

## COM nu TIES (25-28 Jan 18)

Brussels, ISELP, Jan 25–28, 2018

Deadline: Nov 7, 2017

Pierre Arese

### Call for Papers

COM nu TIES – Thresholds / seuils / drempels

Colloquium on the Theme of Communities

The concept of community crops up time and again in politics and the media. It is used repeatedly in the vast domain of human and social sciences, as well as in art. Furthermore, the concept has become hot once more since protest movements 'occupy squares'. Yet the community seems to resist all attempts at unambiguous and transparent definition. Apart from the exhibition about the issue, ISELP and Argos want to explore the concept further by organizing a symposium about the new challenges that arise from the new ways individuals assemble within collective units, from the convergence of common interests, as well as the co-existence within social or communal groups of antagonistic views.

Interaction between individuals and communities also means that we have to cross thresholds. Whether they are symbolic or real, imposed by the outside world or from within, the thresholds invariably result in the articulation of ideas about what it takes to create a community, but they can also turn into impassable borders. In other words, thresholds define and modify the existence and co-existence of communities in our societies. What threshold can we stumble across? How do they contribute to the development or the decline of communities? Can art play a privileged part in making visible the dynamics contemporary communities share? These are some of the questions the symposium seeks to answer through an interdisciplinary approach.

Four themes lend structure to symposium.

### URBANITY /

The city seems to be the place par excellence for the formation (and transformation) of communities. In Brussels for example, the reality of this observation is particularly relevant. The European capital accommodates a huge number of communities that define themselves in terms of their political, cultural, geographical, religious or gender identity. But is it just urban space that entirely defines these communities? How do these communities react to the constant changes that affect the urban fabric? How does the network of communities itself defines the urban space, its use and its typological structure? Can public artistic expressions reveal, delimit or question the complexity of collective urban phenomena?

#### SOCIABILITY /

The cultural diversity that characterizes our global societies can also be the source of mutual incomprehension, rejection or even violent tensions. Living together may not be evident, but obviously requires an opening towards the Other. Through dialogue and communication it must be possible to reach a better understanding and thus also peaceful co-existence. But is such a dialogue actually possible in our extremely fragmented and individualistic society?

#### POLITICS /

In our postindustrial society that faces one crisis after the other, we are confronted with a harrowing democratic deficit and an unprecedented crisis of the political legitimacy. In the twentieth century we have on several occasions witnessed democratic conflicts breaking out, which essentially had to do with issues relating to communities and their political representation. In the context of this democratic revival, how can we actually question the established political institutions, their functioning and their representativeness? Furthermore, what logical distinctions are at work between the political structures of the federation, the community, the city, the nation, etc.?

#### ENVIRONMENT /

The preservation of the environment is one of the main issues of our time. In this age of neo-farming, of the ruralization of our towns, of increasing debate over the development of alternative energy sources and of the redefinition of the concept of nature itself, the thresholds between human communities and their environment are continually shifting. By working together for a better use of our natural resources, some communities also aspire to provide an alternative for our rampant consumerism. The question therefore rises to what extent the environment determines the life of communities and conversely, how the life of communities influences the environment? For many years now, a link has also been proposed between ecology and ideologies such as feminism and socialism. It thus seems legitimate to look into the question how these influence each other and what developments have taken place in this respect.

#### Submitting proposals

This call for participation is addressed to artists and everyone involved in research relating to art, history, art history, architecture and urban planning, geography, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, political, environmental and behavioural sciences, psychology, etc.

Proposals for participation should be emailed not later than 7 November to these two persons:

Pierre Arese, [p.arese@iselp.be](mailto:p.arese@iselp.be)

Laurent Courtens, [l.courtens@iselp.be](mailto:l.courtens@iselp.be)

The proposals must comprise an abstract (maximum 500 words) and a detailed CV (if applicable) with a survey of the submitter's major scientific or artistic publications and interventions.

The proposals should be written in English, French or Dutch.

Colloquium organized by ISELP and Argos in the context of COM ☐ TIES

General curator : Maïté Vissault

Exhibition curators : Ivo Stevenheydens (Argos), Maïté Vissault (ISELP)

Coordination and concept of the colloquium : Pierre Arese and Laurent Courtens

Reference:

CFP: COM nu TIES (25-28 Jan 18). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 14, 2017 (accessed Jan 17, 2026),

<<https://arthist.net/archive/16488>>.