Horti+Cultures: Participation and Sustainable Development of Cities

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Abstract

The wasteland vegetable garden, Horta do Baldio, arose from the artistic programme *More for Less than for More*, which was set up in Lisbon from December 2013 to June 2014. It was one of four community gardens that this cultural programme planned to develop with the participation and training of volunteers, under the thematic banner of a *vegetable garden on every c*orner, with the objective that they would serve as a *temporary stage* for the artistic programme. The particular characteristics of the wasteland vegetable garden were that, firstly, it was set on an empty lot in the city center of Lisbon and, secondly, it managed to gather around itself an active and creative Community till today. This paper aims to reflect not only this process of participatory citizenship, but also on the role of art and culture in the sustainable development of a city.

Keywords: artistic vegetable gardens; art and agriculture; art and participation.

Introduction

From the beginning of the new millennium the performing arts sector in Portugal has expanded in two directions. The first covers the area of cultural programmes, through an increase in the number of cultural organizations, mega-events and festivals, from the most official to the most alternative. The second involves transdisciplinary or hybrid arts, through an increase in the number of artistic projects that combine different artistic disciplines and even the recent social and exact sciences researches in areas such as anthropology, sociology, biology, etc.

At the moment, the correlation between the two areas – cultural programmes and transdisciplinary arts – is particularly obvious in cultural laboratory programmes, which lay greater emphasis on the artistic process than production/presentation of the final work. We can see that this specific programming format, in which the transdisciplinary and transcultural facets of art predominate, goes beyond the performing arts system (by incorporating the plastic arts, technological arts etc.), the Portuguese national art system (by incorporating influences/agents with different cultural origins) and even the art system itself (by setting its action in active civic, participation and intervention movements in the local or even global society).

The programming space is taken as a test laboratory for social questions, jointly shared by the artistic community, specialists from the different social domains and the general public. To discuss this process and its effects, we shall analyse the wasteland Vegetable Garden, Horta do Baldio, which arose from the artistic programme More for less than for more (started in December 2013), which was elaborated by the Portuguese choreographer Vera Mantero (with the collaboration of the architect Rui Santos and the performer Elisabete Francisca) in a production of the Cultural Association Rumo de Fumo, Teatro Maria Matos and Culturgest. It was one of four (almost five) community gardens that this cultural programme planned to develop with the participation and training of volunteers, under the thematic banner of a vegetable garden on every corner, with the objective that they would serve as a *temporary stage* for the artistic programme that took place in the period from April to June 2014. Nowadays in September 2015 we still have this ephemeral and utopic space in our town with the participation of community. This paper aims to reflect

not only this process of participatory citizenship but also the role of art and culture in the sustainable development of a city.

1. Art programming for utopic planning of the city

With ever greater frequency, the spheres of artistic creation and programming are appealing to their potential public to be part of the artistic process, not only as receivers, or even participants or *collaborators* (Suzanne, 1996: 37), but also as active citizens. This can be seen when the public is encouraged to participate in the thematisation, problematisation and even resolution of social issues, within the scope of artistic or programming proposals.

Underlying this addition of the idea of civic engagement to the concept of artistic participation is a new endeavour to relate art to the social sphere, a *return to the real* (Foster, 1999) or a *return to social* (Bishop, 2012) of which the nucleus is no longer *objects* but the *issues* themselves of the social sphere (Milevska, 2006).

Various factors from the artistic, social and political domain help to explain this expansion in the concept of artistic participation.

In the artistic field, on the one hand, art has undergone a progressive invasion by everyday topics (Zolberg, 1997) — whose history can be seen in various artistic *movements* that seek to re-connect art with social issues, from romanticism to realism, to performance and happenings, and on to situationism etc. On the other hand, it may even be said that underlying this emphasis on participation is the recovery of one of the structural/original functions of art, as a means of expression for the common person.

In a manifesto article entitled Art Alienated – An Essay on the Decline of Participatory-Art (1989), Greg Evans emphasised the fact that in capitalist societies, in contrast to others (from primitive to pre-capitalist, e.g. mediaeval or Renaissance, societies), there has been a regression in artistic participation caused by the monopoly of art seen as a commodity/item of consumption and not as participation. In his view, this cycle should be reversed. To quote him:

> It is vital that we liberate ourselves from this fetishism of art-products, and thereby overcome our artistic alienation. As with all forms of human expression, the making of art is an essential part of our being and of our need to express our feelings and thoughts, joys and sorrows. In addition, it can be satisfying and fun in a way that no art-commodity can possibly be, because one is actually doing instead of just watching. Ultimately, then, we must start making our own art in order to begin the process of liberating ourselves from the alienation of commodity culture, and thereby regain our ability to fulfil our expressive needs (Evans, 1989:2).

This proposal reflects what the philosopher Jacques Rancière (2007) calls the "emancipation of the spectator", who should become a participant in artistic processes instead of standing by as a mere receiver, removed from the act of creation. Since the nineties, in particular, Claire Bishop has been producing a register of this type of "participative art", which has been expanding the artistic field into post-studio practices and been given different names: socially engaged art, community-based art, experimental communities, dialogic art, contextual art and (most recently) social practice (Bishop, 2012:1). One of the characteristics of this "participative art", as the author mentions, is that this art generally includes an ethical posture (Bishop, 2012: 23), where social transformation or change is sought.

In the social field, the sociologists Richard Sennett and Jeffrey Alexander offer a more structural explanation. For Sennett (1986), there has been a progressive erosion in the sphere of public life since the 18th century, through what he terms "the tyranny of intimacy", in which public life has come to be evaluated on principles of intimacy, subjectivity and proximity. This mixture between the public and private spheres has reduced the

common citizen's active participation in public life, resulting in a fall in the number of those who have kept an active voice (e.g. the politicians or artists), with the rest becoming a silent crowd, merely squashed spectators. For Alexander (2006a), this separation between the spheres has resulted in the loss of "fusion" or "organicity" in the elements inherent in social performances (which include the systems of collective representation, the actors, the audience, and the means of symbolic production, e.g. the space, costumes and props for the production, along with the social power and the staging). This is reflected in a fall in the creation of shared "units of meaning", as happened in primitive ritualistic societies, for example. To regain that "fusion", this writer, like Greg Evans, recommends more active and participative integration of the agents in the public sphere (Alexander, 2006b).

In this connection, the expansion of participation in art may be explained both as a basic process, to be set against liberal trends that tend to reduce art to mere consumption and, from a more structural viewpoint, as a form of guaranteeing a more organic and inclusive social performance in the public sphere. This latter factor provides a better justification for associating the concept of participation in art with the political dimensions of the concept of participation, which are operationalised through more classical ideas such as representation and community or more recent notions such as participatory governance (Rhodes 1996; Rosenau 1992), planning and sustainability. This incorporation allows participation in art to be assumed as an alternative power to politics itself, a parallel polis, which competes as a civil power of citizen engagement and intervention, on the basis of civil society and beyond the authority of the state.

In the political field, therefore, there are various factors that may help to explain this expansion in the concept of artistic participation: from the crisis in the legitimacy of the state to the claims of the actors (seeking to take in groups that are generally excluded from participation or representation) and on to the complexity itself of the social problems and the diversity necessary for decision-making. In general terms, these factors may be included in the emerging paradigm of participation that is based on a re-interpretation of representative democracy and the need to complement it with participatory democracy, and perhaps extend it (Guerra 2006; Fung & Wright 2003; Dryzek 1990).

In brief, it may be said that the expansion of participation in the artistic sphere emphasizes a creative and less ideology-driven desire (in relation to the traditional 'ideological' protest model) to become independent, on the part of the citizens – a need to articulate their own questions "and find ever more inventive modes of taking part in the processes that are determining their lives" (Rogoff & Schneider, 2008:348).

This code of political ideas not only extends to discourse but also the forms and methodologies used to develop participation in art. The process is based on a combination of the classical principle of a cultural programme (generally applied by cultural intermediaries to activities restricted to the artistic field) and the concept of strategic planning (mainly applied in land-use planning policies and associated at present with participatory governance) (Madeira, 2010). This process has been strengthened with the expansion of the principle of sustainability, which, in being inherent in the planning process, is also being included now in artistic discourse and practices. For some writers, it reflects a "new frontier for art" (Kagan & Volker, 2008).

Adopted from the principles of planning and sustainability, these methodologies have the following underlying elements: the importance attributed to a critical attitude; the notion of participation as a democratic value; and the problematisation of social issues (e.g. social justice, cultural diversity, conservation). This problematisation includes a more comprehensive perspective of the various aspects of sustainability (social, economic, political, ecological and cultural) as well as of the various spatial scales (including, on the one hand, local and global dynamics, or even new "glocal" processes that stress an intercultural standpoint) and the various time scales (encompassing various notions of time, from the here and now to the long term or to future time). When associated with the artistic sphere, these methodologies are applied within platforms of collaboration, forums, composed of people from the art world, specialists in various social fields and the general public. These forums aim to develop diagnoses, beginning with urgent

social issues in a specific (local or global) territory that allow alternative and more inclusive scenarios to be generated.

2. Case study: Horta do Baldio

The mixture of art, ethics and politics, programming and planning, is reflected, at various levels, in Horta do Baldio. In the beginning, it was a wasteland, a vast space full of weeds and wild flowers, a shelter for the homeless and a place to take your dog for a leak, a place stuck behind apartment buildings near a very central zone of Lisbon, Campo Pequeno Square. It was a space marked out by crumbling walls, a car park, the Roma Arreiro train line and a cul-de-sac.

This space has had several uses and functions in Lisbon: an old panel of traditional tiles, on the other side of the train line, depict the meaning of the names of the different areas. These pictures show Entre Campos (Between Fields) and Campo Pequeno (Little Field), in former times, with their stately homes and farmed fields irrigated by the River Alvalade. The area was also the setting of a battle and civil war that didn't happen because a miracle. Two armies, son against father, divided by the River Alvalade, are kneeling before the saintly mother, who makes peace between them simply by her presence. More recently, in the first half of the 20th century, city life transformed this space that had, in the meantime, been surrounded by tall buildings, and a beer brewery (which has now gone). The brewery was replaced by a small lake created by an underground river where no miracle managed to avoid the drowning of two children playing there. Many good and bad memories are mixed in what was and is this space. There have been several projects for this valuable piece of land waiting for new constructions in central Lisbon, the most recent was for a new hotel and shopping centre. However, building stopped when it was realised that there is a river under the land which makes it difficult to lay deep foundations necessary. The empty space became the perfect place for a social experiment: a garden and a community looking after it. In the artistic programme More for Less than for More this blending of art and the social was objectified by a manifesto:

> We wanted to dance among the vegetables, flow between roots, make music to encourage seeds, draw by listening to plants, humming to their growth, eating in front of the food (when it is still in the earth), talk to vegetables, recite great texts in the middle of the garden, have edible scenography.
> We wanted to counteract the train and see the food growing near our homes in idle land we passed every day, encouraging others to cultivate it with us. We wanted have a hand in the food (*Mais para menos do que pra mais* program, Rumo de Fumo).

Based on this desire, four (almost five!) gardens were made: the Horta Mandala (which started as Horta Grande (Big Garden), then Horta Mandala (Mandala Garden) and was finally called Horta do Baldio (Wasteland Garden) after a vote by the volunteers); The Horta do Lago (Pond Garden) e a Horta da Cobertura (Roof Garden), which are both at the head office of the Caixa Geral de Depósitos bank; the Horta das Galveias (Galveias Garden) (a vertical garden in the Galveias Palace garden), and the site-specific instalation of small gardens grown in small fruit boxes and taken in procession on the streets by the volunteers to another wasteland in Bairro das Estacas, the so called Marcha do Orgulho Hortícola (Horticultural Pride Parade), which would lead to the Horta súbita (Sudden Garden). These various types of gardens were designed and prepared by several gardeners with urban agriculture experience with the help of volunteers who wanted to participate in the project Uma Horta em cada esquina (A vegetable garden on every corner).

The volunteers were invited to participate in several permaculture workshops, such as Dream a vegetable garden – Garden Management, Build a pond, or Aromatic plants for cooking and medicine. Some private vegetable gardens appeared due to a part of this project called Da varanda ao produtor! (From the balcony

to the producer!), where training was made available for building vegetable gardens at home and promoting a network of exchange of seeds and extra-production with other gardeners, encouraging the sustainability of proximity vegetable production. At the website, we read that "It is possible to define where it makes more sense to grow something (e. g, aromatic plants on the balcony, lettuces in the kitchen garden, carrots in one of the community gardens, potatoes bought from a nearby producer). We can organize ourselves in order to optimize all our resources!)".

Other events were developed in this project:

- A cycle of conferences and debates called Circuito Curto-Curto-circuito for experts and non-experts about urban agriculture, in order to discuss the current agricultural production system and explore alternatives for sustainable production and consumption based on national and international examples. In these conferences, scientists shared their experiences with associations and projects on urban agriculture. This theoretical approach allowed art to be put alongside a scientific position, an ethical art for social change, for *a better world*. In short, it thus created a social forum with the artistic community and theoretical specialists, to reflect on the social issues and "contemporary urgencies" (Rogoff & Schneider, 2008: 352) affecting contemporary societies and cities on a global level.

- Exhibition of documentaries and docfiction on the relationship between cities, agriculture and food in the shop windows in a nearby shopping area in Av. Guerra Junqueiro in Lisbon, called Cinema in the shop windows – bringing together the idea of consumption and a criticism of the way it is done in our societies.

- And also a group of artistic and performative events that had the city and the new gardens created as a set, promoting experiences calling for public participation and more sensorial, as well as being more closely connected to the land or the water: such as the performance One to One - Ruminant Tours where new details and sounds of the city were discovered and the participant's feet were washed in a bowl in the Horta Garden; or the Ação Aquática (Aquatic Action) performance with improvised music and action in an aquatic environment, in the Pond Garden and where the participants also had the right to get their feet wet and walk barefoot or in rubber boots in the pond; or the Time Beach performance made up of dance, performance, drawing workshops, readings, sound experiments, talks and guided tours that went between the Vertical garden in the Galveias Palace, and the Pond and Roof Gardens.

In this context, Lucinda Childs' Calico Mingling choreography, 1973, was presented again; where everyday situations become performance: walking, sitting or running. In the performance Conversas em namoradeiras (Conversations in loveseats), on stone benches placed opposite each other, private conversations between the performers and the audience became performances and in the wandering readings participants could hear readings *in keeping with its drifting*.

In the performance, Notas sobre Hortas (Nortas)(Notes about Gardens) (Notardens), created at the Horta Súbita (Sudden Garden) in the Bairro das Estacas, there was an attempt to show what it is to create a vegetable garden: "1. To work in a garden is to work uncovered. A garden doesn't have a roof. 2. In a garden, there are always things happening, things that aren't yet (potentialities or possibilities). Seeds are, we could say, pure speculation. 3. The city's hustle and bustle contrasts with the slowness of the garden: a fast car passing next to a cabbage growing."

In Horta Mandala, now called Horta do Baldio, the Teatro da Agricultura (Agriculture Theatre) took place and included a harvest, drawing workshop, staged reading, audio-installation, a light meal and a dance performance: the harvest was a walk with each garden's gardeners, to harvest with cultivation tales. There were also several projects to hear the garden's sounds: Lisbon by sound/ Baldio (audio-installation) that presents with the historical impact of the train on the city's food consumption. Exercícios para ouvir plantas (Exercises to listen to plants) – a drawing workshop; A performance Para uma grande horta grandes textos (For a great garden great texts), performed readings directed by Vera Mantero where actors and audience got together inside the circular garden, "surrounded by edible plants and truculent thoughts", followed by a

picnic in the garden and a dance performance.

This closed the Mais para menos do que para mais programme. This practice of creative vegetable gardens is not completely new. In the 1970s, there was a community project developed by Bonnie Ora Sherk and Jack Wickert in San Francisco, in a zone surrounded by overpasses and affectionately called The Farm. With some collaborators and the local community, they transformed this no place into a farm, a community centre, a school without walls, and a human and animal theatre. Several theatres and artists, poets, dancers, punks, children, gardeners, animals and members of the community took up residence there. It was around that time that performers like Joseph Beuys developed ecological intervention projects and land art came on the scene. Recently, for instance, Martha Rosler created a similar project within the scope of the 3rd Singapore Biennale creating a multifunctional garden with the help of the community in an avenue near the airport. In Portugal, the main ideologist of the restitution of spaces to cultivation by the urban population has been the architect Gonçalo Ribeiro Telles, distinguished in 2013 with the *Nobel* of Landscape Architecture, the Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe Award. He began the process in the 1950s, in Pedrouços, an area which was built but later destroyed. Indeed, only at the end of the millennium, did municipalities such as Lisbon, Porto, Seixal, Oeiras and Odivelas, among others, start to invest in developing urban gardens. The process, however, is still relatively marginal and is not treated as a priority issue in the sustainable redevelopment of cities. Clandestine vegetable gardens, however, proliferate in various areas of the city, and several Portuguese artists have been recording these processes using photography in particular. In photography, for instance, there is the work No name place that Fernanda Fragateiro presented in 1998 in Sala de Exposiones del canal de Isabel II, in Madrid, curated by João Pinharanda, where the artist documents the ephemeral vegetable gardens she photographed in 1989, in Martim Moniz, Lisbon. The catalogue tells us that "No name place documents a space that operated on the fringes of the system. These ephemeral gardens that, in 1989, were photographed at Martim Moniz, in central Lisbon, temporarily 'occupy' 'abandoned' spaces. A place where there are ruined buildings and new buildings are expected. During the dead times in between, people plant, labourers who left the fields to work in the city can thus maintain a link with the land, that they didn't own. These spaces, both private and public, displaced and integrated, and quietly squatted on were small pockets of resistance, impossible to classify." In 2001, during Marvila Capital do Nada (Marvila capital of Nothing), Fernanda Fragateiro developed a participatory project to regenerate the flowerbeds in the Loios area. Aromatic plants and lime trees were planted and the public space was reorganized with artistic intervention.

In 2006, Ângela Ferreira also started keeping a photographic record through the series Hortas na Autoestrada (Motorway Gardens) and continued it in the exhibition in Museu do Neorrealismo in 2009. Her work shows the gardens emerging around the IC19 motorways, occupied mainly by immigrant communities from Portuguese Speaking African Countries. As David Santos, curator of the exhibition, said, these photographs "stress the paradoxical meaning of concepts such as survival, community, economy, territory and ownership, observing in the gardens of the Lisbon suburbs an individual practice that still has a political sense, even if reinvented, a urban "agrarian reform" (Santos, 2009: 118). This author points out that the reading of these photographs "promotes again in Angela Ferreira the need for a political re-evaluation of human action, even when it is not determined by ideology, but only the expression of an urgent need" (Santos, 2009:121). In artistic terms, Ângela Ferreira adds performative dynamics to this record. In 2006, she had stamped her presence on the photographs, walking with a red flag along the vegetable gardens. In the 2009 photographs, performance insinuates its way into the artistic actions left in space, blending with the vegetable gardens. In October 2014, Fernando Brito also introduced in the Avenida da Índia gallery, a photographic survey called Nas Hortas (In the Vegetable Gardens), where once again the precarious, order and disorder, and chaos are highlighted. Also in 2014, Rodrigo Bettencourt da Câmara produced a work he called Transportadores de Memórias (Memory Transporters), where he carries out a photographic survey of

illegally cultivated land where Cape Verdean families residing in the Chelas valley cultivate sugarcane to ensure the reproduction of cultural tradition: the making of grogue, an alcoholic beverage, which otherwise could not consumed because it is illegal. In March 2015, Teresa Palma Rodrigues also presented, at the Sala Veado, a project where she exhibited objects found in an empty space in Chelas, where there is an illegal vegetable garden. Some objects are transformed into paintings, while others are placed in showcase tables: fossils found in the ground, lost playing cards, tiles left from manor houses that occupied those places in the past.

These projects give visibility to the confluence of paths that run through these fringe locations: between leisure and work, between cultures, places and times.

Other projects have emerged in which a dynamic more programmatic or curatorial aspect is underlined. One of them was Projeto Bloom - Arte e jardins efémeros (Bloom Project - Art and ephemeral gardens), in Fábrica da Pólvora, between 8th and 31st July 2005, with an international discussion forum on relationship between art and ephemeral gardens and the construction of several of these gardens in space. *Projecto 270* was a space dedicated to permaculture, where in 2007, when the project was still based in Costa da Caparica, two artistic projects of collective experimentation were created. The *Morro* project, organized by Vasco Costa and Hugo Canoilas, was an ephemeral architectural project later dismantled and replaced by *Disco Batata*, a project by environmental activists and the artists Sophie Dodelin and Kazsas Tamás. This last project built a multifunctional performative space, that could serve both for future activist meetings for the ecologist cause, as well as a space for meditation and introspection, and also a space to play, among other possible functions. In 2009, the Cascais City Council launched a land art festival and, in 2010, the Museu do Design e da Moda hosted an exhibition called Sementes. Valor Capital (Seeds. Capital value) (18th Dec. 2010-20th March 2011), curated by Barbara Coutinho. In order to awaken public awareness regarding biodiversity, the exhibition displayed 500 varieties of agricultural seeds grown in Portugal, stored in the old vaults of the Banco Nacional Ultramarino, thus receiving another capital value on which the very survival of species depends: seeds. Other projects have been developed with less public visibility, but still showing an increase of interest from the artistic community. There was Estufa (Greenhouse) by Projeto Teatral, which took place between 2005 and 2006, in which a greenhouse was built in the garden of an apartment in a street in Lisbon's historic centre: Rua de Caetano Palha (in São Bento), nº 37, r/c. The project, as if it was different scenarios, was open to the public during its various stages of development, culminating in the dismantling of the greenhouse.

These projects, however, bear little resemblance to what goes on in the Horta do Baldio as it exists today. For this project's name, voted for by its members, implies a utopian and performative ideal to transform an empty space into agricultural land for communal and creative sharing (Baldio means both *wasteland* and *common*). Its guardians are the participants, an open community consisting of fixed and occasional members, depending on availability and skills for the development of the garden. It isn't a community based on physical proximity, but on ideology, with participants going there from other areas of the city and even from the metropolitan area of Greater Lisbon, such as Oeiras, Almada, etc. There are also people from different projects that help with the Horta projects. This informality has been an ethical value of respect for the space: the space has remained assigned to Rumo de Fumo with the compromise of immediate eviction if the owner's construction project comes to life.

This has slowed down the project's progress and its development into an association, but hasn't stopped it being a laboratory of experiments for new situations. There has, in fact, been a Dragon Dreaming process where the volunteers talked about their ideas and ideals for the space and the Horta has, in fact, won an award sponsored by the electricity company EDP / Visão magazine and the President of the Republic called Todos Queremos um Bairro Melhor (We All Want a Better Neighbourhood). In its application for the award,

the Horta proposed 1) a community centre / research garden; 2) construction of community gardens without individual plots; and 3) a communal outdoor cooking area with solar oven and a traditional clay oven.

However, if the existing type of open participation from the neighbours is an advantage, it can also be a weakness. The lack of constant local participation in the Horta makes it more difficult to keep the space up, in terms of agricultural maintenance, the creation of alternative solutions to become autonomous in relation to the water (which, for over a year, has been supplied by the police in the nearby carpark), or even in the difficulties maintaining the space clean and preventing vandalism. There is therefore a dissonance between participatory reality and the idealization of community involvement, which is fundamental for management on a daily basis. The project has, therefore, been reassessed, involving restoring the image of a clean garden, without wild vegetation, without waste and without vandalism, and establishing an artistic programming process to act as a bridge into the community. This last aim is being prepared by a group of students from FCSH-UNL, the Performing Arts Masters I'm supervising in my seminar about cultural programming. They were to devise concepts and programme lines for the Horta respecting the informality of the space. It is expected that these projects will be discussed later in the Horta with the gardeners and the Rumo de Fumo, and will bear fruit next year. he full article should be between 5,000 and 9,000 words in length. (This word count does not include references.). All text must start at the left-hand margin. (Word style: Arial 10 pt, line spacing 14.5 pt, alignment justified). The sections of the text's main body must be clear. The different subsections of the article must be enumerated and bold. The body of the text should not contain bold or underlined text.

Conclusion - The effects/defects of art participation programming

Therefore, we can conclude that these programmers undoubtedly demand a space in society for discussion and even intervention. For this reason, as already mentioned, their action is based on a notion of participation in art as an alternative power to politics, that is, as the "will to be able to act in another way" (Giddens, 2000: 87) – on a form of action that not only implies reflexivity but also the variability necessary to find non-codified solutions within already known effects.

This form of action may be reflected in the notion put forward by Irit Rogoff and Florian Schneider (2008) of "productive anticipation", which, when successful, may even create "social fictions" that serve alternative and more inclusive scenarios, in relation to the prevailing reality. This is because the notion of "productive anticipation" attempts to characterize a state that is simultaneously reflexive and participatory; not formatted or speculative (in the sense that it does not try to give directions on observing or to set out predefined ways of seeing) but endowed with a strong performing potential.

As a form of action, "productive anticipation" reflects an openness and a fundamentally experimental nature that is based on participant inclusion and factors that are not generally encompassed in the political powers' decision-making processes. And so, according to these writers, this inclusion of a multiplicity of voices and aspirations makes room for the "productive" construction of "social fictions".

"Social fiction" in the sense of the creation of imaginary manifestoes and projects that may offer the chances of alternative scenarios, because they focus "on the possibility of the here-and-now of aspects that generally remain at the edge of processes" (Rogoff & Schneider, 2008: 350). So the main value of these "social fictions" is "to experiment with the possible and, at the same time, produce narrations that resonate in the present" (Rogoff & Schneider, 2008: 349). As these writers mention, it is a question of "anticipation", in the more creative or productive sense, though it needs to be distinguished from reproductive anticipation, which operates on the basis of a predictable repetitiveness.

The potential of these "social fictions" encounters its effects and defects in the same practice on which it is based: participation. Because here, too, or especially here, in this alternative space to the more conspicuous forms of politics, a discourse on the participation and "emancipation of the receiver" is not enough for the

latter to take place. Because, as some studies indicate, democratic participation by the citizens seems to be inversely proportionate to the importance attributed to it in the discourses: the traditionally excluded people's difficulty in participating is maintained, a factor that tends to be conjured away by the growing presence of "middle-class" participation (Guerra, 2006). For this reason, participation processes must be assessed in order to achieve transparency not only in the form (which agents participate and how?) or their content (they participate in what?) but also the interplay of the inherent consensus and conflicts, and the effects of participation.

Paradoxically, evaluation seems to be the great absentee from these programmes that base their discourse and practices on the concept of participation in art. Generally speaking, no one questions who effectively participates or the results of that participation. This absence, which tends to be justified by the non-utilitarian nature of art, gives room for participation to be taken as a value in itself which needs no questioning. When this happens, it is not "social fictions" that develop, based on a de-programming that promotes scenarios of "productive anticipation" but, instead, Pandora's boxes are created – and their potential and their effects on the social sphere remain to be seen.

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