



CAP

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Memória / Memory

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Cadernos de Arte Pública (CAP) is an open source, regular scientific publication dedicated to Public Art - a cross disciplinary field, that supports research on the collective production of public space. 'Narration' and 'Memory' are the themes of the two first issues of CAP, the aim of these issues is to reflect upon the practices and proposals that summon the space and the public sphere into an art work. Either through the concepts and notions associated to them, either through the practices supported by the engagement of the public and its communities.

Increasingly the artistic agents require participating audiences, capable of producing and projecting meanings into their works, however the permeability of the public space, together with the incapacity to form specialised publics, expose the inoperability of traditional tools of analysis to build a narrative that is sufficiently comprehensive about this phenomenon. The debate on the specificity of the work, traditionally centred on the thought, methods and vocabulary of the artist, has been replaced by more recent forms of analysis that borrow concepts and modes of practice from outside of the traditional processes of production and artistic legitimation. But perhaps we often forget that "the relationships between the isolated parts of a visual object are offered simultaneously to its observer; they are there to be perceived and assimilated together and at the same time", as Krauss has taught us (2001). Meanwhile public art is re-expanding the limits of its own materiality and time. The idea of the work and its physical presence are now often diluted into ephemerality, into the time of a passing gesture, or the moment of a word or action taking place in a specific time, while reclaiming the qualities of the object as a new form of public expression.

CAP addresses the relationship that public art establishes with perceptions of time, and how this transforms the modes of artistic production and challenges the re-

interpreting of the current artistic legacy in the city. With basis on the program defined by Oriol Bohigas (1986), where he defended that it was "necessary to expand the concept of monument and that it was necessary to understand it as everything that gives permanent meaning to an urban unit, from the sculpture that presides and brings everything together, to the architecture that adopts a more representative character and, in particular, to the public space that is filled [and overcharged] with meanings". However, the output of artistic thought and production on public space has consecutively legitimised the criticism of monuments built accordingly to outdated canons, while questioning the values underlying their representativeness. Public art is a powerful tool in affirming the right to individual protest and a strong form of representation of public minorities. But simultaneously its political arbitrariness, is raising a series of questions, that span between the crisis of historical heritage embodied by the monument to the crisis of social identity that afflicts many of the values of their representativeness in the public space.

Is art, and public art in particular, losing the ability to transcend us (Lefebvre: 1974), to transport us to another place? Giedeon (1958) had already defended, in the nine points that he wrote together with Sert and Léger in 1943, that art must "they have to satisfy the eternal demand of the people for translation of their collective force into symbols. The most vital monuments are those which express the feeling and thinking of this collective force the people". We live in a time when there is a significant increment in the production of art works for the public space, and we know that this demand is in large part due to the economic valuation and cultural promotion of cities. At the same time we assist to a shift in the direction towards non-monumentalisation (Giedion, 1944), it is not by chance that he defended that monumentality is affirmed

by timelessness in its public dimension, a state that can only be reached when, at a given historical moment, the art work achieves a balance between its social reason and the thinking of its intellectual elites. In CAP we attempt to discuss the relationship between the power given to art and the power of art in the transformation of society by citizens.

In the peripheries, new urban centralities emerge that bring about a new field of artistic action that despite its great vitality and transformative power, does not find an echo in the great structures of legitimation and dissemination of art. Nevertheless it is important to analyse these contexts and the ways in which they are given meaning, as well as to anticipate the debate on the main issues related to the artist's ethics and collective responsibility in the public administration of the territory.

We believe this publication to be a space of plurality, and the result of a cross disciplinary exercise between the arts, humanities and sciences that, in its heterogeneity, allows the integration and interaction of different types of skills and knowledge.

The group of artists and researchers who collaborated in these issues contributed to the debate on contemporary artistic practices, with public art at its core, their articles constitute a critical and multidisciplinary analysis, in order to bring together critical thinking that seeks to rethink the field of art in a globalised world, pointing out directions for the reconstruction of identities, opening up possibilities for re-commemoration, re-memorisation and re-valorisation of artistic production in the urban space, while facilitating the emergence of works with effects in the radical changes of our common reality. These two issues are an essential starting point for a better understanding of the current state of research on public art. They offer valuable new insights and together represent an important contribution to further research on the subject and its adjacent disciplinary fields.

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