

State of the Art concerning the situation of research in the "Cultural heritage in urban area"

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"Les écritures du lieu"

"place writings"

It is because today we live in an intense period of creativity regarding Arts, Architecture, Urban Planning and Landscape, and that it has an influence on how places are conceived, it is urgent to assess the situation.

The relationship, forever evolving, between the arts and building, between town and nature has reached such a point of fusion, that it can no longer be ignored when one is about to undertake something.

To create, restore, save a place, is first of all to stop and look at it. It is about writing or re-writing it. Since the beginning of time, artists have had an important part to play.

The artistic practices concerned by the context, with the most wellknown and ended forms are Minimal Art, Conceptual Art, LandArt and the "In Situ", are the witnesses of the emergence of new artistic languages .

These tend to create a new architectural language, and then, enter in the city.

"It is clear that today, an essential part of Art, rest on what is called " the inaugural show of the work ", its exhibition (whatever its shape) having become the principal more of existence of art. More that a representation of space, it is its concrete practice which is taking place. This practice requires variable scales: from the use of space to its construction. Eric Watier, *les lieux de l'art.*

The stakes are important. We are attentive. We must not get away from fusion towards confusion. We need to think about the conception by gathering knowledge and disciplines.

1. The question of memory

According to Aldo Rossi, " History is a material for the architect ". *La città analogica*. Let's agree we could say the same for all forms of Art.

The question of memory is therefore fundamental.

Let's remind ourselves of what Thierry Verdier, wrote in his last work:

"From existing buildings, as well as from the past which is re-built, the architect is seized by temporality. Any architectural gesture, any project, any creation, any attitude intend to be postures of the present. But we all know that all work of art is a re-writing of the past."

Let's listen to his proposal

"...divert history to understand it better, invent for oneself the memory of an architect, in another word let's work on that memory which initiate places without trying to model them." *La mémoire de l'architecte, (Théétète)*

Therefore, there might be means other than the choice between identity and memory?

Because creators and those who decide must be given scientific basis on which to make their aesthetic decisions, and appropriate criteria to evaluate projects, it is important not to neglect the path of Contemporary Art.

We need to consider it, even though this entails some risks, because no evaluation criteria exist.

These remarks regarding the relation between Art, Architecture, Town and Landscape as well as the question of memory, need to be debated and expanded by everyone's contribution.

Very soon it becomes clear that they are not without consequence regarding the teaching of Art in learning of Architecture.

This is why today we are introducing you to a team gathered to study these questions, on the theme of "Les écritures du lieu". Which could be translated by "place writings"

2. Research Project: "Les écritures du lieu" or " place writings"

The DAPA (Délégation Aux Arts Plastiques), Ministry of Culture have just sent a project appeal. The topics of research proposed reflect the most actual preoccupations concerning Art and town:

Art and Town

- Evaluation of artistic practices
- Decision process regarding matters of contemporary art
- Artistic awareness and education
- New media in the presentation of Art

It is to contribute to this thinking that we have decided to build a research team and to submit the theme of "Place writings". The theme we have offered to develop is transversal to the preoccupations of DAPA.

Taking part:

- L'Ecole d'Architecture Languedoc-Roussillon EALR, one of the 23 French State schools of Arch and Town Planning
- L'Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier III, Département d'Histoire de l'art, Département d' Esthétique et Philosophie, Département Arts-Plastiques Nîmes-Montpellier.

The pluridisciplinary reserch team is made up of artists- lecturers at Schools of Art and of Architecture, Theoreticians and University Lecturers.

It is at the centre of various institutional Networks and liaising with correspondents in France and abroad is also in relation with numerous contemporary artists.

Its particularity is to intend to practice and encourage the practice of "Place writings"

It is made up of :

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Scénographe - designer

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Responsable du DEA et du Doctorat esthétique, éthique et
psychanalyse, Université Paul Valéry
Responsable de la section arts plastiques Nîmes-Montpellier II

Assisted by administration and technical team

Administrative Direction : **Martine Lieutaud**, EALR

Responsable du service de la Recherche et des Relations
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Adjointe à la Directrice, EALR

École d' Architecture Languedoc - Roussillon

It is in the context of present reforms concerning the study of Architecture that this project is taking place.

The schools of Architecture have aligned their curriculum with that of University. The course takes 6 years, with 3 cycles of 2 years. The 3rd cycle makes it possible to move on to University, in order to do some research or study for a doctorate.

The teaching body in a school of Architecture is represented by 5 departments.

The role of the representative of the Department of Plastic Arts is to debate the pedagogy of Arts and its place in the whole subject of pedagogy of Arch. However, for a long time were influenced by our beginnings/history, when Arch was taught at the School of Fine Arts.

Due to the evolution of Contemporary Art, and that of the study of Architecture and Urban Design, we need to rethink its teaching and take a more radical position.

Moreover, many students are following a double curriculum by studying jointly the Architecture Course and a University curriculum. This happens essentially with Art History, Town Planning, Geography and Human Sciences.

Then we will put forward conclusions and hypothesis in order to better understand what is at stake with this bringing together.

It is in this context that we wish to engage further our research team.

3. Writings

By "Writings" we mean artistic writings and theories writing.

A way, through artistic practice to communicate a message, to express a thought, to organise a sign system, the material transcription and the representation of thought.

We will look more particularly at plastic, photographic and cinematography languages, without excluding literature, choreography, the figuration of a place rather than its abstraction.

4. Place

The place here in question means Architecture, Town and Landscape.

Place as a determined place.

5. Objectives

The last exhibition of ArchiLab à Orléans, the works of creators such as Herzog et de Meuron, R. Koolhaas or François Seigneur, research studies for Urban Architecture by the Dutch group MVRDV, as "Megacity Datadown", or

Ken Goldberg and his Télégarden for virtual gardeners, built at the Art Electronica Center, the great exhibitions of gardens as Chaumont in France or the Bundengarten in Postdaam, artists tasks as Lewis Baltz's, Jeff Wall's, Bustamante's, Georges Rousse, Sarkis, Daniel Buren, and more over, ... come as a proof of the coming together of Art, Arch, Urban Design and landscape

But do we need to really talk about coming together, when we already are at a time of fusion, not to say confusion. Anyway, at a time of real interaction between Art / Site Conception, Architecture / Nature, Town / Nature.

The team aims to analyse the phenomenon parallel of the emergence of new forms of place writings. Indeed, since the practice of Installation, Installation in situ, Land Art and also forms issued from new technologies, the interrelation of disciplines carries on.

It is to give yourself the means to perceive what is at stake.

Sometimes, it is unexpectedly that the passage from Art to Architecture is put into light. For example when the property on image crystallize a specific moment of this evolution.

As a proof, the fact that Daniel Buren is victim of his own practice, the "In Situ", when he loses his action concerning the Place des Terreaux at Lyon in France, cause of a question of property on image. (Droit à l'image)

At first, any architectural work is In Situ. But Daniel Buren who saw himself as an artist is perceived as an architect.

Tool of representation, knowledge, exchange of communication and overall research, site writing, whether artistic or theoretical accompanies this evolution.

To question the role of site writing in the past, present or future, is to enable yourself to perceive its signs.

To understand their evolution, their passage from one to another.

6. Theory and Practice

Our intention is to know and understand the apparition of place, the in the Art, in the past, in order to better grasp in actual time the significance and consequence of the bringing together of art and concept of place.

Therefore, we will have to consider particularly the time when artists went from place writing (picture of a place) to architectural practice.

We will observe the strength of the borderline between place writing and concept of place.

For this purpose we will study and analyse the evolution of the writings themselves, the situation of the place in it. See how new technologies (vidéo, web, ...) have changed the way we look at a site.

Finally, how the birth of new artistic languages has created a new Architecture Language, and the role of Architecture in the new artistic languages.

7. Methodology

We have therefore put in place a methodology.

It will allow us to build a database and the necessary tools for its reading.

It will also enable us to observe in real time the evolution of the relation between Art, Architecture, Town and Landscape.

To practice and encourage the practice of writings linking artists and theoreticians will allow the creation of a documentation bank.

It will be time for artistic experimentation.

Then we will put forward conclusions and hypothesis in order to better understand what is at stake with this bringing together.

Finally, we will communicate the conclusion of our research and transmit the results of the practice of writings.

The database and the documentation bank that we will have gathered will form the base of communication and ongoing training.

These actions will allow us to arrange partnership.

8. Present artistic practices and cultural heritage

The teams which are working today for "Cultural Heritage", as researchers or practitioners, gather the most varied subjects and the most up to date knowleges.

Technically, we agree that what is coming from the specialists is essential: from ingeniors, historians, architects..., we test and we create new materials...

But this is only about "preservation".

However, ancient buildings, districts, villages, are written in a contemporary context. (social, politic, urban...)

Meant for contemplation or for public activities, they will have to suffer a graft with modern living.

There will be talk of surroundings, streets and places near by, of present day needs, and essentially of the social and economic life of the buildings.

There will be talk of calling the contemporary architecture, for all or a part of arrangements and equipments.

It appears that it is at this moment, at the same level as others specialities, that it will be indispensable to understand and evaluate what Arts concerned by the context will offer.