Dialogue Table.
A Hybrid Method of ActiveArt and Citizenship

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Abstract: In the absence of a methodology or of an inherited practice, be it directly – from the local artistic environment, or indirectly – through written sources and scholarly literature (*Artificial Hells* by Claire Bishop was released around 2012) – the experience and practice of social art were the result of the encounter of a more or less fragmentary familiarity with art history and lived experience, at the beginning of 2006 within the Rahova-Uranus community art project. The attitude which had not yet become common currency in the local cultural context of those years was one opposed to the art institution(s), which occupied a too markedly elitist and exclusive zone and were insulated from society. It was our desire to identify the various vulnerable social categories which were subjected to a policy of exclusion, rather than to one based on communication, that would bring communities in dialogue. We had to create our own method of working together, the community, the artists and the local authority, in a space of learning from each other skills and experiences which will inform a local practice for a cultural public policy and its servants. The theoretical landmarks originating in the history of art were, alongside direct experience, points of reference and support which could suggest a new practice of embracing cultural competency, professional training and development in public service for the common good focused on this paradox of mediation at the centre of modern political life.

Keywords: communitarian, *ActiveArt*, co-authorship, *Dialogue Table*, action research, radical pedagogy, participatory democracy.

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Context

In this text, I present and analyse the *ActiveArt* method – *Dialogue Table*, describing the organic transition from an imported practice, *The Speaker's Corner*,[2] which we[3] employed at the beginning of our intervention in the Rahova-Uranus community (2006),[4] the way in which this *artivistic* practice evolved into a working-method adapted locally in the dialogue with the administrative authority (2008-2010), and how it was subsequently tested internationally, in 2011.

The method aimed to contribute to the articulation of claims on behalf of a community that was in danger of eviction ever since the plans for the area's further gentrification were officially confirmed by the local authority. The working method around *laBomba*[5] (cultural space of community self-representation) informed the *ActiveArt* concept in its meaning of arts in education and manufacturing, focused on creating active citizenship. The re-valuation of the human resource and potential of the Rahova-Uranus community have created around *laBomba* a *new aesthetic*, through which *Participatory Democracy means of expression* were practiced. The method used was going-between university/professional sets of values and the community creative potential trying to find out new co-intelligent ways of citizenship. Through our means (artists as public workers) we empowered the visibility of participants, co-producing spaces for the interaction with the local administrative structures,

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[2] I am deliberately quoting from Wikipedia, in order to show that this practice – which we adopted, and to which we attributed certain functions in our project – is a widespread one, and is not specific to Active Art: "A *Speakers' Corner* is an area where open-air public speaking, debate and discussion are allowed. The original and most noted is in the northeast corner of Hyde Park in London, UK. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Speakers%27_Corner

[3] O2G 2007 (Be *Organized* within community, *Offensive* operations towards injustice, with *Generosity* for marginals) Maria Draghici (visual artist), Gabi Albu (architect) and the theater directors: Miruna Dinu, Irina Gâdiuță, Bogdan Georgescu, Vera Ion, Ioana Păun, David Schwartz.

[4] The volumes: *The Generosity Offensive Initiative 2006-2008* (Bucharest: Vellant, 2009); *Reader Rahova-Uranus LUM DOC.2009* (Bucharest: Vellant, 2010) testify on the beginnings of the *Generosity Offensive Initiative* (O2G) and on the Rahova-Uranus Community Art Project (2006-2013).

[5] http://labombastudios.blogspot.com/

in which marginal groups can construct new meanings and values for (re)inventing the institutions.[6] *ActiveArt* provokes experiences by gathering people in a positive attitude towards their challenges, and forces them afterwards into public action. The practice is both a social one (collective memory and the community identity) and process-oriented towards valuating the community's collective imagination through which both urban space and everyday life are becoming meaningful categories for those who live in the area. The artist should mediate spaces for bringing the power back to the people, shape the public space by encouraging life-learning processes through dialogue and carve out a new subjectivity by creating a meaning once again of our appurtenances to a rooted historical community.

In 2006, we started *The Generosity Offensive*, a movement of artistic practice and social pedagogy which brought together artists from various backgrounds, but also common people, activists, and NGOs. This practice reflected the pressing necessity of a group of artists who could no longer content themselves with artistic representation in the restraining space of the *white/black box* of traditional art institutions to find different ways of putting their vocation to work and who chose at that moment to plunge into the unknown. Finding the appropriate way of formulating our conceptual discourse regarding community intervention took time and was not devoid of failure, disillusionment or wasted efforts.

Community art is, first of all, an attitude, and undoubtedly a choice made by the artist consciously. By encouraging his/her active implication in non-artistic environments, community art repositions the artist's role in the social and even political context, in most cases changing the function of art towards a move from "representing" to "doing something with." Community art creates the situational framework where the artist works together with *the amateur* – a term used in close connection with the common person accepted as *maker of naïve, untutored art*, culturally untrained in the conservatories or

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6 "(...) In spaces of appearance, horizontal relationships enable participants to escape the roles and rules that normalize or even oppress them in other social spaces, to disclose their individuality, and to begin something new — that is, to be 'free' in the Arendtian sense of the term." Xavier Marquez, "Spaces of Appearance and Spaces of Surveillance," *Polity* 44 (2012): 6-31 (7), doi:10.1057/pol.2011.20; published online 19 December 2011.

Art universities, or as we named them, the *experts of daily life*[7] who shape the working-site actively, together with the artist. We named this type of intervention *incisive anthropology* – an investigation space for research and community production where evaluations are based on quality, and not on quantity. The artist, the anthropologist and the researcher become part of the community and through direct action one starts to collect/research/reshape the data, integrating it into his/her work as an active perspective of the local inhabitants on the realities which they are confronting. This way of doing research takes the risk of modifying the observed reality, and moves away from the so-called neutral, "objective" scientific research.

It is a process of direct research in the construction of the investigated site that enables an envisioning of the world through artistic thinking. Art becomes a tool in shaping a new subjectivity. The artist is transformed into a constructor of *site-specific* situations as a result of an organic involvement into the collective work, and changes his/her position from one of authority into that of a participant, from a passive to an active attitude towards the subject and the other way round: "Nothing is completely itself and its full being is realised only in that participation,"[8] in which the members of a potential or real community, the common people, the places, the objects, as well as personal stories become the most valuable source and resource.[9]

Through the performative approach (action), interpersonal communication (observation/empathy), the audience transformed into a creative participant (cultural *open source*), processuality (the disappearance of the final artistic object as the end result of the process), the experimental character (the idea of *feedback* – trial and error, "you don't know"), the giving up on the attainment

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[7] An understanding of the subject by means of the concept of *expert of daily life* is taken from the Rimini Protokoll, a group of authors-directors formed in 2000 whose whole work was written collectively under the name Rimini Protokoll. The group used theatre as a tool in shaping several perspectives on reality.

[8] David Bohm, *On Creativity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998): 106.

[9] Even Foucault, who does not commit himself towards a more constructive enterprise regarding humanism, came to the conclusion "that we need to expand the spaces where self-creation is possible" (Xavier Marquez, "Spaces," 30), in connection with the importance of constructing values and meaning for the reinventing of our institutions.

of perfection as an artistic aim, community art reintroduces the notion of *good* in conjunction to that of *beautify*, as an ethical approach instead of an aesthetic one.

Through the community art projects in Rahova-Uranus in 2006-2013[10]– the volunteer artists together with the people from Rahova-Uranus laid the ground of the *Creative Community* around *laBomba – Community Base*, thus defining a new concept of cultural intervention, namely the *extended concept of school and active citizenship*. The *Creative Community* is a temporary social structure directly engaged in the process of solving some practical problems, process-oriented and collaborative, extended in time in its direct interventions and in the forms of employed expression. *The Creative Community* acted as a catalyst, practically, for "the social sculpture,"[11] at the same time, as a learning community, a social community as well as a manner of (re)constructing identity. Through the *direct actions*,[12] the creative community achieved the organic transition towards an original artistic formula, that of *ActiveArt*,[13] whose concept derives directly from that of community art, while exhibiting certain specific features

The ActiveArt concept places added emphasis on the dimension of social transformation within the process of community intervention. As in community art, the artist enters the process with the role of context initiator (the observer), the subject (witness) as the most suitable person to speak about the situation, but also the most motivated in finding new possibilities, and the audience, together with the artist and the subject, enters the situation as a participative worker. They are the ones doing the act of imagination in the cultural space of a *new subjectivity*, wherein the final product of community expression is achieved through the common effort of the artists and community

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[10] "The Sensitive Map" 2006, "Build your Community!" 2007, "Flexible" 2007-08, "Mobile Urban Laboratory"2007-2010, "School in the Street" 2013.

[11] A term used in relation to Joseph Beuys' social plasticity.

[12] Using resource-methods as: the interview method, the *Speaker's Corner* method, *the Dialogue Table,* the *Personal Map*, the Viola Spolin method, the Warner & Consorten, Cornerstone, *Verbatim*, Teatr Dok method.

[13] This was the subject of my research: *Active Art, Action Research and Artistic Pedagogy (Reflections around the personal experience of working in ActiveArt projects)* / The National University of Arts, Department of PhD Studies / Bucharest, 2018.

members in direct negotiation with the local authority.[14] The collection of data is actively used in the economy of the final artistic product of *ActiveArt*, where the term "art" is understood as *fitting*, as David Bohm proposes in *On Creativity*. *ActiveArt* has to do with changing the context, going beyond what is well-known and can give shape to new possible worlds where "normal laws" are suspended, be it only for a moment, as a result of the insertion of "fictions" through which the law itself and the way it operates in such a limited manner is questioned at the level of the urgent pre-documented situation. This suspension in understanding is achieved by bringing together all the participants in the process, according to the concept: *I participate. You participate. He/She participates*, all of them acting in the same present in configuring the transformative event. The event is totally eruptive and cannot be deduced from the situation. It happens as a miracle which, in Spinoza's view, would be an event whose cause cannot be explained;[15] in terms of Alain Badiou's positive paradigm,[16] it is a moment of reconstruction where the normal functioning of the old economic, social and cultural order is rejected or suspended so as to generate the appropriate conjunction for its reorganizing in a new way. The construction of the situation begins before the event, continues during the event and can remain active even after its end, and the *ActiveArt* product is in fact a community creation whose ultimate aim is the active restitution (giving back) of the image to the community from which it was initially taken, observed and documented[17] – a process of understanding

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[14] Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells. Participatory Art and Politics of Spectatorship* (London & New York: Verso, 2012): 11: "There must be an art of action, interfacing with reality, taking steps – however small – to repair the social bond."

[15] Spinoza, "Of Miracles," *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, Chapter VI: "a miracle can only be a work of nature, which surpasses, or is believed to surpass, human comprehension." The Gutenberg Project, trans. R. H. M. Elwes, 1997, 12, http://www.dominiopublico.gov.br/download/texto/gu000990.pdf (accessed on 10th of September 2018).

[16] Alain Badiou, *From Logic to Anthropology, or Affirmative Dialectics,* 2012, online by the European Graduate School Video Lectures https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wczfhXVYbxg

[17] "(...) On the verge of being expropriated not by the state (that cunningly retreated from the dispute of which conditions it created) but by a real estate developer with foreign venture capital who bought legal rights of inheritance in 2006 (the moment in which it seemed that there is no limit to profit in the business). The local that hosts 'La Bomba' is in the same situation, the

reality through its objective, organic-experimental crossing: the image can be described, debated, disputed, recreated and re-used by the community members via the artistic products and the related public debates.

The active restitution, the event, the expected accident ("the miracle") are instruments which, used in the re-enactment of pressing issues in ways that are sensitive to a particular context, by stimulating the observation and activating the premises in the performative act, lead, through *feedback,* towards finding the right solution to the predicament an individual or a community face. Through distancing, empathy and chance, the interaction between *accident* and *rule* brings about the *event*, which is not the creation of a *new situation*, the creation of a *new world* – but the creation of a *new possibility* of a new world in the present situation. *The event* is that which simply interrupts the law, the rule, the structure of the situation, and through this suspension creates a new possibility. The collective action is carried out by relying on these three concepts according to the principle of value accumulation through direct confrontation with the issues it faces, and not through promoting the negative paradigm of antagonism and conflict. This type of positively oriented action,[18] which formed the basis for the formulation of the working method of *ActiveArt* – the *Dialogue Table* – embraces at the same time the belief of the historian and activist Howard Zinn: "democracy is achieved when people get organized and manage to do something together."[19]

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next event will be dedicated to the women who are threatened by expropriation: a fashion parade casting them as models." – A. Bălășescu, "Learning from a Flower Market in Romania: Community, social fabric and the promise of economic prosperity." *Development* 53 (2010): 410-415, https://doi.org/10.1057/dev.2010.58

[18] Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells*, 2: "(…) the artist is conceived less as an individual producer of discrete objects than as a collaborator and producer of *situations*; the work of art as a finite, portable, co-modifiable product is reconceived as an ongoing or long-term *project* with an unclear beginning and end; while the audience, previously conceived as a 'viewer' or 'beholder', is now repositioned as a co-producer or *participant*."

[19] The historian and the activist Howard Zinn in the interview for *Radical History (Conversation with History)* with Harry Kreisler for U.C. Berkeley, 2001: https://uctv.tv/shows/Radical-History-with-Howard-Zinn-Conversations-with-History-8400 (accessed in March 2017).

The *Dialogue Table* – an *ActiveArt* hybrid method

With the establishment of the *Community Centre for Education and ActiveArt – laBomba Rahova-Uranus*, aesthetics, research and organization came together in imagining a new public space in the middle of the city – a creative space with all the implications of the reality of the place, which required our direct participation in helping people tell their stories in the public arena. It goes without saying that *the accident* itself could not have later caused the emergence of the community centre without the previous preparation of this moment in time through all the actions carried out in the area by artists together with and for the community, through which the "traces" of its coming into being were configured. We then acted as though the utopia existed already – the project had taken a more precise shape than the real space. The *enactment* of the community centre in 2007 made possible the inclusion of *laBomba* on the map of cultural centres,[20] in 2009. Through the community plays, documentaries, organized public debates, the question of housing rights in Rahova-Uranus was being analysed and discussed in public in ways that contributed to lending it a new sense, a new sensitivity, in a dialogue within the social and political sphere. Beyond our wish to remain true to the anti-system discourse, what was primarily at stake in the *community creation* around *laBomba* was establishing communication between the Rahova-Uranus community and the local authority of Precinct 5. When communication occurs, this creates community, both within, as well as outside of it. The "intelligent communication"[21] we came to propose as civic education / *ActiveArt* in the work within Rahova-Uranus community, cemented itself in the concept of *Dialogue Table*.

In order to ease the dialogue between the community and local authority it was necessary to create a structured framework, especially devised in a performative sense, of direct interaction, where this dialogue would be followed by the setting up of a strategy in conceiving and applying clear

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[20] *laBomba* is part of TEH – a Europe-based network of cultural centres initiated by citizens and artists. TEH has been at the forefront of repurposing Europe's industrial buildings for arts, culture and activism since 1983.

[21] Richard Sennet, *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures, and Politics of Cooperation* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2012).

intervention actions through which the community would become responsible, together with the local authority, for their implementation. This intelligent form of collective action for a common good cannot be applied without achieving dialogue in the manner described by David Bohm as being the result of a dynamic and evolving process which presupposes order, structure and the harmony of the totality – a different level of consciousness. Ordinary people can appear in public spaces and disclose their identity through action with others in smaller and more private spaces. The *Dialogue Table* should be understood in the context related to *ActiveArt* intervention of re-education through cooperation, a matter of collective self-education of all parties involved.

Stages in organizing the collective action of the *Dialogue Table* intervention:

1. Contemplating via the "armed" eye the traces of things in reality. Documenting observationally the existence of several perspectives. The plurality of truths.

Contemplating via the "armed eye" is an expression used by Boris Groys in "A Universal System for Depicting Everything," referring to Ilya Kabakov's way of looking.[22] The world as we see does not satisfy him. He is inspired by the idea of finding the correct angle of looking at everything that exists. By combining several perspectives, this artist sees, at last, the object of his perception (in the given example, the pan) in the correct position. The fourth dimension would be precisely that inexpressible and irrepresentable thing, but this does not mean that he saw something that other people do not see. He can grasp the trace of things in reality, before they become. Through the memory work, Kabakov's *Total Installation* becomes a space which imposes itself by creating a perceptive discomfort, a spatial model for alerting knowledge, thus altering its comfort zone. The more pronounced the discomfort, the more intense the perceptive impact on the participant.

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[22] "A Universal System for Depicting Everything: a Dialogue between Ilya Kabakov and Boris Groys," published in *Art Margins online*, on 26th of August 2000: http://www.artmargins.com/index.php/8-archive/429-qa-universal-system-for-depicting-everythingq-a-dialogue-between-ilya-kabakov-and-boris-groys (accessed in April 2018).

The documenting of all the perspectives by preparing the connections among the factions around the socio-political paradox places the actors in the paradigm proposed by the Xenofeminist manifesto: "Refusing to think beyond micro communities, not encouraging the fractioned insurgencies, not taking into account the way the emancipating tactics can be re-escalated in view of their universal implementation means that we are still content with temporary and defensive gestures."

The documentary material gathered in this first stage of documentation is grounded on the concept of plural perspectives of data gathering, which in the second phase of the context consolidation becomes an *assemblage* recognizable in reality as an installation.[23]

2. The identity affirmation of the vulnerable ones. Consolidating the context. Consolidating their image as equal partners in the future dialogue with the authority. Documenting, dramatizing, archiving as instruments of consolidation

The community identity emancipation by placing it in the value group *we are 99%*, as described by Jonas Staal in *Assemblism*,[24] makes possible the emergence of the artistic product of *ActiveArt*, which initiates a process of personal recognition of the participants in the public space: "as artists we are no longer *in power*, but through our means we can *empower.* The practice of assemblage opens the possibility of the emergence of a new community coming out of the new social class of the 'precariat' – a new *us*, through whom we can formulate new campaigns, new symbols, a new poetics necessary for a radical collective imagination – a new emancipatory governing of reality."

These *assemblages* become tools used in the subsequent development of the *Dialogue*, by sustaining a concentrated look on the problem that can no longer be solved in the present, but which requires a new approach, a suspension of attention on the paradox itself, rather than an attempt to get rid of the problem or to solve the conflict.

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[23] "True, people might enter such spaces already shaped by the relationships of power operating in other spaces. But much research by psychologists suggests that human action is highly situation dependent." John M. Doris, 2002, qtd. by Xavier Marquez, "Spaces," 20.

[24] Jonas Staal, "Assemblism," *e-flux* Journal #80:
http://www.e-flux.com/journal/80/100465/assemblism/

Fig. 1. *Dialogue Table Komettorget Odlingslotter*,
@ Roda Stein & CITY MUSEUM, Gothenburg 2011-12

The method was used, tested and validated in 2011 in Gothenburg, in a different social-political environment, more suited for democratic cultural dialogue.

For the *Dialogue* to occur we need means of slowing down the thinking process so as to be able to observe this process, with all its consequences as David Bohm describes it in *On Dialog*:

> When we come together to talk, or otherwise to act in common, can each one of us be aware of the subtle fear and pleasure sensations that "block" our ability to listen freely? Without this awareness, the injunction to listen to the whole of what is said will have little meaning. But if each one of us can give full attention to what is actually "blocking" communication while also attending properly to the content of what is communicated, then we may be able to create something new between us, something of very great significance for bringing to an end the at present insoluble problems of the individual and of society.[25]

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[25] David Bohm, *On Dialogue* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003): 4.

The *Dialogue* should make available a space where this attention becomes active.[26] The suspension of thought through paradox – *the suspension in the paradox* – implies full attention, the capacity to listen and to see, all these actions being essential in exploring, in the intelligent communication further proposed through the *Dialogue Table*.

Fig. 2. *Dialogue Table Economatul Locativ*
@ Modern Club, Rahova-Uranus, Bucharest 2013

3. The spectacle of the insertion of the situation in reality. Spectacular. *Performative*. The *Dialogue Table*

The *Dialogue Table* (as an installation-assemblage) is built on two levels: the spectacular/performative one, and the one which consists in the re-creation

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[26] After the positive result in the Swedish public realm, the method was reloaded in Bucharest and made possible the dialogue between Rahova-Uranus Community and the local administration which was the main goal of Rahova-Uranus project from the beginning. More details for the *Dialogue Table* in Sweden: https://komettorgetodlingslotter.wordpress.com/author/komettorget/ and for the Romanian context: http://labombastudios.blogspot.com/

of meaning. *Spectacular* is to be read in the sense of vision, a fictional structure, as in "the world as spectacle". *Performative* – participative – means something that happens in front of us, through direct participation. Thus, the spatial construction of the *Dialogue* depends to a large extent on the participants. The trajectory that leads to dialogue crosses unavoidably three levels of attention consolidation: the change of the formalized framework, the spectacular / performative perspective, and re-(co)creation of meaning.

By changing the formalized framework and adopting the spectacular perspective, the trivial, formal meaning of the analysis of the *de facto* situation is disrupted, and so is the comfort of the trajectory of the initial thought. This leads to the acceleration in the number of possibilities, negotiated by the participants, which favours the emergence of a new present, but in an uncontrolled form.

> Creativity is connected to art, science, religion, but also to every aspect of life. I think that, fundamentally, all activity is art. Science is a particular kind of art, which emphasizes certain things. Then we have the visual artists, the musical artists, and various kinds of other artists, who are specialized in different ways. But, fundamentally, art is present everywhere. The very word "art" in Latin means "to fit". The whole notion of cosmos means "order' in Greek. It is an artistic concept really.[27]

Everything is like in an "improvisational ensemble acting," where anything from anywhere can be juxtaposed in order to stage new meaningful associations, to create a new subjectivity in which the first image is the premise, but it is hard to foretell what develops from it and in what direction the participants will lead it; but whatever the case, they move it beyond the initial impossibility of comprehending in which they are stuck.

In order to be in the new affirmative dialectics proposed by Alain Badiou, you must think and act outside the state, and become self-generative. Within the state the only position allowed is the one of defence, resistance or fight – that is, of being in opposition, and this is what leads towards acting in a negative logic. *Self-organizing* is the new creation in the social organism such

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[27] David Bohm, *On Creativity*.

as it develops through the approach of *The Generosity Offensive,* the affirmative way (the positive creation, construction from within in a communitarian way), in contrast to *via negativa* (the way of a conflict and bloody revolution).

Conclusion

I do not believe that the answer to any social problem is that of destabilizing the instituted social structures. Instead of criticizing the systems, we had better try to construct a new one that will render the previous ones' undesirable. We should support the ones that work. As artists cannot convert into politicians or missionaries transforming the lives of others, our task remains that of becoming "constructors" or co-producers of social systems. *ActiveArt* as public culture is one in which the artists are at the service of a larger segment of the population. These new social constructs will not be implemented on a large scale, but at least they can help the artist generate model-ideas which will incorporate knowledge, and which will be used as means of expression, involving us all in the process of self-knowledge.

ActiveArt usually employs the strategy of working with the context and not against it –knowledge through agglutination, a sort of visual thinking or a way of thinking through visual means. Sarat Maharaj[28] describes it as a *liquid form of knowledge*, which manifests itself through cut-outs and discontinuities for a new social design. The *Dialogue Table* as a method is a type of knowledge which sculpts in the fluidity of information, of the experience and thinking, in *bits* combinations, it appears in contradiction, generates associative manoeuvres and juxtapositions, so as to configure an algorithmic sequence. As a consequence of the interaction between trials and errors, in contact with each individuality of the collective, the coordinating direction is defined at each particular moment, through specific choices: "the desired product (a possible future) consists in the very choice we made 'on the fly'."[29]

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[28] Sarat Marahaj, "Know-how and No-How: stopgap notes on 'method' in visual art as knowledge production," *Art & Research, A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods*, 2, no. 2 (Spring 2009): http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n2/maharaj.html

[29] Mihai Nadin, "Reporting on anticipatory systems: a subject surviving opportunism and intolerance," *International Journal of General Systems* (2017): 1-30.

94

Resorting exclusively to practice, the professionalization of method restricts its range of action, since you no longer allow hazard or chaos to come into the process and thus you restrain your activity. The artist permanently needs to stay "unfinished," that is, to be a student in order to keep his/her ability as a catalyst, so suggestively described by Boris Groys in "Education by Infection."[30] Self-infection is produced through experimenting, listening, observing, through a "not knowing" attitude, which should ultimately represent the usual method of working in art. We should be capable of inventing our own methodology every time, as it is needed as an answer to a specific situation. The *effect* produced through involvement becomes a methodological tool, where the artist tries to change the world in order to be able to understand it in the sense of his creation. The passage towards a militant kind of research is accomplished not when the artist is in the process of "changing the world" by constructing an involved subjectivity, but only when the effect of these practical changes *on site* is produced together with the ones it directly concerns (the community itself). The maximum *point* of involvement: someone lives, breathes and researches a given subject and in this process, one becomes the object of his/her own research, together with those with whom he/she began the "submerging". A way of being in the world "with" or "through the others". Humanity and compassion are notions that you do not grasp in solitude; they are achieved only by those who manage to devote their lives to the public sphere, and in doing this are ready to enter a dialogue around this action.[31] This would be possible only in a society where people are not ignorant.

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[30] Boris Groys describes how the student has to be taught through a "no rules" artistic education for real life in "Education by infection," apud Steven Madoff, *Art School (Propositions for the 21st Century)* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2009): 27-32: "Ultimately, teaching art means teaching life."

[31] "I think everyone is creative. There are a lot of people who feel separated from their creative nature. I think that's one of the ways culture and society separates us from our compassion for ourselves and our ability to connect with others. Whether it's through a performance or just through a conversation like this one, it's always about connecting. I'm predominantly interested now in performance as a dialogue. Let's just have a moment where we all talk about the thing that happened. Like you said, the creative experiment. I love the idea of that." *Document*, issue no. 12 / Conversations, Patrisse Khan-Cullors and Asia Kate Dillon, http://www.documentjournal.com/2018/05/black-lives-matters-patrisse-khan-cullors-and-actor-asia-kate-dillon-on-the-art-of-creative-survival (accessed in May 2018).

We have the responsibility of acting and re-acting to the reality in which we live. Bringing people into dialogue, to think and act in their immediate proximity, is a form of activism due to the fact that it forages into the public realm. *To dig where you stand* is not only a social act, but rather an artistic work. In praxis-oriented artistic research, the researcher is genuinely determined to make an impact on society – whether in the political, social, cultural or any other sector – and does not want to differentiate his/her own abilities from the practicality of the world. One needs to participate, act and live each encountered experience and to encourage co-participation, to guide and mentor students and others to become involved in a transformative praxis. We all influence and contribute to social change as artists, sociologists, architects, public servants... or as mere citizens and this leads toward of a re-educated administration in which the role of the public servant is changed from that of a manager towards that of cooperative participant.

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