

Public Art, strategies for the regeneration of public space¹

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Apollinaire El Poeta asesinado : « - Une statue de quoi? demanda Tristouse. / En marbre? En bronze?. /- Non, c'est trop vieux, répondait l'oiseau du/ Bénin, il faut que je lui sculpte une / profonde / statue en rien, comme la poésie et comme la / gloire »

SUMMARY

This paper discusses some of the key concepts in the consideration of public art as a central element in urban regeneration processes, especially in reference to its role in the processes of citizen participation

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RESUMEN

Este trabajo analiza algunos de los conceptos clave en la consideración del Arte Público como elemento clave en los procesos de regeneración urbana, especialmente en referencia a su papel en los procesos de participación ciudadana

RESUM

Aquest treball analitza alguns dels conceptes clau en la consideració de l'Art Públic com a element clau en els processos de regeneració urbana, especialment en referència al seu paper en els processos de participació ciutadana

The introduction of strategic planning as a tool for regulation of urban growth has had a major impact on what can be called "*politics of public art*".

It should be noted that, firstly, this type of planning is a response to a crisis in the city. A particular crisis (1) by an outdated model of the developmental growth of the city based - directly or indirectly on the paradigm of modern architecture (functionality, zoning, etc), (2) the emergence of new "*urban classes*" with different life values from those of previous generations and (3) by a huge change in the productive base of the cities involving, first, a redeployment of the productive fabric - with the side effect of massive unemployment -, and second, the emergence of a huge stock of industrial urban fabric that requires new uses and functionalities. The development of society itself generated a new social setting in which young people, women, racial and sexual minorities began a battle to have a voice in this society more or less wealthy society. Furthermore, the development of disciplines such as ecology urged by the need for revision of industrial production system unsustainable effects.

“Social crisis, cultural crisis, economic crisis and ecological crisis, are the dimensions that are part of urban regeneration programs. These programs should act on economic and social level, meanwhile on the urban fabric from the perspective of sustainability. If we add the revolution in the management information systems we have

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defined the landscape of transition from an industrial society based on production and indiscriminately mass consumption, to a post-industrial society based on services”³
(Remesar- Nunes da Silva)

MODERNISM	POSTMODERNISM
Planning on large-scale	Urban design
Metropolitan-wide	Fragmentation and locality
Urban plans technologically rational and efficient plans	Palimpsest /collage of forms and uses
Space considered to be shaped for social purposes	Space autonomous and independent to be shaped according aesthetic aims and principles
Based on a social project	Timeless and disinterested beauty as an objective

A. Remesar, adapted from Harvey⁴

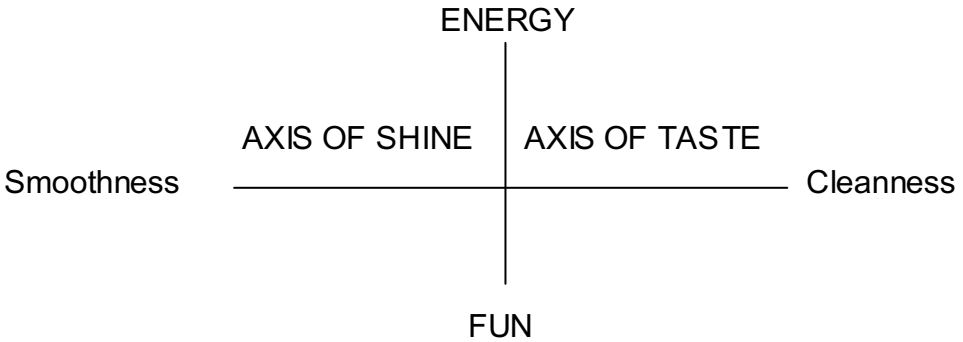
The logic of construction of the city and its public space, therefore move from the modernist paradigm to the new tenets of postmodernism. Without going into other

³ REMESAR, A – NUNES DA SILVA; F. Arte Pública e Regeneração Urbana, in AA:VV. Arte Pública e Cidadania. Novas Leituras da Cidade. Lisboa, Caleidoscópio 2010

⁴ HARVEY, David. The postmodern condition. San Francisco, Polity Press. 1990

considerations, it seems appropriate to summarize this dialectic from the synthesis presented by Harvey (1990).

The progression and implementation of the postmodern ways of to “build cities”, have generated a process of "urbanalisation" extensive and intensive. F. Muñoz (2008) departs from the work by José Luis Pardo to define the concept. As noted on several occasions the banality is a condition of our contemporary society. To analyze it Pardo establishes two coordinates systems that describe the semantic mapping of banality.



For Pardo⁵ *“The way in which ways of acting, thinking, saying and feeling are trapped in these coordinates of the system of Taste and the system of Shine (Energy, Fun, Cleanness, Smoothness) that pretend to lock everything that is not trivial, everything worth to feel or say ”* (op.cit. 118).

⁵ PARDO, José Luís. La Banalidad. Barcelona, Anagrama 2004

It is from this schema that Munoz defines urbanisation⁶ "The production of urbanal landscapes can be explained, as in the case of Pardo's banal objects, from the logic underlying the two systems of coordinates. We could talk about speak of "tasty" and "brilliant" landscapes, spaces that would be for a fun time but clean, strong but soft. Adapting the words of Pardo we can define the urbanisation as " the ways in which the forms of thinking, planning and finally of inhabiting the city are built into the coordinates of the taste system and the system shine Both approaches, seek to incorporate every possible form of the non-banal city, all urban form worth to be thought, planned and finally inhabited " (Muñoz, op.cit. 65)

With this scheme, Muñoz points out that the urbanisation requires four new urban requirements:

The image as a prime factor in the production of the city and from there, I might add, the importance of references, the skylines, the skin architecture, of urban icons mission in what public art plays an essential role from the first experiences of the great masters in art-in- public space

The need for adequate security conditions involving urban design parameters that emphasize the visual and behavioural control and facilitate the aesthetization development of the elements that furnish this space

⁶ From URBAN + BANAL, MUÑOZ, F. Urbanización. Barcelona. G.Gili, 2008

The use of some morphological features of the city as public space in terms of "*recreational beaches*", covering central areas of the city (the old town, waterfront, nature reserves, parks, river ...) with a clear effect on [1] theming in its functions and its design, [2] aesthetification raised to the nth degree, with a decisive intervention of Public Art, Architecture and restore operations

The part time consumption urban space, which implies the prevalence of behaviours linked to the visitor among places experience, rather than that of the inhabitant of a place, as can happen in many of the centres during the weekends or in new public spaces to gather mass at specific moments such as the esplanade of the Forum 2004 in Barcelona

The big problem of urbanal landscapes is, following Muñoz, that "*they represent generic environments where the similitude of the urban design programmes⁷ goes hand in hand with the equivalence of uses and behaviours, at the same time that , it is clear, that there is not a global process of homogenization of urban territories. That is, although it has often been associated with the globalization of the city, of the cities with a repetition of certain homogeneous space formats -the same franchise retail space, the appellant tourist and consumption areas, the fact is that always are differences between them and other cities.*

⁷ Public Art would add, as one of the key elements of the status of public space in these environments

[The key] is the management of differences, of these "small differences"” (op.cit 197-198).

The important conclusion by Muñoz is that urbanisation, feature of development in the city today, operates less as a factor of global homogenization, but as a "*processor, as an equalizer*" that domesticates and frames the differences. To what purpose?

To build up a new narrative for the city, superficial and easily assimilated by the various and different layers of citizens and users of the city: from global tourists to residents, from the commuter to illegal immigrants.

Or following Barthes "*the city is a discourse and this discourse is truly a language*⁸". The transition from modern to postmodern paradigm has made it a change of discourse on the city based on a change in language on the approach to the city itself and its construction.

But urbanalized or not, the spaces of the city are and will continue to be designed. Pedro Brandão⁹ addresses the issue of urban design from the conviction of its necessary interdisciplinarity. We will not present now all his arguments, but some of the tables that summarize his position.

⁸ BARTHES, R. *Semiologie*. Paris, Puf, 1975:92

⁹ BRANDÃO, P. *A Cidade entre desenhos. Profissões do desenho, ética e interdisciplinaridade*. Lisboa. Livros Horizonte.2006. This book is a part of the Brandão's Ph. Dissertation "Ética e profissões do design urbano", Universidad de Barcelona 2005 y oriented by myself

First of all, Brandão questions the matrix and the identity of Urban Design, summed up this way:

URBAN DESIGN MATRIX	STROKES OF IDENTITY
The role of design and production of public space in the founding of the city	A vision of the construction of urban form from public space, as matrix layout
The close relationship between the tracing scales and object, between fixed and mobile	Considering both elements of continuity as other variables, of transformation
The interactivity of times and different actors in a participatory dynamic	Acting long and short-term (with the target of sustainability and opportunity)
Resource management in public-private partnership	With the corresponding decision-making process stemming from the relation of interests and resources
The interdisciplinarity of resources in the project both on knowledge and action	That requires new forms of communication and interaction among different competences

But Brandão, acknowledges that the term Urban Design (UD) is an ambiguous one:.

CONCEPTUAL AMBIGUITY OF URBAN DESIGN

As a result or outcome	UD should it focus on a particular scale? UD, does it refer only to the visual characteristics of urban space or, more broadly, to its organization and management, looking at different systems and products that shape it? UD does it have to do with the transformation of spatial grid or has deeper roots and addresses issues relating to cultural relations between space and society?
As product-process interface	The focus of UD should it be its product (designed urban space from public space) or the production process (professional and social, economic, political, cultural process)?
As a process	UD should it be a preserve of professionals (architects, landscape architects, artists, designers, engineers, planners) or it must meet professional and non-professional actors? With what regulatory responsibilities? UD should it be a public sector activity, part of the State's obligation to construct and manage public space and to regulate construction activities? Or Should it be an activity of the private housing sector? UD should it be the result of a rational process, objectiveness domain (techno-science) or the result of an expressive process of creative subjectivity (art)?

To conclude with a summary of the types of urban design practice

TYPES OF PRACTICE IN URBAN - INTERVENER

	Professional Domain	Features	Activities
Urban policy, management and control	Traditional domain of planners, architects and involving other	Programmatic dimension in the planning and management. Cast-scale problems than the operational design	Includes: Diagnosis, strategy formulation, preparation of programs for UD aesthetic control
Development plans and urbanization projects	Traditionally is the domain of architects and engineers, supported by landscapers and other professionals	Based in the process of urbanization. Typically locally applied	Design situations involves "all-of-a-piece" and some situations of "total design"
Urban Design-public space projects	It is often the unintentional result of uncoordinated decisions of other partners	Infrastructure networks (roads, pavements, car parks, transport interfaces and other urban spaces.). Significant at various scales	Includes design and project management. Production and application of rules. Improvement of space. Management and maintenance. Event programming. Public Art

Urban Design, Community Projects	No profession in particular (the residents should be the main protagonists)	Community relationships are sought to develop basic proposals. Applicable to the scale of the neighbourhood.	Approaches and techniques used for mobilization and commitment to users in a localized environment.
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Implicitly, in this text, I am defending the inclusion of public art in the broader concept of Urban Design. *"Public art is aimed at urban qualification, in terms both physical and symbolic. In this context, we can say that, despite the differences between different historical periods, practice public art is integral to the process of "city-making."*¹⁰.

The "forms" that take artistic practices in the field of public art differ from time to time from the *"monument" to the "environmental"* sculpture and only have a relative value, probably more in the context of academic disciplinary analysis that in the context of the project embodiments (Remesar- Ricart, 2010) or we could add *"If statuary was the dominant paradigm for centuries, today the situation has changed radically. The traditional stone and bronze, give way to iron, steel and other materials. The mass volume gives way to the dematerialization of the sculptural object, sometimes in the form of water, electricity and land [...] we can confirm the presence of other technologies that manage*

¹⁰ As evidenced by a perusal of the treatise from the foundational texts of Vitruvius

dematerialization of art by: photography, video, digital imaging, the hologram or sound. Technologies are difficult to be implemented in public space, but used in other media, such as advertising"¹¹

There is some willingness to intervene in the landscape, to modify and aesthetizing it. *"The whole landscape, i.e. the material treatment of the territory, assuming from where it comes (its memory) and where it goes (sustainability), becomes one of the current paradigms of intervention. The double recovery movement and projection includes the intention of using the minimum resources, recycling and reuse existing ones into another dimension: cultural and tourism. Why the material subject, location and even the message, give way to natural elements (water, soil and light) and the document in order to build a comprehensive landscape with which people feel identified. Interestingly, many of these initiatives, informational use sophisticated technology as with the Wet-works design team do or the latest work by Jaume Plensa at the Crown Fountain in Chicago*"¹²

However, the ways in which urban design, and public art have been developed in some places, are so banals that some cities, they think to introduce "moratoria" for urban design and public art. Urban design and public art have

¹¹ Remesar, A. Ornato público, entre a estatuária e a Arte Pública. In AA.VV Estatuária e Escultura de Lisboa. Lisboa, 2005

¹² REMESAR, A – NUNES DA SILVA, F , op. cit

multiplied so that the logic of excess has conquered the territory of "*city-making*."

Therefore we should ask ourselves if public art is necessary for urban regeneration processes?. The answer is not easy. Yes and no. It depends on how these various processes go ahead. We know that in these processes, the status of public space has significant effects on the housing market. We know that citizens express satisfaction with the real state classification induced by public art.

But we also know that the mechanical application of public art policies can lead to nonsense, to the accumulation by the accumulation which ultimately serves only the logic of "*city marketing*" and not necessarily that of Urban Regeneration

The very history of the city from the late Middle Ages until today, explains that public art is required to "city-making" to "*arredare*" the city, to "*amenáger*" the city and by extension the whole territory

Surprisingly, it is in the Republic of Cuba, where we precisely clarify these issues. The act that regulates the practice of collective space qualification in the Republic of Cuba raises that "*special attention should be given to the development of "monumental" sculpture and murals with works designed to perpetuate historical facts and the memory of the heroes, heroes and martyrs of the nation. The work in this area should also contribute for improving*

environmental design and deepen the social concept of this event " ¹³.

The text continues "*SECTION 1. - This ordinance is intended to establish guidelines to be observed in the development of monumentaria and environmental sculpture, conceived as an enduring environmental environment and an important element in the cultural education of our people, and for measures that take effect the Ministry of Culture in its capacity as governing body in the field of visual arts*" and in the following article, Article 2, states. "*The environmental design as a process whose outcome should be consistent integration of all technical and artistic manifestations, gives various meanings of social, economic, ideological and cultural urban and rural, interior and exterior, in which our people unfolds their life . These manifestations include urban scale and landscape design, architectural scale, equipment, works of sculpture, and other manifestations of the visual arts, integrated into the whole in its social context and culture*" ¹⁴.

The city and the territory need some interventions to ensure that the memory of the events survives through the

¹³ República de Cuba. DECRETO No. 129 17 días del mes de julio de 1985

¹⁴ I do not go into the analysis, but the Cuban act raises again the principles that guided the emergence of the fin de siècle movements of Public Art and Civic Art that we should consider as direct antecedents of much of the current practices of Public Art

monument, but it also needs qualifying operations through artistic intervention.

Another strategic issue to public art in urban regeneration processes refers to participation.

As it was pointed out by Merlin y Choay¹⁵, despite its large use the concept of participation is ambiguous and nebulous. However, the European Council of Town Planners¹⁶ defines participation

[1] as a guarantee for the environmental improvement of the cities *"Sustainability - which integrates the economic, ecological and social issues for change- , based on participation and engagement will be a priority objective which will allow all this possible"*

[2] as a guarantee for social and territorial cohesion *"The cities are meeting places where to feed social interaction. Planning should endeavour to create a concept of neighbourhood to strengthen local identity, sense of belonging and human atmosphere. In particular, the smallest units of the city-block, neighbourhood, or "district" - should play a key role in providing a framework for human contact and allow*

¹⁵ MERLIN, P – CHOAY, F. (1988) Dictionnaire de l'Urbanisme e de l'aménagement. Paris. PUF, 2005

¹⁶ Nueva Carta de Atenas 2003. La visión de las ciudades en el siglo XXI

public participation in managing the urban agenda. At the same time, these cells have to deal with urban network of the city, provide the context for local action. To support local communities we need flexibility in decision making " and

[3] as a guarantee of change in the economic base of the city to allow development in the context of the knowledge economy "*Another important challenge is to develop innovative processes of local democracy-seeking new ways to involve all social partners to increase participation and ensure the common interests of all groups. Citizen participation provides a better understanding of their demands and can initiate a cultural evolution that leads to the acceptance of a variety of solutions to meet the different needs of different groups, while retaining a shared identity across the city."*

I shall not deepen on the concept or the role it can play in the implementation process of public art. Just as an illustration of the examples I will present in person, a table summarizing the different stages at which we could organize a participatory public art and urban design¹⁷

¹⁷ I refer to the doctoral dissertation by NURIA RICART, *Cartografies de La Mina: Art, Espai Públic i Participació*, led by myself and Dr. Tomeu Vidal and presented at the University of Barcelona in 2009

To manage the empowerment processes of the population has become one of the great challenges for formal democracies, both the consolidated and the emerging¹⁸.

Obviously, as already expressed continuously since the mid-sixties of last century, we must understand the processes of participation from a perspective at the same processual in time and scale.

Process-based, by the fact that they overlap each other, linked to political cycles and experiencing different levels of everyday life and, especially, because a process leads to another in a spiral dynamic logic and there is a clear political management participation. We should bear in mind that when you put up a participatory process, we know when it starts but we can hardly know when it ends. The imponderables, the side effects and their management are very difficult to predict.

¹⁸ This section corresponds exactly to the presentation, Xavier Salas and myself, we made of the participatory process at Baró de Viver (Barcelona) in the context of the ODP International Congress in Reggio Emilia (2009)

Process . Phases. Participation Levels	Project Workshop	Social Validation	Relations with governing bodies
PHASE I Decisions making on an issue through local workshops, forums, training work, etc.	<i>1.- Situation analysis</i>		"With" or "against"
	<i>2.- Scenario Design</i>		
Neighbourhood General Conference		<i>3.- Choice of options</i>	Negotiation
PHASE II Follow up process through forums, training through "design studio." Decision making	<i>4.-Chosen scenario analysis</i>		"With" an agenda for partnership "Against." Resistance strategy
	<i>5.- Design of the program of uses and functions</i>		"With" technical support. "Against" Support:
	<i>6.- Formulation of master plans</i>		Independent Bodies

Neighbourhood General Conference		<i>7.- specification and choice of master plans</i>	Negotiation / Claim / Support
PHASE III Follow up process through forums, training through "design studio." Process Evaluation	<i>8.- Project Development</i>		"With" technical support. "Against" Support: Independent Bodies
	<i>9.- "Executive" Project</i>		
Neighbourhood General Conference		<i>10.- Approval</i>	Negotiation / Claim / Support
PHASE IV Follow up process through forums, training through "design studio." or other	<i>11.- Realization / Construction</i>		"With" technical support. "Against" Support: Independent Bodies

Scale-based, because the processes can affect everyday life in its various scales. The management of the participatory budgeting process is connected with a territorial level, often not limited to the scope of the territory which is approaching the process. In this management the relationship between

global and local level is essential. While participatory budgeting processes are part of local politics, territorial processes are not. This means that these processes interfere with the legal processes of the organic representative democracy and its management is not, most of the time, neither easy nor peaceful.

[An important consideration. Participatory processes "*consume an enormous amount of time*"¹⁹, a very precious resource. in the current context. So in the participatory processes we find the paradox that we need a long time and have little time. Much and little affect all actors involved. The citizen because should "subtract" the little time he/she have to rest and what we call family conciliation. From the point of view of legal bodies, in the context of urban policies, time management of participatory processes "clashes" with the time management of administrative processes, political processes of the urban planning processes That is why, from this viewpoint, we must know how to manage time and, as a result how to manage the procedures - methods which will allow the process to achieve results.

¹⁹ F. Muñoz addresses the importance of time "*But if the overall process of urbanalisation refers both to the equalization of space and time, then the pursuit of sustainable and integrated urban societies alone is not challenging land planning or design the city, but must also cover the distribution and time management*" (op.cit. p.213)

Therein lays a key to success or failure of participatory processes. Usually working methods developed from the disciplinary perspectives of Sociology or Political Science, tend to compact the time, shorten processes between full statement of the problem and to obtain solutions for this problem. No wonder that under these circumstances, these methods do not greatly exceed the usual procedures of the "consultation" with the result of reducing the problems or solutions to a binary scheme of white and black, for and against, yes or no.]

A first consideration we should ask is, what purpose do we have? Simplifying there are two responses. The first is to legitimize government action through these processes, while we can detect, among the citizenry, "symptoms" of distress related to certain actions.

The second is defined differently and, therefore, has wider implications, both civic and political. The objective is:

- [1] to give power (empower), understood as the ability to take on hands and to solve problems from a given population, while
- [2] to empower this population to intervene directly - i.e. the policy- in the decision making process that will lead to the effective solution of the problem

This definition immediately raises two "*different time scales*." One slow, another, faster, at the same time that determines "*process phases*" which are organized on a continuum. To enable (one of the key elements of empowerment) is to give tools - conceptual, methodological, instrumental, of language, etc.. To give such tools is not achieved in a short time, given that we are dealing with very small physical temporalities. To give tools require of "time", surely a long time ..

But, to deliver tools, is also a radical change in the role played by the different actors involved in the process, especially in the 'technical' layer. Normally the technical (community, educators, and town planning) deploys a role as mediators between the population and the administration in charge of the process. The performance of his role is very technical not to say the technocratic. In such a stage of participation process should transpose its mediator role to, what we call, the facilitator role ..

What would be a facilitator?. A technically skilled person who, in a participatory process, is following up the process and training – providing instrumental, conceptual, methodological resources ... – to the group of participants in order to achieve the fundamental goal of the process: to end with "practical proposals" not just with "vindictive proposals." In short, a "facilitator" would be able to introduce a qualitative leap in the argument structure of a problem, going beyond the topical approaches and solutions.

The work of facilitator takes time but too an important shift in the disposition of the methodological device. The consultation methods are not appropriate.

Our experience in Baró de Viver and other neighbourhoods in the metropolitan area of Barcelona, has led us to experiment with new procedures that meet the following characteristics:

- [1] are simple in their design and deployment;
- [2] are dynamic and understandable enabling quick involvement on the part of citizens;
- [3] are divisible, which allow good management of time producing partial results that can accumulate in relation to overall objectives;
- [4] are fun, attractive, ensuring participation of citizens;
- 5] allow to learn, gradually introducing, resources, concepts, techniques, etc., addressed to solving the problem to be solved, and
- [6] have a multiplying capacity in the environment since the results that are obtained are physical, visible, touchable and explainable to that part of the population not directly involved in the process.

The results, as we said, "*practical proposals*" that - at a later stage, may be subject to negotiation with the responsible administration of the territory.

The search for concrete solutions is essential and has a significant impact on time management. There is "little" time, because if we extend the time we (the neighbours) are not going to see, touch and enjoy the solutions. It is therefore important to proceed to the methodological restatement: problems no longer arise from the repetitive boredom of historical claims, but from the "solutions" provided by all actors involved on the agenda for public spaces.

Participatory processes should aim to generate power, to empower citizens to take ownership of their own city, not only in the use, but also in creating her shapes and forms. The factual outputs of public space improvements will be enough so to call them "Public Art?".