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Is the Cultural Turn of sustainable development possible?

Martine Bouchier

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复杂性 与 转变中的城市设计

Complexity vs. Urban Design in Transition

新城市设计：建筑学的社会理论？ / 亚历山大·R·卡斯伯特

当代社会转型中的城市设计 / 董明

新城市设计 / 阿德里安·范达尼普尔

资本空间化过程中的城市设计：一个分析性的框架 / 杨宇振

消费主义、城市品牌化与城市设计 / 乔恩·朗

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Résumé :

Un tournant culturel du développement durable est-il possible ?

Cet article examine l'idée que la culture peut être un moyen de donner au développement durable en milieu urbain une nouvelle orientation basée sur l'intégration de la mémoire et des représentations. L'hypothèse est que la culture en général et la culture vivante en particulier peuvent être un levier de transformation urbaine, un activateur patrimonial, une source de développement économique pouvant apporter dynamisme, contemporanéité et attractivité à la ville. Tel qu'il est pensé et appliqué aujourd'hui, le principe de développement durable est essentiellement technique. Le risque de cette position est que le patrimoine immatériel se perde. Ce texte plaide pour un «tournant culturel» du développement durable et pour un développement impliquant la prise en compte des style de vie, des pratiques collectives, de l'imaginaire et de la mémoire partagée par les habitants ordinaires. Il serait donc intéressant de prendre en compte le couple « culture / patrimoine » dans la dynamique du développement durable. L'intégration de la culture vivante aux projets de développement pourrait accroître le sens de l'identité ainsi que l'usage social des lieux publics.

Is a Cultural Turn of the Sustainable Development possible?

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Abstract - The paper discusses the validity of the idea that Culture can be a way to give to the urban sustainable development a new orientation based on the integration of habits, memory and representations. Culture in general and especially the living culture are a lever of the urban transformation and a patrimonial activator, a source of socio-economic development which can bring dynamism, contemporaneity and attractiveness to the city. As it is thought and applied today, the principle of the sustainable development is essentially technical. The risk of this position is that the intangible heritage will be lost for the future generation. Thus, it would be interesting to take account of the couple "culture / heritage" in the dynamics of the sustainable development. Integrating the living culture could heighten the identity sense as well as the social usage of the public places to which is linked the memory. A « cultural turn » of the sustainable development would give an heuristic legitimacy to what constructs the memory of a district, not only the remarkable buildings, but also the habits and the stories of ordinary inhabitants. It includes the life style, the collective practices and gives a great importance to the representations, to imagination and to speeches. This paper advocates for a development involving a bigger consciousness of the memory shared by people and which constitute them in an organized community.

Around the world, cities are growing, removing the limits that separate the city from the countryside, integrating the villages that used to be settled at a distance into the urban continuum, transforming old industrial and popular sectors into neighbourhoods for the middle or upper class, deteriorating these neighbourhood due to the lack of resources invested in their maintenance or their requalification.

As cities grow and change, neighbourhoods are changing too and the role of public policy, whether the policies of the state or region, are intended to ensure a balance between economic development and the development of quality services and environment for residents.

In France, the policy of the city, working for both the economic and social development of disadvantaged areas for urban renewal, is acting directly on the transformation of the building environment. But even when the projects are desired both by cities and neighbourhoods, they don't change without loss. Besides the remarkable buildings, a number of elements of intangible heritage are disappearing: patterns of usage of space, the routes and paths, details of the urban landscape to which are linked the memories. All these things constitute the memory of a district, a memory shared by the people and which are organizing them in community. The example of the "Great Paris" project - the Great Paris Company and Paris Great International Workshop, involved respectively for transportation and architecture components - in his desire to produce a large infrastructure project is an example of a strategy that may destroy the cultural specificities of the territories involved in the project.

The metropolization phenomena mean massification and homogenisation. In order to exist, it aims to create a strong image and to forge an homogeneous urban identity which will be readable from the outside. The broader context of a city may well seek to erase all singularities and cultural patterns shared by many in favor of a uniform standard. The recent report on the Cultural Dimension of Greater Paris considers the Greater Paris as a timely response to metropolization in its ability to impose a new culture of "think big" giving the precedence to a territorial culture¹. Thus this type of territorial strategy raises questions about the place given to the intrinsic values of the culture of diversity and identity, memory and creativity in the instrumentalization of culture. How to ensure that arts and cultural projects continue to be tools of trade meetings, defending the social and cultural diversity, and promoting empowerment?

That is why it is important, during the transformation of a former neighbourhood by urban renewal, to be attentive that the memory of the place is not completely erased and can continue to being transmitted to young people generations. The consideration of cultural settings in urban planning schemes is a way to make the culture active and to enhance the attractiveness of the heritage. This principle focuses on the impact of culture on the social space and puts the relationship between the practices and representations in the centre of the process of urban analysis. It is in this assumption that culture enters into play, the culture defined as a vector for sustainable urban development.

*"In mass society, wrote the philosopher Hannah Arendt, the artist is the only one who remains a singular individual. What is important is not his subjectivity, but the fact that he is the authentic producer of the objects that each civilization left behind herself, as the quintessence and the lasting legacy of the spirit which animates it."*²

1. City and Culture

We consider culture as a component of the urban organism as well as the economy, trade and social relationship, it is expressed through the objects, places and actors. Recall that the term culture refers to subjects as diverse as artistic interventions in public space, street art, the artistic practices of young people in the city (Graffiti and Hip Hop Culture), ethnicity and diversity of urban cultural, images, signs and symbols belonging to a particular city linked to its particular set of values, historical environmental, its own aesthetic, also linked to representations or perceptions of urban space and to the memories of places. It is possible to define objective criterias characterizing a cultural metropolis (demographic and economic weight, political centrality, the presence of cultural facilities of national or international ranking, diversity of actors and locations, artistic innovation, the presence of a art market) and also, the international renown of the city, its cosmopolitanism, the brewing of cultures. "Both centripetal and centrifugal, a cultural city attracts artists and radiates into the world through the exhibition and publication of their work. It maintains relationship with other cities, diffuses patterns and cultural innovations, influences the taste and fashion plays the role of junction ...".

For example, the last projects which were realized in France or in Europe this last 20 years, in the context of new cities development but also in the reconversion context of post-industrial territories such as the so called "Ruh Gebiet" in Germany, are leaning on a dialog between the work of art and the local situation. These situations are understood as a complex organisation of different levels: economical, ecological, social and historical. Habits, traditions, architectural heritage, nature and landscape are more and more included in art

¹ D. Janicot, Cultural dimension of the *Greater Paris*, La Documentation française, 2012

² Hannah Arendt, *The Crisis in culture* (1954), Paris, Gallimard, 1972, p. 257.

processes as an essential component for the creation of spaces of socialization. It is due to this cultural heritage that people elaborate a communicative relationship with the city. The European model “Ruhr Gebiet” aimed at the transformation of a huge steel industrial and mining territory. Structured by the IBA project (International Bau Ausstellung) - this area became, after a twenty years long project, a pleasant territory to live in where the ecological, cultural, economical, patrimonial and educational level were totally reconsidered after the definitive phase out of the steel industry. Art, depollution processes, and ecology, sustainable development, sport and recreation are now the main themes contributing to the rediscover of the identity of this territory.



Zollverein Industrial Complex, World Heritage, project by Rem KOOLHAAS Essen, Germany, 2008

The modalities for integrating artworks into public space were defined in France during the fifties (1951) by the so called « one percent measure ». According to this policy directive, one per cent of the building resources had to be devoted to the purchase of a contemporary artwork, when constructing or transforming any kind of public buildings (school, station, university, museum, town hall, etc.) This measure evolved first in 1972 when the French government proposed it's reconsideration and expansion to the buildings surrounding and to the construction of new cities. The consequences of this extension is now clearly visible and readable in the new approach of the relation between art and public space which is nowadays identified through two expressions: the first: « Thinking cities by contemporary art » and the second: « Repairing cities ».

This two positions aim at increasing the quality of outdoor space and urban life in the city centres and suburban territories. It involves three principal types of actors, first, the general contractor, particularly elected officials who expect projects, which have a direct impact on space. The selection of sites is fundamental because the impact of the artistic project on the city development depends on its location in the city space and in the context of landmark

hierarchies. The visibility and the readability of a new building, landmarks and works of art by the audience give its shape to the contemporary culture.

The second type of actors is the artist who works in/on the city. They need to be aware of site's conditions, city planning and landscaping. They are the actors whose role is to bring to any kind of spaces, the *genius loci*, i.e. the spirit of the place, which is often missing. It means that they embody the essence of the context. Their symbolical, aesthetical, emotional, evocative and meaningful contribution introduces poetics and imagination into urban and landscape development processes.

The third actor is the city user who is asking for collective and comfortable conditions of life and surroundings made of functional, aesthetical and ecological attentions paid to the environmental quality and services. In the urban open space, art meets population and a great variety of audience. It is in these situations that what we call the « democratisation of culture» can be effective, art meets it's public and the passer-by becomes an audience through the contact with outdoors public art.

2. Creative City and the three “P”

The concept of creative city was born in London in the 80th on the occasion of the formation of the Greater London Council, which took into account the cultural industries by providing aid, assistance to some districts in order to counter the Thatcher's government decision to demolish industrial tools bringing their income to the working class. This concept was a political instrument of the “New Left wing” which goal was the creation of social ties between local populations and ethnic minorities. It concerned the restructuring of public policy (cultural planning), evaluation of cultural resources, identifying the areas of cultural consumption, creates institutions and cultural facilities and introduced the permanent presence of artists in the city.

The concept of creative city is based on three forms of innovation (or creativity) that can be easily identified as the "3 P's": Practices - Policies - Partnerships³.

It brings together three worlds, three dynamics: to rule (creation of cultural foundations, expert consultation on key issues), to produce (valuation of amateur practices), to consume (democratization of art).

Mainly, the creative city works through cultural events and different temporal scale, the regeneration of post-industrial sites ensuring to create a balance between heritage and contemporary creation, the balance between the urban centre and the periphery, tourism management, the creation of infrastructure like theatres, concert halls, museums.

In France, the “European capitals of culture” program allowed the cities like Lille (Lille 2004), Marseille (Marseille 2013) to develop a charter for cultural cooperation open to territorial development. Lille created the label "Art of the Future City" by creating an axis science / business / art and Marseille 2013 opened a program of eleven “Creative Areas” where cultural development is directly linked to urban and social development of underprivileged areas through the cooperation between ANRU (National agency for urban requalification) and eleven artists. In Paris, the union Paris Metropolis has developed metropolitan initiatives in the cultural field and initiated the emergence of a "creative ecosystem" of metropolitan scale. At the end of 2011, it has launched 70 projects for cultural interventions in abandoned territories, on the brownfields, also in social housing areas (generally in areas which were banished from the technician urban production). The Paris metropolis program took its sources in the German IBA experience (International Bau

³ Isabelle Schwartz (European Foundation for Culture), Symposium of the Observatory for the Cultural policies, Paris, 2012.

Austellungen) initiated in 1979 and completed in 1987 in Berlin that has promoted experimentation in the implementation of the projects. The IBA Exhibition in Berlin was an urban renewal project following two distinct strategies: "Careful urban renewal" and "Critical reconstruction". This first program continued with the famous "Iba Ermscher Park" (1989-1999) and Iba See (2000-2010) that aims to reconstruct a landscape after 50 years of mining. These initiatives, sometimes ephemeral, attempt to redraw a "sensitive map". They do not claim to be a "top down" logic, where the government acquires lands in order to set up wide structure of cultural facilities, but complete the full-scale interventions by artistic interventions that contribute locally to redefine a subjective point of view on the local territory.



Jürg MONTALTA, *Lost Everything*, IBA-See, Germany, 2000-2010

3. Sustainable development and heritage

*"The cultural world contains tangible things (books, paintings, statues, musics and buildings) that reflect the past of nations and mankind. These are permanent things that last through the centuries."*⁴

In Europe, traditionally, since the time of ancient Greek and Roman antiquity have been models in the field, the relationship between art and the city is expressed through the creation of cultural objects in the public space. Public space is sometimes compared to a history book through which people or visitors can be in contact with cultural facts marking the history of a country, a city or a particular local area. Thus, the tradition of public art has evolved from objects celebrating some historical figures such as the great statesmen, soldiers who saved the country, resistance fighters who improved living conditions of populations or scientists, engineers and artists who have enriched the culture of a nation. Similarly, cultural objects in the public space are used to commemorate the great facts of history (wars, liberation, revolution, massacres), or technical inventions, scientific, artistic.

Contemporary concern for heritage is that it is a common good to be protected, enhance and revitalized. The concept of heritage is as much monuments, industrial buildings, some

⁴ *Op. cit.* Hannah Arendt

traditional cultural practices in the public space but can also be considered as a common good testifying to human creativity and as the expression of their identity. Heritage policies, initiated after the French revolution (1789), while many buildings were looted and destroyed, are made to preserve the most emblematic buildings having an important historical and cultural character for society. They meet three objectives: preserving (that is to say, keep, maintain, restore and transmit), managing and enhancing for the usage of the publics and answering to touristic, educational and social issues.

"The world within human is evolving, wrote Paul Claval (French theorist of cultural geographer), exists only through the culture that they carry". It binds them to the past, allowing them to act in the present time, to plan their future. Paul Claval defines culture in terms of "identity and territoriality", "symbolic construction", "expression of the class". He also defines this term in the sense of the "cultural studies." The "cultural fact" is a component of "urban reality" and the culture can be seen in terms of the creation, production and artistic representation in urban areas. The understanding of the relationship between city culture and representation can be done through, on the one hand, cultural objects that characterize the material heritage (theatre, churches, museums, gardens...) and, secondly, through cultural events which depend on the conditions of communication and transmission of representations, ideas, techniques, between individuals, and between generations. But users of the public space can also discover an intangible heritage that reflects practices, representations and skills and lets us see the instruments, objects or cultural spaces that communities or individuals recognize as part of their culture. This intangible cultural heritage provides a sense of identity and historical continuity and contributes, as well as the material heritage to a sustainable development for society.⁵

In the Agenda for Culture 21 the tangible and intangible cultural heritage is seen as "the evidence of human creativity and the substrate of the identity of peoples".

"A cultural object is an active object, which operates on an entire group in a visible manner, but most of the time in an invisible manner. It has a specific function that is recognized by a whole group. Those objects are many and multiple in form. They are objects of worship (relics, prayers, tombs), rituals, even people having specific functions within a culture (priest, therapist, wise). It also can be theories".⁶

In France, for the contemporary period, a few examples are demonstrating directly the existence of an inaccessible and intangible heritage that is presented in the public space in an artistic form. It is the celebration of literature, of music and creation in general, taking the form of a sculpture displayed in the public domain or printed as poems on posters in the subway. It is also the articles of the declaration of human Rights issued during the French revolution of 1789 and that are settled in the Concorde metro station in Paris, it can also be a traditional lace pattern enlarged at the scale of a public square of the city of Pont-Audemer in Brittany. Other examples such as old prints stored in the Print Room of Strasbourg and are generally viewed only by insiders are made known to the public by being printed on the tram tickets which can be purchased by the general audience.

⁵ The notion of intangible héritage, appeared at the early 90th after the Unesco recommandation about traditionnal cultures protection (Barcelone 1989)

⁶ « Cultural objects », Françoise Sironi, La revue de psychiatrie sud/nord, n°12



Françoise Schein, *Universal declaration of Human Rights*, Concorde Subway Station, Paris, 1991

4. « Cultural Turn

The culture is not separate from the world, it is its expression and in Europe today, lots of institutions are proclaiming their commitment to "cultural democratization".

This so-called "cultural turn" that has occurred in the Western countries (the U.S. and Europe between 1960 and 80) became a branch of geography.

The emergence of this turning point occurred in parallel with the "post-colonialism" and the rise of the "actors paradigm". It gives some legitimacy to the voices of ordinary people. It includes lifestyle, collective practices, belief systems and varied and fundamental thoughts and gives great importance to the performances, to the imagination, to the speeches, to the sign systems in the functioning of societies. It is impossible to talk about the development of a region, without the focus on its primary resources: people development. The cultural development is based on the multiplicity of actors⁷.

The development is designed by Amartya Kumar Sen, a specialist in human development and economic well-being, Nobel Prize in Economics in 1998 as an expansion of choices for each person, which means both respecting freedoms and personal development opportunities necessary for the exercise of his freedom. It takes into account the social partners not just as disembodied social categories or as passive receivers of the intervention, but rather as active participants who process information and set up strategies by creating links with both local actors and the institutions⁸. Sen's contribution to development economics is the concept of capability. He argues that governments should pay attention to the actual capability of

⁷ Agenda 21 for Culture, Art. 5

⁸ Norman Long, *From Paradigm lost to Paradigm Regain, The Case for an Actor-Orientated Sociology of development*, *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 49, December 1990.

citizens. The welfare economics seeks in turn to evaluate economic policies in terms of effects on the well-being of communities⁹.

"The challenge is to encourage open political processes on the development of "wellness" and not only of "have more", by adding to the quantitative performance indicators, some criteria based on social, cultural and philosophical indicators¹⁰".

Thus, stakeholder engagement can find a better anchoring of actions on the territory, the implementation of new modes of governance characterized by bottom-up and cross-cutting approaches to promote the emergence of cooperation between partners and between territorial scales, and to strengthen local democracy leading to greater involvement of the people.

Considering the words of the actors, means thinking the development from the base (bottom up) and give importance to the specificity of human life in society. It also involves humanizing approaches. According to Alain Touraine, for which a new "paradigm", a new representation of the world is rising in our society "Sociology of systems must give way to a sociology of actors and subjects'. It is thus to take into account the capacity of human beings to create and transform individually and collectively¹¹.

5. Culture and Sustainable Development

The reconciliation between culture and sustainable development is the subject of many debates, seminars and books.

While the object of use is consumed, wrote Hannah Arendt, the artwork is potentially immortal. It is not made for men, but for the world, and the world is to survive beyond the life of mortals. Only objects that survive the cycle of life deserve the name of "culture"¹².

Sustainable development is characterized historically by a figure that is called the virtuous triangle reflecting an evolution of the concept over the centuries. The general policies of sustainable development are expected to be based on three pillars or dimensions that should be applied at all levels of government, local, national, continental or global. In the 18th and 19th century, the term was apprehended in terms of economic growth in the late 19th century, it was enriched with a dimension of social cohesion in the 20th century by the "ecological and environmental sustainability. This paradigm has been consolidated after the *Brundtland Report* of 1987 and the *Earth Summit* in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, but by introducing, more or less explicitly, a hierarchy: the economy first, then the ecological and finally, the social, because in that time, the predominant approach to development was first economic.

We are seeing a crisis of legitimacy of the issue of sustainable development because local and national strategies have mainly considered the technical aspects of the problem and failed to take into account the culture. When the current paradigm of sustainability is applied by governments in their long-term planning, the economic dimension is always explicit (it generates income and employment, and therefore exports), the social dimension focuses on equity (health and education, and the fight against poverty), while the objectives of the environmental dimension include introducing a balance in the use of resources in local ecologies. Culture is ignored or simply appears as a useful instrument to achieve other objectives.

The link between culture and sustainable development highlights the tension between the prosaic and poetic, as Edgar Morin had said.¹³ Indeed, the principles of sustainable development (a concept focused by scientists, economists and engineers), are often associated

⁹ Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*. Oxford University Press 1999

¹⁰ *Indicateurs et valeurs*, labo Culture et développement durable, www.reseauculture21.fr/labo

¹¹ Alain Touraine, *New paradigm for Understanding Today's World* (2005), Polity Press, 2007

¹² *Op. cit.*, Hannah Arendt, p. 270

¹³ Edgar Morin, *La Voie, pour l'avenir de l'humanité*, Paris, Ed. Arthème-Fayard, 2011

with very practical, technical and pragmatic approaches aimed at finding solutions to identified problems while culture is foremost in the sensitive register of the imaginary, of symbolic or spiritual thoughts. In the current context, the danger is in fact to give the priority to economically profitable activities and consider the cultural sector only as a single producer of services and consumer goods. The marchandization (commodification) of culture which can be induced by the economic component of sustainable development is a trap related to the instrumentalization of culture. Cultural action sometimes seems to be reduced to a tool to raise awareness of the challenges of sustainable development in order to encourage people to adopt eco-citizens behaviors, or to "give a soul" at the sustainable development. In 2013, the development cannot be understood as it was throughout the twentieth century. The world has changed. The paradigms must change too to be adapted to the reality. Thus, taking into account the culture at large, we could consider it as a tool allowing us to improve the understanding of sustainability that is one of the targets of societies based on transmission of knowledge through aesthetical artefacts. It is the role of scientists and activist artists to speak about the need of cultural approaches and the task of the policy makers to integrate the plurality of knowledge systems into the sustainable development charters. Development can only be sustainable if it is full, if its dimensions are balanced and mutually enriching in the programs and policies that incorporate an interdisciplinary.

Today, in the early 21st century, the virtuous triangle has began to be loaded with cultural dimensions, precisely in 2001 in the UNESCO declaration on the need to preserve cultural diversity and in 2004 by the editors of the "Agenda 21 Culture", which promotes the development of culture at the heart of all local policies in close coordination with the strategic planning processes, while allocating a ration of at least 1% of their budgets to culture.

In France the cultural dimension of sustainable development through heritage, architecture, democracy and cultural diversity is enshrined in the "National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2010-2013" which provides a common framework for all actors, public and private, to help them structure their own sustainable development projects around strategic choices and indicators. Thus, Agenda 21 proposes that art, through the mediation of artists and creators is involved in projects to improve urban living and the quality of life. The organization of live performances, film screenings, parties and festivals in public spaces, as well as the opening of the cultural heritage to residents and visitors are clearly described in some articles Agenda 21 for Culture.

Among the many articles on this agenda, we have selected those whose effects can already be seen in the real space due to their inclusion in the development of cities in Europe:

Art. 17. Implement policies that promote cultural diversity which involves the variety of supply, promote the presence of all cultures in the means of communication and dissemination.

Art. 18. Support and promote, using various means and instruments, quality and development of cultural goods and services, while trying to make them accessible to all and allowing the deployment of creative abilities of each.

Art. 23. Promote the permanence and the development of indigenous local cultures, bearers of a historic and interactive relationship with the territory.

Art. 26. Take into account the cultural settings in patterns of urban development and all territorial and urban planning in establishing the laws, standards and regulations necessary for the protection of local cultural heritage and the legacy of previous generations.

With the green economy (which includes the ecological footprint) and the social economy (which includes the social footprint), the purple economy that integrates the cultural imprint is

intended to be the forth pillar of a transition to a draft located beyond a purely quantitative growth.

6. The purple economy, cultural Footprint and creative economy

Mauve economy refers to the consideration of cultural economics. It means an economy that adapts to human diversity in a globalized world and builds on the cultural dimension to value goods and services¹⁴

This concept is to be considered along with the green economy. It is based on the idea that companies are vectors "culturalization" of the economy. The horizontal Culture (global, geographical) is complemented by a vertical crop (which focuses on quality and environmental respect), the notion of cultural footprint affects the positive or negative impact on the generated cultural environment by the action of economic agents), the principle of cultural diversity requires interaction, an exchange between cultures on an equitable basis. The well-being is the target. It imposes to include the culture as part of the daily environment. The ambition in the charter of the "purple economy" is to be connected to the green economy in the regional space through numerous cultural initiatives aimed to strengthen a sense of belonging and well being of inhabitants in the territory they inhabit. The territorial issue is fundamental in the relationship between culture and society. The creative economy, as defined by UNESCO covers the local dimension of the purple economy. It includes creative industries located at the crossroads of arts, culture, business and technology and includes the cycle of creation, production and distribution of goods and services in which the basic factor is the use of the intellectual and cultural capital. The creative industries sector, an area whose mission to bring together the cultural, economic and political worlds and civil society is based on the culture as a means to enhance the attractiveness of cities by creating a strong image on the national (or international) level and boosting tourism.

The integration of some of these activities in a heritage district can help to transform this area into "creative district" and make culture the way to develop new activities that produce economic and symbolic value. It covers the Arts, the art market (galleries - artists' studios), architecture and urban planning, publishing, visual arts (cinema, photography, television), crafts, music (composition edition, concerts, festivals), arts (theatre, dance, circus), fashion, design, advertising and event management, digital design (multimedia, software, games) and finally the gastronomy.

Thus, the urban regeneration that is likely to be economically successful (like in the city of Bordeaux) has given place to development where the culture has been linked to the architectural heritage with numerous artistic activities, the cultural industries, urban marketing which used the "cultural" image to attract investors. The improvement and the aesthetization of public space and facilities (transport systems and accessibility to sites) was strengthened by the creation of architecture designed by famous architects.

7. The artists and the spirit of the city

To the question: what art has to do with urban development? One can answer that for the general public, art keeps on playing an important part both in the diffusion of culture as in the construction of a collective memory. It creates the opportunity for direct contacts with real space. It contributes to the cultural development of the society and therefore also draws an

¹⁴ 2nd International Forum of Purple Economie, Abou Dhabi (9 Décembre 2013) »- The Cultural challenges for the global Economy- http://www.economie-mauve.org/economimauve_diversum_3.html

urban cultural structure. Cultural sites generate a training effect, influence the development of neighbourhoods in which artists are settled. The cultural sites, with their cafes, restaurants, galleries, shops, studios and living public spaces are (for better or for worse), a powerful engine of gentrification, and increases the property value.

There are multiple toing and froing between the city and the artists and nowadays, more and more artists are involved into connecting art forms and urban functions. The city is a place of inspiration and experimentation for many artists who are travelling from one country to another, from cities to cities, when they are invited to stay several months “in residence”. The cities are themselves under the influence of artistic actions or representations. Public art aims at investigating the relationships between cultural memory, citizenship and public space. And it acts on the daily lives as we can see in the following outdoor installation by Maro Avrabou and Dimitri Xenakis.



AVRABOU Maro and XENAKIS Dimitri, *Picture the City*, Kadifekale, Izmir, Turkey, 2012.

If the word « Public art » itself is often accused of ultimately being a glittery show, or, as we say in France, « a cherry on a cake », i.e. a final decoration which completes an architectural or an urban process, it can no more be resumed today to the kind of intervention which consists in displaying one art object in front of a monument or in the middle of a square as it used to be during the 19th century. In discussions about art in public space, artworks and public space are usually understood to occupy opposed positions. This relation is interpreted and accentuated in various ways, as an opposition between form and function. Actually, its role is more and more to bring to the « functional city » on the one hand, a poetic dimension which affects directly the sensitive scape of the citizen and on the second, a symbolic dimension bringing a counterpart to the pragmatic aspects of urban management. Today's space is to be aesthetically configured, particularly the suburban territories that were been left

out of public investments. The artists who have chosen to pay attention to those contexts, are bringing along with their installation the most important dimension of aesthetics which is not beauty but care. They take care directly of the space and indirectly of people, they work with care, while giving the very best they can, offering to people the possibility to enjoy the attention and respect to them. When space is not already aesthetically structured by urban planning, architecture or landscaping, public art can be considered as a new way for structuring and valuing urban space and the inhabitants. Public art is therefore a factor of identity and a counterpoint to the supremacy of economical constraint in urban space development. It participates to the transformation of space into « place» (locus), I mean to the transformation of an abstract location to a phenomenological one, and contributes to define identity, historicity and anchorage of a society in a territory. Its main characteristic is to serve pleasure rather than functional goals.

Art is admitted to be the aesthetic side of forms when the urban space is considered as the functional side of city. The function of aesthetics is more and more critically thought by artists as a way to change politics of space through culture. It is aimed at influencing the general public behavior, perceptions and experiences of place. Sometimes, like in the city of Ivry, public art is a way of mediating invisible and complex urban transformation processes. With the so called “Trans 305” project, Stefan Shankland doesn’t focus only on art objects or on installations, he aims to diffuse to a large audience the cultural and structural aspects of urban local situations and gives to city builders the opportunity to include Culture (teaching, performance, exhibition, creation) into the transformation processes of urban space.



Stefan SHANKLAND, *Trans 305 workshop*, Ivry-sur-Seine, 2007-2012

All these experiences are speaking about how to incorporate artworks and artist's experiences into urban development, now that the world that we inhabit is more and more strongly influenced by economic processes and the circulation of money in the global system, and that the accumulation of exchangeable goods has become the most important objective of our capitalistic societies.

Martine BOUCHIER, Paris, 2013, October the 11th

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