

museum. The museum of the 21st century should not define itself as a self-contained entity but should allow encounters at any time. For Edouard Glissant, museums today are challenged to provide new spaces and new temporalities in order to achieve a mondialité that can counteract worldwide standardization.

When you try to create new spaces and new temporalities, new affiliations emerge between exhibitions and between exhibitions and between museums. Characteristic of these affiliations is that they are not determined by purely economic and pragmatic principles but rather by solidarity and situations geared towards bringing together the widest possible variety of models without making them conform to each other. And this is not only a question of the museum but also of art and the way in which its generic concepts or classifications are being transcended. It's important to explore how major institutions can be envisioned, not as homogeneous spaces but as a site that satisfies a diversity of conditions so that, let's say, the white cube, a laboratory, and a space for intimate conversation can be housed in the same institution.

The events-mania has to be arrested in order to generate a situation receptive to interesting, interlocking spaces, ranging between acceleration and deceleration, between noise and silence.

Thank you very much for your attention.

INSITE

CarmeN Cuenca and Michael Krichman

We want to begin today's presentation by thanking the organizers of SITAC for inviting us to the conference today, to share our experiences in organizing the inSITE project in San Diego and Tijuana. Forums such as this are extremely important, particularly in the context of a project such as ours, which is based in large part on the process of developing artistic projects within communities that often are invisible in terms of final product that can be exhibited. In the end, these processes are the most important aspects of what we do. Neither Carmen nor I are curators. Nor are we theoreticians, so we thought that the best presentation here today would be rooted in very specific examples of the

experiences that we had in organizing inSITE, generally, and more specifically, in facilitating individual artist's projects as they have been developed in our bi-national region.

What we want to focus primarily on today is the most recent version of inSITE, inSITE2000. But as an introduction, we thought that we would provide a brief background on inSITE as it has evolved over that last ten years. The project is based in San Diego, California and Tijuana, Baja California. We operate through a unique partnership between a non-profit based in San Diego and the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes in Mexico City. As an organization that has managed to exist under the umbrella of two very different systems of cultural institutions, we find ourselves constantly searching for new works in and about public space in the two cities by cutting edge artists from throughout the Americas.

inSITE originate in 1992, and as well for versions that took place in 1994 and 1997, the project was primarily interested in sponsoring the development of installation and site specific projects, as those terms might be understood traditionally. While projects for inSITE certainly took shape and form in unconventional sites, through 1997 works were generally readable in the context of tours of sites much as one might experience at venues such as Sculpture Project Muenster, Mary Jane's *Places with a Past* and others. Perhaps the most significant and consistent aspect to the project over the years is its base in a process of artist residencies. We have found that there is a compelling correlation between the amount of time and resources for investigation that we are able to make available to artists, and the public impact of their work. Since 1997, we have operated from a curatorial perspective by engaging teams of curators, not solely to select artists, but to be involved in the overall conception of each version of inSITE. Our strategy has been to undertake not only a full evaluation of each version of project, but to allow the project in a sense to reinvent itself version to version.

In the fall of 1998 we convened the first meeting of the curatorial team that had been selected for inSITE2000. Ivo Mesquita from Brazil and Sally Yard from San Diego, members of the team for a second time, together with Osvaldo Sanchez from Mexico and Susan Buck-Morss, a political theorist based at Cornell University in New York. And it was the first six months of discussions among the curators that radically transformed the nature of the inSITE as a large-scale display of temporary works, and to think about focusing away from any traditional notion of exhibition at all. Rather, what curators had in mind was what we came to speak of as the "installation of a cultural practice in the region". And once we as organizers bought into that notion, it dramatically transformed the nature of what we were doing and, more than that, enlarged the scope of practice that we might support. And by that I mean that it freed the project up to look beyond traditional notions of site specificity, to look beyond traditional forums and forms of public art, and to think about the ways in which artistic practice might engage various sectors of these two communities. In doing so, it was also possible to look beyond the traditional parameters of the visual arts, and to think about actors that might be involved: new music, film, technology, literature, any number of different disciplines. I'm not suggesting that this in and of itself was a departure in some way discovered by inSITE, but rather was a reflection of the trend among artists to engage a wide variety of disciplines, media, etc. as a basis for their work.

It was the curators' interest, and ours, to focus resources on works that were rooted in the development of the process that would engage public from the inception of project development. And in this the curators were fairly specific with the artists who were invited to participate: they wanted to facilitate process rather than emphasize the completion of works that might be exhibited or displayed to a public in the context of an arts festival or large scale outdoor exhibition. And this, I think it is worth quoting briefly from the curatorial statement that was developed for inSITE2000.

In art project reiterated globally, the radical has become predictable. The city has been used as a large-scale gallery, a stage for the display of aesthetic objects and/or artistic interventions. inSITE2000 intends to break the limits of this model. It will install artistic process site in the San Diego/Tijuana area, in order to reframe the notion of cultural practice in public space. Taking the city as a laboratory, inSITE2000 will challenge concepts that have oriented previous versions of inSITE and similar international exhibitions: site specificity, community engagement, artistic practice, and public space.

In the laboratory model, not the object but the process is important. The role of the public shifts from audience to co-investigator. Institutions, no longer display cases, become co-laboratories. Rather than merely entering urban space, the works of artists reconfigure it. If cities are laboratories, if artists are practitioners, if the public energizes new cultural meanings, then how will these imaging give visibility to the urban landscape? How will knowledge of the city be transformed?

Against this backdrop, the curators invited some thirty artists, or in some cases artists' teams, to visit San Diego and Tijuana in early summer 1999 to participate in a group residency. And the notion behind the residency was to promote some dialogue among the artists that were participating in the project, as well as a dialogue with various actors in the region who the curator's thought would be interesting resources for the artists. The curators were anxious to do away with a more traditional format of constructing an exhibition and then conceiving a separate, academic component where scholars, critics, curators are invited in after the fact to discuss a form of practice or comment on particular works realized. Instead, the curators felt it was important to start a dialogue from the beginning with people who they thought would be important for the project later on, and for this reason the artists were invited to participate in the initial residency together with guests from a variety of disciplines who later became pivotal in the development of *Conversations*, a series of public forums, and in the publication documenting inSITE2000 that will be published this spring.

After the initial residency, each artist had the opportunity to return to region. Five separate trips were allocated within each project budget with the average amount of time each artist spent in the region, approximately 100 days. As preliminary project proposals began to

arrive at our offices in fall 1999, it became apparent that inSITE2000 would not be susceptible to a traditional “tour” of sited works. Instead, for most projects the question of location for display was secondary or irrelevant. Many works would unfold as events, performance, or spectacle visible at particular moments and thereafter only as documentation. Others would exist as documentation only, the essential work being a process deeply rooted in collaborations with particular neighborhoods or groups that would require more time to visit than a whirlwind excursion would afford.

What we want to do at this point is to talk about four projects that were made for inSITE2000. And we selected these projects not on any sort of qualitative basis, but rather because for us they seem to indicate several different strategies that were employed by the artists as they undertook the somewhat daunting task of making works that would resonate in the context of the region, the curatorial framework, and their own work.

We begin with a project by the artist Krzysztof Wodiczko. Wodiczko has long had an interest in public monuments, and in giving voice to groups that ordinarily do not have voice, or a venue to give voice, to their concerns. During his first residency, Wodiczko became interested in the *maquiladora* industry that has in large measure spurred the tremendous growth of the city of Tijuana, now the fastest growing city in Latin America. And he was interested in the *maquilas*, and the workers operating in the *maquilas*, and became particularly interested in the women who work in the *maquiladoras*. His research began with interviews with sociologists at the Colegio de la Frontera Norte, and ultimately he was led to an activist group, Factor X. Factor X is a group that has worked to protect the rights of the women working in the *maquilas* and Wodiczko was able to convince the organizers of Factor X to work with him on the development of his project. The heart of the project was a year long series of workshops that Wodiczko undertook with women working in the *maquilas* and associated with Factor X. In the end there were twelve women who agreed to participate in his project. The workshops took the form of day long sessions, some recorded some not. Exploring the stories that these women wanted to tell not only about their jobs but in many cases about their family background, stories of abuse, and stories of working conditions. Wodiczko also wanted to identify an important public monument in the city. Ultimately he decided to work with La Bola, as it is known, the façade of an Imax theatre located on the campus of the Centro Cultural Tijuana. This is a structure that is well known in the city, situated at an important axis through the city and to the border. And La Bola has also become a symbol of sorts for the “new Tijuana”, that imagines itself as a modern city poised to become a pivotal economic center for the twenty-first century.

Wodiczko in the past had used public projections, video projections and still projections in his work. For the first time for inSITE2000, he proposed a live video projection. The idea was he, together with his students at MIT, would develop technology so that the faces and the voices of these women could be projected in real time onto the façade of La Bola and throughout the plaza of the Centro Cultural Tijuana. Ultimately he was successful in developing a headset that you will see in the video we will see, on a very public scale throughout the city. The project has an aspect of technological spectacularity on the one hand, but for us the heart of this project is again that process that Wodiczko

initiated through the workshops, and as we will discuss also the resonance of the project, the memory of this project, transforming in certain ways the lives of the participants, initiating a dialogue that is ongoing in the city and, even an international resonance. His project is now being shown as a video at a variety of different international forums from the Biennial in Yokohama, to the Museum of Modern Art in Paris, France, to Wodiczko's gallery in New York.

A second, very different type of project was undertaken by Mexico City based artist Gustavo Artigas. Gustavo became interested during his initial residency in the interplay, if you will, between the two cities and, not to put words in his mouth, to an extent in the absurdity of the border situation as it exists in San Diego and Tijuana: the gamesmanship between the two countries, a quite fantastic situation where you have two entirely different cultural systems, political systems, economic systems, that for better or worse are forced to operate in common space. And ultimately what Gustavo proposed was the development of a new sporting event. He asked us to find two teams of US high school basketball players and two teams of high school soccer players in Mexico. And again, working over the course of a year and a half, working not so much with the players but with their coaches, Gustavo developed his project called "The Rules of the Game" which took the shape of sporting event where the two basketball teams played against one another, the two soccer teams played against one another, on the same court, at the same time.

The fantastic thing again about Gustavo's project for me, while it certainly had a wonderful sense of spectacle, was the engagement of these groups of teenagers in this project, the engagement of their coaches the engagement of their parents, the engagement of cheering high school student spectators, none of whom were necessarily interested or perhaps even conscious of the fact that somehow they were participating, or witnessing something that had been conceived for supposedly international arts event. And yet this project operated as a very powerful metaphor for the border as we experience it, with all its intricacies, with all of its danger, with all of its absurdity, and even with all of its comedy. And it is interesting for me, because it is a project that has achieved a fair amount of critical scrutiny, as to how this project is perceived when it is taken in video form and displayed as it was at the Venice Biennial. What does that mean to an audience in Venice? What could it possibly mean? And it raises an issue for us, that a catalogue, but it can't possibly show through photographs the experience of being at the game, let alone that process leading audience that was not necessarily the audience intended to be reached? Of the 1500 or so spectators at the Gustavo Artigas game, maybe 200 of them were "art world" audience. The project resonated for a different group of people and the memory of that project and the experience of participating in that project is really situated elsewhere.

The last piece that we want to show is a work that was perhaps conceived with the least amount of community engagement if you will, of any for in SITE200. It is by Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle, a Chicago based artist. Iñigo was struck when he first visited the region by the notion of aliens, and the rhetoric surrounding the enforcement of the border: to find and stop illegal aliens. He was also struck by the bullring sited on the Mexico side of the border at the Pacific Ocean. It a bullring that was built in the '60s, the third largest bullring in the world, with capacity of

about 25,000 people. Iñigo was struck by the form and site of the structure and he asked us to find a way to borrow the bullring so that it could be temporarily transformed into the world's largest radio telescope searching for aliens. Ultimately we were able to prevail upon the matador who own the bullring to let us borrow it for a couple of months. Iñigo worked with local sailmakers to make a dish, described by the circumference of the base of the bullring. Suspended from the corners at the top of the bullring was a large metal receiving antenna. Outside the bullring, in the entrance of the bullring. So that when you entered the bullring you were struck immediately by a loud, modulating, humming sound.

What really brought Iñigo's piece to life was had been working with Fussible, a group of Nortec musicians. Fussible had become generally interested in other projects that were unfolding and they had become friends with Iñigo. The day that Iñigo completed the work, Fussible was there and asked if they might "jam" with the work. Iñigo was interested in the idea and it very quickly developed into a full Nortec concert that took place the following evening in the bullring. Nortec musicians and hundreds of their fans jamming with the broadcast from space and, of course much more than we could have figured out, simulcast over the internet. And it was really this act that brought a very different kind of public to the work and in some sense made it much more than just one of the world's largest pieces of public sculpture.

The last thing that we want to talk about is our experience with the audience for inSITE2000. What became clear is that the audience of participants was want to talk about is our experience we seen before. That is, if you calculate all of the people within the two communities that had participated in one way or another in the development of these projects, whether in the investigative stage, or the developmental stage, or in the performing stage. What was equally true was that the interest of the "art audience" was much smaller than for previous versions of inSITE2000. And I think it is something that we need to think about as an organization. Among other factors, I think it does have to do with an expectation that has been developed through the system of biennials, art fairs, even museum exhibitions, that you can come and can see it, and you can get it, and you can go. And that just didn't work here. Now maybe it didn't work because of the way we tried to define it. Maybe it didn't work because of the projects themselves. But I don't think so. I think it had to do much more with an expectation that was not being fulfilled for the "art world". And at the same time it seemed to us that these projects were operating in a much more meaningful way within the communities. But there was uncomfortableness. It was uncomfortable to "see inSITE2000". It was uncomfortable because you weren't in a familiar context. You were in a high school gymnasium in Tijuana, you were in the municipal auditorium in Tijuana watching a lucha libre wrestling match, you were in a desolate bullring, you were standing outside freezing watching a very difficult narrative in Wodiczko's project, and how those experiences translate into any kind of traditional format is something that I think deserves some attention. Perhaps it's a falling but perhaps it is one of the successes of this inSITE.