

Building Communities: transformative societal strategies of artistic research

(KEYWORDS

Transformative, societal, practice, strategies, interweaving, longevity, slow research, diversity, locality, community building, generative, dialogical, relational.)

1.a. Brief outline

The focus is on building generative communities through the interweaving of localities, practices and strategies with the aim of exploring and creating transformative societal strategies within a space where diversity is welcomed and fostered.

The theoretical and artistic research and experimentation proposed within the Circle will seek to actively include new practitioners and dialogical strategies whilst offering a unique creative and critical context in which to continue practice and research employing longevity and slow research. This will enable research/practice to develop over time where interweaving processes and practices produce collaborations that foster activities and strategies that spread ideas, projects, inspiration and knowledge far beyond the study circle.

The community will not be based on consensus but on the desire to be generative and organic. A community that is a dynamically changing diverse one also provides support, inspiration, challenges and a critical framework that allows curiosity both physical and intellectual to evolve and transform over time.

Societal strategies involve transformation. This reflects the need to test, break and build together individual and collaborative notions of practice and strategy as well take these beyond our ever-changing group into institutional and non-institutional strata of society.

1.b. Aims of the proposal

The aims of the circle are to build communities that explore the functions, practices and strategies of artistic practice and research in different localities, fields, disciplines and contexts and to create, explore and develop transformative societal strategies and practices.

The circle will offer physical and virtual spaces for the purpose of developing generative communities not based on consensus or commonalities but ones that embrace difference and diversity. Participants from all creative, academic, social and cultural backgrounds working in physical, academic, artistic, political, social and virtual spaces that are interested are encouraged to become part of the developing community.

1.c. Central questions and considerations

Why do artistic practices and artistic research matter?

How does this manifest itself in society in other locations and disciplines?

How can art have a transformative affect on society?

How can the interweaving of strategies, practices and locations create new societal strategies?

How do artists affect each other during collaborative practices?

What tools, practices and strategies can be used to document these?

What do we mean by practices and strategies?

What will be the impact of new disciplines and methodologies be on slower long-term research?

How do we create a space for presenting slow research whilst preserving the integrity of the slow formation of outputs?

1.d. Evidence and outcomes

The organic, generative nature of this proposed community will be focusing on interweaving themes, practices, research and strategies to produce on-going events and encounters which will shift between localities, spaces and contexts. These may take be dialogical, artistic, political, philosophical, scientific, cultural, academic, sensory and take on the form of potentials, performances, provocations, interventions and physical manifestations.

The processes of forming strategies and developing research will be as much in focus as results of developing transformative strategies. The point of slow research is to focus on an on-going genuine enquiry as opposed to the production of immediate outcomes; therefore exploration of how to document and present the on-going process of research will form a significant area for experimentation.

2.a. Background for the proposal

The Crossing Contexts circle developed an exciting programme of seminars over the last three years. New participants from Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia have brought new exciting ideas and diverse practices and research to the group. The development of the Lab nights at the 2014 summer session in Iceland was very successful and proved popular with participants across all circles.

Collaborations have been rich and fruitful leading to new research and generating new artworks in Berlin, Finland and UK amongst others. We have also been successful in encouraging participants from an extremely wide range of disciplines from performance, theatre, visual arts, film makers, sound composers, philosophers, historians, theoreticians, ecologists, educators and environmentalists.

Rather than reflecting on negative impact of challenges faced by the arts in the current climate we will focus on these challenges as a starting point of inspiration.

Developing strategies that break free, grow and evolve and have effective transformative societal impacts.

The building of communities within the new circle reflects the status of NSU and the position in which it finds itself. Many participants in this circle are members of the board and Arrkom reflecting the passion of the circle to promote and raise awareness of the values of NSU to institutions, independent scholars, artists, activists within Nordic and Baltic countries and beyond.

2.b. Methodological considerations for the running of the study circle

The circle will pursue an interdisciplinary collaborative approach to interweaving practices and strategies from other geographical, contextual, societal, institutional and non-institutional spaces.

The building of communities will create its own challenges and these will be used to evaluate and develop methodologies as part of the on-going life of the circle. They will include open dialogue and encouragement of new practices and strategies both theoretical and practical whilst maintaining a high level of research.

The notion of unexpected outcomes, failure, and will not be a discouragement for attempts at explorative approaches to creating societal strategies. The possibility of breaks and fissures being inserted into the scaffold of building and generation offer further possibilities. Research that leads into areas that are unknown, and introduction of encounters that may be difficult to categorise are welcomed.

The very notion of “trial”, as in true experimentation, implies “error” which will therefore foster the constant and transformative renewal of research strategies. The circle has already built relationships with other circles and proposes to collaborate with Forms of appearance of the political in contemporary democracies study circle on two seminars in 2017 and 2018.

2 c. Structural overview and plans for 2016-2018

Winter 2016: Sweden (Gothenburg or Malmo). Transformation.

Summer 2016: Slow spontaneity.

Winter 2017: Riga. Material culture – Collaboration: *Building Communities with Forms of appearance of the political in contemporary democracies*

Summer 2017: Functions of fissures.

Winter 2018: Tallinn. Activism – Collaboration: *Building Communities with Forms of appearance of the political in contemporary democracies*

Summer 2018: Reflecting inside and out.

3. List of the people behind the proposal

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