

EDUCATIONAL TURN



Photograph of Workshop: "The educational complex: (dis) meetings between cultural policies and pedagogies" (Palau de la Virreina, Barcelona. 2011).

The connection between critical thinking and educational practices has become increasingly stronger in the field of cultural production and art. Various experiences during the last decade reflect a change in perspective on the artistic and curatorial production as well as in the activity of certain museums and art centers that have addressed their work to find concepts related to education, focusing on the potential of individuals and groups, in order to react to current reality and to promote their emancipation (Mörsch, 2011a). This trend, which has been called "educational turn" (Rogoff, 2008), is motivated by a desire to provide critical responses to the asphyxia generated on learning and to the social inefficiency of the systems of production and distribution of knowledge. All of this, under the new process of commodification and bureaucratization of the institutions which is undergoing within the neoliberal restructuring of Western societies (Mörsch, 2012).

Somehow, from the idea that art may help to perceive things from a different perspective, raise awareness and catalyze action or political participation (Emmelhainz, 2013), the art field has assumed the responsibility of examining the power relationships that occur in the

institutionalization of education and has begun to imagine alternative ways of social organization, using education as form and adopting critical pedagogical models as medium (Allen, 2011). Somehow, this turn is presented as a possibility of generating strategies and new models of institutional critique from the field of art and curatorship, aimed at academy and institutions of formal education as well as art institutions such as museums and art centers.

However, this turn does not only involve the generation of formats, methods, programs, processes and procedures that takes education as a subject from a critical point of view; the purpose here is to legitimize art and curatorship as a critical and radical educational praxis in itself. In order to achieve it, a paradoxical situation rises in the field of artistic and curatorial practice that have expressed an interest in education. On many occasions, to highlight this idea and gain recognition of this role, these cultural agents show the need to differentiate from the art education and disregard the work of the educators, considering educators are merely exercising a transmitter and normalizing role. A role, moreover, that is often relegated to these professionals as being a part of the field of art.

In this process, curators and artists, not only overlook the knowledge of educators who have spent decades relating the art to the pedagogy within their practice, but often reject the references of the field of education, relying mainly on sources from the field of philosophy. Thus, they end up playing a certain discursive elitism that leaves out the dialogue towards those whom it is intended to address. Similarly, to refer to what they do and to distinguish from the forms of institutionality they are criticizing, artists and curators are turning to a variety of terms such as mediation, radical pedagogy, self-learning, self-education, etc. Thus, they avoid the use of other concepts such as education or pedagogy, considering these terms may have some connotation close to indoctrination or vertical transmission of knowledge.

This antagonistic positioning, besides of revealing a clear difference in position of strength between curators and artists, on one hand, and educators, on the other, within the artistic framework, shows the ignorance and denial of the processes of reinvention, resistance and change and transformative possibilities that are trying to offer both in schools and universities, as in many educational departments of museums or art centers. Furthermore, even if these projects often propose other models of educational institution, beyond a temporary change, they rarely question or disturb the institutional frameworks in which they are deployed. As Krauss, Pathick and Vishmidt (2010) point out, it seems that with many of these projects we are facing an institutional critique authorized and absorbed by the institutions themselves, culminating in a harmonious dialectic between the objectives of some groups and the goals of others, only reaffirming the privilege of the usual actors.

However, despite all these controversies over the years, there have been projects which have carried out reflections on the opportunities offered by this educational turn in order to reconsider the role of the curator, the artists and the education professionals and their complex relationship within the framework of art. In this regard, several authors (Graham, 2010; Mörsch, 2011b, 2012; Sánchez de Serdio, 2010) have noted how significant it may be to explore the potential opportunities for cooperation on equal terms between all these actors, starting from common interests and seeking to set up, embody and perform

together an emancipatory project and a transformative practice for a reflective and critical institutionality. A practice that decentralizes the museum or the exhibition as a primary place of change, using it only as a starting point for the development of work processes that may arise out from the creation of new partnerships.

From these reflections, a series of questions that could be intended to open the debate are proposed:

- What do we mean when we speak about mediation within the framework of the educational turn? What does this concept mean in different contexts to which the members of the network belong? What theoretical references are handled when defining this term?
- Is the mediation a work of art when an artist originates it? What is the role we give to art? Does art have an educating power in itself?
- What kind of participation/collaboration is encouraged in projects related to the educational turn? Who gains recognition?
- Which are the ideal conditions for developing a project?
- How can we escape the culture of the spectacular event, the symbolic capitalization of projects and the logic of the competition in the cultural sphere? Are other economies possible in the field of culture? Which forms of institutionality do we consider to be necessary to explore?
- Which transformative possibilities do we perceive with the educational turn?

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Participants of the virtual session held on October 14, 2016.

- Quito Working Group, Popular Education Cluster: Alejandro Cevallos N. and Lennyn Santacruz.
- Bogotá Working Group, Popular Education Cluster: Moisés Londoño B.
- Barcelona Working Group, Popular Education Cluster: Javier Rodrigo, Judit Vidiella and Fermín Soria Ibarra.
- Coordination: Fermín Soria Ibarra.

DISSERTATION 1

Group Quito¹.

By Alejandro Ceballos and Lennyn Santacruz.

This document gathers context information and general questions that positioned and characterizes the local discussion about educational turn. We try to answer: why do we feel convened by this discussion in our context? We make some reflections mainly about educational policy and the institutions that bare the relationship between art and education.

¹ This text arises from some own reflections and the roundtable discussion we had on the 20th of september 2016 in Chawpi Cultural Center with our colleagues Adriana Coloma, art educator, coordinator of the educational mediation team at the Contemporary Art Center in Quito 2011-2014. Mayra Rivas, artist and art teacher in primary education. Jaime Sánchez, artist and university professor of art. José Luis Macas, artist and university professor of art. Paola de la Vega, researcher and cultural manager. Montserrat Gómez, cultural manager. María Oscondí, cultural manager. Tomás Bucheli, artist and cultural mediator at Cumandá Urban Park. Valeria Galarza, educator.

The dismantling of the bilingual intercultural education in Ecuador.

During the last decade we have experienced the systematic dismantling of the bilingual intercultural education (BIE) that was a concession from the Ecuadorian State to the fierce indigenous social movements who were forging a demand over the education management in their communities since the 1940s that exploded finally in 1990.

The precarization to which was subject the national system of the BIE from its birth is used today by the same State to argue its intervention, calling them derogatorily as "the schools of the poverty". Since 2005 when Ecuador subscribed the UN Millennium Declaration it began a process of "educational quality evaluation" that put the spotlight on 5771 community, intercultural bilingual, single-teacher, indigenous schools and non-directive pedagogy models - we're talking about a 44% of the student population. An important number of these schools have already been closed or merged, some of them coincidentally located in comunal territories in open opposition to the projects of natural resources extraction implemented by the Government.

The model proposed by the Government, the so-called "Educational units of the Millennium" are mega campuses to receive up to 1000 students, with an architectural array that plays regardless of the climatic, cultural, and linguistic differences in the territory. The arguments for such campuses are an efficient coverage, a better infrastructure and technology and the Government's discourse that believes in mainstreaming the intercultural approach throughout the public education system (primary, secondary and University), although on this last point is not explained which plan, pedagogical model, or teacher training would be required for such purpose².

A key fact is the announcement by the Government (in 2014) to enter the appraisal system PISA (International programme for international student assessment) which assesses the knowledge of the students in a standardized manner without paying attention to the students' life conditions or the educational community that surrounds them nor the material conditions in which the educators develop their work³.

Despite the precariousness, the BIE represents one of the greatest innovation sources in the field of education and an area of epistemological disputes due to its efforts to reflect on the linguistic, cultural and territorial relevance of its practice. It explores the relationship between knowledge and community practice being a space for the political and social organization.

² For a more detailed discussion on the situation of the bilingual intercultural education in Ecuador see the following link: <http://www.planv.com.ec/historias/sociedad/que-declararon-correa-enemigo-la-educacion-bilingue>. <http://otra-educacion.blogspot.com>

³ To review a more detailed critique to the appraisal system PISA the following link is to be visited. http://www.clacso.org.ar/difusion/Declaracion_GT_politicas_educativas/Declaracion_GT_Politicas_educativas_y_derecho_a_la_educacion_en_America_Latina_y_El_Caribe.pdf

With the described scenario the question is obvious: **what will be the impact of the disappearance of the community school on the dynamics of cultural, linguistic and political re-creation of indigenous communities?** Towards our discussion on the educational turn we wonder: **is it possible to assume the challenge of mainstreaming the intercultural in fields such as the artistic education without re-knowing/recognizing the experimentation, learning and dialogue between knowledges that the community, indigenous and bilingual school has represented in Latin America?**

DISSERTATION 2

Group Barcelona/Donosti/Madrid.

By Javier Rodrigo, Judit Vidiella and Fermín Soria.

Discussions and practices that intersect art and pedagogy have become increasingly varied forms in the Spanish context. The following text seeks to trace a journey through some of the characteristics and specific examples which have been assumed by the educational turn . It distinguishes three phases in its development over the last ten years: background, two peaks and present.

First phase: invisible stories and expanded pedagogies

In the first phase, deployed between 2004 and 2008, we place the educational turn background. While there was already education in museums and discussions about the ins and outs of artistic education in the Spanish context, two projects were developed with regard to what in 2008 Irit Rogoff described as educational turn⁴ were developed during that period . On the one hand, between the years 2002 and 2004, we highlight Distrito3 produced by the Caixa Forum in Barcelona, a cultural center opened in 2002 by the Social Foundation of la Caixa.

District 3 was an educational and cultural project that revolved around education in the visual arts, which explored the possibility of establishing links from creative practice, between the museum and secondary schools located in its district. It was the first time that artists worked in long-term projects in educational contexts, for at least several months. These processes led to the organization of an exhibition. However this initiative - from which not many records are left - was never portrayed as educational turn. The other

⁴ <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/00/68470/turning/>

project that we highlight is *Cartografiem-us*⁵, developed by the area of education and cultural action of Es Baluard museum in Palma de Mallorca along with several schools in the city. This initiative, launched in 2006, put in relation the school, the museum and the territory. It had a publication which stopped being published two years ago.

On the other hand, in the year 2008 two events were held which are placed in different artistic educational traditions in museums. They constitute two ways of understanding the picture configured prior to the boom of the educational turn in the Spanish context. One of these events was the 11th International Cultural Festival *Zemos98*⁶ in 2009 in Seville, dedicated to the *Expanded Education*⁷. This edition of the festival focused on the search for new forms of education that incorporate and adapt to social and communicational processes created by Internet. It was primarily based on the idea of free and open knowledge, from a combination of formal educational elements, informal education and the use of communication technologies, leaning occasionally towards the tradition of popular education. The other event was the birth of the *PEI or Independent Studies Program*⁸, developed at the Museum for Contemporary Art of Barcelona (MACBA). This programme which still continues today, is directly supported by radical pedagogies and militant research, making a confrontation with the most standard and conventional University studies, offering a series of seminars for specific groups. It is a master difficult to access due to its high fees. Its main thesis is based on the introduction of critical theories and every possible relation with social movements through University seminars. This first previous phase ends with the explosion of the systemic and financial crisis in 2008 that set up another scenario for the educational turn in the Spanish context.

Second phase: institutional boom of the educational turn and institutional models

The second phase began after the outbreak of the economic crisis in the Spanish context in 2008, and experienced a boom of the educational turn in two moments. A first moment was the peak between 2009 and 2011, very marked by the emergence of the movement 15M and popular uprisings in the squares, in which some museums developed artistic-curated initiatives connected with education. We highlight three projects that seem significant of what began to happen in the Spanish panorama regarding the educational turn. One of them is the *Primer Proforma 2010*⁹ project, developed at the MUSAC of León. It was an artistic-expositive project in process. It was born with the will to respond to the jump that the three artists that drove it detected between university training in the fine arts and the professionalization of the artist and it aspired to be "a University, understood in its original sense, as a congregation or community oriented towards a common goal that responds to its own authorities; a University made by artists, for artists and non-artists. A symbiosis of the Museum, the Studio and the classroom" (Web MUSAC). The second

⁵ <http://www.esbaluard.org/es/activitats/69/cartografiem-nos/>

⁶ <http://17festival.zemos98.org/previous-festivals>

⁷ http://www.zemos98.org/descargas/educacion_expandida-ZEMOS98.pdf

⁸ <http://www.macba.cat/es/anteriores-pei>

⁹ <http://musac.es/#exposiciones/expo?id=347>

initiative which we highlight is the self-education and research project called *Las Lindes*¹⁰, born in the Center of art 2 de Mayo in Madrid (CA2M) in 2009.

Initially, the aim of this initiative was to bring together professors, artists and various cultural agents interested in the interaction between art and education in order to discuss with the help of texts related to critical, feminist and Queer pedagogies, etc. The idea was to create an educational community that could serve as an antidote to deal with the problems that teachers experience today - especially in secondary education. The third project that we highlight is *Transductores. Collective pedagogies and space policies*¹¹, developed in the José Guerrero Center in Granada. This initiative was constituted as a cultural project. Its main purpose was to look into proposals in which art practices have a flexible joint with pedagogy and the political intervention in the social context.

After this first moment of boom there was a transition period between the year 2012 and 2013, in which some projects continued exploring the different points of intersection and relationship between education and art. This is the case of ACVic with *QUAM 2012. Mecanismos de porositat*¹², a seminar and forum for debate on artistic practices, educational processes and social space. Also other centres directly placed education as one of its main focus, as ACVic did, specializing in education. That is also what happens to the Art Centre of Tarragona focused on Mediation¹³. It began a practical and theoretical research into formats and methodologies that would deepen the potentials and the contradictions of mediation between the artistic and the social practices. Certainly this already closed space was one of the few exceptions in this regard. These projects found precedents in other initiatives implemented between 2007 and 2008, for example *Medialab Prado*¹⁴ that was working the mediation from the point of view of the reception or *Intermediae*¹⁵ which stands as a hybrid space for work and production of artistic projects based on shared learning and experimentation.

Since then there is a second moment of boom between 2014 and 2015, which we refer to as "explosion", because of the conversion of the educational turn into an aesthetic paradigm after its deployment in the major museums. At this time we note exhibition projects such as *Playgrounds. Reinventar la plaza*¹⁶ that revolved around the political, educational, socializing and transgressive potential of the act of playing linked to the public space. Also noteworthy is the exhibition *Un saber realmente útil*¹⁷, which places the critical pedagogy as a crucial element in collective struggles. Both samples were carried out in the Museum National Center of Art Reina Sofia (MNCARS), located in Madrid. Moreover, in Barcelona the Miró Foundation conducted the exhibition series *Lesson 0*¹⁸, conceived as a cross project in which different exhibition formats coexisted next to a pedagogical

¹⁰ <http://www.ca2m.org/es/las-lindes>

¹¹ <http://transductores.net/>

¹² <http://acvic.org/es/quam/979-quam-2012-mecanismos-de-porosidad>

¹³ <http://ca.tarragona.cat/es/programas>

¹⁴ <http://medialab-prado.es/>

¹⁵ <http://intermediae.es/>

¹⁶ <http://www.museoreinasofia.es/exposiciones/playgrounds>

¹⁷ <http://www.museoreinasofia.es/exposiciones/saber-realmente-util>

¹⁸ <http://www.fmirobcn.org/exposiciones/5643/lesson-0>

mediation called *Pedagogías de fricción*¹⁹, whose purpose was to build relationships with different collectives through negotiation, to generate discussion or new proposals of reflection and intervention in space.

Both in the initial phase and the moment of explosion of the educational turn in the Spanish context we note a number of problems related to being part of a culture focused on the exhibition event. Institutions often tailor the projects according to the prevailing need to constantly renew its contents. This means that on many occasions projects end up with a short duration and its processes have a limited sustainability in time. In addition, we see there is an imbalance that frequently occurs in relation to the distribution of capital, profits and recognition among those who organized and designed projects and the participants.

Many times we wonder if the participants have not finished acting as a merely artistic material. Also we appreciate a risk of musealisation of processes in many of these initiatives at a time when the main criteria is aesthetic. We also see that the subalternity of the educators is perpetuated by reinforcing the traditional divisions of labour on the basis of the exclusion and the invisibility of the work that educational teams do. In short, we recognize a huge difficulty to generate processes of institutional transformation through these projects (Rodrigo, 2010; Soria, 2015).

Third phase: intersections, new institutions and paradoxes

Finally there is a third phase which corresponds with today, between the years 2015 and 2016, where crossed speeches live together. On the one hand, this period is determined by new forms of government deployed by new municipalities and its clear willingness to renovate public institutions generating other forms and structural models, organizing public tenders for equipment, etc. On the other hand, we find at the same time a huge pressure from private lobbies such as Carasso and Gil Foundation, Santander Foundation, Telefónica Foundation or La Caixa, which tend to have a friendly speech to artists "landing" in the context and believe in art abilities to generate an impact in terms of innovation, primarily based on the use of new technologies. It occurs a capitalization by these lobbies of many practices and discourses that have been worked out by collectives throughout many years working in various institutions or non-formal contexts. This leads to certain issues related to precariousness, lack of sustainability, insufficient training of the mediators, little knowledge of the territory or dual work division between artist by one side, and educator or the people who collaborate in projects, on the other. On the other hand this intersection of discourses has to do also with a turn that we know as social and educational innovation taken mostly from the field of museums and cultural institutions. After the explosion of the cultural bubble lived due to the creation of numerous cultural centres in the Spanish context during the last two decades, there has been a boom of mediation practices. It was because of the necessity to have an impact via public activities

¹⁹ <https://pedagogiesdefriccio.wordpress.com/sobre-lesson-0/>

and a social return on the community to justify not only their budgets, but also their very existence. Also, most of the programmes presented by political parties to the various municipal elections held in may 2015 recognized the need of uniting art and education. This issue was a central element in the cultural policies of some cities, either from paradigms of new audiences for cultural literacy, visual education or community culture. This fact has been reflected in some specific agendas of the so-called city councils of change as Madrid or Barcelona who devote seminars or specific laboratories to topics like culture of proximity , education and mediation , structures of work or the reformulation of juries for tendering criteria of education, with professionals in this specific field, that work with them on equal terms.

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