

The artist as activist in public space: Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

SPACES Conference Vienna

Moderation: Angelika Fitz

Thursday, Oct. 30th 2014 – Friday, Oct 31st 2014

Kunstraum Niederoesterreich, Herrengasse 13, 1014 Vienna

Free Entry

Contact & Information: ina.ivanceanu@oikodrom.org, Tel.: +43-1-984 23 51

www.oikodrom.org, www.spacesproject.net

Detailed Programme

Thursday, October 30: Art shaping the city

14:00 Doors open

14:30 – 15:30 Welcome to SPACES!

Introduction by Heidi Dumreicher, Oikodrom, Vienna, Nini Palavandishvili, GeoAIR, Tbilisi; and screenings of short films from the SPACES WEB TV (Vahe Budumyan, Ina Ivanceanu, Tatia Skhirtladze)

The space and time context enhancing urban participation and creating a public sphere: A transdisciplinary approach opens the conference and unveils contexts of the SPACES project in Eastern Central Europe. How could city-dwellers and artist seize their right to the city? Reflections on the impact of art interventions in changing societies: the perception of the public sphere as a place for democratic participation, the role of the activist.

15:30 – 17:30 Panel 1: Public art and activism in Eastern Central Europe – thoughts on activism.

Accompanied by the SPACES caravan, the project established a platform for reflection, discussion and participation where artists, scientists and city-dwellers had and have the opportunity to interact with each other. In order to paint the picture of what can be realized through artivism, this panel gives insight into the background and impact of art interventions that have taken place in the course of the SPACES project. Initial contributions from the SPACES curators take the conference participants into the experiences of artists in the post-Soviet public space.

The panel informs about art interventions in the post-Soviet public space and re-thinks challenges for arts under surveillance and censorship on behalf of the authoritarian state. Furthermore historic and cultural diversity in the Eastern and Central European region have significant impact on the successful implementation of the SPACES project and are discussed in the first panel.

- Kateryna Botanova, Center for Contemporary Art, Kyiv: Architecture of Common
- Vladmir Us, Oberliht Association, Chisinau: Chisinau Civic Centre
- Taguhi Torosyan, Utopiana.am, Yerevan: Public Talks
- Sophia Lapiashvili, GeoAIR, Tbilisi: undergo. the parallels



Respondents: Tihomir Videman, SKUOR - Interdisciplinary Center for Urban Culture and Public Space, Technical University Vienna; Torange Khonsari, Public Works, London; Markian Prokopovych, Institut für Osteuropäische Geschichte, University of Vienna

This panel is organised in collaboration with the colloquium "Stadt gestalten", Institute for European Ethnology, University of Vienna, Brigitta Schmidt-Lauber.

17:30 Break

18:00 Film Screening „The plundering“ - a film by Oliver Ressler

The documentaries of Austrian film-maker Oliver Ressler have strong links to economics, democracy, social resistance and alternative civil disobedience. In ‘The plundering’, the artist tells the story of aggressive state-property privatization in Georgia combining powerful images with interviews.

“We can talk about the ‘plundering’ of Georgia. Public property, which in fact should serve the common needs of society, has become the property of individuals. For example, if that project became successful, the citizens now using this park would not be able to use it.” – Mikheil Svanidze, ‘The Plundering’.

Unsurprisingly the implementation of radical free-market policies worked to the advantage of some Georgians while regular citizens need to face instability and precarity. Indeed Georgia today is 9th of 185 states in the World Bank ranking “Ease of Doing Business” while accumulated common goods are nearly sold off.

Discussion with the film maker and panellists after the screening.

19:00 End

Friday, October 31: Artists reclaiming the city

10:00 Doors open – welcome

10:30-13:30 Panel 2: The artist as citizen – is all art in public space a political act?

Art is no longer condemned to locate itself in museums and galleries but takes possession of the space it needs. Art interventions in the public space leave behind the institutionalized but protective environment of museums and search for new communication strategies in order to get in touch with city dwellers.

Differences between the public and the private space for artists have become visible also in the civic disobediences of the Arab spring. Artists and especially art activists ingested a major role in the development and the perception of the revolution: numerous artists supported the protests in Cairo. The same was the case in the Euromaidan movement that forced a dictatorship down. The art of communication in the public space is a relevant aspect for its re-appropriation; interrelations between artists, audience and environment seem to be almost obvious when a society calls for change.

- Alevtina Kakhidze, artist, Kyiv: The art of communication – the artist and her audience in a public space context
- Galila El Kadi, urbanist, Cairo/Paris: Public space, art and revolution - the reappropriation of public space through art in Cairo
- Vitalie Sprinceana, sociologist, Chisinau: The city belongs to everybody

Respondents: Sabine Knierbein, SKUOR - Interdisciplinary Center for Urban Culture and Public Space, Technical University Vienna, Simonetta Ferfaglia, gangart, Vienna.

13:30 Break

14:30 – 17:00 Panel 3: Blurring borders – on participatory art and culture production in urban spaces

Urban spaces are melting pots in multiple manners. This panel aims at discussing the role of artists in varying urban patterns such as neighbourhoods or city quarters. The threshold of spaces for artists, activists and the audience blur when a social transformation of the urban spaces takes place and impacts the perception of the environment. In the SPACES project and beyond, it had been observed that socially and politically relevant art production push towards the open urban space, graffiti's as well as performances and installations invite their audience to participate in the democratic process. Urban decision-making, urban planning and even spontaneous urbanization share plenty of interfaces with fine arts and cultural work. This is how new cultural spaces in the city are created.

The question whether these forms of participation can contribute to the societal, political and cultural balance of power will be discussed from different perspectives including speakers from Belarus, the U.S. and Austria. In each of these countries arts in the public space is of varying importance but looks for similar solutions that are both: simple and complex, metaphoric and functional.

- Olga Shparaga, critic and theoretician, Minsk: Contemporary Art in Belarus: First steps into the urban context.
- Anton Lederer, Margarethe Makovec, < rotor >, Graz: The Annenviertel, a complex neighbourhood
- Richard S. Levine, Center for Sustainable Cities, Lexington: Public space animated by art

Respondents: Angela Ramírez, artist, Santiago de Chile, Can Gülcü, Wienwoche, Vienna.

17:00 Break

17.30 Discussion: Imagining the Public. Future spaces, future projects

The involvement of citizens, artists, cultural workers and professionals committed to the organizational autonomy of artists and their interventions in public spaces defines and shapes the present and future destiny of public spaces. The involvement of independent artists and cultural groups in large urban restructuring projects, development initiatives but also projects that are located in undecided public spaces or *third landscape* would be extremely important. The SPACES partners and conference participants discuss upcoming challenges in their towns and countries in relation to public funding and unavoidable socio-cultural differences. The embodiment of space and time constitutes a dynamic configuration of social relations and continuously re-design power structures and dependencies. Opportunities in the transnational collaboration, but also the role of single project partners will be re-thought in hope for further, add-on cultural and art programs in the Eastern Central European region.

Impulse: Michele Bee, Manifatture Knos, Lecce: Third landscape and third place: undecided public spaces

18:30 Nataša Bodrožić, loose associations, Zagreb and Nini Palavandishvili, GeoAIR, Georgia present the new SPACES publications:
SPACES – Cultural Sphere in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine
THE FUTURE IS COMMON

19:30 Dinner for all at Kunstraum Niederoesterreich

The SPACES conference Vienna is supported by:



BUNDESKANZLERAMT  ÖSTERREICH
KULTUR

 EUROPE
INTEGRATION
FOREIGN AFFAIRS
FEDERAL MINISTRY
REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA

