

Programme

- 13:00** Welcome and introduction by Signe Meisner, (Mobilex postdoc, ZHdK).
- 13:15** Paulina Varas (CRAC) and Nahuel Quiroga (Espacio Santa Ana), "Did I invite you to live here?" Radical Urban Practices in Valparaiso.
- 14:15** Jens Strandberg (Home Works), "A Typical Konsthall C Day"
- 15:15** Coffee
- 15:45** Rachel Mader (Lucerne Hochschule), "Continue to Negotiate. Between Institutional Framings and Autonomous Gestures"
- 16:30** Discussion – moderated by Rachel Mader and Signe Meisner.
- 17:30** Reception



The seminar is organized by Signe Meisner and the Research Programme in Museology, Aarhus University, in collaboration with Kunsthal Aarhus. Contact: signemeisner@cc.au.dk



Ciara Phillips in collaboration with Hemtjänstuppöret (2015). From the exhibition Warm Friends, Cold Cash by Ciara Phillips. Commissioned by Konsthall C. Photo credit: Ciara Phillips

Precarious Infrastructures

How to build institutions that escape the logics of touristification and urban service economies

26 April 2017 at 13:00

Kunsthall Aarhus, J. M. Mørks Gade 13, 8000 Aarhus C

Introduction

As the demand for immersive cultural events and for art as an integrated value in leisure economies increases, it becomes still more attractive for institutions to adapt to the measures of urban service economies. In fact, an institutional model based on art and culture as an attractive resource has become the predominant model – and it may seem that there is no alternative. The seminar Precarious Infrastructures directs attention to the border-crossing strategies developed in self-organized art projects as a place to find inspiration for alternative models of connecting art, culture, creativity and institutional action. Seizing on the idea of precarious infrastructure as a creative tool for enabling alternative models of co-existence, the seminar presents experiences and accounts from two recent experiments with border crossing institutional action. These are: CRAC/Espacio Santa Ana (Chile) and Konsthall C (Sweden). What is special for these initiatives (CRAC and Home Works programme) is that they do not conform to pre-established divisions of labour in the art institution. Rather they develop lines of allegiances and collaborative working models from local situations – disregarding such divisions between artistic practice, social co-creation and institutional agency. The purpose is to discuss with our international guests: what can be learned from such small-scale experiments? And does the notion of precarious infrastructure hold a political force as an institutional thinking based on solidarity and collective co-creation?

Invited guests

Jens Strandberg (SE) (together with Jenny Richards) has been working artistic director at Konsthall C (2015-17). He defines himself as a "full-time-unemployed-artist". He spends a major part of his time at the unemployment office, at which place he insists on calling himself an artist. Nobody believes him and he barely believes himself any more. He sometimes goes on an artist residency abroad, which he considers a vacation from life as unemployed. Jenny Richards is presently working as a curator at Marabouparken in Stockholm. She holds a MA in Art and Politics from Goldsmiths University. Her research focuses on the political perspective of collaboration. Recent publications include "We Build Families: The aesthetics of Domestic Labour - Critical Cities Vol. 4" together with Marrison Begonia and Louise Shelley, and "Loving Work" together with Sophie Hope about the feeling of pleasure and pain in the body of a cultural worker published in "European Journal for Cultural Studies".

Paulina Varas (CL) and **Nahuel Quiroga** (CL) have been collaborating on workshops and events in the city of Valparaíso. Paulina is co-coordinator of CRAC Valparaíso, a collaborative research platform that operates in the city of Valparaíso. She is a researcher and professor in Campus Creativo, Universidad Andrés Bello in Chile. Since 2007, she has been a member of the Red Conceptualismos del Sur. Nahuel is founder and member of the group Espacio Santa Ana, a community organization in the city of Valparaíso, dedicated mainly to the development of cooperative and self-management practices from production without owner(s). He is professor in Theory and History of Architecture at the Central University of Chile and Visiting Lecturer in the Cultural Identity, Social Justice, and Community Development program of the international school-based Program for International Training in Valparaíso.

Rachel Mader (CH) is professor at Lucerne University for Applied Science and Art and head of the Competence Centre for Art and Design in Public Space.

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Abstracts

"Did I invite you to live here?" Radical Urban Practices in Valparaíso, Paulina Varas and Nahuel Quiroga
The presentation on two cultural initiatives in Valparaíso, Chile will focus on some activities of both groups: CRAC Valparaíso and Espacio Santa Ana. The idea is to consider how we work collectively, and what are the micro-political forms in which we develop some projects. The film "A Valparaíso" developed in the 60s in the city of Valparaíso, marks a leakage point, to think about the ways in which the city has been modified in the last 60 years, in relation to the crises of the capitalist model in a port city of the Southern Hemisphere. After Ivens is a starting point to ask ourselves, what survives in the city after capitalism changes? What forms of life do they resist and which cultural forms do they recognize in this legacy? We want to share some ideas related to affective sustainability of our groups, the incidences of subjective and social issues in our practices, are determining the pulse that is developing, how to influence to the processes of political reconfiguration from our cultural practices? How to work in a way situated on the city and its critical memories? Imagining forms of collective creativity is that we want to contribute in the debate about the infrastructures that are held on bases that propose possible futures.

"A typical Konsthall C day", Jens Strandberg

6:50 Alarm, tired, tired, tired, snooze snooze, up. Forcing myself into shower, wash in order to wake up, in order to clean, shave. Breakfast, tea, reading news Listening to radio about the latest news, brushing teeth, getting dress, still tired.
8:00 Out, coffee to wake up, catching up on emails that should have been answered last week, writing emailing, writing new emails, setting meetings.
9-9:45 Late, running. Meeting the auditor for Konsthall C to maintain accounts, no money, no news.
9:45-10 traveling to the konsthall, getting on the wrong route, getting on right route.
10-11 shopping for tonight (using money from own pocket)
10-11:15 making soup for lunch, while answering emails, making funding strategy, producing
12-13 lunch, making strategy for application to sthlm stad. Also checking out the KKN next application, running to check the storage to make sure we have tables, buying limes that we had forgotten.
13-14 Cooking food for dinner, writing emails, planning meetings, finding table
14-15 catching up on emails, burning food, throwing away food, going back to the shop for peppers as we had forgotten. Fixing tables. Washing up. Someone come to see the show, putting the show on, introducing the show, discussing the issues raised in the show. Emailing, setting up meeting, cutting myself, cleaning myself
15-16 building up tables, cleaning tables, cleaning toilet, cleaning floor
16-17 still cooking, trying to work out how to make the space homely – playing tetris with the tables.
17-18 meeting with Gunilla Lundahl about how we will develop the next show.
18.15 running out to buy more coconut milk – will there be enough food? Setting up projector
18.30 getting changed, smelling of cooking. Trying to work the bloody printer
18.45 writing this list, writing a series of questions we wanted to ask.
19.00 welcome
And again tomorrow...

Jens Strandberg will build on the experiences of running the exhibition programme Home Works at Konsthall C. Home Works was a two-year research that discussed the politics of labour particularly highlighting domestic work as labour fundament for all other kinds of work. In the presentation Jens will use the precarity of Konsthall C's infrastructure as departure point for artistic experiments, political workings and collective actions.

"Continue to negotiate". Between institutional framings and autonomous gestures, Rachel Mader

There is a bundle of current discourses that are of interest if we look at 'precarious infrastructures' as it is supposed with this conference. It's not only the very often heard notion of precariousness that due to its presence within debates on art and culture implies a lot of interpretations and unspoken certainties. Also the growing interest in organisation and the possibilities of how to act or negotiate within whatever kind of structure you are in is a very viral and pressing issue.

I suggest to think about the implications of these two terms before looking closer at a new kind of commitment, that in my eyes seem to be major criteria for quite a lot of recently developed organisations. I will mention a couple of criteria that seem to be important for these organisations and situate them with reference to the debates described before.