

## Marginal Establishments, Cooptation and Resistance (Bari, 12–14 Jun 12)

vessel / Bari, Jun 12–14, 2012

Deadline: May 9, 2012

Vlad Morariu

Open Call for Contributions at the first Giant Step symposium:

Giant Step 1: Enter the Artworld? Marginal Establishments, Cooptation and Resistance

Confirmed speakers: ArtLeaks, The Bureau of Melodramatic Research, Charles Esche, Viktor Misiano, Dan Perjovschi, Francesco Scasciamacchia

Bari, Italy, 12th – 14th of June 2012

More information: <http://www.giant-step.org>

Organizer of the conference: vessel

Partners: European Cultural Foundation, Van Abbemuseum, Galeria Labirynt, MOSTYN, vessel, Politicized Practice Research Group (Loughborough University), The Romanian Institute for Culture and Humanistic Research of Venice

Giant Step is a project organized for the purpose of discovering the place of the institution within contemporary culture. It involves two internationally established institutions, Van Abbemuseum | The Netherlands and MOSTYN | Wales, and two that are less connected to a rigid institutional structure, vessel | Italy and Galeria Labirynt | Poland. The main goal of this project is to establish possible roles that institutions could play in the cultural production of a specific area, in order to respond to the needs of the area itself. Taking into account the current political, economic, and social conditions, Giant Step aims to articulate institutional (ideal) types, which are put into a critical dialogue with existing institutions within the framework of four “nomad symposia”.

The context in which Giant Step 1: Enter the Artworld? Marginal Establishments, Cooptation and Resistance takes place is shaped by the city of Bari and the region of Apulia, Italy. Both have a very strong and well-defined identity connected with their history, traditions and geographic position. They are currently undergoing a process of deep transformation in the contemporary art infrastructure and consequently can be seen as a microcosmic example for the tensions between the sociocultural specificity of “marginal” places and the dominant ethos of contemporary art. In the last two decades, the latter has been increasingly shaped by the powerful neo-liberal economic order and inherited its contradictions and paradoxes. On the one hand, it gave birth to a globalised space for self-realisation, circulation and freedom, while on the other hand it reinforced

rigid protocols, norms and principles of security and public control, which increasingly purged possibilities of collective and public resistance. We acknowledge that, when addressing the process of co-opting marginal geographic areas into the art world, a literal recuperation by contemporary artists of the anti-institutional, queer, anti-war artistic activism of the 60s and the 70s cannot produce a critique of the paradoxical and multifaceted ethos of the contemporary era. A pure critique, one that is confrontational and oppositional, is not effective anymore: there is a need to reframe the notion of critique. We ask, therefore, which tactics can be adopted by artists, curators and critics in order to simultaneously embrace and disclose the dichotomies operating in the global era? How is it possible to effect change rather than imposing internationally recognised models of criticism and protest? And given that the art field is structurally articulated by processes of institutionalisation, how is it possible to re-imagine the notion of the institution, since our minds and bodies are the places in which the institutionalisation imposes its pervasive necessity to produce economic values? How is it possible to configure the institution as a place of public encounter where citizens can deploy their desire to 'react' or 'revolt'? Our intention is to construct a forum in which different interests and positions are represented. We propose a sustained reflection about the potential of a rhizomatic realm articulated by transversal alliances of cultural and artistic energies stemming from geographical margins.

We invite proposals for papers of 20 minutes from academics, unaffiliated researchers, activists and artists, welcoming individual papers as well as group panels that respond to these and other conceptions that address the issue institutional criticism. The language of the conference is English. Possible research questions include, but are not limited to:

- What is the role and the function of the art institution today, given the deep social-economic and cultural changes which have occurred in the last 20 years?
- How does the legacy of institutional critique inform actual artistic and curatorial practices and how does it contribute to the re-location of critique within institutions?
- How is it possible for the art institution to imagine and preserve its autonomous space for critique under the pressures of the contradictory logic of late capitalism?
- What is an economic, cultural and social margin and what is the possible function of an art institution operating within?
- What political and artistic practices can such spaces propose as alternative to the logic of the art world?
- Are the notions of radicalism and dissent still applicable to artistic criticism?
- What are the means and methodologies for determining the success and viability of systems of critique within specific contexts? How could contextualisation, as a methodology, be a tool for opening up a space for a more effective response to the dominant cultural context?
- How is it possible to retrieve political value (rather than assumed moral good) from horizontal collaboration, when collaboration itself is precisely what post-Fordist capitalism seeks to valorise? How can ambiguity create a space for criticism?

Applications and enquiries: please send a short proposal (up to 300 words) with bio to Vlad Morariu (v.morariu@lboro.ac.uk) who will also respond to all other enquiries.

Deadline for submissions: 9th of May 2012

The conference is free of charge.

More information: <http://www.giant-step.org>

Reference:

CFP: Marginal Establishments, Cooptation and Resistance (Bari, 12-14 Jun 12). In: ArtHist.net, Apr 17, 2012 (accessed Jul 3, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/3113>>.