participatory art in general is related to the political theory of deliberative and participatory democracy and the inter-subjective philosophy of *“being singular plural”* as conceptualized by Jean-Luc Nancy, *(11) as well as to Giorgio Agamben’s work on *coming community* (Agamben 1993). (*11) Jean-Luc Nancy, for example, reminded us that the *aporia* of the “we” is actually the main aporia of intersubjectivity, and he points out that it is impossible to pin down a universal “we” that always consists of the same components. *(12) I therefore propose the hypothesis that when participation gives preference to the art institution and remains focused on the art system—which I have identified as the first type of participatory project—, it cannot truly fulfill the promises that characterize the second type of participation, precisely because of the limited outreach of art and cultural institutions from the outset, and the limited “we” that they address.

Interestingly, the constantly newly created “we” contains different parts and counter-parts, but does not give any indication of what has happened to the previous parts/participants who become a certain *inoperative community* (Nancy 1991: 80-81). (*12) For Nancy, however, community occurs exactly in situations of interruption, fragmentation, and suspension: “Community is made of interruption of singularities… Community is not the work of singular beings, nor can it claim them as its works…” (Nancy 1991: 31). (*12) This interpretation of community as being intrinsically inoperative and fragmentary helps us to understand the way in which participatory art projects function or fail to function in practice, especially when they are controlled by institutions. Similarly to Nancy, Agamben thinks of *being-in-common* as distinct from community (Agamben 1993: 87). (*11)

Participatory art projects aiming towards democratization could also be linked to the older philosophical progressive assumptions proposed by John Dewey, mainly in his critique of education as an instrument of social change (Dewey 2001: 333-341). (*13) It is no coincidence that many participatory art projects are run by the educational departments of museums and other institutions, or are contextualized within pedagogy and epistemology. The “participatory turn” and “educational turn” are often interlinked through artistic and curatorial contemporary art projects engaging with critical education and pedagogy, mostly based on the ideas of Ivan

Ilich (*Deschooling Society*), Paulo Freire (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Pedagogy of Hope*), Peter McLaren (*Critical Pedagogy and Predatory Culture, Life in Schools: An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education*), and Jacques Ranciere (*The Ignorant Schoolmaster*). *(13) Research and art projects by artists such as Olafur Elliasson, Tanja Ostojić, Tania Bruguera, Ahmet Ögüt, Chto Delat, and Pablo Helguera have indicated the pedagogical potential of participatory and socially focused art practices. *(14)

Applying elaborate ethical research principles already at work in the social sciences and humanities may be helpful for artists in many respects—in appreciating the communities and the subjects whom they address with their projects, in creating projects that have the social relevance that they aim for in the first place, in understanding the tensions and conflicts between the spectacle of representation of the communities in directed performances and the fulfillment of the hopes to bring about social change (Brigstocke 2011; (*14) Noorani/Blencowe/Brigstocke 2013; (*15) Billington et.al. 2015 (*16)). Already in the late 1980s Raymond Williams offered a very ambivalent definition of democratic culture addressing the contradictions and controversies surrounding culture as a resource of hope and as a means to foster democracy (Williams 1989: 3-18). (*17)

Participatory art projects can easily become caught within a vicious cycle of criticism that does not take into account any positive aspects or outcomes, because they often end before making any proposals for self-sustainable participation or providing any models that would secure the desired and promised social effects. However, most of these projects are still welcomed by society, since mild, social critique that eventually recuperates the institutions critiqued and most likely perpetuates the status quo is preferred to a more direct political critique of social inequality and injustice.

Authors such as Jodi Dean and Slavoj Žižek have pointed out the fundamental contradictions between democracy and neoliberal social developments. For example, Dean argued that while the left attempted to develop and defend a collective vision of equality and solidarity, the ascendance of “communicative capitalism,” consumerism-driven gridlocks, privileging of self over group interests, and the embrace of the language of victimization have constantly undermined such attempts (see Dean 2009). (*18) Žižek went so far as to announce the separation of the two: “the eternal marriage between capitalism and democracy has ended” (Dutent 2013). (*19) However, this separation has not been politically acknowledged despite the fact that it has become more obvious in the wake of recent economic and political scandals, such as the Panama Papers, which have exposed the close link between democratic and neoliberal powers. It is currently extremely difficult to make a clear distinction between democratic norms and values and right-wing politics, and it becomes especially difficult to define and justify when it comes to the analysis of governing when financial capital and philanthropy are the main resources for supporting politically engaged and participatory art projects.

The second type of participatory art often leads artists to engage in social activism, and to collaborate and show solidarity with existing and newly established activist organizations in order to overcome the paradox of democracy in neoliberal times (Clements 2011: 18-30). (*20) Solidarity and collaboration between artists and non-professional community members may overturn fears of negative responses to affirmative action in the realms of art, culture, and education. Participatory art often focuses on issues such as social inclusion of different communities and

individuals—with reference to ethnicity, gender, race, and class—in all social strata. Participatory art projects often use means that express values similar to political correctness, when they critique privileges, exploitation, and discrimination in order to overcome inequality. *(15)

Another radical aim of some participatory arts projects is to fundamentally change society. Art, then, is understood as an “imperative,” *(16) or a fetishization: as a call for revolution, which means that its successes or failures are measured against the projects’ revolutionary prerogatives (Penny 2011). (*21) The interpretation of art as an agency meant to overcome the main social and ideological obstacles outside of democratic systems has been heavily critiqued. But the accusation and reproach that such a notion imposes excessive expectations on the social impact of art activists’ projects is made from a safe and privileged position on the part of critics. On the one hand, one could not agree more that participatory art projects establish a new and more productive context for such entanglements with neoliberal politics and that they open up new potentialities for greater social impact of contemporary art practices in general. On the other hand, it becomes obvious that by organizing participatory art projects, art institutions often compensate for the lack of establishing and developing a profound and long-term relationship with their audiences who have become mere numbers and statistics required for further funding applications. The distinction between “audience” and “participants” may also very well be simply an artificial distinction that leaves the institution with control to define the terms and “limits” of participation.

Furthermore, through a subtle transfer of their programming to artists, institutions can exploit participatory art as a kind of “liability reserve,” as along with the assignment, they also transfer their social responsibilities. To conclude, it is not possible to discuss the paradigm shift from objects to subjects in participatory art in isolation from the general social context and without taking into consideration all involved parties (governmental policies, economic changes, institutional interdependence of cultural policy decision makers with real politics, local governance deliberation, etc.). The experiences of Brazil’s Porto Alegre participatory budgeting, which is the main financial instrument of the community’s self-sustainable policy, *(17) or the art informed by the Occupy movements show that art that takes social context into account, can lend its own means to such movements. *(18)

Conclusion

To state it quite bluntly, the general socio-political and economic context in which art is produced and practiced inevitably over-writes participatory art’s ambitious goals. This calls for further distinctions to be made among participatory art projects of the second type that rely on different, concrete historical, cultural, and socio-political contexts and promise a move towards democratization. These projects also induce hope for a more profound discussion of how different participatory artists position themselves in the general social and political contexts on the one hand and of the relevance of art institutions’ responsibility on the other. It is difficult to imagine and expect any social changes prompted by artistic projects in the long run without support from both the institutions where the projects are organized and the communities for whose empowerment such projects were conceptualized and initiated in the first place. *(19)

However, although theoretical and academic research may help to analyze the advantages and obstacles regarding the social relevance and impact of participatory art projects, any prescriptive propositions are inadequate without concrete references to particular contexts and projects. *(20) Even though neo-

liberalist cultural policies currently prevail in most European countries, *(21) the gap between promise and delivery remains wide and predictable, given the stringent neoliberal policies that appropriate participatory art and manipulate its aims to gain political “points,” while interpreting its failures as “infelicitous” acts and justification for the most blatant populist ideology.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to express my gratitude to Elisabeth Klaus, Anita Moser and Marcel Bleuler for their constructive feedback and comments, as well as Lisa Rosenblatt for proofreading.

//Zur Person

Suzana Milevska

Suzana Milevska is an independent curator and theorist of art and culture based in Skopje, Macedonia.Her projects focus on postcolonial critique of identity politics and the hegemonic power regimes of representation at the intersection of gender, ethnicity, race and sexuality. She was a Fulbright Senior Research Scholar and has a Ph.D. in Visual Cultures from Goldsmiths College London. In 2010 she published the book *Gender Difference in the Balkans* and edited the book *The Renaming Machine: The Book*. She was the Endowed Professor for History of Central and South Eastern European Art Histories at the Academy of Fine Art in Vienna and a visiting professor at the Visual Culture Unit – Technical University Vienna (2013-15).

//Literaturnachweise

*1 *Bourriaud Nicolas (2002): Relational Aesthetics. Paris: Les Presse Du Reel. 9.*

*2 *Fontaine, Claire (2012): “Giving shape to painful things” (Interview). In: Fontaine, Claire/Culp, Andrew / Crano, Ricky: Radical Philosophy, 175 (Sep/Oct 2012). /https://www.radicalphilosophy.com/interview/claire-fontaine. (September 15, 2015)*

*3 *Milevska, Suzana (2006): Participatory Art: A Paradigm Shift from Objects to Subjects. In: springerin, volume 12/2, 2006: 18-23. http://www.springerin.at/dyn/heft_text.php?textid=1761&lang=en (April 25, 2006).*

*4 *O. V.: Socially engaged art—an ‘arts’ perspective. In: Colouring in culture, https://colouringinculture.wordpress.com/tag/kester/?blogsub=confirming#subscribe-blog. (April 2, 2015)*

*5 *Agamben, Giorgio (1998): Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 166.*

*6 *Brown, Alan (2006): The Five Modes of Arts Participation. http://www.artsjournal.com/artfulmanager/main/005967.php. January 31, 2006.*

*7 *Möntmann, Nina: The Rise and Fall of New Institutionalism: Perspectives on a Possible Future. In: Raunig, Gerald/ Ray, Gene (Eds.): Art and Contemporary Critical Practice: Reinventing Institutional Critique. London: Mayfly, 155–161.*

*8 *Alberro, Alexander and Stimson, Blake (Eds.) (2009): Institutional Critique: An Anthology of Artists‘ Writings. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.*

*9 Steyerl, Hito (2006): The Institution of Critique. In: eipcp, european institute for progressive cultural policies: transversal, do you remember institutional critique?, 01.2006, http://eipcp.net/transversal/0106/steyerl/en/base_edit.

*10 Milevska, Suzana (2014): Participatory Budgeting.Presentation at Critical Management in Curating, December 9–10, 2014, , Vienna, schnittpunkt ausstellungstheorie & praxis www.schnitt.org in co-operation with the Österreichisches Museum für Volkskunde http://www.schnitt.org/critical-management/criticalmanagementincurating/

*11 Agamben, Giorgio (1993): The Coming Community. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota University Press.

*12 Nancy, Jean-Luc (1991): The Inoperative Community, ed. by Peter Connor. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota University Press, 80-81.

*13 Dewey, John (2001): Education and Social Change. In: Schultz, Fred (ed.): SOURCES, Notable Selections in Education (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Dushkin, 333–341.

*14 Brigstocke, Julian: Review Three: Aesthetics, Authority and the Performance of Community. In: Authority Research Network, School of Geography, Politics & Sociology, Newcastle University. October 1, 2011 http://www.authorityresearch.net/uploads/8/9/4/1/8941936/review_3_-_aesthetics_authority_and_the_performance_of_community.dot. (April 2, 2015)

*15 Noorani, Tehseen/Blencowe, Claire/Brigstocke, Julian (2013): Problems of Participation: Reflections on Authority, Democracy, and the Struggle for Common Life, eds., Lewes, UK: ARN Press.

*16 Billington Josie/Fyfe, Hamish/Milling, Jane/Schaefer, Kerrie: Connected Communities: Participatory Arts and Well-being Past and Present Practices. http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/documents/project-reports-and-reviews/connected-communities/participatory-arts-and-well-being/. (December 25, 2015)

*17 Williams, Raymond (1989): Culture is Ordinary. In: Williams, Raymond: Resources of Hope: Culture, democracy, socialism, ed. by R Gable., London: Verso, 3–18.

*18 Dean, Jodi (2009): Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies: Communicative Capitalism and Left Politics. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

*19 Dutent, Nicolas: The eternal marriage between capitalism and democracy has ended, Interview with Slavoj Žižek, trans. by Harry Cross. In: L'Humanité (English edition), September 2, 2013. http://www.humaniteinenglish.com/spip.php?article2332. (April 2, 2015)

*20 Clements, Paul (2011): The Recuperation of Participatory Art Practices In: International Journal of Art and Design Education, 30.1, 18-30.

*21 Penny, Laurie (2011): Protest by consensus: Laurie Penny on Madrid's Occupy. In: New Statesman, October 16, 2011. http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/laurie-penny/2011/10/spain-movement-square-world. (December 25, 2015)

*22 Milevska, Suzana (2015): Auf der neoliberalen Bühne: Die uneingelösten Versprechen und Hoffnungen partizipatorischer Kunst für die Demokratisierung der Gesellschaft. In: BILDPUNKT Herbst 2015. http://www.igbildendekunst.at/de/bildpunkt/bildpunkt-2015/demokratie-im-praesens/auf-der-neoliberalen-buehne.htm.

*23 Lind, Maria (2004): Actualisation of Space: The Case of Oda Projesi. www.republicart.net/disc/aap/lind01_en.htm. (August 15, 2006)

*24 Bishop, Claire (2006): The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents. In: Artforum, February 2006, vol. XLVI, no. 6, pp. 178–183.

*25 Bishop, Claire (ed.) (2006): Participation Documents of Contemporary Art, ed. London: Whitechapel/Cambridge: MIT Press.

*26 Goldenberg, David (2012): A short history of Post Autonomy. In: The Scenarios of Post Autonomy. The Studio: Glenda Cinquegrana, September 19 – October 8, 2012, https://www.academia.edu/12205149/A_short_history_of_Post_Autonomy. (December 26, 2015)

*27 Goldenberg, David / Reed, Patricia (2008): What is participatory practice? In: Fillip 8, Fall 2008. http://fillip.ca/content/what-is-a-participatory-practice. (December 23, 2015)

*28 Sholette, Gregory (2016): Merciless Aesthetic: Activist Art as the Return of Institutional Critique. A Response to Boris Groys. In: FIELD A Journal of Socially Engaged Criticism. Issue 4/Spring, 2016. http://field-journal.com/issue-4/merciless-aesthetic-activist-art-as-the-return-of-institutional-critique-a-response-to-boris-groys.

*29 Kimball, Whitney (2013): Should Art Volunteers Be Paid? Some Suzanne Lacy Volunteers Say Yes,. In: art f city October 18, 2013. http://artfcity.com/2013/10/18/should-volunteers-be-paid-all-the-time-suzanne-lacy-volunteers-think-yes/

*30 Bocar, Leina et.al. (2013): Open Letter to Suzanne Lacy, Nato Thompson, Catherine J. Morris, Brooklyn Museum, Creative Time in: http://bureaux.petitemort.org/2013/10/open-letter-to-suzanne-lacy-nato-thompson-catherine-j-morris-brooklyn-museum-creative-time/

*31 Graham Janna/Vass Nicolas (2014): Intervention / Art. In: p/art/icipate—Kultur aktiv gestalten # 05. https://www.p-art-icipate.net/intervention-art/

*32 Nagel, Thomas (1979): The policy of preference. In The Mortal Questions, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 91–105.

*33 Austin, John A. (1975): How to Do Things with Words, eds. J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa, 2nd edition. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 100.

*34 Felman, Shoshana (2002): The Scandal of the Speaking Body Don Juan with J. L. Austin, or Seduction in Two Languages, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

*35 Nancy, Jean-Luc (2000): Being Singular Plural. Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, , p. 13.

*36 Vidokle, Anton: Notes for an Art School-Exhibition as School in a Divided City, http://byanalogy.org/texts/02%20-%20Anton%20Vidokle%20-%20Exhibition%20as%20School%20in%20a%20Divided%20City.pdf

*37 Ögüt, Ahmet (2012): Silent University. http://thesilentuniversity.org.

*38 Helguera, Pablo (2011): Education for Socially Engaged Art: A Materials and Techniques Handbook, Jorge Pinto Books Inc.

*39 Zinggl, Wolfgang / (2001): WochenKlausur: Sociopolitical Activism in Art. Wien: Springer.

*40 Raunig, Gerald (2015): DIVIDIUM. Vienna: transversal texts, p. 17.

*41 UNESCO—MOST Clearing House Best Practices Database (n.d.): The Experience of the Participative Budget in Porto Alegre Brazil, in http://www.unesco.org/most/southa13.htm.

*42 The Hague Academy for local governance (2014): Fiscal Decentralisation and Local Finance, in http://thehagueacademy.com/blog/2014/04/fiscal-decentralisation-local-finance/?gclid=CjwKEAjw0KK4BRDCiKHD5Ny8pHESJACLE620AhAIZDM9hdVhA8goXOfLwZk3aKPsK2zKbgKBYXEN8BoCfbvw_wcB

*43 V&A Shop: http://www.vandashop.com/Disobedient-Objects-Exhibition/b/4930353031.

*44 Trends Watch 2016: http://www.aam-us.org/resources/center-for-the-future-of-museums/projects-and-reports/trendswatch/trendswatch2016; http://www.aam-us.org/resources/center-for-the-future-of-museums/projects-and-reports/trendswatch

*45 Voon, Claire: Report Advises Museums on How to Be More Inclusive and Maximize Happiness. In: hyperallergic, March 10, 2016, http://hyperallergic.com/281215/report-advises-museums-on-how-to-be-more-inclusive-and-maximize-happiness/?ref=featured. (April 10, 2016)

*46 MAPSI—Managing Art Projects with Societal Impact: http://www.mapsi.eu/

//Fussnoten

* 1 This text is actually a longer version of the more recent article: Milevska (2015).

* 2 For example, the use of food in Rirkrit Tiravanija’s projects presented in art institutions could be interpreted as both relational and participatory, making a clear cut distinction between these terms difficult, although his project The Earth (1998) with Kamin Letchaiprasert, imagined as a self-sustainable environment in Thailand (near Sanpathong) links Tiravanija’s work more obviously to participatory art.

* 3 The older discussions dealing with the terms as “new genre public art” (coined by Susanne Lacy) or “community based art” resonate with participatory art. For more recent debates on participatory art practices and theories, see: Lind 2004; Bishop 2006; Bishop (ed.) 2006.

* 4 Here I want to acknowledge my gratitude to the artist David Goldenberg for his generous revision suggestions, comments, and text recommendations including: Goldenberg 2012, Goldenberg/Reed 2008.

* 5 In his recently published article, Gregory Sholette had argued that activist art returns as a new and politically

more effective institutional critique, an argument that could also be linked with several more recent participatory practices striving towards institutional critique. See Sholette 2016.

** 6* *For example, most projects that dealt with issues related to the condition of Roma in Europe during the Decade of Roma Inclusion (an official instrument of EU that focused from 2005 to 2015 on supporting art and cultural projects centered around Roma issues) did not have a long-term impact: although there were many art projects financed with the EU funds, and even two Roma Pavilions curated at the Venice Biennial, Roma artists have yet to be included in any major international art Exhibition.*

** 7* *For example, some artists, activist initiatives, and collectives (such as WAGE, Precarious Workers Brigade, ArtLeaks) have scrutinized and critically evaluated participatory art projects for their inconsistent labor policies. The case of the feminist artist Susan Lacy is one of the most contradictory since she was one of the pioneers of such practices: her project Between the Door and the Street at the Brooklyn Museum co-organized by Creative Time was targeted in an open letter from the participants (Bocar et.al. 2013) and in a text (Kimball 2013).*

Another example of similar critique was when Yvonne Rainer criticized Marina Abramović for her performance at a MOCA gala fundraiser in an open letter sent to the director of the institution and the artist; see Graham/Vass 2014.

** 8* *However, exactly his practice recently turned appealing and easily recuperated by institutions although his historic significance cannot be undermined.*

** 9* *Particularly relevant for this discussion is Thomas Nagel’s commentary on the negative effects of affirmative action and preferential policies favoring students from underprivileged backgrounds in the U.S. educational system. See Nagel 1979: 91–105.*

** 10* *See Austin 1975: 100. For a more precise analysis of the failure behind all speech acts, e.g., a promise uttered from a performing stage, see Shoshana Felmann’s text on Molière’s Don Juan and his character’s double speech: Felman 2002.*

** 11* *Nancy’s concept of being is always already being with. According to him, being always entails with as an inevitable conjunction that links different singularities. See: Nancy 2000: 13.*

** 12* *He refers to the problem that, at this moment, we cannot truly say “we,” that we have forgotten the importance of being-together, being-in-common, and belonging and that we live without relations (Nancy 2000: 75).*

** 13* *Future Academy (2002–2007), Clementine Deliss, Edinburgh College of Art (eca), Academy (2006), Charles Esche/Irit Rogoff, Vanabbe Museum, Radical Education (2006–2014), Bojana Piškur, Moderna Galerija, Ljubljana, Deschooling Classroom (2011–2013), TkH/Kontrapunkt.*

** 14* *In the last decade we’ve seen the rise of such education-focused participatory art projects, e.g., Tanja Ostojić, Office for Integration-Language Lessons (2002), The School of Engaged Art, Bertolt Brecht’s “Lehrstücke” inspired Russian collective Chto Delat, Anton Vidokle’s Unitednationplaza, Berlin (after the cancelation of the European Biennial Manifesta 6, 2006, Nicosia/Cyprus), see: Vidokle (n.d.); most of the long-term projects by Tania Bruguera (e.g., Immigrant Movement International, conceptualized in 2006, implemented between 2010–2015); Ahmet Ögüt’s Silent University, (2012–); and the instruction works and books by Pablo Helguera, e.g. Helguera 2011.*

** 15* *The continuous efforts and work strategies of artists, groups, and collectives that dedicated their practice to participatory art are not easy to follow, analyze, or evaluate, since they are often of small scale, locally produced and presented in a low-key way (e.g., the Berlin based NGBK, or the Vienna based collective WOCHENKLAUSUR, see Zinggl/Barber 2001).*

** 16* *Or “Imperative der Involvierung” as coined by Raunig 2015: 17.*

** 17* *For more information on the structure of the participative budget as an example of urban creative self-governance in Porto Alegre, Brazil, see: UNESCO – MOST Clearing House Best Practices Database (n.d.), and how this example even became a topic of an academic course at the Hague Academy for Local Governance, see: The Hague Academy for Local Governance 2014.*

** 18* *For example, the exhibition Disobedient Objects that was held at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (July 26, 2014–February 1, 2015) addressed different forms of collaboration between artists and grass-root activist movements, but nevertheless, the “disobedient” art objects turned souvenirs, such as Suffragettes’ teapots, were available for purchase in the museum’s shop, as usual, thus emphasizing the major contradictions between the spaces of museums and barricades. See: V&A Shop (http://www.vandashop.com/Disobedient-Objects-Exhibition/b/4930353031).*

** 19* *In the 2016 issue of Trends Watch, the website publishing the annual reports of The Center for the Future of Museums (CFM), part of the American Alliance of Museums, proposed are different global trends that museums should consider in order to move forward to better respond to society’s needs. See also Voon 2016.*

** 20* *For conceiving this argument, I am grateful to Mick Wilson and the students of his course “Art, the market and the question of values” at the Valand Academy during my guest lecture that preceded and was closely linked to this paper. Gothenburg, March 18, 2016.*

** 21* *For example, one of the EU funded Life Learning Projects MAPSI claimed to provide specialization in the management of artistic projects with societal impact. Such a very ambitious aim seems problematic from the outset, precisely because the project’s aims of “create[ing] an international network focusing on educating cultural managers and facilitators to manage and mediate artistic and cultural projects with societal impact” exceed any realistically achievable impact, when taking into account the complexity of each local context and the project’s limited duration and sustainability.*