

De-Colonizing Art Institutions

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Manifesto for Self-Organization as an Institutional Principle

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Manifesto for Self-Organization as an Institutional Principle

This manifesto questions what a decolonized institution should offer and who is ordering this institutional space. It puts forward the idea of self-organization as a perspective for decolonized art institutions. Self-organizing means to create its own stability and logic. A logic that is at its base flexible, polyphone, and a practice of mutual recognition.

It's the practice!

The start of self-organized initiatives encompasses many different motivations. These initiatives can be an artistic strive for innovation, a social pleasure, or a strategic and biographic vision. In the end they form a single practice, composed of a spatial implementation, a social embodiment, and a routine. This defines, shapes, and differentiates what an initiative is. Self-organization can therefore be described as an immediate and constitutive practice, creating its own horizon, perspectives, and values through its actions. Therefore, self-organization is based on practical enactments.

It's the flexibility!

Still, this practice is alterable, flexible, and subject to change or as an artist said: "Our exhibition space could also be a table." Self-organizational contexts can be seen as paradigmatic when it comes to negotiation, integrating, and contesting certain forms of cohesion. Initiatives can be like an umbrella, a label for very heterogeneous strategies, or social relations that adapt, reform, and move from place to place. The flexibility offers the freedom to react and embrace inputs. It's an assembly of people whose order is not fixed in absolute terms. Not only are they personal constellations, but they are also the responsibility and decision making processes that need to be negotiated.

It's the reference!

Self-organized initiatives have a high sensitivity of contexts which they work in. They respond, relate, assemble, distinguish, and fight. They fill empty spots, amplify existing modes, or circumvent existing formats and protocols. The logic of self-organization is highly cautious to its surroundings.

It's the polyphony!

Self-organized initiatives serve as a vessel for multiple voices, not only as an internal high resonance field for an individual's necessities, but also as terms of low resistance against collaborations and formats of intertwining external interests. Different roles, whether as a curator, artist, organizer, or complice, can be shifted from engagement to engagement. Self-organization as an institutional principle also means to annex skills and to define, refine, and remix existing roles, processes, and visibilities. In the end it's about art, giving different answers on what art can be and what it means to handle art in an organized manner.

It's the criticality!

Addressing each other happens in a matter of mutual respect, in terms of recognition of different subjectivities, bodies, and epistemological stances. Also temporalities of production, observation, and receiving are not turned against each other. It's a differentiating form of existence.

It's the metaphor!

The usage of metaphors is a way to immunize the initiative's actionability, to keep them mobile and as positively invasive ideas.

It is not about efficiency!

It is about us!

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