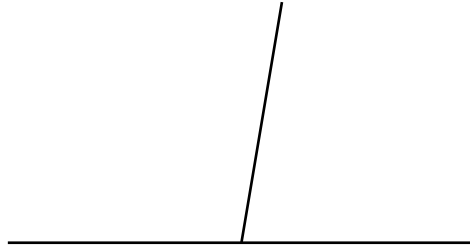




Green Days

a multidisciplinary project on art
and nature

2012



Green Days

a multidisciplinary project on art
and nature

Green Days the project

a multidisciplinary project based on the relationship between urban environment and nature, and on the possibility to “imitate nature” through biomimicry applied to the visual and performing arts in public space.

Supported by





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Green Days

INTRODUCTION

The Green Days project came about from the desire to investigate the network of relationships between urban space, nature and cultural processes through collective learning paths experienced directly at the coalface, or in parks, squares and streets of four European cities: Bologna, Brussels, Cluj-Napoca, Loughborough.

The first steps in the creation and project development travelled along two parallel paths: the website asknature.org (a project of the Biomimicry Institute, Montana, U.S.), drawing inspiration from biomimetics and its applications, and in the observation and study of individual contexts.

*Green Days, through its European dimension and at the same time, its local dimension, built a system made up of individual, specific, geopolitical elements, in which the four organizations involved (AAA - Audiovisual Anonymous Artists, Fabrica de Pensule, neon>campobase, Radar) become spokespersons, by outlining a geography made up of relationships, exchanges and participation, and tracing the contours of an ecological map of Europe. The multiplicity of processes put into action made continuous efforts to redefine the language of green economics and green philosophy, producing cross-disciplinary variations of the concept of ecology, allowing itself to be inspired, by freely mixing them up, by the "three ecologies" described by Guattari in the book of the same name, from 1989 (environmental ecology, social ecology, mental ecology) and expanding the idea of nature to human action, the willingness of individuals and communities, urban interstices, occupation and physical and emotional appropriation of places and spaces, alternative and collaborative thought systems, memory and ideas. Green Days has in fact taken an outspoken stance against the "green world", the more radical environmentalist positions and all those obtusely progressive visions which view renewable energy and organic products as a sort of fundamentalist religion. The idea of going back to nature as a finished system of nostalgic projections, characterized by a reassuring sense of ultra-conservatism, was also looked upon suspiciously. The interaction between these four organizations contributed to the creation of a complex picture in which the paratactic dialectic between the different emergencies and contexts has produced unexpected connections and innovative solutions, not so much at the formal and linguistic language level, as at the ethical, social and political one. The experience of individual cities, through the practice of urban walks and urban bike tours, gradually outlined a human and design landscape from which reflections on discussions on global warming, ecological disasters and the exhaustion of energy resources have been physiologically excluded. The social, economic and political worthiness of single micro-phenomena of appropriation of space and the questioning of the role of nature within contemporary cities has prevailed. A new awareness seems to have emerged from what the Green Days working group has recognized as "good practice", and from all those spontaneous interventions that are springing up like wild plants within urban and rural areas to affirm, not so much the need to gratify humans with healthy and welcoming environments, as the right to put individual policies in place that make collective responsibility the foundations for the birth of the "planetary garden" that Gilles Clément, in *The Planetary Gardener*, equates with diversity, an ideal that every indi-*

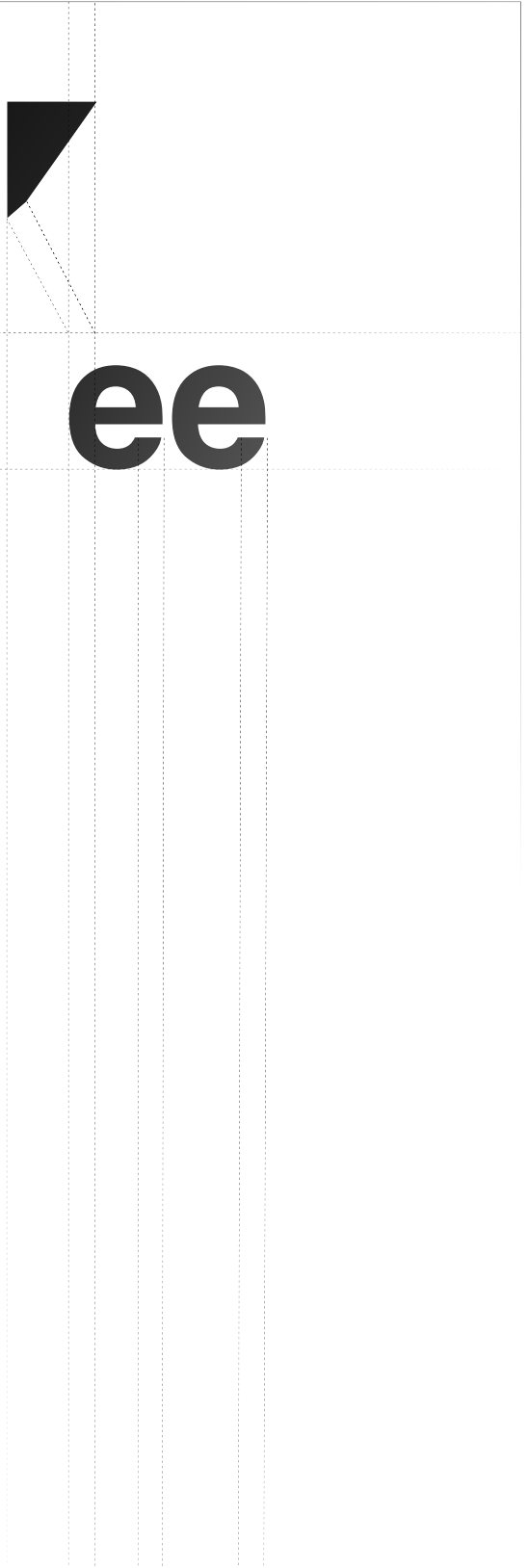
vidual feels the call to nourish through care and participation.

Each place that is explored is, to use Clément's words, "a space that expresses neither power nor submission to power", a built-up place where man-made human intervention is recognizable not only in construction and architectural, urban or agricultural solutions, but also in the manifestation of thoughts, ideas and visions (political, social and economic). These places, be they illegal markets, urban gardens, multicultural centres, peripheral parks or abandoned parts of neighborhoods turned into playgrounds, declare the existence of a third way that differs in equal measure from the continuity one as from that of dissent: this is the route of intervention and alternative ecological practices which produce shared economic and social formulas to the point of becoming the hub of new groups and communities. In a restrained and conservative climate that the crisis has further strengthened, and that would prefer to see individuals passively waiting for a solution from political or financial institutions, counter-pressures of various kinds make use of their own resilient force through a variety of measures: occupying abandoned areas, or looking after a small garden amongst the concrete and asphalt of our cities. Reclaiming areas, like the self-production and creation of other exchange and production circuits (tangible or intangible) gives us a glimpse of the birth of a society in which nothing can be delegated yet to institutions and which renders the decision-making power of the individual a key resource.

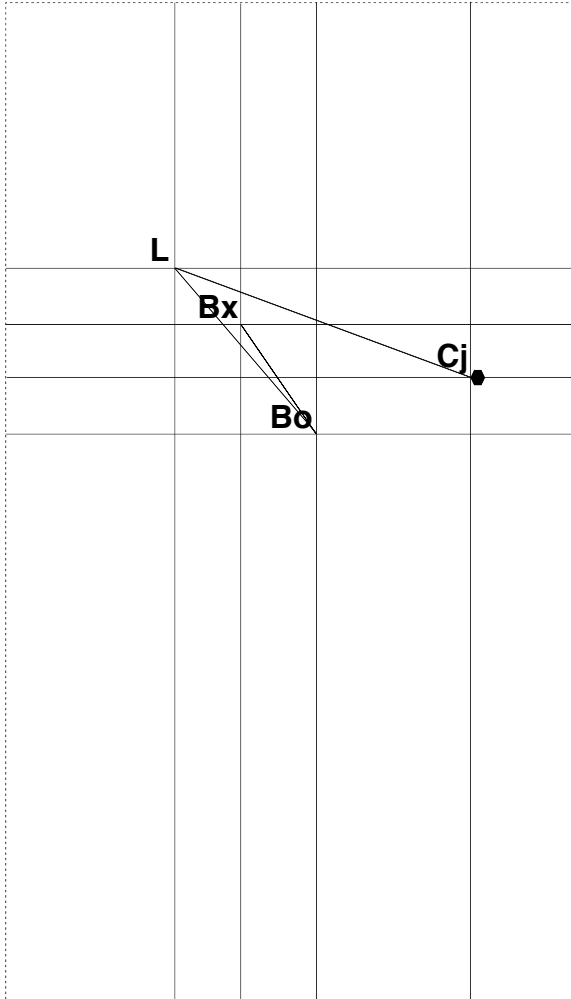
The fact that these movements and initiatives do not have solutions at hand is obvious. It is clear, however, that they are able to build cities within cities, producing a human architecture made up of design and effort.

It is useful, in conclusion, to reflect on the fact that in Greek οἶκος, oikos, means "house", a public space seen not only as the place to be occupied, but mostly as a shared home to take care of and look after.

Anna Santomauro



ee Green Days a

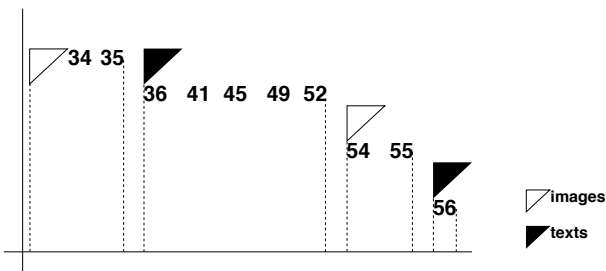


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Brussels

11-14 may 2011

Challenging and inspiring. In a nutshell, that's how we could describe Green Days Brussels. Green Days explores the possibility of "imitating" nature by using biomimicry in visual and performing arts in public space. AAA organized a full three-day program of walks, talks and workshops in Brussels and beyond, from the 14th to the 17th of May. In search of answers to the question of "What can we learn from nature?", in search of inspiration, in search of collaboration... The whole experience was an eye-opener: a whirlwind of activities that would be the source of much reflection in the weeks and months to come. Here's a little summary:

Day One

On Sunday, a bike tour through Brussels was organized by AAA to reveal initiatives by Brussels associations and individuals that enrich the urban fabric with artistic and ecological interventions. We rode our bikes from North to South, with stops in parks and interesting green interventions in the city. We discovered a whole new world behind Tour&Taxis, visited "Debut des Haricots", where people from the neighborhood are taking care of a community garden. We went to the Garden of Jeroen Peeters, a lone ranger who (with the help of AAA-member Jelle Desmet) is trying to create a small social and ecological revolution, by turning a forgotten wasteland into a small eco-paradise for the whole neighborhood.

We also went to Fontainas Park, an 'island' surrounded by busy streets, where Dees & Lepage, our artistic partners in Green Days, have proposed to make an artistic intervention. Charlotte from Dees & Lepage explained the purpose of the project. Our next stop was Recyclart Skatepark, a good example of an initiative that managed to change the social fabric in a formerly less safe part of the city. Our final stop was at Wiels Art Centre, where we also visited the exhibition of David Claerbout. The bike tour took a lot of energy out of us, but left us feeling inspired by the many initiatives touching on the relations of green spaces with their surrounding areas.

Day Two

On the second day, we attended a lecture given by the artist Angelo Vermeulen, followed by an open debate. De Nieuwe Opdrachtgevers and AAA invited Angelo Vermeulen to present his work and practice. We were all quite impressed by the work and life experience of Angelo Vermeulen, a visual artist, filmmaker, biologist and author. His art touches upon ecology, environmental pollution and teratology, and he explained his diverse projects, such as BIOMODD (bio installations incorporating living organisms and parts of used computers). He also explained how he is now cooperating in a space project, the MELiSSA life support division of the European Space Agency.

For his latest project, in association with De Nieuwe Opdrachtgevers, he works with the city Willebroek (Belgium) to create a sustainable artwork for a public space in the town. Angelo Vermeulen is an interesting artist who operates slightly outside the typical art-world, and who always lets his projects be guided by the people (surrounding community and partners) he meets while creating them. Here's an artist not afraid to take risks in order to ask the right kind of questions concerning bio-diversity, green architecture, art, recycling and ecology.

More info on www.angelovermeulen.net.

Day Three

On Day Three, we went outside of Brussels to visit the Verbeke Foundation, an initiative by private art collector Geert Verbeke that aims to offer chances to contemporary artists who focus on bio-art or work on nature and ecology. A guided tour by curator Simon Delobel through the area of 12 hectares of green and art, made us realize that reflecting on art is one thing, running an art centre with huge ambitions like this one, is quite another! The Foundation is one of the largest private initiatives for contemporary art throughout Europe www.verbekefoundation.com, and still growing..

Peter Beda/AAA

AAA vzw
www.artanartist.org

Wouter De Raeve / Dees&Lepage
www.deeslepage.be

Verbeke Foundation
www.verbekefoundation.com

Green Days... a reflection from Brussels

As participants in Green Days we embarked in a multi-disciplinary effort of “Rethinking green”, tried to define what green is within an urban context and tempted ourselves to redefine it.

In the course of the project, as we travelled to each other and discussions were forwarded, the sharp divides between green as strictly green dissolved into green as an open-source ...and opened up a diversity of approaches and interpretations. And so green gained also other colours...the colours of the cities that were involved in Green Days, the personal colours of the participants and the projects that were realised within its framework.

The initial question of “What can we learn from nature” sometimes shifted to “What can we learn through people, through each other?” An important lesson learned was that humans and environment are inseparable, are intertwined. It might seem a rather naïve realisation, but to us it was also indicative of how this notion of green is sometimes perceived as something distant and outside of the city’s mental and physical ‘walls’. The interdependence of socio-ecological systems as a key-concept of resilience was therefore awaiting us at the beginning of the process of Green Days.

Green Days has proved a resilient endeavour, with all its flux, unpredictable turns, adaptations to new givens and finding the right balances between doing and reflecting upon what we were doing. A resilient structure was formed with the involvement and feedback by all participants. The results that this publication is presenting will hopefully also reflect this collaboration and will be visible to those outside our temporary community.

In Brussels we had set up a programme that touched upon issues of biomimicry and public art (lecture of Angelo Vermeulen at the Nieuwe Opdrachtgevers), self-organised urban farming and community-building (visiting Mr and Mrs Potager at Congress and the Debut des Haricots behind Tour&Taxis) and eco-art (visit to Verbeke Foundation). With LINK, we tried to introduce ‘movement’ in a central urban site.

Green Days presented to us the opportunity to re-invent our relationship to this particular site in the centre of the city and experience of it. Rather than a proposal that aimed to impose a permanent idea of the site on its users, it aimed to open up the discussion for its potential redefinition.

Sevie Tsampalla

AAA

Audiovisual Artists Anonymous
in partnership with Wouter De
Raeve/Dees&Lepage, Verbeke
Foundation & De Nieuwe Op-
drachtgevers.

LINK

Place Fontainasplein (Fontainas square) is an intersection between different neighborhoods, cultures and social groups. It is situated in the centre of Brussels, Belgium, between Anspach and Lemonnier Boulevard, two major boulevards that succeed each other to connect North and South. Fontainas Park is the only public green space on this North-South axis.

LINK created a temporary and physical connection between Anspach Boulevard, Fontainas square and Fontainas park. It opened up the park at the level of Fontainas Square and connected the park with Anspach Boulevard.

By extending the limits of both the park and the square, LINK aimed to launch a debate on a potential redefinition of this urban site. It showed that a connection between square and park, neighboring but nevertheless distant worlds, was and still is possible. LINK did not claim to be a definite proposal for the site. It rather wished to encourage residents and authorities to reflect upon its potential, and envision a different, long-term approach for the site in question. LINK has been therefore a starting point towards the possibility of Fontainas Park growing into a unique and green interlude on the central North-South axis of Brussels.

LINK was a structure made using scaffolding. It referred to construction sites, and aimed to trigger all sorts of associations to anyone crossing the site: change, evolution, restoration, the beginning of something new, ... The message was "There is work being done here". Locals and passersby were in this way involved and mobilized for the possible change that LINK aimed to evoke.

LINK was the Brussels/Belgian contribution to the European project Green Days in four European cities. Green Days in Belgium was organized by the non-profit association AAA. LINK was designed by Dees & Lepage Garden and Landscape Architecture Office.



Fontainas









Bologna

24 - 27 June 2011

When a workshop becomes a park, its participants are the grass, plants, insects and, why not, even waste, billboards and the concrete of the buildings that surround it. The thought that underlies this process, the breeding ground which nourishes it, is not defined only in an ecological sense: it is a biomimetic thought, and arises from a primordial identity-creating system which is innovative at the same time. It's primordial because it is inherent to living systems, a part of the material whole and is continually changing. It is also primordial because human beings have always viewed with interest natural phenomena and logic, recognizing the various sources of inspiration derived from them (who would ever have thought of constructing a hang-glider without ever having seen a swallow?).

The past two centuries has seen the gradual and inexorable breakdown between nature (in its bucolic, or, conversely, catastrophic, capacity) and design (production, wealth, consumption, progress): systems which are either separate or brought together through the logic of pure exploitation/rebellion. So we have spoken about an innovative identity-creating system, as the purpose is to renew this bond, by enacting authentic collaboration between anthropogenic and natural forms and dynamics.

The Green Days Bologna nomadic park, in three days (June 24 to 27), mapped and built trails and relationships connected to the ecology of urban and human spaces and, beginning with the biomimetic approach, it was integrated with the surrounding landscape, in its green and mobile component. The incursions and forays triggered reflection on the concept of nature, green, and social and environ-

mental residue, stressing the importance of collaboration in the cultural sphere.

"In natural systems everything is connected and evolving towards symbiosis¹" is one of the founding principles of the Blue Economy, an economic model that sees nature and its processes as the inspiration for new sustainable and ethical production systems. This is an example of a further push towards cooperation and the creation of an

open collaborative system in which to create links between artists, curators, young agricultural researchers, entomologists and architects, all of whom are intent on seeing the city as a habitat in the making, who are interested in building a small slice of that “garden of ideas” that represents the biodiversity of thought.

The workshop, organized by Anna Santomauro and Enrico Vezzi, produced an open and temporary mind-set structure within which operated multi-faceted visions of a sustainable future in a social, cultural, environmental and political sense.

A bike tour led the Green Days work-team through specific places (neighborhoods and areas of Bologna) and conventional categories (centre and outskirts, expression and functionality, infrastructure and nature discovery and limit, spaces of contemporary times and places of historical and environmental memory), in an attempt to return the experience of city to a psycho-topographical narrative.

Reconnaissance proceeded along three parallel levels:

the city and its inhabitants, to explore urban ecological resilience initiatives arising from the grass-roots level and which attempt to redefine the relationship between society and nature;

the city and architecture, investigating the microcosms and social, urban and environmental separations, which are noticeable when moving between the centre and the outskirts and along invisible borders; the underground city and the possible forms of energy sustainability and rearrangement of the city landscape in Bologna.

Some of the participants in the workshop included Georgina Barney, Corina Bucea (Fabrica de Pensule), Viviana Checchia, Jelle Desmet (AAA - Audiovisual Artists Anonymous), Bruna Esperi, Vincenzo Estremo, Claudiu Iurescu and Matilde Soligno.

The workshop was possible thanks to the contribution of Agrisophia, Amici delle Acque e dei Sotterranei di Bologna, Federica Benatti - Association of Architects of Bologna, Biodiversity, Campi Aperti, Centro Zonarelli, Eugea, La Pillola, Orti dei Prati di Caprara, Quartiere San Donato.

The Green Days experience in Bologna saw the work methods which were used increasingly adopt the forms of the result: although the workshop was a moment of pure sharing of research, and although this research led to a final stage of production, what was central was the collaborative practice in itself, the continual reworking of themes and their collective performance through exercise, physical and mental, of the movement in the city.

This practice seems to affirm the role of art in society only when inserted within a multidisciplinary network, and underlines the inability of art itself to act independently, i.e., without use of the context in which it occurs.

B

Let's Take A Position is one of the results of this process, an installation created by Enrico Vezzi in collaboration with LaPillola in the John Lennon - Charlie Parker Park in the San Donato quarter in Bologna.

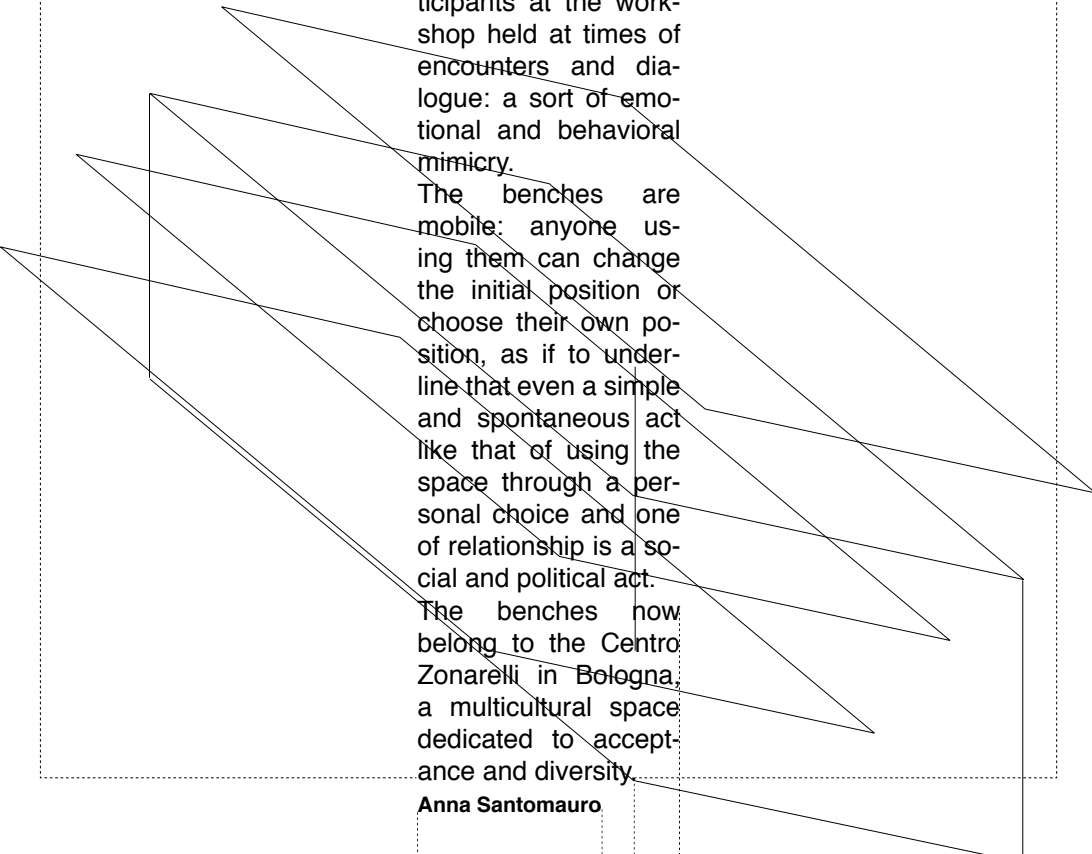
The action is the result of research carried out on two levels within the Green Days project: one came from the study of the city and some of its specific areas, the latter was achieved through the sharing of issues related to ecology and the nature of public space during the itinerant workshops held in the 4 countries involved (Belgium, Italy, Romania, UK).

Let's Take A Position is an invitation to reflect and take a stance in the public space, understood as dwelling, as a place of belonging and growth.

The public space itself, in fact, hosted the Green Days workshop: small acts of emotional and perceptive appropriation of the places marked the process of learning about urban and rural contexts, and human and environmental contexts, in a dimension of continuous dialogue among the participants themselves and between the participants and the surrounding space.

Enrico Vezzi froze those moments in dozens and dozens of photographs and outlined from time to time new ideal lines in a map of relationships and positions, analyzing the psychology of these connections and reflecting on what Bateson has called "ecology of mind".

"What can we learn from nature?", the common thread of the whole project, then turned into "What can we learn from people?", as they are an integral part of natural systems and producers of ideas and thoughts.

The page features several overlapping geometric shapes, including triangles and polygons, drawn with thin black lines. These shapes are layered over the text, creating a complex, abstract composition. Some shapes are solid, while others are defined by dashed lines. The overall effect is a dynamic and layered visual structure.

The artist produced micro-systems that reflected these positions, with which the audience could physically get in touch. In fact, benches were placed in the park, whose shape and orientation corresponded to the position and attitude that the participants at the workshop held at times of encounters and dialogue: a sort of emotional and behavioral mimicry.

The benches are mobile: anyone using them can change the initial position or choose their own position, as if to underline that even a simple and spontaneous act like that of using the space through a personal choice and one of relationship is a social and political act.

The benches now belong to the Centro Zonarelli in Bologna, a multicultural space dedicated to acceptance and diversity.

Anna Santomauro



Parco John Lennon and



Charlie Parker





**in collaboration with
La Pillola**

Loughborough

GREEN DAYS in Loughborough

Food for thought
Growing change

3 - 8 July 2011

The starting point for GREEN DAYS in Loughborough was the University campus, located in a rural setting on the edge of a market town. The University is committed to developing a more sustainable campus and employ a Sustainability Manager to actively promote and develop initiatives such as its participation in the UK's Higher Education Carbon Management programme. While the sustainability agenda is far reaching Radar chose to focus its attention on the sustainability of food production and distribution.

An investigation into food as an urban and rural resource became Loughborough's contributory investigation. Gillian Whiteley an academic from The School of Arts and contributor to this publication initiated a discussion around the campus as a working farm or factory, both in a humanistic and environmental based understanding. Exploring capitalism as a driving force to the current state of many Western models of education and manmade pseudo-natural environmental growth the two were paired to examine the present and forecast for the future. The concept related closely to the physical starting place of the Loughborough excursion, the site of a Future Farmers commission initiated by Radar in

2010. The artists took over a plot of land on the University and created a living installation where plant structures were grown as political models. One example is 'Soil Assembly' taking its roots from Anarchism, planting in an initially structured format but with the potential for plants to enter new territory through their process of growth. The political growing systems acted as a reminder to the participants of the systems and interventions that humans have inflicted upon the environment and the world's populations of humans, animals and plants.

Jo Hasbury the Universities Sustainability Manager expanded Gillian's concepts into the practical sustainability of a University. Leading a tour around the campus and its neighbouring sites, participants visited wind powered spaces, local woodland and were introduced to some of the University's sustainability policies and projects. These included having environmental champions on the campus to raise awareness of potential change, car sharing initiatives for commuters and energy generation with long term plans to cut down on the consumption or waste of energy at the University. Jo Hasbury also introduced a project she was undertaking with artist Anne-Marie Culhane, who also contributes to this publication, exploring foraging on campus. Anne-Marie worked with the sustainability team to produce a new piece, 'Fruit Routes', utilising fruit trees to both aesthetically enhance and practically give to the path ways around the University. The work created edible routes around the campus where fruits can be harvested by visitors, providing access to a basic sustainable food source.

Drawing on the explorations into food within sustainability artist Georgina Barney hosted a walk and workshop with collaborator Alice Carey in the Leicestershire village of Wymeswold, a short bus journey from Loughborough. Georgina's investigation hinged on the history of manmade farming today through the pioneering strategies of Robert Bakewell an 18th century agriculturalist born near Loughborough. Bakewell's devised techniques in stock farming developed the present day livestock farm, which was viewed as revolutionary at the time. Bakewell utilised inbreeding as a way to find perceived perfection in animals, creating the ultimate animal that would eat less and produce more, his favoured Longhorn breed did just this. Bakewell's inbreeding created the start of mass production where animals no longer mated with random partners but with a selected mate to produce the best the beast could be. Longhorn Cattle in contemporary society are although livestock also an animal for show, using breed modification as aesthetic artistry from the breeders. On the one hand Bakewell's practices set for a suitable future for farming creating livestock that would be more efficient, yet on the other the tampering with nature has developed over time into a situation where the mass farming of animals such as chickens for eggs has developed into an unethical practice where hens are caged to lay eggs.

Georgina's walk took participants into the Wymeswold countryside visiting contributors to the local economy, such as the butchers and the local pub, making visible connections through the food chain from birth, slaughter, preparation to consumption. The walk acted as a discursive starting point introducing the participants to Bakewell as a revolutionary pioneer and the countryside as a place for production. The historic roots of Georgina's project laid the ground work for a contemporary reflection on farming. Connecting old to new Georgina took participants to a herd of Longhorn Cattle and a local Tesco supermarket. The supermarket acted as a lynchpin to the project combining farming techniques, aesthetics and sustainability; here Georgina hosted a workshop that set out to question the perceptions of pre-packaged foods over the realities of its content. Participants scoured packaging that in some way commented on the countryside initially referencing a poem by John Clare, questioning 'how the countryside is sold'. The packaging's contrived nature of reality exploited an idealistic view of production in aesthetic ideals to encourage greater consumerism, the relationship between

the object and its packaging sometimes tangible at best. Current trends, highlight that the demand for pre-packaged and treated goods is growing led by the consumer market. Supermarkets are taking over from local farmers markets and under cutting prices. Distancing the consumer from the origins of the food source the consumer has little connection to its production, and the more that packaging is implemented, the further the food travels, and the more preservatives that are added to the original product the less environmentally friendly and sustainable it becomes. Consumers use mass produced consumer temples where ease of access is key.

Georgina's final interventions in the public sphere aimed to look at the balance between history and our current relationship to consumerism and sustainability as linked subject matters. Returning to the beginning of the journey Georgina placed a small sign in a London butchers counter aiming to get onlookers to question their decisions and choices when it comes to their relationship to food.

The text read:

'Industrious people!

As you navigate Ethics, Choice, Power: an uncertain future;
Set your compass on England's green.'

Georgina also wrote a letter to her local MP as an action to get Robert Bakewell's portrait on British currency. The connection between the capitalist currency / consumer driven system and the history of contemporary farming created an open ended dialogue about an open ended future; a future that cannot rely on a capitalist model and requires sustainable measures for long term stability, where change and choice are prevalent.

Green Days asks us what we can learn from nature but perhaps we should question what we can learn from how farming has evolved over time and our current consumerist society. Man has left a visible record of its interventions in nature and developed a model around its decisions. In order to address our future we need to look at our past and learn from it.

Amelia Beavis-Harrison

Radar





Nicky Morgan MP
3/3a Nottingham Road
Loughborough LE11 1ER

Dear Nicky

I am writing to ask for your support in my campaign for Robert Bakewell, Leicestershire agriculturalist, to appear on legal tender. Would you submit an early day motion to the House of Commons?

Robert Bakewell developed new methods of irrigation and pioneered selective breeding in farm animals for meat. In the eighteenth century his farm Dishley Grange, near Hathern in your constituency was the site of experimentation in farming methods that made possible increased food production to fuel an industrializing nation.

I am an artist and researcher from Wymeswold, also in your constituency. Since 2007, I have worked alongside farmers, to understand and try to help communicate their experiences. For example 'GB Farming' (2007) is a website with text, drawings and photographs (www.gb Farming.co.uk) that shows a spectrum of agricultural practice: from crofting to traditional family farming, to large-scale commercial food production. 'GB Farming' shows some of the ways farming creates landscape, society, culture.

Bakewell's fame does not match the influence he has had on the world, in this pivotal moment in history. I propose that he should feature on legal tender with a design incorporating images of the food cycle, Leicestershire farmland, and the 'Longhorn' cows that he favoured. His innovations enabling farmers to 'convert' grass to financial profit, via breeding and fattening livestock, are the bedrock of contemporary farming technology; the bank note is therefore an acutely appropriate platform for his promotion as a figure of huge historical importance. If you were able to help with this campaign, I would be delighted to hear from you and to help by drafting the early day motion.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Georgina Barney". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and personal.

Georgina Barney



Georgina Barney, 2011.

Matthew Hoyland, 2011

Georgina Barney, 2011

A Gentleman Farmer with his Prize Hereford Ox and Two Greyhounds. This anonymous eighteenth century portrait reflects a catalytic moment in the histories of art and farming. The wealth and specialist knowledge of an emergent patron class became embodied in the livestock displayed in these paintings. A proliferation of such portraiture from the past poses the question of what art can say of farming today.

Award-winning farmer and breeder Pat Stanley shows Alice Carey what to look for in an ideal Longhorn cow. Spring Barrow Lodge Farm, February 2010

Rosettes and trophies won by the Stanley's Blackbrook Longhorn herd in Leicestershire.

The display of abundance: a view of Tesco's Extra in Loughborough.



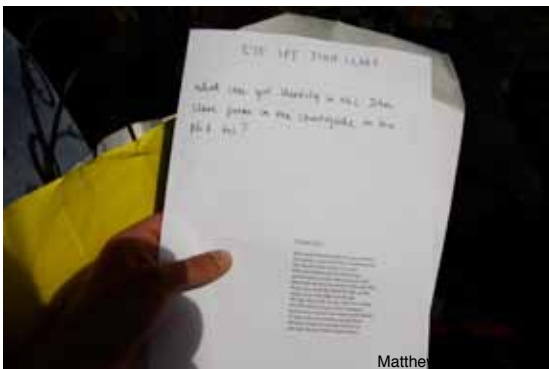
Matthew Hoyland, 2011

Chris Widman of Collington's Butchers in Wymeswold identifies the traditional cuts on a beef carcass.



Matthew Hoyland, 2011

Robert Collington welcoming the Green Days group in the shop front at Collington's Butchers, Wymeswold est. 1905.



Matthe

Local ecology was the muse for "peasant poet" John Clare. Robert Bakewell's contemporary represents the suffering flip-side of eighteenth century capitalist progress.



Hoyland, 2010

Butcher, Baker (Village Walk) Wymeswold, July 2010. Artist Georgina Barney took Green Days behind the scenes of the English idyll. The walk was designed to deconstruct the imagery of the countryside mobilized to sell meat products.

Ecology and economy: Green Days participants were given capital to spend in Tesco's, responding to the appeal of diverse images on food packaging. They articulated and shared their choices over lunch at Radar Arts.

Cluj - Napoca

[Jun 29th 2011, 5:24 AM]

Green Days workshop in Bologna ended, the one in Loughborough is under preparation. Between the Bolognese encounter with genuino clandestino and what will the meat packaging in Loughborough bring to, drafting some thoughts on the Cluj workshop. What is to be discussed and walked through in Cluj, in green spaces, and what can we take from this case?

Been brainstorming on this, and spread the antennas on topics around us. Few ideas appear and will probably create a whole web of connections and stories, hopefully learning processes for us, the participants, just as much as for others in Cluj. One thing is for sure – the idea is to benefit from this context in order to create an urban walk for the locals just as much as for the outsiders. Walk through the urban spaces in Cluj to explore ideas on green topics and map our local context. A map that would include space as such, our own projection about it (with mental maps, subjective connecting roads and stories to fill in the gaps that physical space leaves as suspension marks) and of course future forecasts that we, as a mix group of insiders and outsiders, can draft together.

[Jul 1st 2011, 9:05 AM]

First spot on the map of green topics is settled: Parcul Feroviarilor / the Railroad Park. Situated in the neighborhood close to Fabrica de Pensule / The Paintbrush Factory, the park is a local landmark, being the only relevant green space in the area (second by size in the whole city) and a strong presence in the collective memory of those who live here. The park has been one of the highlights in a sociological research conducted in 2009 and a starting point for a series of art interventions as part of a project called Future Forecast.

Browsing through the interviews we took at that time, I remember some interesting samples of how the park is present in the memory of the nearby inhabitants:

We did the park, including me, as a child, I took a shovel in my hands and a rake and the whole neighborhood, through voluntary work (munca patriotica) contributed at building this park' ,now it's just a miserable park that nobody manages, because the city hall and the railroad company are in conflict about who owns the park.

The park started to get back in the attention of the public recently, when another private company signed a contract with the legal owner, allowing them to use the park. Protests rised as local activists reacted to the illegal closure of the park (which is a public space, still) and dubious cutting of trees. Excellent occasion to start the discussion on activism connected to green urban spaces, but also to reflect on what role collective memory plays in shaping the profile and the role of green urban space. How can art contribute to that?

[Jul 2rd 2011, 9:05 AM]

Just had a small revelation for the Green Days in Cluj. We MUST watch Ilha das Flores/Isle of Flowers. As a teaser, the short wiki-introduction on it is convincing:

It tracks the path of a tomato from garden to dump with the help of a monotone voiceover and a collection of bizarre images. While a very humorous film, the message it delivers about how human beings treat each other is anything but such. The director himself has stated that the film was inspired by the works of Kurt Vonnegut and Alain Resnais, among others.

It seems interesting how we can connect the theme of the workshop to the theme of how food circulates in nature, and what type of connections its circuit creates – even between human beings. A story of exploit, just as much as it is a story of a tomato.

[Jul 6th 2011, 8:29 PM]

From: Corina Bucea / Fabrica de Pensule
To: [ionut greenrevolution]
CC: [amalia greenrevolution]

Hi Ionut,
Thanks for initial approval of our conversation on the phone today. What we ask is to offer us 10 bicycles for participants in the workshop, which use them since July 18 (takeover date) until 22 July (on return). Bikes will give us access to various locations in the city and will ease the movement; we want to do it in an environmentally friendly way.
All the best,
Corina
[google translate> Ro-En]

[Jul 14th 2011, 1:09 PM]

Invitation sent. Green Days Cluj is on:
^^^Green Days
Cluj, July 19 - 21
Fabrica de Pensule
Fabrica de Pensule invites you to the Green Days workshop in Cluj, an urban exploration in various spaces of the city. The workshop will include bike tours in the city, parks, green spaces, meetings and discussions with artists, arhitects, urbanists, sociologists, with guests from Italy, Belgium and England.

Green Days is an international multidisciplinary project that proposes a reflection on the relations between urban environment and nature and offers the context of larger dabates on the way we can learn from nature and apply nature-inspired models, schemes and concepts in art, urban space and....[see more]^^^

[Jul 18th 2011]

Amelia and Georgina arrive first, then Anna and Enrico. We meet in the evening, have a chat about the city, cultural cliches, have some nice pasta on a terrace in the center. Late, Peter and Wouter from Brussels join in. All are equipped with bikes and a full programme for the next day.

[Jul 19th 2011, 9:00 AM (more or less)]

Meeting in the morning in Fabrica. Talks about the collective of artists and cultural producers, about the story of the cultural center converted from the old paintbrush factory and industrial spaces in Romania. Looking out the window, we place ourselves in the industrial setup – the green theme is more present in our ideas than in the physical environment. Croissants and some guests are with us – students in architecture, a photographer, a mix of people curious about the urban walks and sharing a bike in the city.

Words don't come easy yet, but we jump on the bikes and go for the first explorations. Marius makes a first small training on bikes and riding a bike in the city.

Short passing by Parcul Feroviarilor, short stop-by at the small independent market nearby – old ladies selling whole foods, just a teaser for what will follow – the market of Mihai Viteazu, privatized just a few years ago. Bogdan joins us for a ride in the market and our guests let themselves tempted by the cheese section – a crazy mix of flavors and local colors. We then go on the roof of the building where the market is located – Bogdan and Ramona talk to us for hours about the activist movements that joined forces with the local farmers in keeping this market independent. Our discussion jumps more towards topics related to the Romanian cultural context. How much of the agricultural profile of Romania is embedded today in our social tissue, how is this profile intertwined with all the industrialization processes that exploded during communism, and what is the mix of all these backgrounds visible in today's society. The view over Cluj offers us an occasion to look at the intriguing map of industrial versus green versus historical versus rural versus urban patches of the city and start getting in the topic of how is this visible in the social relations of its inhabitants.

Afternoon bio ice-cream, tea and cookies in the Green Basket, the first bio shop in Cluj. It gives us the occasion to talk about cultural contexts connected to green movements and how is that reflected in local history. Talking also about generational shifts, young movements and the way that influences mental geographies of change. Keeping the lavender taste of the ice-cream as a tag of our already intense discussions, mostly colored by specific examples and local specificities.



[Jul 20th 2011, 10:15 AM]

Morning visit to the botanical garden. Strolling through the alleys of the garden, observing exotic species and melting into the greenhouses where we make a stop at the lotus pond, we get deeper into our reflection on how this exploration switches something in our interest for nature. There is a difference that seems to be more loaded than others – on nature that is artificially built and its lighter version of improvised poetics, allowing surprise, risk and uncertainty. Being in a constructed medium of closely selected species, there is a feeling of urging for breaking the lines of this structure.

But when it comes to structure, we instantly adapt our discourse towards what brings us together here – in a Japanese corner of the garden, we draw lines on the continuation of our project.

[Jul 21st 2011, 10:22 AM]

Rainy day. Striving to fight nature's obstacles while we are trapped in a frightening hail and trying to gather forces for our next walk in the city. We realize that it is wiser to follow nature's signs than fighting them, so we just go with the flow, admire nature's force with humbleness – brilliant discussions are born from this flow as we continue to the railroad park and Fabrica, later.

We do watch Ilha das Flores, reflect on future steps as we discuss on what we can learn from each other, by learning from nature, and listen to a Ted talk on biomimicry:

'We live in a competent universe, we are part in a brilliant planet and we are surrounded by genius. Biomimicry is a new discipline that tries to learn from those geniuses and take advice from them, design advice.'

We are left with one urge, rather than questions or even answers: Ask nature!

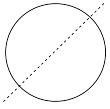
Corina Bucea







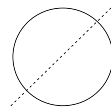




Green Days

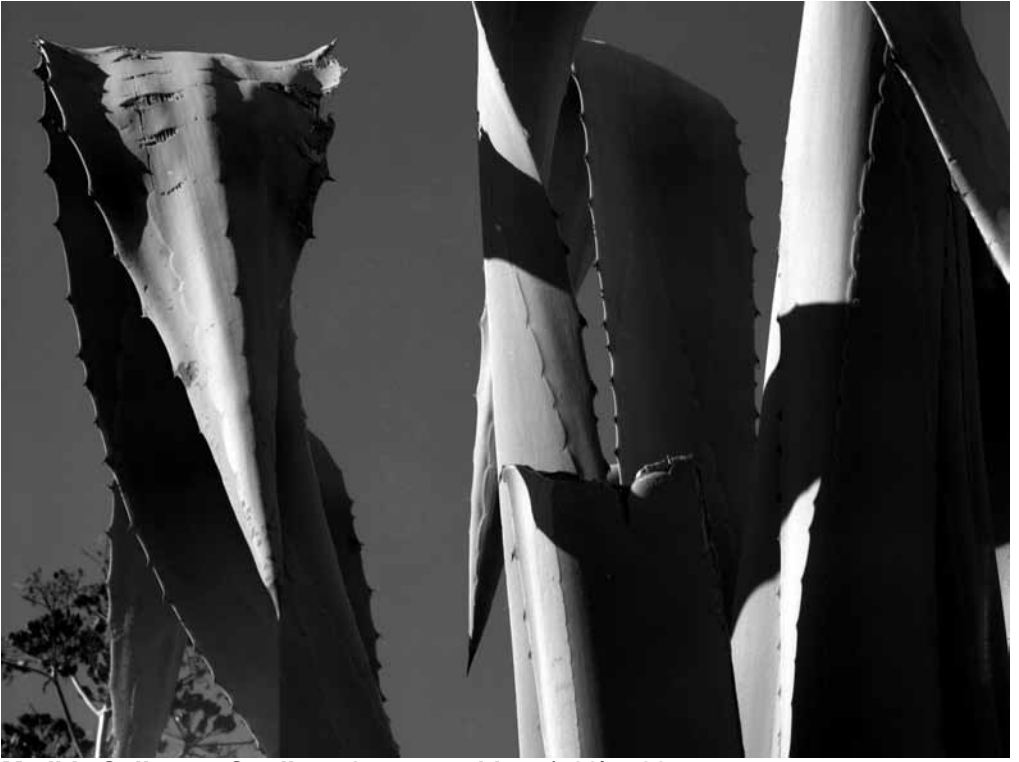
IMAGES
TEXTS

Matilde Soligno
Bram Vanhoutte
Gillian Whiteley
Elena Cologni
Anne Marie Culhane
Saul Marcadent
Francesca Dainotto
Olof Soebach





Matilde Soligno, «Studies of zoomorphism (#01)», 2011.



Matilde Soligno, «Studies of zoomorphism (#02)», 2011.

The use of green space for urban communities

Bram Vanhoutte

Green space in cities is not new. Green belts around cities are already described in the Old Testament. While these green belts are meant as more or less unspoilt nature, providing lungs for the city, most contemporary green urban spaces are of a different nature. They are human-made, sculptured parks, often dating back to the Victorian era. The enormous population growth of cities in the wake of the industrial revolution, created the need for public space to unwind, to play and to meet different kinds of people. Prime examples of these historical parks can be found all over, such as Central Park in New York, Hyde park in London, Tiergarten in Berlin, Les Tuileries in Paris, Vondelpark in Amsterdam, ... Next to these historical parks, a last important and more activist form of contemporary green urban space is urban agriculture. Either in private allotments or through community gardening, they contribute to both food security and healthier diets. Apart from the obvious positive influence on urban ecosystems, green space has a specific use in the strengthening of urban communities. To grasp the utility of green space, it's important to understand the thinking around urban communities, which is sketched out concisely in this contribution. The second part of this text focuses on the effects of green space on community, and the mechanisms involved. We close with a discussion on green space in the city, and its role.

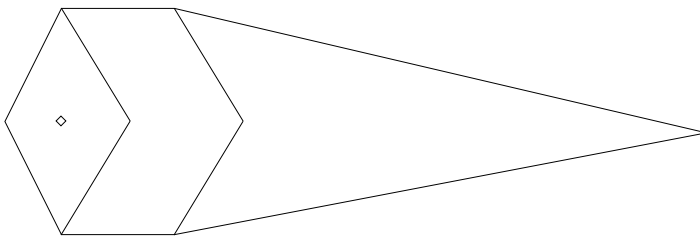
Community in the city

The city, seen as the hallmark of modernity, in the beginning of the 20th century was usually contrasted with the pre-industrial, bucolic village. On a psychological level, the city and its intense atmosphere, overstimulating the senses, demand its inhabitants to take a more rational, distant way of handling social relations to maintain mental sanity (Simmel, 1905/2002). On a structural level, because of the large heterogeneity in terms of jobs, neighborhoods, and interests, interpersonal relations in an urban setting are more segmented and shallow and undermine kinship bonds (Wirth, 1938). This double malicious influence of the city on human relations and social integration, leads to anomie or normlessness, since 'true', bonding, social ties within the family are lost.

This early resistance to modern city life and its supposed inherent loss of community was countered in later studies. Firstly, by illustrating that not all neighborhoods in the city are as dense and heterogeneous as described earlier, pointing out the difference between inner city and suburbs (Gans, 1968). A second argument to counter the loss of community, was an emphasis on the strong local bonds that exist in these urban neighborhoods (Jacobs, 1961; Park, 1952). In the social disorganization perspective, these local networks are crucial in establishing a form of community, and hence also the ability to enforce social control (Shaw & Mckay, 1942). Recent research in the Netherlands on which kind of neighborhoods are also communities showed that a number of contextual factors do contribute (Völker, Flap & Lindenberg, 2007). Most important are interdependencies between residents, and the intention to stay in the neighborhood.

Both of these approaches presuppose that social relations, and hence communities, are based on close geographical proximity. In a novel approach to the community question, based on personal social networks instead of geographical boundaries, Wellman (1979) showed that solidarity in the form of social support does exist in the city. This community does not take the form of 'urban villages', as the urban neighborhood approach suggests, but is "dispersed among multiple, sparsely interconnected social networks" (Wellman, 1979: 1207). Further examining structural differences in personal networks, Fischer (1982) observed that urban social networks are composed of fewer family members, but more friends, and are less dense than rural networks. Instead of being constrained by the availability of people in ones neighborhood, people move around and have their own personal networks. Others have argued that presence is a first condition for social contact (Blau, 1977). As such the kind of place you live in determines to a large extent your social life. Although this context does not need to be limited to the neighborhood, people do tend to form most of their face-to-face close personal networks in a relatively small perimeter of about eight kilometers (Mok, Wellman & Basu, 2007), even in this digital age.

In summary, urban communities are not that different from other forms of social organization. Neighborhood communities can exist, if there is enough contact between the neighbors and residents have a certain attachment and local identity. But even if these urban villages are absent, personal relations in the urban context supply the necessary social support that is the essential feature of community.



The power of chlorophyll?

Research has illustrated that living nearby green space lowers mortality, and increases subjective health and mental well-being (Maas, van Dillen, Verheij, & Groenewegen, 2009). So green is good for you. But what exactly causes people living nearby green spaces to be healthier and happier? It could be that green spaces are simply more prevalent in wealthier neighborhoods. Or that healthier people move to greener neighborhoods. Studies in several countries have illustrated that this is not the case, and that are not related with the social background of the neighborhood (Takano, Nakamura, & Watanabe, 2002; Vries, Verheij, Groenewegen, & Spreeuwenberg, 2003). Furthermore the effects seem to be stronger with less mobile or more fragile groups, such as children and the elderly, or lower income groups. As such, green space seems especially beneficial for the weakest in society.

So what causes this positive influence of green space? One obvious explanation, that seems especially valid for physical health, is that green space is a free and accessible place to exercise (Sugiyama, Leslie, Giles-Corti, & Owen, 2008). Walking is the most practiced form of exercise, and parks are ideal places to do so. Green exercise also has both short and long term beneficial effects on self-esteem and mood (Barton & Pretty, 2010). As such a second influence on green space is the soothing and distressing effect of green. A third positive spill-over is that public green space is a meeting place. As such it facilitates social interaction, and links between less green space and more loneliness have been reported (Maas et al., 2009). This social aspect of urban green is a lot stronger in the case of urban gardening, and can foster community forming experiences. It also provides a green space for those who do not have access to a park nearby. As a social movement, urban gardening can make people conscious not only on individual aspects such as a better diet, but empower people to work together for a better city (Wakefield, Yeudall, Taron, Reynolds, & Skinner, 2007; Westphal, 2003).

Discussion

Urban space is costly, but it's clear that green space has surprising and hidden benefits, that often stay under the radar. Not only does nearby green space improve both the mental and physical health of city dwellers, it seems to have a stronger influence on those who need it most, namely elderly, children and the poor. Additionally green space also helps maintaining urban communities, both seen as neighborhoods or social networks, as they provide free and public meeting places. But parks in itself are only a base form of green space. Often historical in nature, or decided on by top-down decision making, this form of green space has clear benefits in terms of physical, mental and social health, but sees the citizen as politically passive. In contrast, urban gardening and especially community gardening enables citizens to get to know their fellow citizens and become aware. Since the state of democracy relies on active and involved citizens, maybe we should move from a walk in the park to sowing the seeds of a better society.

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The Knowledge (Factory) Farm: Biomimicry on Campus Afterthoughts on contagion, community and *conatus*

Gillian Whiteley



‘Contagion is everywhere in the contemporary world.’¹

As the first day of the UK leg of Green Days, hosted by Radar at Loughborough University (LU), responding to the project’s investigation into what we can learn from nature, I decided to focus on the concepts of ‘cultivation’, ‘contagion’ and ‘community’. After my brief introduction providing some theoretical contexts, Jo Hasbury (LU Sustainability Manager) and I conducted an interactive exploration of the urban campus environment as knowledge ‘farm’. We started and ended with discussions at the ‘Beneath the Pavement’ shed - the legacy of a previous Radar project² now adopted as a ‘green’ networking base and ongoing community gardening initiative by the students’ ‘Landscaping our Society’. The discursive trail highlighted many points of ‘green’ interest such as areas of ancient woodland and various participative efforts to conserve and maintain the delicate ecological balance of accommodating student life within a ‘green’ environment. On the trail, our conversations ‘activated’ key features such as Nils Normans sculptural installation ‘Open Assembly No 1’ (commissioned by Radar) conceived as a public platform to generate new ‘communities’ of insects, worms, fungi and birds. As we walked, we also heard about the campus’s commitment to providing a sustainable future through further radical artistic-horticultural projects such as ‘Fruit Routes’, which will create a system of foraging pathways and, it is hoped, produce ‘food for free’ for generations of students to come.

1

Anna Gibbs, ‘After Affect: Sympathy, Synchrony and Mimetic Communication’ published in Melissa Gregg and Greg Seigworth (eds) *The Affect Theory Reader*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010, p. 186

2

For info, see Radar website and Nick Slater’s contribution elsewhere on the Green Days blogsite.

My own critical practice is eclectic: it ranges across disciplines and discourses but I have a long history of interest (political, activist, horticultural, cultural, artistic, sonic and academic) in the germination, histories and generation of radical communities of various kinds. Of course, partly inspired by the writings of Deleuze and Guattari, there has been a 'biological' turn in thinking with the excavation of work by much earlier theorists such as Gabriel Tarde et al.

'What are the implications of a (meta) physics of vibrant materiality for political theory?'³

After Spinoza's concept of conatus, the idea of 'thing power', explored by Jane Bennett in *Vibrant Matter*, in which she argues for the vitality and volatility of things, has a particular resonance. Hence, amongst other things, recent writing that has engaged with the possibilities of an interconnection between radical politics and affect informed my thoughts on Green Days, both before and after. Notably, for me, Bennett highlights Guattari's views expressed in *The Three Ecologies* (1986), in which he warned that, if we have a humanistic interest in a richer kinship or civic life, we must pursue a more ecological sustainable relationship with non-human nature. Guattari's transversal concept of Integrated World Capitalism (IWC) is a complex assemblage which interlaces the human with the nonhuman, the social and mental ecologies with environmental ecologies, seeking to acknowledge their entanglement rather than their distinction.

3

Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matters, A Political Ecology of Things*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010, p. 94

In Loughborough, the campus trail and the village 'field-trip', organised by Georgina and Alice, provided commendable contexts for Green Days and its ethos of learning from nature - and a convivial time was had by all. A dialogue was opened up and some important questions were raised but the acutely problematic aspects of the university campus and the complexities of 'farming' and its relationship to 'the rural' and 'the urban', demand much more critical interrogation. Whether factory or farm, the idea of the university (in the UK, US and across Europe) is in crisis⁴. And the continual construction, marketing, selling and consumption of 'the countryside' has complex histories and contested contemporary sociological contexts which were only hinted at. The Green Days project invited artists, cultural critics and thinkers to find new models for cooperation in nature - models which might contribute towards 'the creation of mental and physical spaces devoted to sharing knowledge and through this to experience a system of intersections and collaboration'. To achieve this, a much deeper and more extensive socio-political analysis and critique of some of the issues raised is needed and more radical approaches, like some of the ones generated by the Green Days artists, need

4

The 'assault on the university' and the university as 'knowledge factory' needs little introduction: as an aside, I recently presented a paper 'Is there no alternative? Re-imagining the university' at Critical Pedagogy's 'Educational Spaces of Alterity', University of Nottingham, April 2011

Green Days was a first step. It has sewn a seed. Perhaps, now, it is time to ferment and spread the virus, create a community of spores and infect the host with a multitude of Green Days. For me, the 'greening' of capitalism is fundamentally and always a vital political question. To reflect back on the epigram of this short text, 'contagion is everywhere in the contemporary world'. As I write, across diverse socio-political worlds and global locations, spontaneous rebellion is, indeed, both multitudinous⁵ and pandemic.⁶ That said, I am seduced by discourses, such as Jane Bennett's ⁷, which urge us to consider the sensuous enchantment of matter and the vibrant agency and affectivity of organic and inorganic things. Maybe also, as Anna Gibbs suggests, a verdant profusion of Green Days might open the way to a new 'epidemiology of affect' that sees continuities between things that were once held to be discrete, and discontinuity and difference where once there was sameness⁸. Communally, let us look forward to that.

www.bricolagekitchen.com

5

On the discourse of 'the multitude', see work of Paolo Virno, Antoni Negri/ Michael Hardt et al

6

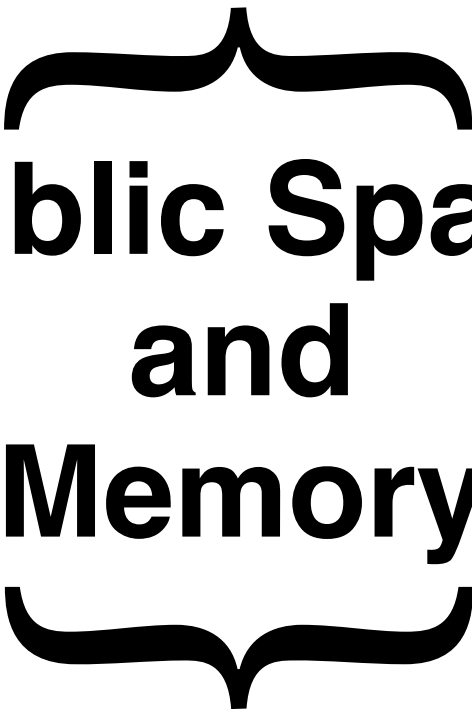
A passing reference to my own ongoing project around the theme of pan-demonium – see www.bricolagekitchen.com

7

Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matters, A Political Ecology of Things*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010

8

Anna Gibbs, 'After Affect: Sympathy, Synchrony and Mimetic Communication' published in Melissa Gregg and Greg Seigworth (eds) *The Affect Theory Reader*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010, pp. 186-205



Public Space and Memory


Conversation between
Elena Cologni
and
Anna Santomauro

○ **Let's begin with those small acts, such as automatic repetitive movements that construct maps of daily life. It seems that the idea of distance, that is, the relationship between here and elsewhere, have changed dramatically in recent years, and with it the perception of places. What do you think are the cognitive impacts at the individual and collective level?**


● I think that the current alienation the individual is subject to, and which is caused by the dominant technological economy, is based on the urgency to reduce the space/time gap, which is typical of today's system of communication. Assuming that we all share this context, ROCKFLUID (<http://rockfluid.com>) represents an attempt to investigate it by creating opportunities to meet in a shared physical space where we undergo an experience, we walk, we move around a certain place, moving our body in space, thereby re-defining it as our own. I'm interested in this type of activity, in relation to psycho-geography too, but rather than as an individual activity, as the adoption of relational tactics instead, and aimed at sharing the creative process with the participants. In fact, their input builds a web of narratives I witness and adopt. I also believe that raising an awareness of how digital time interferes with our perception of time (subjective time) is a driving force behind the work. One way to do this is by breaking the now-established memory/past relationship. Since we are so obsessed with constantly documenting our lives, the impos-

sibility of doing the same with memory may become a phobia (...), and I thus to present the possibility for an alternative idea: that we are able to change our memories when they resurface in the present. Aspect I introduced with a previous work of mine, and which in this context becomes instrumental for a new definition of 'place'. This is found specifically in the qualities of instability and transition typical of memory.


What frightens me, and which I also notice is happening to me, is how we have become used to confusing the illusion of reality with reality itself. I am aware that this may be a controversial thing to say because it's like saying that interaction through technology is not interaction. So let's clarify this further. There are two aspects to explore to support my remark: the first relates to how many of us engage in interaction through technology at the same time as, for example, we are on Skype or respond to a message on Facebook... the fact that we can do other things leads us to act in a somewhat schizophrenic manner, which also has a bearing (and this is the second point) on our perception of time or subjective time.



Going through space implies an evocative, emotional and mnemonic act of appropriation: while on the one hand, in fact, the schizophrenic use of places is a prerogative of contemporary life, on the other, this same attitude leads obsessively to attempts of mapping, collecting traces, documenting, and re-writing. Perhaps this stems from the desire to produce new forms of narrative of reality, or to produce alternative realities. What do you think?




The awareness of our position in space in relation to the use of technology has changed our perception of space itself. We're used to macro-scales (Google Earth), and we don't consider our proximities as much anymore. In my project I try to get people to understand this by generating micro-geographies, and the relationship of our body with the space that surrounds it, rediscovering the poetics and politics of everyday life. It's one way of customizing resistance to the global landscape context. Through my work personal space is a non-verbal language of inter-subjective spatiality. I believe that this need to document is rather linked to the unconscious awareness of not being entirely in the know with the perception of reality in the present, precisely because paradoxically we want to document it at that very moment. If I look at the screen of my phone while I take a picture, at that moment I cannot see through my eyes the same thing that I am photographing. I have documented that moment, but at the same time I have also lost it. I am interested in working on this paradox and the attraction that it exerts on us. The attempt to build another reality is also linked to the disappointment of the created reality and the continuous search for a new reality (another image)... in a sense it's what happens in the creative process, it is driven by dissatisfaction.




Public space, in addition to being an institutionally defined and bounded space, in opposition to the private one, is the result of several components: individuals, groups, histories, cultural systems, historical, social and personal memory, aspirations and political failures. I wonder, in light of what we have said, what new forms of enjoyment and production of space we will


encounter, and what are the responsibilities and possibilities of art in these contexts.




The public space is becoming more and more a theatre of interaction and enjoyment, which is also due to the need for 'honesty' that artists feel today. I mean, having worked in a site-specific way for some time, I realized the importance of the quality of audience involvement, and the fact that spaces designated for art are mostly visited by 'us' who make the art or assist in its interpretation. And this is not enough for art to be effective at a social level. It's time to revisit the utopian ideas of Bauhaus and relive them in our contexts. I think the artist is still the director of his own operations, even if shared, open, scattered around the street, but in a way so that it leaves a trace, be it tangible or not to the people (and here the catalog for the gallery comes into good use...).




Imagine giving birth to a new discipline: individual memory archeology linked to places. It occurs to me that the first layer to be dug up would be that linked to the collective thought which is shared by everybody, and then move on to the perception one derived from the encounter between the senses and objects. Then comes the emotional one, and after that the one for pathways and systems that subject all these aspects to the individual imaginative reinterpretation. What's art's place in this scheme? And what short-circuit does this encounter produce?



The artist listens, but s/he is not a psychologist nor is s/he a priest. It's a tacit agreement with the participants who know it. They also know that in reality the artist does not listen, but is present and witnesses the moment. Art transforms the essence of these encounters, freeing itself of words and translating what happens into surrounding forms which remain so, continuously in power. In this sense, we're not talking about further traces, but new realities.

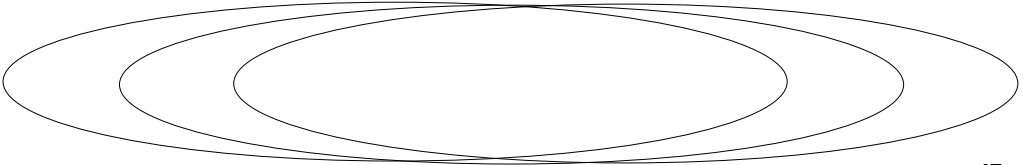


In recent years art has attempted to redefine, or at least deal with, concepts such as community, neighborhood, the collective. What definitions would you give them in terms of the spatial relationships they imply?

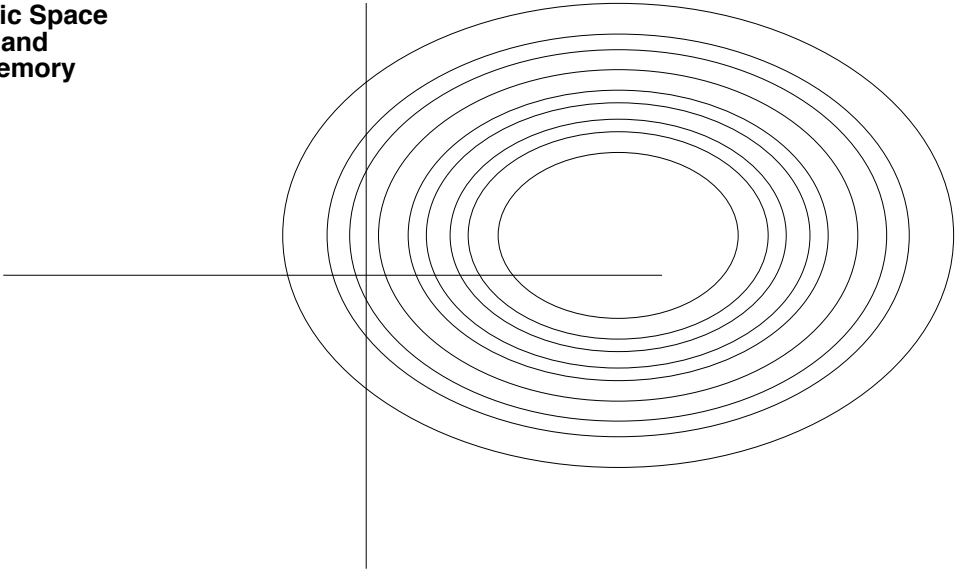


A community may already have its own identity, or it can exist because it was created by artistic operations: in my case these meet up and are redefined. Neighborhood implies an ambivalent relationship, similar to what occurs with your classmates, sitting in his/her chair at a desk next to us: s/he has been assigned to us, it just happened.

I think collectivity has to do with considering specific geographical, sub-state or regional areas, and in contemporary times these areas can be built based on abstract concepts and not only tangible spaces.

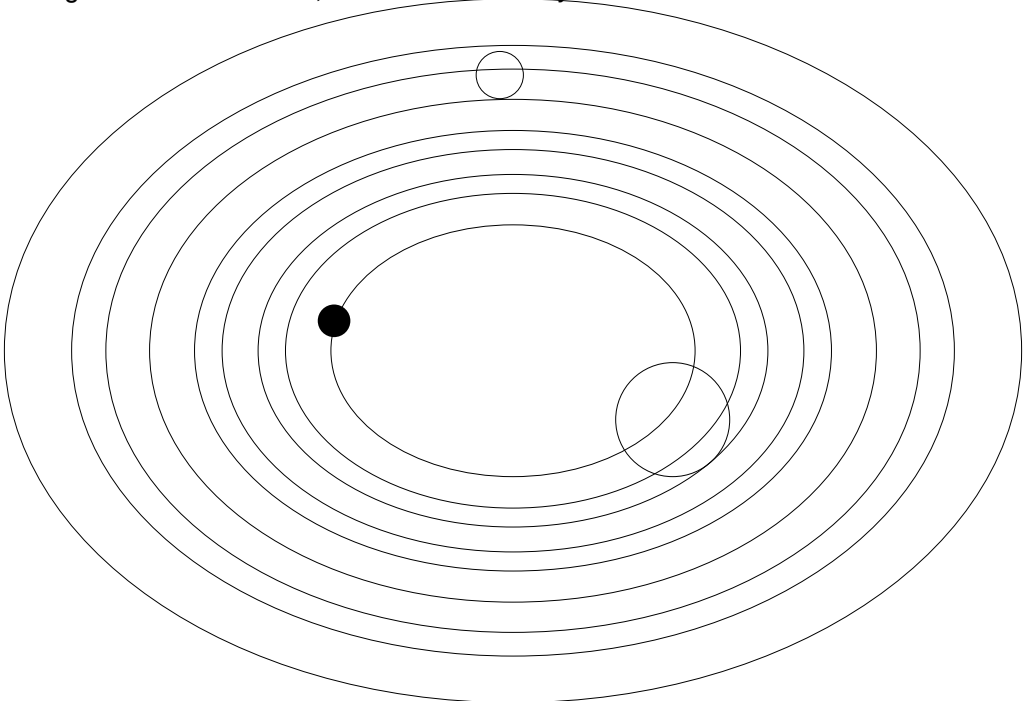


Public Space and Memory



And if you were to give a definition of "nature"?

In the traditional sense it implies the difference between what is natural and what is not natural and is artificial. The latter is to be understood in terms of what has been brought into existence by the human consciousness or mind. Or, depending on the context, we can distinguish the term "natural" from what is unnatural, supernatural or synthetic. The problem is that nothing is natural anymore and thus free from human intervention. To the point that, since the time technology enabled communication travels imperceptibly through the air we breathe, that too is altered by it.



Fruit Routes Co-Creating an edible Campus

Anne-Marie Culhane

The FRUIT ROUTES project which started in 2011 is mapping and highlighting the existing edible and food resources on the Loughborough University campus such as fruit trees, nuts and foraging plants; enhancing existing fruit and foraging through designing a number of specific fruit and foraging routes which traverse the campus; celebrating and sharing ownership of the project and emphasizing a long term legacy.

The project vision is to plant fruit and nut trees along foot and cycle paths throughout the University creating a spring snow-fall of blossom and an autumnal abundance of fresh fruits for harvesting, eating and distributing. Different varieties of pears, plums, damsons, greengages, hazels, almonds, apples, quince etc. suited to the local environment and the changing climate. The trees planted by people who live, work and pass through these places will enrich the habitat for people, plants, insects and animals and provide an annual feast of free food for years to come.

The project is developing a spacious sense of participation involving University staff, students and local people offering the potential basis for a fruit routes culture and community to develop using the routes as a locus for harvesting, reflection, creativity and learning.

Fruit Routes emerges from my work as an artist and food activist focusing on making fuller use of green spaces in all their different forms as a productive food resource and basis for *renewed local food culture*.

My recent project, started in 2007, Grow Sheffield combined these aims in a city-wide network promoting urban food growing through active learning and planting, culture and political work.

Amongst other things, I have been inspired by the power and the freedom that resonates from growing and sourcing the food we choose to pass into and out of our bodies.

To quote Wendell Berry:

*There is then, a politics
of food that like any politics
involves our freedom. We still
(sometimes) remember that we cannot
be free if our minds and voices are
controlled by someone else. But we have
neglected to understand that we cannot be free
if our food and its sources are controlled by someone
else. The condition of the passive consumer of
food is not a democratic condition. One reason to eat
responsibly is to live free.*

Quoted from Wendell Berry's essay on Centre for Ecoliteracy website
<http://www.ecoliteracy.org/essays/pleasures-eating>

I am also intrigued by the cultural and creative possibilities of *Fruit Routes*: How do we meet these new trees as they emerge into an already busy and multi-functioning urban green space? What can we learn from listening and being amongst the trees and each other and responding to their seasonal rhythms?

Fruit Routes draws from the growing awareness that *many UK cities* are already disparate and underused 'orchards' and from real experiences of community city harvesting as a co-founder of *Abundance* over a number of years in Sheffield locating several thousand fruit trees. It is an offshoot of the *Orchard City Manifesto* which suggests expanding the urban fruitscape and re-visioning the metropolis as one big orchard where people happen to live amongst the trees.

Common Ground inform us:

Since 1950 nearly 2/3 of England's orchard area has disappeared

- The Apple Source Book, Common Ground, p11 Sue Clifford and Angela King

Fruit Routes is mindful that our changing climate shifts the possibilities and limits of what we grow. We are planting trees that will live for 50-100 years so aims to plant experimentally with species that will be at the edges of their current range.

The *Fruit Routes* launch week in October 2011 included an interactive installation created in The Shed constructed as part of RADAR's Building Green programme in 2010 and occupied by the student group *Landscaping Our Society*. The Shed was inhabited throughout the launch and visitors were invited to taste, share, eat and drink fruit and plants harvested on the campus and try out the apple press as well as contribute their ideas and thoughts about the project and share knowledge on a map of the campus fruit trees.

A daily walk tracing the first *Fruit Route* was attended by local people of mixed ages, university staff and students. The walk was a chance to identify and discuss some of the wild and edible plants growing along the route and to visualise the new planting. Apples and pears harvested from existing trees on the campus were left in unusual locations across campus and into town for people to find, eat, share, offer to others. I co-hosted a public event focusing on the relationship between artist and forager with Gillian Whiteley, Bob Levene and Paul Conneally and also offered a talk and demonstration by Paul Paine about cider and fruit wine making. A locally sourced and foraged harvest feast ended the launch activities. It was attended by a woodlouse, bumble bee, mycorrhizal fungi, two ladybirds, a herring? a lion? a fly, a pipistrelle bat and the promise of spring. The evening was a rich weave of shared stories, songs, dance, sounds and objects representing and celebrating some of the biotic community who will inhabit the Fruit Route with us.



Fruit Routes is funded by the University Landscape Master Plan in line with the Biodiversity Action Plan and is managed by the Sustainability Manager at Loughborough University.
For Grow Sheffield and Abundance: www.growsheffield.com
Fruit Routes blog: www.fruitroutesloughborough.wordpress.com
For a copy of the Orchard City Manifesto please contact the artist mail@amculhane.co.uk
www.amculhane.co.uk

Saul Marcadent

Reversing our view on the themes of nature

through specific actions, focusing on geographical areas, making projects, works and sustainable exhibitions while investing in local qualities. This seems to be the right direction to take and the growth of research groups, publications and related panel discussions – in Europe and in Italy – bodes well.

A survey conducted by Limno¹ on the idea and perception of nature has revealed the need to interpret the man/landscape relationship not as an exchange of rights and duties, but in the form of open and continuous discussion. The study, divided into three questions², initially involved professionals in the scientific and humanities areas, which then broadened to include a wider audience. The recurrent use of linguistic forms like caring about and looking after in the answers indicates a desire to move back again to nature, even through the slightest actions, which are being put into practice more and more often, as building a greenhouse on a terrace or in a private garden. It is fascinating to note how the word care is currently being adopted in cross contexts - from advertising to politics – and how the figure of the care-giver is at the centre of cultural debate because of a deeply rooted need, to delve profoundly into the concept of trusteeship.

Upon closer inspection, artistic research also views nature from a different perspective. The environmental activism which characterised the second half of the twentieth century was slowly overtaken by a more intimate discussion. Contemporary artists develop microanalyses of situations, contexts and histories, moving away from the political statements of the seventies. In 2009, an exhibition at the Barbican Art Gallery in London, *Radical Nature. Art and architecture for a changing planet*, takes stock of the situation, from the actions of Robert Smithson to Joseph Beuys' performances for environmental protection. The exhibition introduces utopian projects of artists and architects such as Agnes Denes and Ant Farm: Denes cultivates free land in downtown Manhattan and distributes the harvest in several countries (*Wheatfield. A Confrontation*, 1982), Farm tries to establish a non-verbal communication between humans and animals for a happy co-evolution (*The Dolphin Embassy* 1976).

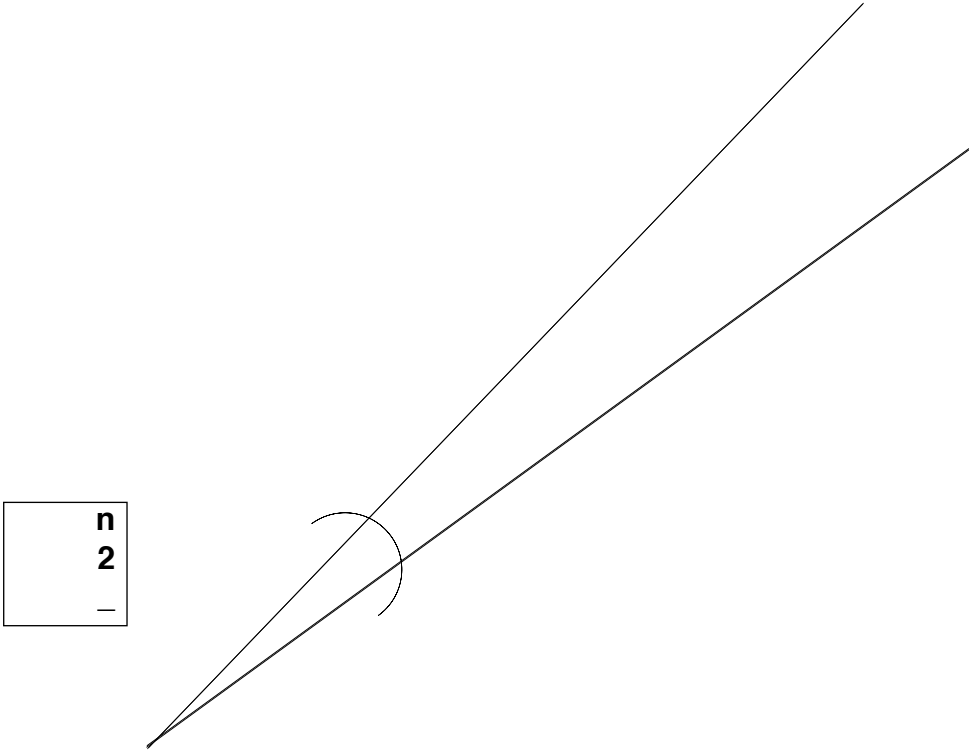
1
A project that investigates the themes of nature – and of natures – through meetings, exploration and videos.

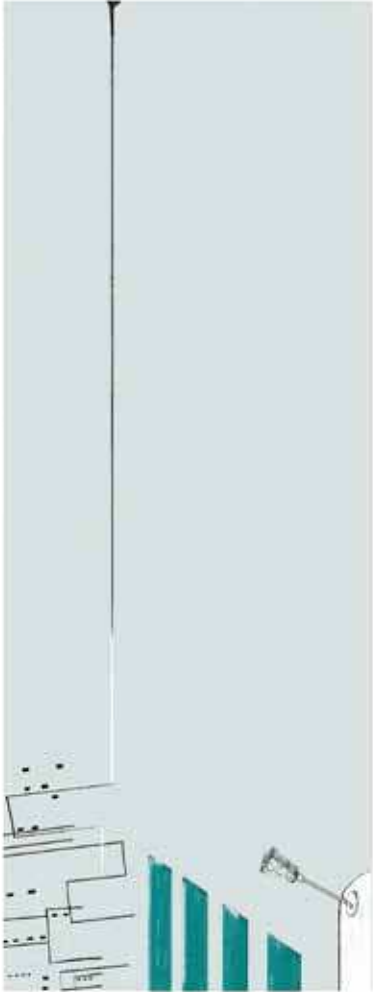
2
Is the right to landscape, a duty to landscape? If the landscape is connected to idea of nature, can we consider culture a part of landscape? Is the increasing attention to nature and environment just a trend or rather an emerging need?

Today, artists reflect on words like ecocentrism and ecocide, but abandon the radicalism and language of protest. They raise issues and by pitting themselves against other disciplines - science, geopolitics and urban anthropology – they examine grey areas in depth that contemporary society produces. Francesco Jodice, for example, while addressing environmental issues from the side, reveals the ongoing changes the metropolis. The film trilogy *Citytellers* (2009) investigates hidden social and urban phenomena while the photographic analysis *What We Want* (2003) recounts an idea of landscape as projection of desires thanks to the ability of individuals and communities to change places according to their own image and likeness.

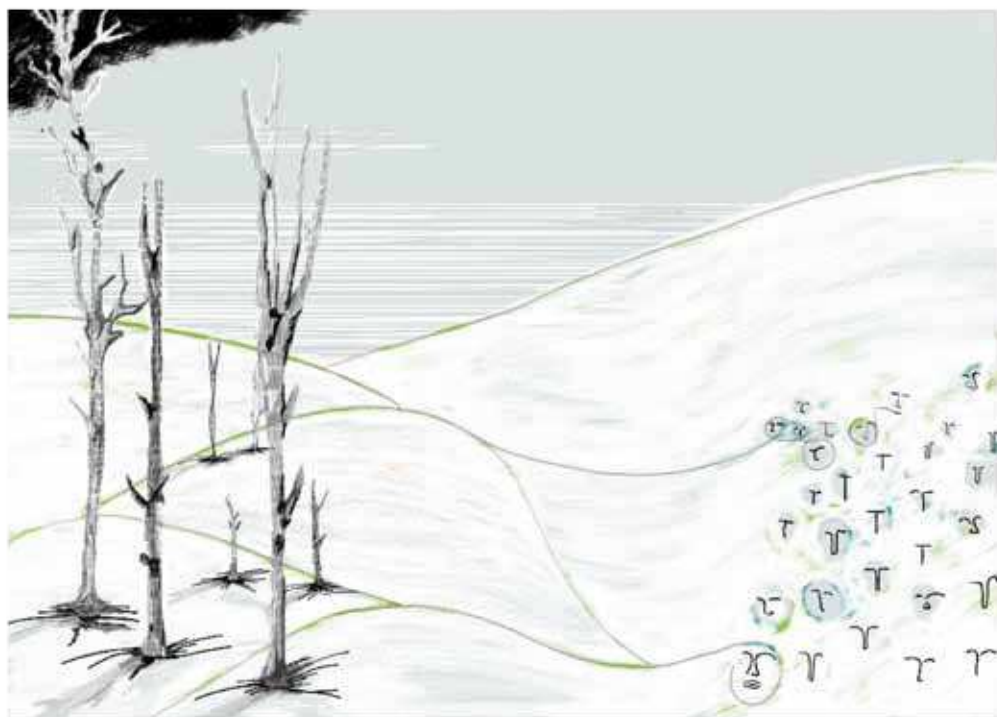
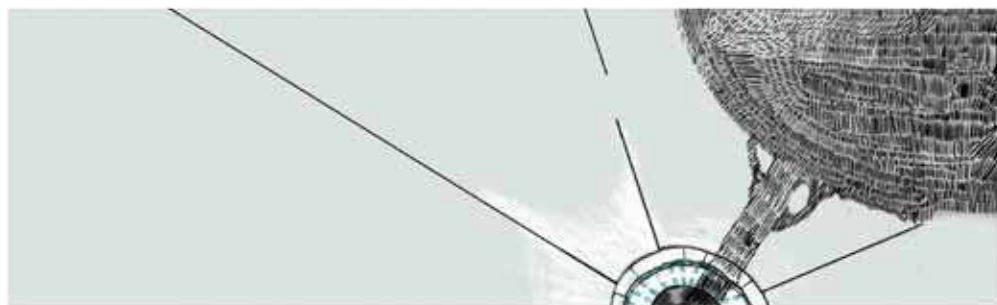
In the curatorial field, the *Latitudes* duo - based in Barcelona and consisting of Max Andrews and Mariana Canepa Luna - examines art practices that resist the presentation of the themes of nature as performance. Their work includes collaborations, exhibitions and publications such as *Land Art. A Cultural Ecology Handbook*, which is a reference text for scholars and curators interested in working in the field. In 2007, in occasion of the new edition of *Uovo* magazine, they collected essays, interviews and images to shape an issue wholly dedicated to green topics. *Latitudes*, through operations characterised by strong planning, does not deal exclusively with environmental issues, but it also analyses economic, philosophical and social issues. With a mobile approach they address the limitations of traditional concepts of ecology and, shifting attention to broader cultural meanings, generate a broader discussion, which grows like a plant.

This research suggest some questions: How relevant is the contribution of artists and curators? What is its influence on public opinion? Artistic research does not provide practical solutions but visions, triggering doubts and offering possibilities for the future.





Francesca Dainotto Taking care, nevertheless



Individual action towards a better urban life

Olof Soebach

- stories of ordinary people leading extraordinary lives -

Let's start with two assumptions: we know and we care. We as individuals are well informed about climate change, pollution, loss of biodiversity, factory farming methods, social injustice, inequity and so on. Most of us also know that the way we consume and the decisions we make are important. And we know that big companies influence us and create artificial needs and desires. On top of that, we know we are not getting any happier in our consumer-oriented, fast-paced lifestyles. With the rapidly growing number of initiatives, civil society organisations and causes, we assume that people also care about these issues. No one wants a poor child to make their sport shoes. No one wants to eat pesticides. No one wants to live in a polluted unfriendly city.

One might even assume that dominating values of individualism, the growth paradigm, and the age old desire to conquer nature to show man's domination and power have begun shifting towards sustainability, collaboration and search for alternative economic and social systems. However, changing behaviour is not easy, and THE solution doesn't exist. But there is a reason to be hopeful, individuals are finding their own solutions, and they are coming together building networks and sharing experiences. Online, one can find numerous websites of individuals sharing their experiments of low impact living, no impact living, experiments of eating only local foods, people trying to remove

one bad habit a day for a year and so on. There are also inspirational websites such as Do the green thing, The Do lectures, Ripe green ideas, the Story of Stuff project and the list goes on. Then there is the explosion of collaborative consumption initiatives such as car sharing, house swapping, couch surfing, freecycling, clothes swapping and peer to peer marketplaces. The transitions town movement is also about citizen initiated actions in local neighbourhoods.

But away from the websites and networks and initiatives, how are people living?

Lucie lives in large house in Ghent that
Green Days a multidisciplinary project on art and nature

used to be a night asylum for women a few decades ago. This is her hub, shelter and the place where she lives and works. In practice it is a place of sharing. For 2 years it was an asylum for minor refugee ex-soldiers whom Lucie housed. Today a number of passer bys stay for a short or a longer period, sometimes paying rent, sometimes helping out around the house and the business in turn for staying. Lucie grew up without a home and much of her time without family. She has made her life about creating her own family and defining her way of collective living, sharing spaces and building small start-up co-operative companies. The concept of being interdependent with others and with nature is key to Lucie's lifestyle.

"My family structure is that typical postmodern city network that doesn't necessarily run along some bloodlines"

The garden of Lucie's home is now a part of a collective, organised through the Transition Town Movement. People with gardening skills are making it into an edible garden. It makes it possible for people with the know-how, but no personal garden to have access to a garden and to enjoy its fruits. Lucie will also have access to the food grown and the space. In that way, a win win situation is created by sharing Lucie's garden. Lucie also shares her roof, with an energy company that has installed solar panels on her rooftop. The panels and energy belongs to the energy company, but Lucie receives her clean energy at a lower cost. She joined a group of people that came together and decided to go directly to the source for buying their staple foods like grains and flour. This

group of people now buy in bulk, large quantities, in less packaging and at a lower price. She buys clothes, furniture and other things often through the Local Exchange and Trade System (LETS), and has access to Cambio, a car-sharing project. More often though, things come to her. There is a constant fluctuation of furniture and clothes in her house. People bring extras to her, as they know that her house has a semi open function, and these things don't stay forever in her place. She gives them further.

"My house is open and I give what I am able to give. I also ask for help when I need something, and you can't book keep that"

As for Lucie's work, among others she is a part of a organic vegetarian fast food collective. A company that belongs to many stakeholders, where maximum profit is not the aim, but to create employment for less employable people and create a vegetarian alternative to fast food. Lucie's desire for an active social life and the realisation of the importance of interdependencies is what drives her to a lifestyle of sharing and collective ways of living. With a creative mind and resourcefulness, she has managed to build a life around those.

Tom's mother has always been very ecologically minded, whereas his father emphasises more on economic stability. The two sides pull at Tom and as his passion is farming, he knew that he'd need to participate in an alternative way to farming in order to ensure both. Tom now has an urban community supported agriculture farm. That means people subscribe at

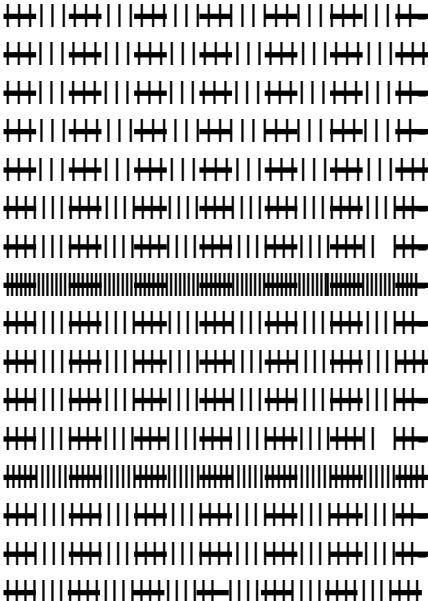
the beginning of the year to his farm. Tom plants and grows organic fruits and vegetables. His clients go directly to the farm and harvest themselves. In this way, the risk of farming is shared. On a good year, the clients get a bit more. On a less good year, they have less, but Tom's income is secured. Tom's farm is not only about local organic and fair trade food. It is also about personal connections and trust building between producer and consumer. Tom's 250 clients bring their children to his farm, pull out the food themselves from the ground and learn where it comes from. Allowing people to experience and participate in the food making creates a very direct awareness and learning experience that spreads. And most of the food Tom eats is food he grows himself. Tom lives in a simple low-tech way, he is renovating a small house he bought in walking distance from his farm. He only uses natural products like COB for his walls, and sheep wool for insulation. No chemicals are used or added concrete, only materials that can breath. All his furniture comes second hand or is found on the streets. Tom has a very low material consumption, and a low desire for material wealth. He never flies, as he believes it should take time to get from one place to the other, and trains or hitch hiking allows for adventures, more comfort at times and personal connections. Possibly his strong consciousness does not allow him to buy products as he is well aware of the raw materials and production processes around them. His quality of life however seems not so bad. He works in the field with his feet in his soil inside a city, and actually makes a decent living. He finds solutions to make a home with natural products. This, as well as family and friends, gives him meaning.

Carolien lives with her son and partner. She has a PhD in environmental psychology, and she had this desire to "save the world" from a very young age, unlike her family. At one point, Carolien felt unfulfilled in her work and wanted to do an experiment. Seeing as the economic system seemed to be crumbling all around, she decided to try to live without money for a year.

In 2010, Carolien lived with almost no money. For almost everything she needed, she made one on one bartering agreements. For instance, she worked on an education project for an organic food shop and in turn she got food. According to Carolien, it was one of her best years, She actually felt safer than when she had the steady income because of the trust that was developed.

"Life became so much more simple in a nice way, it was as if the buzz of a thousand different choices a day disappeared"

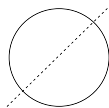
Carolien already had a low environmental impact, and it was never the goal of her project, but her footprint shrank further. By taking money out of her equation, everything changed. Her quality of life is defined by moments of sharing, working on exciting projects which she chooses on a local level, enlarging her circle of friends and spending time with the people she loves.



Lucie, Tom, and Carolien are very different. Lucie creates the family she didn't have and acknowledges that she needs people as much as they may need her. Tom chooses simplicity and makes good food in a fair way, whereas Carolien is searching ways to work more collaborative on a professional level and to escape the boundaries of our current economic system. Which one has the lowest ecological footprint, highest economic or social value? Does it matter? They all make their very different steps, all share the basic opinions that current systems are failing, individualism has become loneliness, and that nature needs to be respected and a part of the equation in the decision-making.

"Nature is all about diversity we need to be diverse, flexible and resilient"

The do lectures
<http://www.dolectures.com/>
The Story of Stuff Project
<http://www.storyofstuff.org/>
The low impact man
<http://www.lowimpactman.be/>
Ripe green ideas
<http://www.ripegreenideas.com/>
The no impact man
<http://noimpactman.typepad.com/>
Transition towns network
<http://www.transitionnetwork.org/>
Spread, sustainable lifestyles 2050
<http://spread2050.ning.com/>
The Hub
<http://the-hub.net/>
Do the green thing
<http://www.dothegreenthing.com/>



A

a

AAA Audiovisual Anonymous Artists

[film, music, paintings, concerts, music nights, performances, texts, photos, gravures, drawings, audio-recordings, radio, television, websites, libraries, theater, archiving, festivals, exhibitions, courses, debates, museum, manifestations, experiments, expeditions, explorations..]

F

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Fabrica de Pensule

Fabrica de Pensule / The Paintbrush Factory is a collective space for contemporary arts in Cluj, Romania. The project started at the beginning of 2009, as an independent initiative to bring together ideas, events and projects of cultural organizations, galleries, producers and independent artists in Cluj. Being a reaction to the local lack of production spaces, Fabrica de Pensule is the first project of converting an industrial building into a cultural space in Romania. The artists, galleries and organizations - active in the fields of theater, contemporary dance, visual arts, arts in public space, music - are jointly engaged into delivering relevant cultural content, both for the artistic community and the wide audience. Besides artist studios and production spaces, Fabrica de Pensule also hosts events of local and international partners. It acts as a major player in cultural and urban policies in the Ro-

manian context.

N

n

neon>campobase

neon>campobase is a cultural laboratory, an independent platform in which artists, curators and professionals from different fields of knowledge-producing can interact. Its structure is the result of a succession of situations inspiring collaborations, intersections, exchanges, and discussions. neon>campobase is interested in the active participation of art into the daily life and into the social pattern. It aims to involve an heterogeneous audience in the artistic field, and it tries to achieve this goal by carrying out multidisciplinary projects. neon>campobase considers art as a daily social practice, and believes in art as a tool that makes social transformation possible. Actually neon>campobase is focused on practices of extra-national participation and dialogue in order to develop a better understanding of contemporary society.

R

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Radar

Radar is Loughborough University's contemporary arts programme, enabling creative exploration and furthering critical debate through commissions, films and conversation.

The University is the largest single site campus in the country and as such offers artists a rich source

of material and knowledge to inform and develop their practice. With each programme artists are invited to tap into this resource, whether that be through a dialogue that informs the conceptual framework or through utilising the technical and production facilities available. This process of interaction between artist and academic and artist and university is central to the programme. While the artistic outputs are not confined to one space, or to the campus, the relationship to the context is fixed, providing a bond between the divergent responses.

The artistic outputs are also used to engender further debate and exploration of the ideas contained within the work. The art works are used to initiate conversations between different disciplines, not only artist and academic but academic and academic and student and academic further encouraging a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and skills.

A

S

Anna Santomauro (1983) lives and works as curator between Bari and Bologna. During the last years she has been collaborating with neon>campobase, a non profit association devoted to contemporary art. She has been curating mainly video projects (Playlist, neon>focus on video artists and, together with Vincenzo Estremo, neon>video selection). In 2009 she has started cooperating with Viviana Checchia within the projects: 1h art, Festa del Migrante and Green Days. Together with Vincenzo Estremo she is carrying out an independent research focused on the social changes connected to new mobility phenomenon and on the concept of identity and community. She writes on Arte & Critica magazine. She has founded, together with Viviana Checchia, vessel, non profit art space.

V

C

Viviana Checchia (1982) She worked as assistant curator for Eastside Projects, not for profit space based in Birmingham (UK) where she researched and assisted in curating the shows Abstract Cabinet Show (26 September to 8 November 2009); Liam Gillick Two Short Plays. Her projects as an independent curator include Back to Rome, solo show by Angelo Castucci (2010); There's something to this (but I don't know what it is) a solo show by Helen Brown at Nitra Gallery- Slovakia(2010) and Twist, curatorial project co-curated with Eleonora Farina at uqbar, 91mQ, Golden Parachutes and Hungarian Institute of Culture (2011) among others; she organized a series of talks and screenings dedicated to art and social change as well as art in Eastern European countries. She took part of the European Course for Contemporary Art Curators in Milan arranged by the Province of Milan and the Fondazione Antonio Ratti (2009), as well as to the AICA International Summer Seminar Program of Art (2009) and the Gwangju Foundation Course for International Curators (2010).

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GREEN

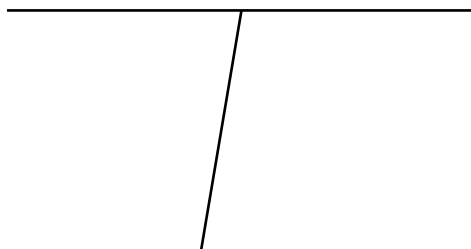
DAYS

neon>campobase





The editorial project aims to be in line with the principles of biomimicry and of ecology. The book is realized by use just the necessary components; printed on recycled light paper (80g/m²) employing less ink as possible.





Green Days
a multidisciplinary project on art
and nature