The Everyday Practice of Public Art

Art, Space and Social Inclusion

Edited by
Cameron Cartiere and
Martin Zebracki

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THE EVERYDAY PRACTICE OF PUBLIC ART

The Everyday Practice of Public Art: Art, Space and Social Inclusion is a multidisciplinary anthology of analyses exploring the expansion of contemporary public art issues beyond the built environment.

It follows the highly successful publication *The Practice of Public Art* (eds Cartiere and Willis), and expands the analysis of the field with a broad perspective which includes practicing artists, curators, activists, writers and educators from North America, Europe and Australia, who offer divergent perspectives on the many facets of the public art process.

The collection examines the continual evolution of public art, moving beyond monuments and memorials to examine more fully the development of socially engaged public art practice. Topics include constructing new models for developing and commissioning temporary and performance-based public artworks; understanding the challenges of a socially engaged public art practice vs. social programming and policymaking; the social inclusiveness of public art; the radical developments in public art and social practice pedagogy; and unravelling the relationships between public artists and the communities they serve.

The Everyday Practice of Public Art offers a diverse perspective on the increasingly complex nature of artistic practice in the public realm in the twenty-first century.

Cameron Cartiere is an Associate Professor at Emily Carr University of Art + Design (Vancouver, Canada). She is the author of *RE/Placing Public Art*, co-author of *The Manifesto of Possibilities: Commissioning Public Art in the Urban Environment*, and co-editor of *The Practice of Public Art* (with Shelly Willis).

Martin Zebracki is a Lecturer (Assistant Professor) in Critical Human Geography at the University of Leeds (UK). He has published various academic articles, journal issues and book chapters on public art and social engagement. He is the author of *Public Artopia: Art in Public Space in Question*.

"Finally a publication that attempts to explore the multiple, complex elements that make up contemporary art in the public sphere. *The Everyday Practice of Public Art* traces the changes in contemporary public practice through a broad reaching series of essays: from the growth of social practice in educational institutions, to the problematics of city public art regeneration programs, to an analysis of art as a catalyst for social transformation. This publication asks the question – why public art, what is happening now and what can and should art in the public sphere be doing for us?"

Dee Hibbert-Jones, *Associate Professor of Art, University of California, Santa Cruz*

"This book is a reminder that social practice is also an acknowledgement of different perspectives, new histories, collaboration. The authors of these texts do us a service by bringing new voices and views to the already robust debate."

Suzanne Lacy, *Chair, MFA Public Practice, Otis College of Art and Design*

"A wonderful collection that takes *public* art as a socially engaged practice seriously. Theoretically, practically and politically engaged, this book does much to advance debates on art and the social world."

Loretta Lees, *Professor of Human Geography and Director of Research, University of Leicester*

"This volume deserves to become essential reading for researchers interested in understanding the processes underpinning the production of public art, its inscription and its contribution to social inclusion. Its value lies in the broad definition given to public art, amply reflected in the case studies, and particularly to the structuring of the discussion. The editors are to be applauded for their innovative approach in teasing out socially engaged public art practices, not least in emphasising the pedagogic routes underpinning production, its evolution and through bringing together authors representing a suitably diverse range of disciplinary backgrounds."

Ronan Paddison, *Emeritus Professor of Geography, University of Glasgow*

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INTRODUCTION

Cameron Cartiere and Martin Zebracki

An anecdotal reintroduction

In 2013–14, the City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program marked its 30th anniversary. Founded in 1984, the programme utilizes one of the most recognized public art forms, the mural, to "create art with others to transform places, individuals, communities and institutions" (City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program 2015a). By 2009, the Mural Arts Program had completed 3,000 installations in the city. But in 2013, as the programme staff paused to look back at its history and consider its forward trajectory, they considered a different means of participatory practice to examine the social dimensions of art in the public realm. They turned to the internationally renowned social practice artist team called Lucy + Jorge Orta. As part of their on-going series of ritual meals staged throughout the world, the Ortas collaborated with Mural Arts to stage the 34th event in the series: *70 x 7 The Meal, act XXXIV*. The goal of the project was to gather a diverse collection of people from across the city around a series of interconnected communal tables to eat together while discussing and debating the politics of contemporary food production and the potential role heirloom foods can play to create healthier food systems that are more ecologically responsive.

On 5 October 2013 over 900 people sat down to the collective meal in Thomas Paine Plaza, located in the heart of Philadelphia. At the event, participants were encouraged to discuss issues of food production, genetically modified organisms (GMOs,) heirloom food revival and food advocacy. In addition to the communal meal, there was an additional project that distributed free food kits containing table runners designed by the Ortas, heirloom produce and recipes that allowed 400 citywide participants the opportunity to produce heirloom dishes at their own tables.

What is remarkable about this moment in public art history is not the scope nor scale of this project. Lucy + Jorge Orta have already produced numerous events

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