

03



Espacio de Arte
Contemporáneo

EL ARTE QUE HACEMOS Y QUÉ HACEMOS CON EL ARTE



Sala_Taller 02
Cajas
Martín Pérez
En la fotografía: Maite Bigi

Aproximaciones a mi generación a través de la crítica institucional (fragmentos de una entrevista colectiva)

Francisco Tomsich

Para la confección de este texto acudí a varias personas, a quienes les pedí vía e-mail que me enviaran preguntas para una entrevista (a ser publicada en un libro y en un marco de análisis de prácticas artísticas actuales en Uruguay), en la cual se relacionaran y desarrollaran los conceptos de *generación* e *institución*. Seleccioné algunas de las preguntas y las respondí por escrito, en el lapso de tiempo aproximado que llevaría hacerlo presencialmente.

¿CUÁL ES TU GENERACIÓN DE ARTISTAS? ¿QUÉ HACE A UNA GENERACIÓN SER GENERACIÓN? ¿LA GENERACIÓN TIENE CONSCIENCIA DE GENERACIÓN? ¿LA GENERACIÓN REALIZA SUS PROPUESTAS APOYADA EN QUÉ ES GENERACIÓN?

Generación es un concepto que, como herramienta de periodización, proviene de las teorías literarias, de la historiografía literaria, y ya hace tiempo que carece de prestigio. Pero a nadie se le oculta que la palabra tiene una fuerza, un poco polémica, un poco irresponsable, un poco auténtica, como lo demuestra su aparición en la prensa (no en Uruguay, pienso por ejemplo en una nota sobre la «nueva generación» de artistas ingleses en *The Guardian*¹ hace un tiempo, cuyo análisis ya respondería a muchos de los problemas planteados en esta entrevista), en los artículos y libros académicos de barricada,² en las conversaciones informales, en los ejercicios de autoanálisis... La agrupación formal, la agrupación informal, la promoción académica, la participación en muestras y publicaciones colectivas autogestionadas, la producción de espacios de exhibición y acción, la redacción de textos programáticos, la presencia en nuevas colecciones, la presencia tutelar de maestros... y también materiales de periodización provenientes de la historiografía política, social, son factores que suelen utilizarse para construir desde «afuera» de las prácticas nociones de generación, y muchísimas veces las preguntas estéticas —qué tienen

1. «Next generation turn its back on Emin and Hirst conceptual art works», en *The Guardian*, domingo 22 de mayo de 2011, disponible en <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2011/may/22/george-shaw-tracey-emin-artists>>.

2. Por ejemplo, el clásico libro de Griselda Pollock *Generations and Geographies in the visual arts: feminist readings* (Londres, Routledge, 1996).

¿CREÉS QUE LAS ACTUALES POLÍTICAS CULTURALES ATIENDEN A LA PRODUCCIÓN DE ARTISTAS DE DIFERENTES GENERACIONES? ¿DE QUÉ MANERA?

Sí, atienden a la producción de artistas de diferentes generaciones mediante la democratización que, a primera vista, supone la política actual de subvenciones, premios y becas evaluadas sobre la base de proyectos. Participar de dichas políticas culturales implica en el mejor de los casos una alfabetización y, en el peor, una adaptación o adecuación. No estoy seguro de que haya una generalización acerca de cómo diferentes artistas (más que generaciones de artistas) responden a esto, porque hay muchas excepciones. Sin embargo, no se atiende a la capitalización de los resultados de esas políticas, ni siquiera en el evidéntísimo lugar del intercambio y la promoción de los artistas en otros países. Las instituciones tienen escasísima o ninguna relación con otras instituciones similares en el extranjero, y no existen programas de intercambio entre Uruguay y otros países para las artes en ningún área —ni educativa ni de exhibición ni de discusión ni de publicación—, por lo que el rango de «atención» de esas políticas es tan reducido y mínimo, que dudo que sea justo hablar ya no de «otras generaciones», sino de un número apenas representativo de artistas de cualquier generación que sea. Por no hablar de lo absurdamente difícil que es ver en Uruguay muestras de artistas extranjeros (especialmente latinoamericanos, africanos y asiáticos) o recibir a artistas extranjeros, y digo absurdamente difícil incluso teniendo plena conciencia de los costos que implica. Pero creo que sí hay un territorio común en el que se puede decir que no existe la posibilidad del intercambio intergeneracional y la participación colectiva en este momento, es el de la formación, la pedagogía y la enseñanza, y como lugares de formación deberían pensarse las instituciones en Uruguay, más que como lugares de exhibición locales. Esto último pensando que necesariamente la producción local de un país de la escala de Uruguay destinada al público de un país de la escala de Uruguay ha de tener un ritmo, y quizá ese ritmo no acompase los parámetros de exhibición actuales.

¿CÓMO ES LA COMUNICACIÓN ENTRE LAS INSTITUCIONES Y LOS ARTISTAS? ¿QUIÉN TOMA LA INICIATIVA?

La segunda parte me parece tan buena como pregunta que responder ambas partes me resulta un tanto exagerado en este contexto.



Sala_Taller 01
Autorretrato de un boceto
Gonzalo Delago

At the same time, the ‘displacement of practices based on objects to practices based on contexts’ which develop a critical view on the milieu, implies, to a greater and greater extent, an interaction and interdependence between the ‘artistic field’ and other fields.⁶

Therefore, it seems relevant to ask: how do artists conceive the production process of their artistic practices? Do they perceive any kind of relationship between the market, the artistic institution, the globalisation process, the existing cultural policies, amongst other factors, and the production of their practices? Do they think that there is a relationship between the production process and the time at which their practices are received?

This is the starting point for an enquiry which will be carried out during Room_Workshop into different visions regarding the aspects of these processes, as well as the complex fabric which is weaved through them.

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FUCK ANYWHERE

Porn factory for the design of a Uruguayan publication of explicit content. In the twilight of the printed magazine, this is the first known case.

Re-enactment of unexpected intimate experiences, in public spaces. Subjects caught anywhere by the flame of physical passion, narrated by themselves. Amateur. And iconoclastic porn.

3: PORN WITHOUT PEOPLE

I once found on the Internet a series of images credited to Jon Haddock. Haddock uses photographs downloaded from the web and, using Photoshop, deletes the actors. The work is called *Pornography with the people removed*. Through this mechanical procedure, Haddock manages to provoke a beautiful liberating accident: a) it leaves one’s eyes to wander

freely around the frame and to look for details; b) it makes one see the location as typically *porn* and, at the same time, as any other place; c) it moves the spectator to look for ghosts, the trace of the actors, motivated by the absolute certainty that they are there, stupidly hidden.

2: PORN ICONOCLASTS

It is surprising to realise that in Uruguay there is no trace of an explicit sex publication produced locally. Typically, it will be claimed that this is due to cultural shame or that the market is too small but, if this were the case, why do not we have at least an isolated attempt, a small editorial failure? This categorical absence describes a very strong relationship with this regime of images and words, but it is manifested as a resounding silence. However, I suspect that this is not a shortage but a powerful collective act of enunciation. An aesthetic-discursive statement on viewing, representing and narrating sex, to which Haddock’s images would indicate a direction, and this project explores.

1: ANYONE, ANYWHERE

In the universe of pornography, there is a subgenre: the *amateur* genre, in which the readers or the users are those who make and send their own material to be published, with themselves as protagonists. The *amateur* section turns pornography into a democratising environment, in which there are no parameters of beauty or standards to meet. It is a playful space charged with sense of humour, in the absence of a critical eye, in which anyone is able to offer him/herself as an object of visual or textual pleasure to an unknown spectator.

0: PLAN OF ACTION

Listening to stories about sex in public spaces. Surveying the exact location of the event from each story with the protagonist of the narrative.

Assembling the narration with the records of the respective locations, without anyone in the frame. Designing the page corresponding to the magazine; printing the templates. Transforming the *Room-Workshop* space into a mini-factory for this unprecedented explicit magazine. Producing, through this reading, and stimulated by the experiments by Jon Haddock, the iconoclastic porn which projects the shadow of inexistent porn.

After signalling and accumulating them, these intimate encounters in public spaces start to proliferate, describing the urban surroundings as a porn playground. This predisposed perspective puts in one’s mind a suspicion of concealment eager to be exhibited in each couple, trio or group found loitering around, inciting a new eroticised experience of the city, enjoyed privately.

Ezequiel Steinman

PALESTRA

Rapprochement to my Generation through Institutional Critique (Fragments of a Collective Interview)

Francisco Tomsich

To write this text, I turned to several people. I asked them, by email, to send me questions for an interview (to be published in a book, in the context of an analysis of artistic practices in Uruguay), in which the concepts of *generation* and *institution* were related and elaborated upon. I selected some of the questions and wrote responses in approximately the same time that it would have taken for them to be answered in person.

WHICH GENERATION OF ARTISTS DO YOU BELONG TO? WHAT MAKES A GENERATION A GENERATION? IS THE GENERATION CONSCIOUS OF BEING ONE? DOES A GENERATION MAKE ITS PROPOSALS BASED ON BEING PART OF THAT GENERATION?

Generation is a concept which, as a method of periodisation, comes from literary theories, from literary historiography, but which lost prestige long ago. Yet, it is clear that this word has a force which is slightly controversial, slightly irresponsible and slightly authentic. This has been demonstrated by its appearance in the press (not in Uruguay; I am thinking, for example, of an article about the ‘new generation’ of English artists published in The Guardian’ some time ago, whose analysis would answer many of the

problems posed in this interview), in key academic books and articles,² in informal conversations, in self-analytic exercises... Formal grouping, informal grouping, academic promotion, participation in collective and independent publications and shows, the production of spaces for exhibition and action, the writing of programmatic texts, the presence of new collections, the tutelary presence of masters... and also methods of periodisation which come from social or political historiography are factors that tend to be used to build the practical notions of generation from the ‘outside’; and, very often, the questions about aesthetics — what these artists actually have in common — are asked later. When I think about what ‘my’ generation of artists would be, I think of all these factors... all of them are present... and, obviously, an age range: between approximately 35 and 25 years old... we witnessed a technological transformation of information and formation, and also a process of conversion from culture as resistance to a culture placed within State mechanisms of promotion and production — from a kind of production based on micro-traditions and micro-patronage to one based on projects (to a certain extent more homogeneous and predictable) and with more linguistic inflation. And also to the construction of local contemporary art, understood as a style and not as a ‘current artistic practice’. This was constructed by the previous generation, not by us; I see ‘my’ generation through that

1. «Next generation turns its back on Emin and Hirst’s conceptual artworks», en *The Guardian*, Sunday 22 May 2011, available at <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2011/may/22/george-shaw-tracey-emin-artists>>.

2. For example, the classic book by Griselda Pollock *Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminist Readings* (Londres, Routledge, 1996).

6. This is the meaning referred to by Néstor García Canclini when he analyses the concept of ‘autonomous field’, as suggested by Pierre Bourdieu, and proposes a postautonomous condition of the field of contemporary art relating to the displacement mentioned in the text which took place in recent decades. It should be noted that this does not imply the abolishment of the notion of autonomy, but conceives it as having ‘open formats’. ‘There is no absolute independence, but tactic autonomies’, García Canclini, Néstor, *La sociedad sin relato. Antropología y estética de la inminencia*, [Society without a Narrative: Anthropology and Aesthetics of Imminence] Buenos Aires, Katz Editores, 2010.

frame, as a generation of transition. At the same time, I clearly see that the contemporary art produced by my generation, when it is not producing something else, is more balanced in its use of the diverse postmodern traditions which make up its structure. I think that there is more than one generation within each generation, understood as ‘consciences’, but I do not think that any generation makes its proposals ‘resting’ on this concept, unless the need to kill the father or the mother is too big; I do not think that this has been our case but, when it happens, it seems to be very interesting.

WHY DO YOU LINK THE CONCEPTS OF *GENERATION* AND *INSTITUTION*?

It has to do, obviously, with what has already been said; with the construction of frameworks of interpretation for thinking as a generation and, also, with the processes of institutionalising artistic practices to which ‘my’ generation has been the witness and very often the protagonist, too. When I think of institutions in art, I first think of academic institutions, in which the training of artists is organised. In Uruguay, there is only one official institution which carries out, as does art itself, several functions — not all of which are necessarily related to the production of histories of art or of schools of artists. When I moved to Montevideo in 2000 and registered myself at The National School of Fine Arts, I understood this perfectly well and I was not interested in such training. However, in the year I spent there, I met a group of artists with whom I have continued to work until now and with whom I share a series of stylistic features, not to mention experiences. Thus, I cannot think of myself as being within a generation (although my generation is bigger and more complex than that) without thinking of the role that the institution played in gathering us together and allowing us to begin working together in a context which provided a certain validity — even if it were only marginal or tangential — to our practices. In this vein, I remember very well that, at that time, and for ‘my’ generation, the vibrant López Lage workshop (which I only came to know later) became FAC (Contemporary Art Foundation). Therefore, it became an institution which had a growing presence and influence in the evident construction of contemporary art – understood again as a style – under the new paradigm which the left-wing government proposed in relation to culture. Beforehand, the magic word from the López Lage Workshop ‘strategy’ had a pathetic competitor in the word ‘approval’, which crossed the conceptual structure of many students of Fine Arts (of my generation) until, I think, not too long ago. The purpose of both words was, in any case, to pose a problem for the artists: that of participation in institutional policies. From certain places — and it is still seen in this way —, participation in institutional policies within the paradigm of contemporary art is viewed as skipping aesthetic steps, as a kind of betrayal of an idea of style, or of maturity, or of language, which is usually self-evident, due to extreme

modernism, but which is often completely justified by a simple immaturity of the general field or, better said, by a lack of aesthetic controllers. The discourse about ‘strategy’ by López Lage has changed recently, as has the attitude of academia. However, as clearly demonstrated by the last National Prize of Fine Arts, the academic practices of ‘institutional art’, so to speak, which come from thirty-year-old (or older) historical practices, have not yet been digested by the system which is collapsing in the most ridiculous way. It is as if only stupid innocence or political manipulation were allowed. And there is something slightly morbid about all this.

DO YOU PERCEIVE ANY KIND OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOUR WORK AND EXISTING CONTEMPORARY ART INSTITUTIONS IN URUGUAY? IF SO, HOW DO YOU CONCEIVE THOSE RELATIONSHIPS? DO YOU THINK THAT OTHER GENERATIONS PERCEIVE THE EXISTENCE OF SOME SORT OF RELATIONSHIP OF THIS TYPE?

This is a very difficult question, and it goes against everything said so far, because active participation in the system of arts tends to present artists with modes, rhythms and methods of production, and specific training is necessary for this. The word ‘strategy’, used in the training of López Lage’s students, responded to this; and the word ‘approval’, used in academia when I was 22 or 23 years old, responded as a criticism of it. In any case, the ‘institutions of contemporary art’ should be identified. I think that Fine Arts is one, to a certain extent, and, to speak about something completely different, the National Museum [of Visual Arts] (MNAV) would be another one. When I think of institutions in this context, I think of those which build and develop a specific policy for a specific range of practices. Thus, it is necessary to leave out those practices which occur in the same place and at the same time but which are not yet, which stopped being, which will go on to become or which will never be contemporary art (for example, the ‘realist’ painting of horse portraits or the interpretations of Figari’s work made by young Uruguayan artists in the provinces). From this perspective, I think that, for our generation, the political and economic construction of institutionalised contemporary art in Uruguay was better linked with foreign cultural centres during the second half of the first decade of this century, and with the (progressive) intervention in recent years of what is currently known as the EAC. This was due to the lack of galleries, collections, national policies for artists to be trained abroad, Uruguay’s failure to attend hundreds of biennial art exhibitions, symposia, colloquia, schools, etcetera, all over the world, and to the conceptual decadence of the National Prize of Visual Arts, and others. I believe that museification marks, by definition, the end of practices. Even if the EAC is not called a ‘museum’, it is clear that it is also a panopticon, metaphorically speaking, for observing what — of all that takes place there — might not be called contemporary art in a couple of years; because what

is new at the beginning does not differ from what preceded it, but: it needs to highlight the aspects it shares with the old so as not to be silenced.³ Coming back to the question, I must say that there is one place in which I do and one place in which I don’t and, up to a certain extent, this is what I tried to experiment with when I organised two parallel exhibitions⁴ — one at EAC and another at the Museo Blanes. They were balanced in terms of their artistic, symbolic, processual and conceptual aspects; they had similar stylistic features; they shared topics, materials, palettes, gestures, drawing; they were positioned on the same level of aesthetic decisions; and they established similar dialogues with the histories of art that I am interested in revisiting, repeating and reconstructing. However, they belonged to such different exhibition contexts that, in themselves, they proposed *the possibility* of an ad hoc rhetoric; a series of shapes that — if explored — could suggest the frailty of stylistic commonplaces, the differences in current artistic practice, contemporary art understood as the style of the (previous) era and its adequacy, historicist reformulation or even (self-)historiography. As I expected, the same audience reacted with disgust, and even anger, to the ‘contemporary’ exhibition and highly approved the other one, whose careful montage was intentionally parachronic, and the other way round. I am now interested in these reactions as symptoms. They did not represent true critical analytical postures – this would lead us to talk about the quality of the exhibitions, which is beyond this discussion. They represented a series of taste ‘a priori’s’, prejudices, and a very common perception of artistic practice as alienation and, in the worst case, as the return of the figure of the ‘monkey painter’ of the 19th century which Duchamp rebelled against by cross-dressing as a ‘monkey visual artist’ (surreptitiously Duchampian or ‘conceptual’). In any case, the key word for thinking about or conceiving those reactions might be the word *project* and, indeed, I believe that artists from other generations perceive these relationships or *shapes*. Due to the fact that, as a style, contemporary art is a series of identical shapes with exchangeable content, I understand as truly political — I can understand it as such — the attitude of a sixty-year-old artist towards the possibility of his/her art being *translated* in terms of contemporary art (something that commonly occurs) and, therefore, interpreted a priori, impoverished, biased. I do not know if this occurs amongst emerging artists, but emergence currently has different parameters to those of my generation. The place of resistance is different; the places in which technique and tradition are said — these two words which always have a different meaning — are different; the power

of the institutional, private workshop, and academic scene is different; the ambition linked to self-taught and global training, new types of erudition, information and knowledge promoted by the use of the Internet, are different. But the ‘realist’ painting of horse portraits can also be easily translated. It can be considered as contemporary art through appropriations, readings or decontextualisations. This is what happens when, as far as processes are concerned, we evaluate the training of painters according to French academia even though it is not really fair; it is an anachronism. To think that contemporary art is an anachronism in itself can be a useful way to begin discussing so many issues.

WHAT FACTORS (I DO NOT LIKE THIS WORD BUT I CAN’T THINK OF ANOTHER RIGHT NOW) RELATED TO GENERATIONAL ASPECTS DO YOU THINK INFLUENCE THE PERCEPTION OF THESE RELATIONSHIP?

The first ones that come to mind are those related to the difficulty of tracing cartographies or maps of action directed to a point. The difficulty of changing those points and turning the compass increases once something has already been said. In this respect, I believe that the works of Ernesto Vila or Clemente Padín are illustrative: Vila has managed to reinvent himself completely and, at the same time, to elaborate a discourse from what is local, with local contents and without losing direct contact with the ways of his own tradition; the tradition in which he was trained. Padín, on the other hand, is a model of self-management; his work — which belongs in its own right to the group of practices which contemporary art claims for itself — crosses over himself, and this is how it also manages to become a bit a-temporal. I am not sure if this interpretation works for Padín’s recent productions, though. Pablo Uribe is another artist whose work is absolutely aware of local contents; the relationship with institutions, though, is completely different and this might be the reason why most of his work is not only determined by the institutional context but it is also conceived and created specifically in and for it. This is already a *modus operandi* of contemporary art. Returning to the question of how institutions and production are related in my work, I would highlight some differences that might also be applicable for other artists, at least for those of my generation: there is a kind of work, or exhibition, which is made primarily with a political objective in mind and, therefore, it requires and demands to be exhibited here and now. This kind of work can be directed by a critical impulse at different levels and intensities, and some of those levels and intensities can cause the work to be anti-institutional; that is to say, it might need a different kind of (public) space – i.e., not institutions – for passing on its message. However, in general, I am interested in installing this kind of work in institutions themselves, being challenged by them, too, and generating a more complex meaning from that interaction.

3. Bergson in words by Gilles Deleuze in *La imagen movimiento. Estudios sobre cine* [Cinema 1: the Movement-Image], Barcelona, Paidós, 1983.

4. Loess, Municipal Museum Juan Manuel Blanes, Montevideo, December 2010-April 2011, curated by María Eugenia Grau, and *Essai sur le enfermement*, EAC, Montevideo, December 2010-April 2011.

ART & SOFTWARE

The State of Affairs / Charging batteries Art and New Media at the EAC

Brian Mackern

Art based on computers has been being developed for about fifty years now¹ but its intrinsic creative possibilities began to be exponentially developed only twenty years ago — after becoming massively available and, consequently, granting access to global connectivity. That is to say: the artistic reflection regarding the ubiquity of the object, the transmutability of the data, its capacity to permeate/impregnate the space, the possibilities of hypertextuality, the interface metaphors, the control systems, etcetera.²

1. For a succinct overview on this topic, see Levin, Golan, *Audiovisual Software Art: A Partial History*, 2009, available at <http://www.flong.com/texts/essays/see_this_sound_old/>, ‘A significant theme in many audiovisual software artworks is the transmutability of digital data, as expressed by the “mapping” of some input data stream into sound and graphics. For these works, the premise that any information can be algorithmically sonified or visualized is the starting point for a conceptual transformation and/or aesthetic experience»; Cramer, Florian and Gabriel Ulrike, *Software Art*, 2001, available at <http://www.netzliteratur.net/cramer/software_art_-_transmediale.html>; *Computer-Art*, available at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_art>; Manovich, Lev, *New Media from Borges to HTML*, Massachussets, The New Media Reader-The MIT Press 2002, available at <http://www.intelligentagent.com/CNM200/manovich_new_media.doc>; History of the WWW, available at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_World_Wide_Web>.

2. Or, as established by Lev Manovich in *Language of New Media* (2001), the new media object is defined by: numerical representation (the object exists as data), modularity (different elements exist independently), automatisisation (new media objects can be created and modified automatically), variability (objects exist in multiple versions) and transcodification (the logic of computers influences how we understand and represent ourselves). Manoviche, Lev, *The language of new media*, Massachussets, The MIT Press-A Leonardo Book, 2001.

At the same time, the popular access to devices which progressively allow more permeating technology and the evolution of the screen into *input-output* devices bring a sustained evolution of the ‘interface culture’, in which there are more frequent displacements towards the tangible interface, beyond projection and screen, and in which we are all connected to one another, in one way or another.

Due to this socio-technological situation, other ways of doing things are also amplified: the collectivisation of the code, DIY,³ the transverse circulation of knowledge and the intermediation between diverse areas of knowledge.

These last few years have also witnessed several manifestos which refer to ‘the state of affairs’ within art and new media, layered across time, based on moments of development, of commercial strategies, of blows to the market and of artistic institutions’ shifts of focus on this topic. Times also marked by the evolution of the type of connectivity, passing though clearly defined periods, from BBS networks to Web 1.0 and to the ‘marketingly’ called Web 2.0.⁴

Amongst the aforementioned manifestos, in 2012, we precisely witness a new update in James Bridle’s proposal in *The New Aesthetic* and the subsequent answers by Bruce Sterling in *Wired*, together with academic echoes in other media. Even if it is not entirely new, this proposal has, at least, brought

3. *DIY*: Do it yourself, term used to describe the construction, modification or repair of something without the help of experts or professionals. Artistic movement which uses these concepts in its creation available at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Do_it_yourself>.

4. developerWorks Interviews: Tim Berners-Lee, available at <<http://www.ibm.com/developerworks/podcast/dwi/cm-int0822o6txt.html>>.

This is what I paradigmatically did with *Moving/Icaria* in 2006.⁵ Then, there is the kind of work linked to the collective; to participation in the generation, so to speak. This kind of work must fight to be supported, produced and exhibited in institutions, for the simple fact that we are the ones doing this now and, later, the opportunity will have gone: working collectively is a position and a manifestation which creates its own timing and rhythms but which is conditioned by the known characteristics of groups of young artists, such as being ephemeral and situational; moreover, their capacity for self-reflection and self-analysis should not be exaggerated. On the other hand, the workshop is a different matter and has nothing to do with institutions. In fact, I believe that art is what the artist does in his/her workshop; once the work is out of the workshop, it becomes something different (that is why, to a certain extent, we would not have been talking about art in this interview, but about something else; however, art is a very important excuse for talking about something else). If the production of an artist in his/her workshop is determined only by its relationship with institutions, I believe that there is a problem and, in fact, there is a problem: very often cultural policies, through forms, not only tend (by a very natural and common process) to homogenise practices and discourses about practices, but also to determine the methods of production, the material methods of production. Artists are, in part, as much to blame for this as cultural policies.

DO YOU BELIEVE THAT CURRENT CULTURAL POLICIES CATER FOR THE PRODUCTION OF ARTISTS FROM DIFFERENT GENERATIONS? IN WHAT WAY?

Yes, they cater for the production of artists from different generations through a democratisation process which, at first sight, arises from current policy on subsidies, prizes and grants evaluated on the basis of projects. To participate in these cultural policies implies, at best, an alphabetisation, and, at worst, an adaptation or adjustment. I am not sure whether or not there is a general pattern in the way that different artists (as opposed to generations of artists) respond to this, because there are plenty of exceptions. However, the capitalisation of the results of these policies is not taken into account, not even in the most evident place of exchange and promotion of artists abroad. Institutions have few or no links with similar institutions abroad and there are no exchange programmes between Uruguay and other countries in any area of art — nor in education, exhibition, discussion or publication. This is why the amount of ‘attention’ given to these policies is so reduced and minimal; I doubt it would be fair now to mention not ‘other generations’ but a barely representative number of artists from any generation. Leaving aside how absurdly difficult it is to see the exhibitions of foreign artists in Uruguay (especially those from Latin America, Africa and Asia)

or to welcome foreign artists; and I say ‘absurdly difficult’ despite being more than aware of the associated costs. I do think that, if there is an area in which we can say that there is no possibility of intergenerational exchange and collective participation today, it is the area of development, pedagogy, teaching. Institutions in Uruguay should think of themselves as spaces for development, rather than as spaces for local exhibitions. This last thought is related to the fact that the local production of a country the size of Uruguay, necessarily addressed to the public of a country the size of Uruguay, should have a rhythm and, perhaps, this rhythm does not fit the parameters of current exhibitions.

WHAT IS THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN INSTITUTIONS AND ARTISTS LIKE? WHO TAKES THE INITIATIVE?

I think that the second part is such a good question that to answer both would seem a bit exaggerated in this context.

Francisco Tomsich

5. MEC, August 2006.