partycypacja artysty w materialnych warunkach życia danej grupy społecznej wpływa na stopień jego/jej zaangażowania przy realizacji projektu. Nie chcemy przez to powiedzieć, że osoby z zewnątrz nie potrafią tworzyć, wraz ze społeczeństwem, autentycznej sztuki zaangażowanej, a jedynie dążą do zżycia się ze środowiskiem lokalnym na płaszczyźnie towarzyskiej, kierując się motywacjami zorientowanymi na cele osobiste. Z drugiej strony, osoby z zewnątrz układu mogą mieć inny wkład, ponieważ mogą dostrzec coś z innej perspektywy niż osoby z wewnątrz, dzięki czemu mogą odkrywać nie wypróbowane twórcze strategie, ofiarowując coś z własnego doświadczenia. Jednakże podkreślamy potrzebę zainwestowania czasu dla podjęcia się tego rodzaju projektu w danej społeczności. Nie jest przesadą sugerować, by zaangażowany artysta spędził od 6 miesięcy do pięciu lat realizując jeden projekt.

2. Ograniczenia wynikające z dialogu

Sam dialog nie jest w stanie rozwiązać konfliktów społecznych w danym środowisku. Pomimo że uważamy projekty oparte na dialogu za zdolne do generowania pozytywnych doświadczeń, zrozumienia i zmian w danym środowisku, o czym mowa powyżej, uznajemy jednocześnie ograniczenia wynikające z wspólnego dialogu. Kester skrytykował 'determinizm dialogowy', który jest „naiwnym przekonaniem, że konflikty społeczne można rozwiązać utopijną mocą wolnej i otwartej wymiany". Utrzymuje, że „ten pogląd pomija przejawy zróżnicowania władzy, która warunkuje udział w dialogu na długo przed wejściem do galerii, miejscowego centrum lub sali spotkań". Dalej Kester twierdzi, że: "nie wszystkie konflikty można rozwiązać drogą dialogu, ponieważ nie wszystkie powstają z braku współrozmówców do pełnego wzajemnego zrozumienia i wzajemnej empatii. W wielu przypadkach konflikty wynikają z pełnego zrozumienia różnic materialnych, ekonomicznych i politycznych. Każda postać dialogu, nawet świadoma, pseudo-utopijna wymiana w pracach Willatsa, Mama Toro i WochenKlausur, grozi reprodukcją różnic potencjału pomiędzy różnymi uczestnikami na poziomie dialogu i reprezentacji."

Dlatego ważnym jest, by projekty w ramach sztuki zaangażowanej wykazywały pełne zrozumienie i potrzebę mediacji z instytucjami oraz uwzględniały mechanizmy zmian politycznych i społecznych oraz podejmowały działania ingerujące w istniejący układ zróżnicowania potencjału.

3. Empatia & negacja

Chociaż projekty z zakresu sztuki zaangażowanej mogą wywołać różny stopień empatii między artystami a uczestnikami, istnieje również zagrożenie nadużyć, wynikające z tendencji artystów do przyjmowania bezproblemowej postawy, unifikacji, ignorowania rzeczywistych panujących różnic środowiskowych. Empatia może również wiązać się z pewną arogancją, wypowiadaniem się w imieniu osób trzecich lub oportunizmem lub wzbudzaniem współczucia.

Dyskusja z uczestnikami:
Dyskusja została nagrana, jednakże nie została spisana.

Seminar „Engaged Art in Public Spaces"
By *Jay Koh & Chu Yuan Chu*
Gdańsk, 13th – 15th September, 2001

Sesion 1

Introduction:

Engaged Art, a brief description & historical background: What is now termed as Engaged Art developed from a post-modernistic response to the existing modernist experience, to move away from the emphasis on an individual genius at work on one hand and on the other, the inadequacy of conventional art practices to engage with audience outside marginalised/ specialised spaces such as galleries and museums (sometimes to the extreme that gallery-based art is not even interested anymore on the notion of audience). Engaged art is also in response to growing problems inflicted on society, especially the changes brought about by urbanization, late capitalism and globalization. After the end of the cold war and global phobia against communism expansion, the 'new' critical consciousness became concerned with immediate social & political issues, the environment and many engaged artists tend to include democratic processes in their work, for example eg. in exposing structures of power, exploitation, oppression, etc.

Of course, engagement has always been implicit in art, and can operate on many levels, from a one sided vertical mode of 'communication' such as an art object/work waiting solemnly for the audience to receive its transcendent messages on one end to a 2-way horizontal communication where the audiences are seen as an autonomous unit who can choose/ select the issues for further dialogue initiated within the framework of an art work. The mode of engagement needs to be considered in relation to the site and intended audience, what may work in a gallery with specialized audience may not work in public spaces. Therefore in public engaged art, we are focusing more on modes which facilitate 2-way communication and offers possibilities for further exchanges.

The fields of practice:
Engaged Art deals with practices which engage with specific social contexts, in more direct, participatory ways. Socially engaged art can take place in public spaces, or with specific groups that form the wider public (e.g. Organization + Imagination's engagement with corporate structures by placing artists within the management of various companies). Socially engaged artists also may work with public institutions and agencies, commercial organisations and individuals from a cross-section of different professions and backgrounds. The public is not one entity, but needs to be recognized that there are differences that shape each individual's needs and concerns, eg. differences in class, race, cultural practices, gender, sexuality, education background, etc. Issues of privileges, power differentials, aveenues for

self-determination and self-empowerment, public participation are some of the underlying concerns of socially engaged art.
Engagement: There are various levels of engagement, from passive contemplation to active interactive ones, for example those of engaging the imagination, self-reflection, education, analysis, or direct contact, dialogues etc., in a variety of media, from gallery-based work to the mass media, like billboards, public displays, public campaigns. Traditionally art engages through appreciation, and one-way communication, placing on the artist the role of educator and visionary, the artist making a work and presenting it to public for appreciation.

Social context: Art has always depicted and is connected to its social setting, whether it is through portraiture, landscape, abstraction etc. the energies that inform the work comes from specific conditions within the social fabric of that time. At the time of high modernism, artists elevated art into a separate realm, giving it autonomy so that it can be independent. Art began talking to itself and increasingly more specialized audiences. But this independence has also robbed it of a sense of social responsibility, with the rift between artists and public growing wider and artists are seen as self-interested and self-indulgent lot. From the seventies, artists began to want to agitate more in public, moving away from gallery setting. As governments become more concerned with solving public discontent, and understand the importance of providing avenues for public expression, public funding was made available for public artworks. But because the transfer was just one of site, but not methodology, socially engaged art has run into many problems.

Brief history of public art:
Public art was initially understood as art in an open space, the artwork being transported from its gallery setting into any open spaces whether owned by the corporate sector, private or by public authority, as a transference of site, where there was a physical cross-over between art and the public (audiences), but not necessarily forging any mental / communicative exchange understanding; treating the city as an open-air museum, so that a wider public can physically access and appreciate such works. Public art was also very useful for urban redevelopment programmes, to revitalize parts of a city.

Public monuments have also been categorized as public art, but monuments function in a different way than public art, more as an instrument to record and immortalize certain important events and values in a nation's official narrative of history.

Why make 'public engaged' art?
Public art seeks to excite a public, shared imagination and to open up avenues for public dialogue, connection, for building community relationship, fostering a sense of community and consultation for collective action, for empowerment, participation and self-determinism, while carrying possibilities for individual empowerment. Not just to place a work in the public as static display for indivudual consumption in the public space (instead of museum space), but to try to find a common corridors among people, to give attention

to social issues facing a certain community and to open up possibilities for positive change in society.
These are the positive aspects of public engaged art, but there are many negative aspects too, such as manipulation, exploitation, misrepresentation, appropriation and misappropriation, cultural arrogance which brings about a need for critical discourse on ethics of public engagement (which we will discuss in greater detail in the following sessions).

In many countries, eg. In the U.S., England and recently Singapore (through interactive theatre / performance), public engaged art has been and is being recognised as a powerful and useful instrument by government and corporate sectors in improving their relationship with 'their public', as political strategy and economic investment, public relations exercise, or as a soft approach in implementing policies. In Singapore, art activities are usually incorporated into its numerous public campaigns, e.g. the Speak Mandarin Campaign, and various campaigns aimed at improving family ties, at tackling problems with youth, singlehood, old age etc. As such, publicly engaged artists have to find their way to collaborate with institutions, funding bodies, corporations, (or they may choose not to), and to retain a certain autonomy for the empowering strategy of public engaged art.

Our work with IFIMA
(International Forum for Intermedia Art)
Our activities with IFIMA include:
- working on building more effective engagement with targetted public in public engaged art: longer term and sustained negotiation, equal and open dialogue, engaging with the conditions of the social-political structures that affect people's lives, developing appropriate methodologies suited to specific contexts, cultural conditions and objectives;
- interrogating existing practices and concepts for more effective engagement, eg. Interactivity, participation negotiation, negotiation, consultation etc.; promoting discourse and selfcriticism among producers;
- building networks for collaboration, support and mobilising resources/resource-sharing, among artists, activists and resource providers eg. International foundations – especially for poor resource countries, including providing organisational and administrative support for art groups and activists who need such help;
- building relationships across groups and institutions, to facilitate understanding, to build a culture of discourse, consultation & debate, and mutual learning, understanding and negotiation;
- organizing and curating cross-cultural art events under IFIMA;
- writing, researching and speaking on engaged art practices within specific sets of conditions;
- occasionally participate in gallery-based work and curated exhibitions.

Our recent project:
Investigating Public Engaged Art, Singapore
- six-month residency in which we carried out direct engagement with people across interest groups, involving public surveys, public actions (eg. presenting multiple

choices with placard as a way of opening dialogue),
interviews, research, groups discussion, documentation;
- long term performance, engagement and negotiation
within a specific context, where we put certain things
in place/ create certain structures & open up possibilities
of thinking, dialogue and action, but not forcing
or consciously not manipulating respondent / public
reaction to produce certain desired result.

Session 2:

Categories of public art:
Public art has been discussed under various categories:

2. Defined by space:
ART IN OPEN SPACES
The most common understanding of the term 'public art' is
art in open spaces, which are usually static displays, autono-
mous works which is transposed from one site to another
without any change in form or content e.g. sculptures like the
in pedestrian malls, train stations, outside public or private/
corporate building etc. The work was developed individually
by the artists or by a group of artists, craftspeople, then
placed in a public space for appreciation, contemplation or
mere viewing.

Distinctions of open spaces:
Open spaces can be private open spaces, or public ones.
Many public sculptures actually occupy private open spaces,
own by corporations, although they are in public view. In
such cases the owners will not have felt the need for public
consultation before, during or after, installing the work, nor
would they feel the need to interact or negotiate with the
users of the open space, choosing mainly to impress or to
inspire the viewers.

Open public spaces:
The spaces have users coming from the public, the work have
intention to interact with the user and negotiation come
after the work is constructed, however negotiation is often
restricted to that of a vertical one way communication.

Art in open spaces may or may not engage with the specific
social-historical contexts of the site.

3. Defined by concept / content-specificity:
ART FOR THE PUBLIC
When an artwork is conceived for the public, we can loosely
term it as 'art for the public', i.e. works in which the content
of the work concerns the interests of a wider segment of
society. The artist may choose to work with social themes,
or issues affecting a community, or engage with the specific
social-historical context of a public site. It may or may not in-
volve direct participation / interaction with the public. Here
the artists may have undergone a process of negotiating
with the community, or may have taken on a 'universal' right
of artists to speak on any topic they wish to, or represent
any issue without negotiation.

4. Defined by Processes-
Collaborative / dialogical / intervention:
ART WITH / BY THE PUBLIC
In most cases the 'public' is seen by artists as people whom
he/she wants to educate, and thus their process is charac-
terized by a one-way vertical (from knowledgeable person
to ignorant person) communication. (As long as the 'public'
remains an imagined entity, undifferentiated and not given
individual voices, it is a 'floating' concept that can easily be
manipulated and used to serve various interests.)

In these cases the artistic process is characterized by art-
ists conceiving and producing work on their own, and then
exhibiting it to the public, and wait for public reaction. The
people are like vessels to just receive the one-way messages
of the artists, without making room for dialogue. This hap-
pens too in the system of the 'banking of art', where objects
are left in marginal spaces (museums, galleries, etc.) so that
their 'messages' can be withdrawn at any time.

Art with/by the public is dialogue-based, activity-based and
collaborative in nature. They could be in the forms of con-
crete interventions, or exercises in raising social conscious-
ness, opening up avenues for dialogue, collective action,
group / community bonding, etc.

Work processes which incorporate dialogue, loosely termed
dialogical works, deal with a two-way horizontal interac-
tive, or at least reactive, communication processes, where
the parties are placed on platforms which give possibilities
of equal status to all parties, or at least make some effort
towards empowerment. One way is by making parties aware
of the possible avenues for manipulation (e.g. when working
with younger persons, they have to be made aware that they
can be easily influenced or to expose the general perception
that wealth equals power).
These processes take into consideration the component of a
mental space besides the physical one. The users of the pub-
lic space are consulted prior to the making of the work, and
their opinion are considered. The communication is in the
form of a horizontal 2-way communication, where members
of the public are given the autonomy to contribute.

Slide projection and discussion of examples of various types
of public art:
Examples:
- Jay Koh, E.T. (Exchanging Thought), Chiangmai, Thailand
- Ukabat group, Ma Pien Rai, Nuclear, Thailand
- Clegg & Guttmann, Open Public Library, Germany
- Kristin Jones & Andrew Ginzel, Mnemonics, USA
- John Ahearn, Neighbourhood Heroes, USA

Points for considerations in evaluating public engaged art:
Much of the criteria used to evaluate more conventional, for-
malist art forms are not useful in evaluating public engaged
art. Here we have drawn up some criteria that we think are
more relevant and central in thinking about engagement:
- the degree and quality of interactivity with participants;
- level of participation of people in the projects;
- time frame / duration of engagement;
- degree of consultation / collaboration with participants;

- relationships built in the course of the project and their continuity thereafter;
- differentiation and investigation of the different interests of members which form the 'public' involved in the project;
- rnderstanding, engagement and negotiation with existing local social-political structures which influence and deter mine people's lives.

In executing public engaged art projects, there are some areas and problems to which specific attention needs to be given, such as:

1. Representation, which requires engagement and relationship with the people represented, or the people affected by the issues. The artist should not take on 'universalised' rights to represent people's situations and conditions without negotiation, consensus and respect.

2. Appropriation, the act of taking possession of issues and characteristics belonging to others, to use as material to fit one's own agenda or self-promotion.

3. Methodology of working, i.e. to expand from an individualistic way of working, to one which involves active engagement with people in the communities, and preparatory groundwork, in conveying intentions, collecting feedback, etc. In situations when the artists' and participants have a conflict of positions, these positions should be made transparent to the public. Realistically, not all disagreements and conflicts can be nicely and neatly resolved before a work 'goes public'. Such conflicts should open up public discussion. We are asking for a rethinking of the conventional way of working, which is that artists make their work, and at a certain time, 'go public', and then the public can react / respond to the work. Do we need to rethink the methodology so that artists can 'work with' people, instead of 'work on' people? Should the public not be involved if the issue concerns them? The methodology of working should also support the possibilities/ avenues for continuous dialogues between public and artists.

4. Transparency of process, from motivations for the work, to funding, and dealing with various parties involved. In engagement and negotiations with individuals or institutions, because there are always multiple interests of different parties operating at any one time in any event, it is important to be open and clear about one's position and also to state one's interests. This does not mean that one can thus level the playing field, but is just one step towards avoiding being manipulative or manipulated.

5. Accountability/ responsibility of the artist towards the handling of the issue he/she uses as the theme of his/her work. Unlike individualist artwork, an engaged artist's responsibility is not restricted mainly to his/her artistic choices with the 'material' on hand, but involves a wider social responsibility, including consideration for possible repercussions on others, which may arise due to the work. Artists need to question if their involvement is based on social conviction, or a flirtation with the issues, or even capitalising on certain issues and positions to advance his/her career. The artist should not only be able to explain or show why and how he/she chooses an issue to work with, but also show their research and position.

Even with all these considerations, we would like to acknowledge the fact that engaged art does not guarantee a deeper and more equitable levels of engagement and enrichment/ empowerment compared to more conventional type of projects. Many projects, for example putting up an annual musical performance or annual exhibition, already involve a fair amount of engagement, interaction, sharing, and negotiation between participants. The difference is that engaged art projects places more emphasis, gives more attention and priority to certain aspects of production and interaction such as methodology of engagement, empowerment, dialogue, and ethics, and generates discourse around these issues.

Session 3:

Further Issues in Public Engaged Art

Within the framework of dialogical exchange and interaction, there are various types of such projects, depending on their intention and methodology of work. In the research made by Grant Kester (Assistant Professor, University of California, San Diego), he has loosely categorized these activities into three types: (In the examples below we have extracted parts from Grant Kester's essay, entitled "Dialogical Practice and the Analysis of Engaged Art", delivered at the International Symposium on Cultural x/Change, Crossing Cultures: Theories and Practices on Engaged Art, Museum of Site, Hong Kong)

1. Concrete Intervention:
projects which involve the facilitation of discrete, locally-relevant changes in a given social or cultural system (the building of a boarding house, changes in the policy governing immigrants, etc.). These works may seek to open up more readily available options, or help people to take positive actions in their lives, and produces a material outcome. E.g. projects of Wockenklausur, Austria.

2. Counter-hegemonic:
projects which involve the production of a critical community consciousness through an extended process of exchange and collaborative production. This consciousness not only leads the participants to think critically about their own role in constituting a community, but is focused as well on the spatial and ideological forces acting on them within a given cultural space. In these projects there is typically less of an interest in a specific material outcome. E.g. Stephen Willats projects in public housing in the UK.

3. Solidarity-Forming:
these projects use dialogical exchange to enable forms of speech that are directed not just to an immediate collaborative community but to a larger site of discursive exchange (a site which may require relatively fixed modes of political identity). In these cases dialogical interaction can be used to ground the kinds of speech and agency that are necessary to

participate in political struggles involving such "coherent" entities as corporations, government agencies and unions. These projects are often based around the process of defining class and race solidarity as a pre-condition for collective political action. E.g. Fred Lonidier's projects with worker's unions in USA and Mexico.

Slide projection and discussion of projects:
- Mama Adeniran Toro, A Better Life for Rural Women, 1999
- Barbara Steveni and John Latham, Organisation + Imagination, UK, range of projects from 80's to 90's
- FredLonidier,panelfromNAFTA(NotaFairTradeforAll),USA,1999
- Stephen Willats, Creating My Own Journey, UK, 1999

Ethical considerations in dialogue-based work Dialogue based works are bound by certain discourse ethics. Other than some of the considerations we've outlined in Session 2, we would also like to highlight some of Grant Kester's arguments based on Jurgen Habermas' 'discourse ethics'.

He outlined three key issues that emerge from a discourseethics framework.

4. Itenerancy of artists:
Kester argues that with the present system of art patronage, which neccessitate the artists to be re-located regularly, either involved in teaching, residencies, on grants given for a fixed, relatively short, time frame, it is difficult to develop the kind of sustained relationships in time and space, that is necessary for dialogue to take place. Art institutions that provide support for community-based work are also accustomed to inviting a practitioner in from "the outside" for a limited period of time.

Although it is not a requirement, but co-participation in the specific material conditions of existence with the community which the artists are working does influence the depth of involvement and engagement. We are not saying that outsiders can't make engaged art with a community, not stressing the idea of authenticity, but rather arguing for the practical considerations of association, motivation, engagement and investment of personal energies and objectives. On the other hand, persons from outside of a system can contribute differently, as they may be able to identify and see things from a different perspective from persons inside it, therefore finding untried creative strategies, and can contribute form their own experiences. We do however stress a considerable amount of time needs to be invested when one wants to undertake an engaged project with a community. It is not unusual for engaged artists to spend periods of ranging from 6 months to five years with one project.

5. The limitations of dialogue
Dialogue alone may not be able to resolve much of the social conflicts encountered within a community. Although we believe that dialogue-based art projects are capable of producing a range of positive experiences, insights and changes within participating communities, which we have discussed above, we also acknowledge that there are limitations to dialogical interactions.
Kester has criticised „dialogical determinism", which is "the naive belief that all social conflicts can be resolved through

the utopian power of free and open exchange". He argues that: "This view overlooks the manifest differential in power relations that pre-conditions participation in discourse long before we get to the gallery, community center or meeting room." He goes on to say: "Not all conflicts can be resolved by free and open exchange precisely because not all conflicts are the result of a failure among a given set of interlocutors to fully „understand" or empathize with each other. In many cases social conflicts are the result of a very clear understanding of material, economic and political differences. Any form of dialogue, even the self-conscious, quasi-utopian exchanges evident in the works of Willats, Mama Toro and WochenKlausur, runs the danger of re-producing differences in power among the various participants at the level of discourse and representation."

Therefore it is very important for engaged art projects to also understand and mediate with institutions and mechanisms of political or social change, and to take steps to intervene in the power differentials that are in place.

6. Empathy & negation
While engaged art projects may establish varying degrees of empathy between practitioners and participants, it also runs into the possibility of the abuse of empathy - the tendency for the artist to unproblematically take on a universalizing identification, ignoring the very real contextual and power differences that do exist. Empathy may also run into problems of riding on a certain arrogance in speaking on behalf of others or be an act of opportunistic, self-interested compassion.

Discussion with participants:
The questions and answers sessions were taped, however transcripts have not been made.