OPENPUBLICSTUDIOSPACE
PUBLICOPENSTUDIOSPACE
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EXERCISES FOR PUBLIC SPACE
(executed in October 2010)

THERE IS AN IDEA FROM A WRITER NAMED KAPUŚCINSKI WHICH IS INSPIRING. IT IS ABOUT HOW WE ARE WHO WE ARE THROUGH THE OTHER. WE ARE NOT LONELY INDIVIDUALS BUT ALSO THE OTHER IS PART OF OURSELVES. DEPARTING FROM THIS IDEA WE STARTED TO DEVELOP EXERCISES IN PUBLIC SPACE. WE TRIED TO EXAMINE WHO THE OTHER IS AND WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM THAT FOR OUR OWN ARTISTIC PRACTICE.

AT THE OFFICIAL END OF THIS PROJECT (WHICH WILL BE CONTINUED SEPARATELY FROM THE SCHOOL PROGRAM) WE HAD THE DESIRE TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO EXPERIENCE THE EXERCISES WE DID.

MAYBE CALL IT A PROPOSAL: WE WOULD LIKE TO PROPOSE YOU TO TAKE PART IN THIS PROJECT.

WE TRY TO PASS ON THE QUESTIONS WE ASKED OURSELVES AND THE EXERCISES WE DID BY MEANS OF THIS DOCUMENT. AND WE WOULD LIKE TO OPEN UP THE PROJECT FOR EVERYONE WHO IS INTERESTED.

THE ACTIONS/EXERCISES CHANGE SOMEHOW THE VIEW YOU HAVE ON THE OTHER AND THE SOCIETY WE LIVE IN AND BY DOING SO, ALSO ON YOURSELF. THERE IS A PROJECT FROM HARRELL FLETCHER AND MIRANDA JULY TITLED: LEARNING TO LOVE YOU MORE. EXECUTING EXERCISES IN PUBLIC SPACE AS A PROCESS TO LEARN TO LOVE THE OTHER OR THE UNKNOWN MORE.

THE MOST VALUABLE EXPERIENCE WE HAD BY EXECUTING THE EXERCISIS WAS THE DIRECT CONTACT WITH UNKNOWN PEOPLE WE WERE ABLE TO GENERATE. ALTHOUGH THE CONTACT IS NOT ALWAYS IN DEPTH, IT SOMEHOW GIVES YOU AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHOM ELSE IS WALKING THERE ON THE STREETS AND IT FORCES YOU TO LET GO ANY PREJUDGMENT. THE CONTACTS CREATE AN UNDERSTANDING OF A WORLD BIGGER THAN THE STUDIO OR THE THEATRE BUILDING. AN UNDERSTANDING CREATED THROUGH DAILY PRACTICE.

WHEN READING THIS DOCUMENT YOU WILL DISCOVER THAT THE PHOTO'S ARE NOT ILLUSTRATING WHAT WE EXACTLY DID. THE PHOTO'S SHOW NOTHING MORE THAN WHAT A CITY EXISTS OF AND THEY GIVE THE FREEDOM TO IMAGINE WHAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED ON THESE PLACES. ACTUALLY IT IS NOT IMPORTANT WHAT WE PRECISELY DID BUT RATHER THE DISCUSSION OR QUESTIONS AN ACTION GENERATES. MAYBE YOU MAKE UP SOMETHING ELSE THAN WE IMAGINED AND MAYBE BY DOING THIS A NEW EXERCISES IS ALREADY CREATED.

WE HOPE THAT THIS DOCUMENT GENERATES SOME THOUGHTS. IF YOU INVENT AN EXERCISE AND YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE IT, FEEL FREE TO EMAIL US: PUBLICOPENSPACE@GMAIL.COM

WALKING + OBSERVING

Who is the other?

(Walking, observing, wandering and wondering who the others are)

MARKING YOUR OWN PATHWAY

How to leave traces in the city?
Or how to leave a constant trace?
And can your trace be seen as a tour through the city that someone can follow?
How to provoke a flow of people that follow the same thing?
How to do this without imposing ourselves on the other (without making a blockade)?
How subtle can you be in public space?

(Buy chalk and a stick, attach the chalk to the stick. Decide a pathway through the city. The beginning is the same as the end. Every tree steps you draw a short '-'. Each time you rest or wait somewhere, you draw a circle around yourself.)

THE TRACES OTHERS COULD MAKE

How to let the other leave a trace behind?
What would that be?
What does the trace tell about this person?
How to activate people in public space?

(Make a small tablet with: LEAVE A MESSAGE ON THE STREET/LAISSEZ UNE MESSAGE SUR LA RUE/LAAT EEN BOODSCHAP ACHTER OP STRAAT, and provide chalk.)

QUI M'AIME ME SUIVE*

Can you seduce or convince people easily on the street?
How to build a drift by following people you don't know?

(Write on a large paper: QUI M'AIME ME SUIVE (If you love me follow me), show it to people and wait till someone wants to join you.)
*action proposed by Guillaume

SEND A LETTER TO SOMEONE YOU DON'T KNOW + CONVERSATIONS

Who is the other?
Who is walking out there on the street?
How do they live? What are their interests?

(Build a mailbox, hang it somewhere in the city with a sentence like: SEND A LETTER TO SOMEONE YOU DON'T KNOW, ask to leave their (mail) address behind, answer if your receive a letter, start a conversation.)

SPREADING OBJECTS FOR FREE

How can you document what will happen with an object?
How to find out the later history of this object?
How to examine who the person is that takes an object?
What does he or she do in his/her life?
How to document what an action provokes?

(Spread objects in the city with the note: "GRATUIT/GRATIS/FOR FREE, *let me know the later history of this object and send an e-mail to: publicopenstudio@gmail.com*", try to find out what happened with the object and who the person is that took it with him/her.)

SPREADING 70 INVITATIONS IN THE CITY

How to create an event where people voluntary participate?
Where do you spread the invitations?
Who can you make people curious?
Do people accept a written invitation from someone they don't know?

(Invent any action you can do in group (walking, drinking, eating,…) make invitations for people you don't know and spread them in the city.)

UMBRELLA TAXI*

How to build a drift following people you don't know?
Can you meet people by helping them?
How can art also help someone?
Do we still speak about art?

(On a rainy day: offer people to walk with them while holding an umbrella for them.)
*Exercise proposed by Guillaume

MEETING POINT II

(Create a place where people can meet and where you eventually can meet people.)

SHORT INTERVIEWS

Who is the other?
How can you more quickly talk about a more difficult topic?

(Buy a Dictaphone, ask people more complex questions. (What do you find important in your life? What do you think about… etc…)

WAFFLEDAY I

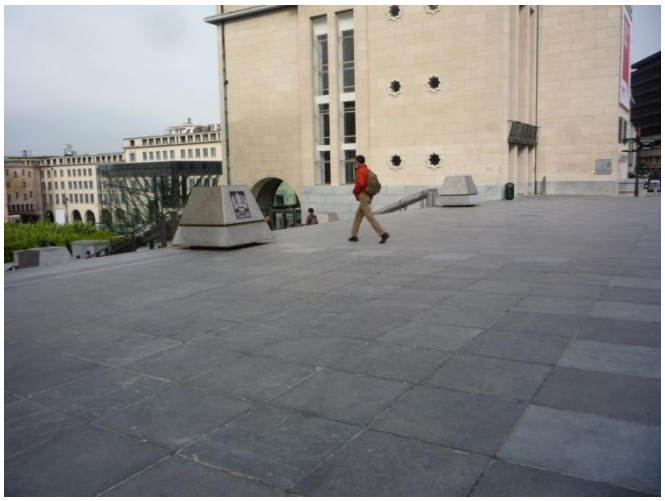
When do people trust you (especially if there is food involved)?
How much the location plays a role in the attraction one could have to what you do?
How to influence the stream of people?
How to stimulate their attraction to what is given?

(Make waffles, choose a place, present the waffles and write on a paper or a board: FREE WAFFLES, GAUFRES GRATUIT, GRATIS WAFELS)

OPENHUIS/OPENHOUSE/MAISONOUVERTE

How to create a situation where there is space and time to have a more profound contact?
How to bring bigger social or ecological concerns (etc…) in a meeting?
Do we have to connect things with its opposite to reach a broad audience (in this case there was a lecture about Pakistan and a concert from a musician)?
How to overcome the easiness of things and bring complexity in a meeting place?

(Open the door of your house, organize an event, invite everyone you know and you don't know, see how that works or not.)



MAKE A BODY OUT OF CLAY

How do people react if they don't receive anything but are only asked to give something?
How far can you go in what you ask? How can you stimulate people's imagination?

(Create a situation in which people are asked to make their own body out of clay. With this collection of bodies examine how people imagine themselves. Expose the bodies on different places in the city, see what happens with it.)

MAN LAYING IN A SUIT ON THE STREET I

When does an action becomes a performance and when do people feel encouraged to participate, to start a dialog?
How independent from the conventions in public space can you be?
Can you be autonomous in public space? How to play with the conventions in public space?

(Lay in a suit in the middle of a pavement. Take a rest. Don't be holy, react on people's reactions.)

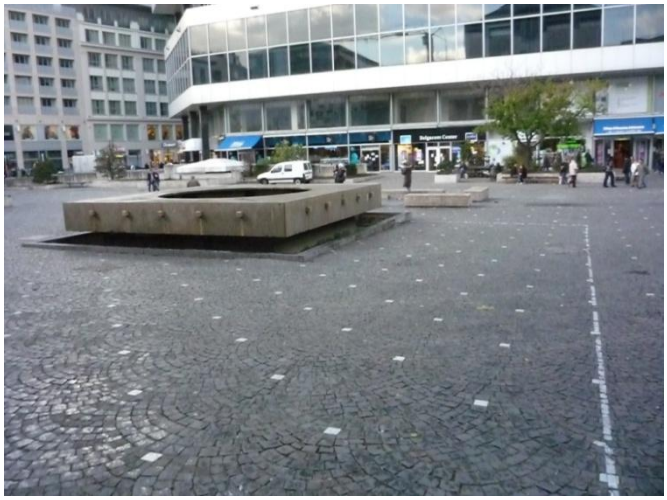
MAN LAYING IN A SUIT ON THE STREET II

(Bring a blanket and a cushion, write on a board: IF YOU WANT, TAKE A REST, wait till someone takes a rest with you.)

LISTENING TO WALLS*

How to make people curious?
And can you make them so curious that they participate in what you do?
How does your presence affect the other?
Can you play with this?

(Search a wall and do as if you hear something, try to engage other people to listen to the wall.)
*exercise proposed by Salva



LINE THROUGH THE CITY

How to involve the other in an unnecessary action?
How to communicate only with the body?
What kind of audience does the public space exists of?
How to give the power to this audience?

(Make a line by giving hands, walk, run, slow down in the streets and try to involve other people in the line.)

MOVING A SOFA THROUGH THE CITY*

Does a recognizable object influences the attraction one might have towards what you do?
How to involve a variety of people in your actions and not only the people that per definition would do what you do?
When is the weirdness of an action still an interesting one and when does it starts to work against the action?
Why are people often indifferent to what happens on the street?

(Find a sofa, start to move it through the city, take a lot of rests and during these rests try to involve other people.)
*action proposed by Alma

TRY TO FIND A DANCE IN PUBLIC SPACE

How to dance in public space?
How to bring more complexity in the actions and relationship towards the other?
Can you still create a direct contact, a dialog?
How to do this only with the body?

(Organize an evening with dance in public space)

DOCUMENTING THE WORK

How to document the actions we did in public space?
Why documenting something and what is the most important to share?
How to define “documentation” (is it merely a way to recollect a past event)?
Can you make a representation of the actions we did?
And to which extend is this possible?
Is art documentation the only possible form of reference to an artistic activity that cannot be represented in any other way?
What is the art? Is it through the documentation that it becomes art?

UNFINISHED

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This project is not finished. More exercises can be invented, others can disappear. Proposals are always welcome!

Mail to: publicopenspace@gmail.com

THIS DOCUMENTATION IS THE RESULT OF ONE MONTH WORK IN PUBLIC SPACE. MOST OF OUR ACTIONS ARE PUT TOGETHER IN THIS FILE. WE LIKE TO CALL THEM EXERCISES, SINCE THE 'RESEARCH' WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE WORK. THE PROJECT EXAMINED ART IN/AND PUBLIC SPACE AND THE PEOPLE WALKING AROUND THERE. APART FROM ALL THE PEOPLE WHO WITNESSED THE ACTIONS AND PARTICIPATED IN IT, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK CLARA, GUILLAUME, ALMA, POLINA, , ELEONOR, MENNO, STEVEN, SALVA, BENNI, TARA, MARIE,…

AND THANK YOU FOR READING THIS!

MICHIEL