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## Courses and seminars

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11/03/2010 - 12/03/2010 Auditori MACBA

### Between production and facts. The Reinvention of Artistic Activism Seminar PEI Open Program

Moderated by Marcelo Expósito

The debate around the articulations between art, politics, activism and communication has gained prominence and legitimacy in recent years. From the mid 1990's, the activities that traditionally took place within the sphere of the arts institution and the politics of social movements have been developing multiple expressions and ways of translating back and forth, so that we can now claim to be in the midst of a cycle of complex reinvention of artistic activism. This complexity immediately stands out when we look at two of the events that were part of the "big bang" that detonated the explosion of the new autonomous politics of social movements and the new politics of experimentation in the arts institution: the start of the Zapatista movement in 1994, and Documenta X in 1997.

The term "artistic activism", which is used loosely here, refers to a whole semantic galaxy. It is part of an imaginary that began to take shape a century ago now, with the first experiences of brimming over towards both sides of the border that has traditionally separated political activity from artistic practice within the institution. Some of the key references in this "brimming over" were the Soviet avant-garde (in the shift from the laboratory stage of Cubo-Futurism, Constructivism and Suprematism to productivist and factographic practices) and German Dada in the Weimer republic (through the invention of political photomontage and avant-garde and Agit theatre). During the twenties, the debates that argued over future directions for the brimming over of the speculative stage of the constructivist avant-garde offered a panoply of options. They included those who sought to introduce the arts avant-garde into industrial production--the productivist line-- and others who claimed that the arts avant-garde was better prepared to "intervene"--through factographic activity-- in the different forms of social activism necessary for the construction of socialism and the expansion of the workers' revolution.

Since 2006, the course The Political Imagination, part of the MACBA Independent Studies Program (PEI), has been exploring three key moments that have produced complex articulations of what we could very generically call institutional critique and artistic activism in the course of the last hundred years. During the Open PEI seminar *The New Productivisms*, which was organised as part of this program last year, a series of guests reflected, together with the audience, on the state of these debates within the Soviet avant-garde, and in possible ways in which they could be updated in contemporary practices in the course of the current cycle. The seminar *Between Production and Facts. The Reinvention of Artistic Activism*, focuses more strictly on experiences that are currently developing in different geopolitical territories, linked to heterogeneous cultural traditions and contextualized within various forms of conflict.

#### Program

##### Thursday, March 11 Diagramming the New Movements

Participants:

Gregory Sholette: Dark Matter: Radical Social Production and the Missing Mass of the Contemporary Art World

Zanny Begg: Message is the Medium: Communication, Activism and Art atelier d'architecture autogérée (aaa): Acting Space

##### Friday, March 12 The Right to the City

## Participants:

André Mesquita: Subverting Time, Memories of Activist Art in Brazil

Curro Aix and Santiago Barber: El gran pollo de Sevilla

Iconoclastas: Political Creation, and Itinerancy and Social Articulation in Latin America

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## Participants

**Gregory Sholette** (New York) is an artist, theorist and teacher. He is a professor at Queen's College (New York), and during the nineties he was a member of activist art collectives like Political Art Documentation/Distribution (PAD/D). He is the co-editor of the books *Collectivism after Modernism* and *The Interventionists*.

<http://www.gregorysholette.com>

**Zanny Begg** (Sydney) is an artist and theorist. Her work is usually linked to the politics of global resistance movements. She has been involved in organising events/exhibitions like *There goes the neighbourhood* (Performance Space, Sydney) and *If you see something, say something* (Mori Gallery, Gallery 4a and Chrissie Cotter Gallery).

<http://www.zannybegg.com>

**atelier d'architecture autogérée (aaa)** (Paris) is a collective led by Constantin Petcou and Doina Petrescu, which promotes collaborative and social cooperation practices that articulate architecture, art and metropolitan activism. It is part of the Urban Tactics network.

<http://www.urbantactics.org>

**André Mesquita** (Sao Paulo) is a theorist and researcher who explores recent links between art, politics and activism. He has participated in some of the collaborative projects involving arts collectives and social movements that have taken place in metropolitan Sao Paulo. He is the author of the doctoral thesis *Insurgências poéticas. arte ativista e ação coletiva*.

[www.teses.usp.br/teses/disponiveis/8/8138/tde-03122008-163436](http://www.teses.usp.br/teses/disponiveis/8/8138/tde-03122008-163436)

**Curro Aix** and **Santiago Barber** (Seville) were members of La Fiambrera, a collective that introduced projects and reflections around artistic practices in collaboration with social movements to Spain in the nineties. For years, they were part of the neighbourhood resistance movement at Alameda de Hércules in Seville, an experience that is documented in the book *El gran pollo de Alameda*.

<http://www.elgranpollodelaalameda.net>

**Iconoclastas** (Buenos Aires) define themselves as "a laboratory of communication and anti-hegemonic resources." It is an activist mapping collective that almost always works in collaboration with other groups or social movements. Their activities take place all over Latin America.

<http://www.iconoclastas.com.ar>

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## Price

MACBA Auditorium. Free enrollment. Limited seating.

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