



AMASS acting on the margins
arts as social sculpture



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Malta Seminar: Socially engaged arts and civic engagement

Spazju Kreattiv, Valletta, Malta Saturday, 11th December, 2021

Programme

9:00-9:10 Introduction *Raphael Vella*, University of Malta

9:10-9:25 Documentation and communication of Socially Engaged Art
Tang Tang, Paul Wilson and Kiwoong Nam, School of Design, University of Leeds UK

9:25-9:40 Analogue photography as a vehicle for positive impact among marginalised digital natives living in the suburbs of four Italian cities
Carolina Gutiérrez Novoa and Silvia Remotti, PACO Design Collaborative

9:40-10:00 Artistic Open Form and Its Secret Life in Art Pedagogy
Marie Fulková, Magdalena Novotná, Jan Pfeiffer and Vendula Fremlová, Charles University

10:00-10:15 Future-proof skills to overcome the disadvantages of a marginalised group?
Ágnes Veszelszki, Corvinus University of Budapest

10:15-10:30 Art and Citizenship: Redefining social norms through artistic collaborations
Raphael Vella and Milosh Raykov, University of Malta

10:30-11:00 COFFEE BREAK

11:00-11:15 Engaging older women in theatre-making – weaving wishes and wisdom into a theatre performance
Isabelle Gatt, University of Malta

11:15-11:30 Museum as a place of development, art as a personal voice
Zsófia Somogyi-Rohonczy, Ludwig Museum, Budapest

11:30-11:45 A voice that comes out of many bodies
Ângela Saldanha, Teresa Eça, Raquel Balsa and Célia Ferreira, APECV

11:45-12:00 North and South: Salmon, Whales and Two Fish
Satu Miettinen, Taina Kontio and Melanie Sarantou, University of Lapland

12:00-12:15 Socially engaged arts—what does the research say?
Sofia Lindström and Cia Gustrén, University of Borås

Abstracts and Bios

Documentation and communication of Socially Engaged Art

Tang Tang, Paul Wilson and Kiwoong Nam, School of Design, University of Leeds UK

This presentation will reflect upon initial findings produced as part of a review of the Acting on the Margins: Arts as Social Sculpture (AMASS) consortium partners' reflections on the opportunities, challenges and post-Covid realities for the documentation and communication of the tangible and intangible outcomes of socially engaged art (SEA). The study was designed to explore and collect experts' opinions on documentation and communication through the following themes (1) the importance of SEA; (2) a framing of definitions and differences between ideas (of documentation, communication and exhibition of SEA); (3) good practice and challenges (4) potential new roles. Opportunities will be identified to draw upon these experiences as the basis for a novel documentation and communications process (of project results, e.g. the participatory process and research impacts). Our talk will present the preliminary analysis of the data gathered through a group discussion with ten AMASS partners via the Miro collaborative board which we regard as most useful for further discussion and expansion to reflect upon possible future directions.

Dr Tang Tang is an Associate Professor of Design at the University of Leeds, UK. Tang has a BEng and MSc in Industrial Design and a PhD in Design. Her recent research focuses on exploring how design can be used to create healthy, sustainable user behaviour and effective cross-cultural communication and collaboration.

Dr Paul Wilson is a Lecturer in Graphic Design at the School of Design, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures, University of Leeds. Much of his work orbits ideas and ideals of utopianism found in manifestations of the utopian action in both community and place, and made concrete via language and typography.

Dr Kiwoong Nam is a researcher at the University of Leeds, UK. Dr Nam has various educational backgrounds from Engineering (BEng in Chemical Engineering) to Service design (PhD). He is interested in quantifying and visualising abstractive subjects in the service sector, such as design value, for investigating causal relationships.

Analogue photography as a vehicle for positive impact among marginalised digital natives living in the suburbs of four Italian cities

Carolina Gutiérrez Novoa and Silvia Remotti, PACO Design Collaborative

This presentation narrates how young people living in the marginalized suburbs of four Italian cities respond to a participatory analogue photography laboratory. The value of documentation has been accomplished through a material process that the participants followed during the laboratories, which itself is sequential and requires active participation. This is because analogue photography is not immediate; shooting, developing and printing are interconnected and sequential steps. Unlike digital photography, the curiosity and involvement of children and adolescents (individual and as a group) with the process has increased their active participation leveraging different learnings, like, raising self-awareness, promoting commitment and responsibility, and fostering democratic participation. By becoming active participants, children and adolescents were able to awaken their sense of responsibility and awareness of the value of their reflections, choices and actions, leading them to understand that being agents of change is also in their power.

Silvia Remotti is a designer and researcher based in Italy; in 2013 she founded PACO Design Collaborative. Her interest in design for social innovation and design for education started before founding PACO and it has grown over the years.

Carolina Gutiérrez Novoa is a Chilean design strategist and researcher based in Italy. She currently collaborates with PACO Design Collaborative, where they address social innovation projects. Her research interest concerns the application of the design discipline to shape concepts, behaviours, interactions and strategies, with critical and reflective thinking.

Artistic Open Form and Its Secret Life in Art Pedagogy

Marie Fulková, Magdalena Novotná, Jan Pfeiffer and Vendula Fremlová, Charles University

The contribution deals with the possibilities of artistic open form and its ability to generate a plurality of reactions and emancipatory potential for participants. Central is tracing creation of the open form in video art by Jan Pfeiffer and pedagogical implications as seen in the environment at the exhibition and examples taken from museums and schools.

Dr. Marie Fulková is an Associate Professor and Deputy Head of the Department of Art Education, Charles University, Prague. Her research focuses on exploring ways in which the cultural artefacts function as a polysemy across different social domains. Her activities cover visual literacy and modalities of perception of visual arts in children and youths, transpositions between artistic, cultural and pedagogical domains and creative interactions between education and visual arts.

Dr. Magdalena Novotná is Assistant Professor at the Department of Art Education, Faculty of Education, Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic. As researcher she focuses on the topic of reflective practice and assessment in Art Education. She focuses on visual literacy, professional identity of pre-service teachers and teachers-beginners; and professional vision of pre-service art teachers using the video recordings.

Jan Pfeiffer moves confidently across different media: video, photography, animation and drawing. For Pfeiffer, of interest are the mechanisms and connotations that shape or surround historical or social moments, and the mechanisms that drive the initiation of historical or social movements. Pfeiffer interprets eclectic stories, and his own reasoning into abstract and often self-symbolic individual works and gallery spaces.

Mgr. Vendula Fremlová, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor in Department of Art Education at Faculty of Education Charles University, Prague and in Department of Art History and Theory at Faculty of Art and Design Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem, Czech Republic. She is also a freelance curator and art theorist. In her research she focuses on visual literacy as an interdisciplinary topic and on critical attitude to visuality and contemporary art.

Future-proof skills to overcome the disadvantages of a marginalised group?

Ágnes Veszelszki, Corvinus University of Budapest

According to the latest research, five key skills will be needed in future-proof training: fluency of ideas, originality, decision-making, diverse learning strategies and resilience. One of the most future-proofing elements of the AMASS project in Hungary, the Roma Cultural Influencer training, aims to develop these skills. While we want to develop the participants' future skills, we are confronted with very real and present problems: 1. digital tools and knowledge of tools are needed to develop digital creativity (Kárpáti & Nagy 2019); 2. the Hungarian - Roma intercultural differences could set limits to development (for example, what a Roma woman can and cannot do according to traditions); 3. a recurring issue is the difficulty of the role of the insider influencer: do the trainees become outsiders in the Roma community as beneficiaries of majority education, or are they able to work as authentic representatives of their group to overcome the disadvantages of marginalised groups?

Ágnes Veszelszki, PhD, is an Associate Professor and Head of Department of Communication and Media Science at Corvinus University of Budapest. Her main research fields include image-text relationships, science communication (pseudoscience, conspiracy theories) and media literacy. She participates in the Roma Cultural Influencer AMASS project.

Art and Citizenship: Redefining social norms through artistic collaborations

Raphael Vella and Milosh Raykov, University of Malta

The idea that art could, or should, transform members of a society into 'better' citizens has a long and contested history. Critics of this idea might say that the subversion of art to moral theory will always weaken art's power and autonomy by instrumentalising it. However, the process of collaboration in art-making can also be conceived as a way of challenging the 'moral' order in society by redefining existing societal norms, including existing normative regulations of 'citizenship'. In this presentation, a collaborative art workshop combined with mixed methods action research was employed to bring together recent migrants from various African countries, artists, and researchers to collaborate on the production of new artwork. The main objective of this study was to examine the viability of this and similar future projects to increase awareness about issues that new migrants face and to influence the redefinition of policies and practices that prevent migrants' integration into society.

Raphael Vella is an Associate Professor in Art Education at the Faculty of Education, University of Malta, where he coordinates postgraduate degrees in art education and social practice. Current research interests include socially engaged art, sustainability in art education, curatorial practices and contemporary art.

Milosh Raykov is an Associate Professor in the Department of Education Studies at the Faculty of Education, the University of Malta, where he teaches research methods and sociology of education. He is involved in studies of early school leaving, student involvement in paid and voluntary work, and studies of socially engaged art.

Engaging older women in theatre-making – weaving wishes and wisdom into a theatre performance

Isabelle Gatt, University of Malta

In March 2020, when Covid cases seemed to be diminishing in Malta, Active Aging Centre members were invited to join a theatre project that would lead to a collective theatre production. A group of six women applied and all were recruited. The schedule for the project was a 6-week intensive one. A professional creative team was engaged to work alongside them, coaching and directing them to produce a theatre co-creation. The participants together with the team went through theatre processes aimed at giving them acting skills and providing the safe space to share their experiences and reflections, express their wishes and wisdom all of which woven into a script by the scriptwriter. The presentation describes the challenges and the opportunities of working through such a project during the Covid-19 pandemic. The research study was to investigate if and how such a theatre process engages and impacts the participants (both the actors as well as the non-actors of all ages). The data from focus group discussions, journals and semi-immersive observations revealed that participation in this collective theatre process positively impacted their sense of well-being, group cohesion, self confidence and creativity while helping them to overcome feelings of solitude.

Isabelle Gatt (Ph.D Exon) is a lecturer in Drama and Theatre Education at the University of Malta where she runs the Drama Education and Applied theatre study-units. Her research interests lie primarily in applied theatre, collective theatre creations and community theatre. She is also a theatre-maker and TV/theatre producer/director. Isabelle Gatt trained as an actor and has worked

freelance in cinema, RAI TV. She has produced her own TV series for children (Dinu) on TVM and ran TQ (TeatruQroqq) Projects for 15 years, producing devised productions and play-adaptations specifically for children. Isabelle is one of the directors of the Trikki Trakki Festival working with secondary schools to produce theatre productions for the annual festival.

Museum as a place of development, art as a personal voice

Zsófia Somogyi-Rohonczy, Ludwig Museum, Budapest

As part of the Hungarian AMASS research, the Hungarian National Gallery and the Ludwig Museum were visited by disadvantaged children and their accompanying teachers to investigate the power of art to help. The theme of our program was identity, being a minority, and art as a way out. We also looked at the curricular framework alongside the works of famous artists. The children discussed the issues by creating their works of art linked to the knowledge content of the literature and history subjects. In the presentation, we would like to delineate the triangulation research methodology of museum research and the possibilities of collaboration between museum and school, museum educator and teacher. The student artwork also gives an insight into the changes that have taken place during a year of work.

Zsófia Somogyi-Rohonczy is an art historian, museum educator and a PhD student. Since 2017, she has been working as a museum educator in the Ludwig Museum and started her PhD in 2018 at the Eötvös Loránd University Faculty of Psychology and Education. In AMASS, she is responsible as a research assistant for the museum projects.

A voice that comes out of many bodies

Ângela Saldanha, Teresa Eça, Raquel Balsa and Célia Ferreira, APECV

The AMASS testbed in Portugal was developed with minority groups: children, women, unemployed people and people with disabilities. In this video we show the process of implementing the experiments. We reveal the group of participants (artists, caregivers, researchers, minority communities, stakeholders), the participatory art methodology used, the different stages/steps and trajectory in time, the art works, the main reflections, evaluations and future projections. With this video we want the viewer to understand the work developed, using different images and processes, in the project developed with different audiences. Images, quotes and reflections captured by the different participants are used, giving a diversified view, with different voices, of the concretized narrative and the story built together.

Raquel Balsa (GriArCE - APECV Research Centre in Arts Education and Community) is a Portuguese designer. She has worked in several companies, co-founded one and collaborates with GriArCE, C3 and ID +. She dedicates herself to community and participatory projects such as "Circle" or "AMASS" with APECV; "EU no musEU"; "Jóias que nos unem"; "Talho o Mimo"; "Criação de uma Marca na ASSOL"; "Horta de Deméter"; "Abraçadores (de árvores)"; "Talho O Mimo" or "Pedais - ANEIS Viseu".

Angela Saldanha (GriArCE - APECV Research Centre in Arts Education and Community) is vice-president of the Association of Teachers of Expression and Visual Communication (APECV- Portugal), where she coordinates research in art and community and art and education. She has a PhD in Arts Education and Postdoctoral degrees in Digital Media Art. She is a Postdoctoral fellow at the University of Brasilia, Institute of Arts, at the Design Department. She collaborates with the CIAC - Research Center in Arts and Communication /University of Algarve and I2ADS in Portugal. Her research interests are contemporary art for sustainability, art and community, art education and diversity.

Teresa Torres de Eça (GriArCE - APECV Research Centre in Arts Education and Community) has a PhD in art education. She is a visual Artist, teacher in secondary education and researcher. She coordinates APECV Research Centre in Arts Education and Community and collaborates with the CIAC -Research Center in Arts and Communication /University of Algarve in Portugal. She was President of the International Society for Education Through Art – InSEA between 2014 -2019, and is President of the Portuguese Visual Communication teachers APECV since 2008. Her interests are focused on participatory action research, socially engaged arts, transcultural educational projects, eco-citizenship and art education activism. Currently, she is the Principal Editor of INVISIBILIDADES: Ibero-American research journal on Education; culture and arts. She published several E-books and articles about art education, has organised several exhibitions and conducts activist art and education international projects with the C3 collective of artist educators.

Célia Ferreira (GriArCE - APECV Research Centre in Arts Education and Community) is a PhD Student in Child Studies-Artistic Education Specialty. She has a MA in art Education and Post-Graduation in Pedagogical Supervision. She is a secondary school art teacher in Portugal. Research interests include: Education through art; textile art, handicrafts, community art and heritage. She is a member of APECV since 1996 and Board member of the Portuguese Association of Visual Art Teachers: APECV since 2008 and member of InSEA since 2006 and Treasurer since 2019.

North and South: Salmon, Whales and Two Fish

Satu Miettinen, Taina Kontio and Melanie Sarantou, University of Lapland

The conference paper will explore the role of place-specific activism of two ephemeral textile art installations and art performances. One of the actions will be implemented in the Arctic North, specifically Finnish Lapland, and the second in the south and remote Far West Coast of South Australia. Both performances aim to create awareness of environmental harm being caused by capitalist-driven energy producing companies. In Rovaniemi, the capital of Finnish Lapland, the activist action will address the disappearance of indigenous salmon from the Kemi river due to unsustainable activities of an electricity company, while in South Australia the activism will be performed at the Wittelbee National Conservancy in the Outback town of Ceduna. The latter will drive a strong environmental message against the drilling for oil in the Great Australian Bight, which intrudes on and disrupts the breeding of more than ten percent of the global population of Southern Right Whales. The presentation will explore how the arts have impacted on creating awareness about environmental challenges such as these in the two different contexts. The presentation will report on both processes that will use textiles and performances to create symbolisms for activism. The symbolisms created by the textile art, as well as the performances, will also be critically reviewed.

Satu Miettinen is Professor in Service Design at the University of Lapland with research interests spanning the themes of design methods in engaging with the Arctic region, service design methods for inclusion, the participatory development of services, as well as socially responsible art and design methods.

Melanie Sarantou is adjunct professor in social design at the University of Lapland, investigating how arts and narrative practices impact on marginalised women in communities in Namibia, Lapland, Russia and Australia. Her PhD holistically mapped Namibian craft and design.

Taina Kontio is a Finnish media artist who has used applied drama and film as a method of participatory and socially responsible arts. Her work has been presented nationally and internationally in exhibitions in the United States, Canada, several countries in Europe and in Southern Africa. In her collaboration with designers and scholars, Kontio works with margins in society and cultural identities, often with Indigenous people.

Socially engaged arts--what does the research say?

Sofia Lindström and Cia Gustrén, University of Borås

In our presentation, we summarize some of the findings we have made within WP1 of AMASS. First, the policy analysis was a tentative mapping of requirements for more closely assessing the social, political and legal framework in place and with implications for the possibilities to achieve social change in a European context. From a reading of previous research on the potential of artistic projects to succeed in their endeavours to counter marginalisation, we argue that a curiosity for the methodological significance of participation as a concept and a working strategy is important. There is a need for a theory of change regarding the role of arts in a wider sense than within the specific project. Those invited must share the right to invite, and the means to influence their role in the project. We highlight how, in research on the arts social impact, the root causes of marginalisation are sometimes left unaddressed. From our studies, we will list how the social impact of the arts can be understood as a complex process, with positive and negative implications.

Sofia Lindström Sol is a lecturer at the Swedish School of Information and Library Science. Her research interests are cultural policy, formations of artistic work, and policy ideas around the social value of the arts.

Cia Gustrén holds a PhD in media and communication studies and an MA in library and information science. Inspired by a discourse theoretical tradition, research interests are to combine visual culture studies and multimodal analysis with different approaches to discursive statements in text as well as to explore the intersections between network theories, strategic communication and educational science.