

LOCAL WOMEN

STRIKING WAS THE ROLE OF LOCAL WOMEN FOR THE ARTISTS IN GAINING ACCESS TO COMMUNITIES, UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIAL LANDSCAPE OF THE PLACE AND GATHERING PEOPLE TO ATTEND THE ACTIVITIES AND PRESENTATIONS. THEIR GATEKEEPER FUNCTION AND THEIR "MAKING DO" APPROACH PROVED TO BE INDISPENSABLE IN NAVIGATING THE SOCIAL AND MATERIAL COMPLEXITIES OF THE AREA AND FOSTERING TRUST AMONG ITS RESIDENTS, PARTICULARLY GIVEN THE LIMITED TIME FRAME OF THE PROJECT.

WOMEN OFTEN ACTED AS BRIDGES BETWEEN THE PROJECT ORGANIZERS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY, LEVERAGING THEIR DEEP KNOWLEDGE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS AND CULTURAL NUANCES. THUS, SEVERAL WOMEN FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAYED A CRITICAL ROLE IN MOBILIZING SPACES, RESOURCES, KNOWLEDGES AND PEOPLE FOR THE CO-CREATION OF THE ARTS PROJECTS, CONTRIBUTING THEIR ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS, CREATIVITY, AND INTERPERSONAL CONNECTIONS TO ENSURE THE EVENT'S SUCCESS.

PARTICIPATORY ARTS

BY ACTIVELY INVOLVING COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS, THESE PRACTICES ENABLE INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS TO ARTICULATE SHARED VALUES, ASPIRATIONS, AND CHALLENGES, REINFORCING A SENSE OF BELONGING AND COLLECTIVE IDENTITY. PARTICIPATORY ARTS PROVIDE COMMUNITY GROUPS WITH TOOLS AND COLLECTIVE POWER TO RESIST URBAN PROCESSES SUCH AS GENTRIFICATION, DISPLACEMENT, TOP-DOWN DEVELOPMENT, AND PRIVATIZATION.

THEY CAN ACT AS A PLATFORM FOR AMPLIFYING MARGINALIZED VOICES, CREATING SPACES FOR DIALOGUE, AND FOSTERING GRASSROOTS MOBILIZATION AGAINST INEQUITABLE CHANGES. FURTHERMORE, SUCH PRACTICES HELP COMMUNITIES IMAGINE ALTERNATIVE FUTURES, RECLAIM PUBLIC SPACES, AND GENERATE NARRATIVES THAT COUNTER DOMINANT POWER STRUCTURES.

VOICES FROM THE PLACE

- RESIDENTS SAID THEY LIKED SEEING YOUNG PEOPLE VERY MUCH DO SOMETHING IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD, ESPECIALLY WITH CULTURAL PRACTICES THAT WERE FAMILIAR TO THEM SUCH AS CONCERTS, FILMS OR COOKING TOGETHER TRADITIONAL LOCAL DISHES.

- SOME PEOPLE ALSO ADDRESSED THE FEAR THAT ARTISTS MIGHT LEAVE AGAIN AFTER THEY BEGAN TO STIMULATE NEW COMMUNITY GATHERINGS AND BROUGHT NEW IMPULSES INTO THE AGEING COMMUNITY - FOR EXAMPLE, ONE WOMAN ASKED: "YOU ARE NOT GOING TO LEAVE US NOW, NO?"

- SO, PEOPLE WOULD LIKE TO CONTINUE WITH THE EVENTS AND EVEN CREATE MORE, SO THERE WAS A FEAR THE EVENTS WILL NOT CONTINUE.

- RESIDENTS GOT MORE ENGAGED WITH THE FORMATS CLOSER TO THEIR DAILY LIFE (SUCH AS FOOD, FILM) BUT SHOWED ALSO GREAT TRUST IN PARTICIPATING IN THE PERFORMANCES AND MEDITATIONS AND SHARED THEIR IMPRESSIONS AND EXPERIENCES WITH STRANGERS.

- RESIDENTS SHOWED GREAT HOSPITALITY AND WERE VERY GENEROUS WITH THEIR TIME.

- PEOPLE WERE ENGAGED LESS IN COMMON DISCUSSIONS WITH EACH OTHER AS IN THE EVENT IN ATHENS WITH SEVERAL FORMATS. PERFORMANCES WERE MORE ABOUT SHARED EMBODIED EXPERIENCES.

PLANT

PERFORMING LIFE AKADEMIA NETWORK

NOVEMBER 2024

ATHENS · MIERES · PORTO

EDITORIAL

PERFORMING LIFE AKADEMIA NETWORK PLANT IS A 2-YEAR TRANSDISCIPLINARY PROJECT, FUNDED BY CREATIVE EUROPE PROGRAMME, THAT AIMS TO ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT AND EXPERIMENTATION OF CONTEXTUAL ARTISTIC AND CURATORIAL PRACTICES AROUND CROSS-PERFORMING ARTS, ECOTHINKING AND EVERYDAY LIFE. PLANT IS A COLLABORATION BETWEEN THREE RESEARCH AND CREATION CENTRES: CRL - CENTRAL ELÉTRICA IN PORTO (PT) - PROJECT COORDINATOR -, ISADORA RAYMOND DUNCAN DANCE RESEARCH CENTER IN VYRONAS, ATHENS (GR) AND ESPAÍ NYAMNYAM IN MIERES, GIRONA (SP).

AS SUGGESTED IN THE TIMELINE OF THE PLANT PROJECT, SÃO PEDRO DE AZEVEDO, AN AREA CLOSE TO THE CENTRAL ELÉTRICA IN PORTO, WAS TO BE A "CELEBRATION OF LIFE" TO CONCLUDE THE PROJECT CYCLE AND THE ARTWORKS. THE EVENT'S TITLE WAS "WHAT IS REAL NEEDS FEW WORDS"; IT TOOK THE FORM OF A STRUCTURED PROGRAMME, WITH A JOYFUL, CONVIVIAL SCHEDULE OF PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITIES WITH PERFORMANCES, FOOD, MUSIC AND FILM. THAT INVOLVED MANY LOCAL PEOPLE AND IT WAS A MOMENT TO RELEASE ENERGY, BUT ALSO TO REFLECT AND TAKE STOCK:

WHAT HAS THIS PROJECT ACHIEVED, INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY?

HOW HAS EACH ARTIST'S PRACTICE DEVELOPED OVER TIME AND THROUGH ENGAGEMENT WITH THESE THREE SPECIFIC CONTEXTS?

WHAT PRACTICES, STRATEGIES, AND REPERTOIRES OF PARTICIPATION FACILITATED COLLECTIVE ENGAGEMENT IN THIS EVENT AND OVER THE PLANT PROJECT?

WHAT SPATIAL AND OTHER MATERIAL RESOURCES ENABLED THESE CONTEXTUAL ART PRACTICES AND PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITIES?

SAN PEDRO DE AZEVEDO

IS A NEIGHBOURHOOD IN THE SOUTH-EAST OF PORTO, CLEARLY SEPARATED FROM THE URBAN FRINGE BY MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE - MAINLY THE RAILWAY LINES AND A MOTORWAY RUNNING PARALLEL TO ITS WESTERN BOUNDARY. THIS PERIPHERAL LOCATION IS FURTHER ACCENTUATED BY LIMITED ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT, WITH ONLY A SINGLE BUS LINE CONNECTING THE AREA TO THE REST OF THE CITY.

SAN PEDRO DE AZEVEDO HAS A PREDOMINANTLY OLDER POPULATION, WHICH MAINTAINS A STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY THROUGH VARIOUS ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES. THESE INSTITUTIONS REFLECT THE RESILIENCE AND SOLIDARITY OF THE RESIDENTS, WHO STRIVE TO MAINTAIN THEIR TRADITIONS AND WAY OF LIFE IN THE FACE OF THE CHALLENGES OF CHANGE, MODERNISATION AND GENTRIFICATION.

SPATIAL COMMONS

AS THE RAIN POURED DOWN FOR SEVERAL DAYS DURING THE EVENT, IT REMINDED US OF THE PRACTICAL CHALLENGES OF CONTEXTUAL ART PRACTICES IN OPEN SPACES. SEVERAL ARTS ACTIVITIES WERE OUTDOORS AND HAD TO BE CUT SHORT OR REPLACED WITH AN INDOOR VERSION.

HOWEVER, THIS IN TURN MADE OTHER SPACES BECOME MORE IMPORTANT FOR GATHERINGS, NAMELY THE FOOTBALL CLUB AND THE OLD THEATRE/COMMUNITY SPACE. BOTH BECAME IMPORTANT SPATIAL COMMONS, MOBILIZED THROUGH ARTISTIC PRACTICES FOR DIVERSE PURPOSES THAT FOSTER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION.

VASILIS NTOUROS, DORA ZOUMBA AND ARIS PAPADOPOULOS

MONUMENTUM

- I WANT A MONUMENT THAT IS IMAGINARY
- I WANT A MONUMENT THAT IS COLLECTIVE
- I WANT A MONUMENT THAT GIVES VOICE TO MANY
- I WANT A MONUMENT THAT INVITES FOR REFLECTION
- I WANT A MONUMENT THAT ACTIVATES ME, MOVES ME
- A MONUMENT THAT IS THOUGHT-OUT FROM THE BOTTOM-UP
- I WANT A MONUMENT THAT INCLUDES ME
- I WANT A MONUMENT THAT IS PERFORMATIVE
- A MONUMENT THAT CAN BE ALTERED AND RE-CONFIGURED
- I WANT A MONUMENT THAT EMERGES WHEN IT IS NEEDED
- A MONUMENT THAT DISAPPEARS AFTER ITS ACTIVATION
- I WANT A MONUMENT THAT EMERGES AFTER ITS ACTIVATION
- THAT IS ALIVE AND CAN BE ALTERED AND RE-CONFIGURED
- A MONUMENT THAT EMERGES WHEN IT IS NEEDED
- I WANT A MONUMENT THAT DOES NOT IMPOSED TO ITS SURROUNDINGS
- THAT IS SITUATED BUT NOT IMPOSED TO ITS SURROUNDINGS
- A MONUMENT THAT ALLOWS FOR SPATIAL REARRANGEMENT AND CAN TAKE MANY FORMS
- THAT EMERGES MOMENTARILY OUT OF ITS OWN CONTEXT
- A MONUMENT THAT DOES NOT NORMALLY MATCH
- THAT JOINS TOGETHER MATTERS THAT DO NOT NORMALLY MATCH
- A MONUMENT THAT IS EPHEMERAL AND IS BROUGHT TO LIFE IN THE PRESENT MOMENT
- A MONUMENT THAT ALLOWS FOR PARTICIPATION AND TRANSFORMATION
- THAT GIVES EQUAL CHANCES TO CO-CREATE
- A MONUMENT THAT DOES NOT RELY ON ITS PHYSICAL PRESENCE, AS OBJECT, TO BE REMEMBERED
- THAT INCORPORATES THE PLACES, DETAILS, STORIES AND FEELINGS OF ITS OWN MAKERS
- THAT REPEATS ITSELF FOR AS MANY TIMES NECESSARY
- THAT GENERATES MEANING
- THAT INCLUDES THE PHYSICAL BODIES OF THE PERSONS INVOLVED IN ITS MAKING
- THAT SPEAKS OF THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN, BUT LOOKS EAGERLY TOWARDS A POSITIVE FUTURE
- A MONUMENT THAT DESTROYS NORMATIVE, TOP-DOWN IDEAS
- THAT CAN BE ERECTED AND, AT THE SAME TIME, DISPERSE INTO A MILLION FRAGMENTS
- THAT INVOLVES EMBODIED MEMORIES AND EXPERIENCE
- THAT IS TACTILE AND TANGIBLE
- THAT REQUIRES EFFORT BOTH PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY
- A MONUMENT THAT IS SOFT LIKE A SUBTLE GESTURE
- THAT DOES NOT TAKE ITSELF TOO SERIOUSLY
- THAT IS SIMPLE BUT NOT SIMPLISTIC
- THAT ALLOWS BEING-THINKING WITH OTHERS
- A MONUMENT THAT IS A CELEBRATION OF COMMON TIME TOGETHER
- THAT DANCES, MAKES SOUND, CREATES SPACE AND CONNECTIONS
- THAT IS MADE OF ASSOCIATIONS
- A MONUMENT AS RELAY OF ACTIONS, IMAGES, THOUGHTS AND DESIRES OF PERSONS, PAST AND PRESENT
- A MONUMENT THAT TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE ACTIONS, IMAGES, THOUGHTS AND DESIRES OF PERSONS IN THE FUTURE
- A MONUMENT THAT SAYS 'YES' TO IMPULSE AND CREATIVITY
- THAT IS NOT EASY TO GRASP IN ITS ENTIRETY
- THAT IS AS COMPLEX AND CONTRADICTIVE AS THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PERSONS INVOLVED
- CREATING IT
- A MONUMENT THAT LIVES FOR JUST ONE DAY
- A MONUMENT THAT OBSCURES ELEMENTS NO LONGER NEEDED
- THAT BRINGS TO LIGHT INSIGNIFICANT DETAILS
- A MONUMENT THAT HAS NO PEDESTAL
- A MONUMENT THAT ARISES FROM THE RUINS
- I WANT A MONUMENT ABOUT THE EFFORT OF REMEMBERING AND THE EFFORT OF FORGETTING



PLANT IS A COOPERATION PROJECT CO-FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION, THROUGH THE CREATIVE EUROPE PROGRAMME.