Participatory Urbanisms

In São Paulo and New Delhi

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São Paulo:

1. Imargem
Multidiciplinary Arts and Culture Collective in Southern Periphery

2. Colitivo Pi
Female Street Theater Troup

3. Casa Amarelo
Artist Occupation of Abandoned Colonial Building

4. Mastres de Obra
Construction Workers’ Art and Education Collective

5. Architecture of Gentrification
Alternative Reporting on Urban Issues

6. Ciclistas Bonequeros
Street Theater Cycling Group

7. Praca Agusta
Reclaiming closed public park

8. URBZ São Paulo
Collaborative Building Workshops, Partner Group in Mumbai

9. Bloco do Beco
Street-Samba Based Cultural Collective

10. Cia Antropofágica
Walking Urban Intervention and Street Theater Collective

New Delhi:

1. Janam (Jana Natya Manch)
Street Theater Organization

2. Gati and Dance Union
Contemporary Dancers’ Research, Advocacy and Policy Group

3. Sarai
Platform for Research and Practice on Cities and Information Architecture

4. CURE
Inclusive and participatory governance in informal settlements

5. Chintan
Informal Wasteworkers’ Advocacy Collective

6. Ankur
Alternative Pedagogy and Spatial Agency

7. Khoj
Artists’ workshop and network

8. Gurgaon ki Awaaz
Community Radio Station

9. Praxis
Participatory Practices and the Democratization of Development Processes

10. Sohail Hashmi
Walking, History and Citizenship
Mestres da Obra, São Paulo, Brazil

Mestres da Obra is an association that works together with other projects, in creating conditions for the development of a healthier working environment. It looks for formation of a reality that values the construction of knowledge, strengthening the collective of workers.

K: Can you talk about this history of Mestres da Obra?

A: It was a relatively simple idea and through an educational process located on construction sites consisting of a process where workers created works of art from construction waste. So, the idea of Mestres da Obra came about, in January of 1999 as the result of a collaboration between two young people, myself, architect and urbanist and Daniel Manchado Cywinski, a business administrator and educator.

Khoj
New Delhi, India

Khoj is an autonomous, artist-led collective aimed at the development of experimental, interdisciplinary and critical contemporary art practice in New Delhi. With a focus on building networks, developing alternative pedagogies and learning through collaboration and exchange, its programs have nurtured unconventional connections between art and disciplines such as ecology, architecture and urban planning. Participatory art or social practice are at the core of Khoj’s work in Khirki, the urban village in South Delhi where Khoj’s studios are located.

K: Could you describe some of Khoj’s community art interventions in the Khirki neighborhood?

P: We have been working with community art since 2002 and this has been a rich and difficult learning process for us about what specifically social practice or community art means here at Khoj and in Khirki. At times we began to feel like some artists seemingly preyed on information from Khirki for their own aesthetic project, which is a huge ethical problem...and then there were other artists for whom their art practice was a process of unpacking a situation.
“Urban citizenship is when everybody has a basic standard of living, and can access the city, whether it’s the park, the metro… all of that. But more importantly, we think urban citizenship is about how and where you are able to contribute to the city and does the city administration facilitate…or allow you to contribute? So, if you’re an informal waste worker, why aren’t you given some space in the city to sort out your waste?”

“Urban citizenship? It’s a philosophical question. It definitely has to do with rights and entitlements and a lot of people in our neighbourhood don’t have access to the things they should have: electricity, water, but on the other hand, it is also about belonging. So we might not have rights or material things but we feel like we are a part of this city. This is more interesting for us. Because no one else can tell me whether I should be here or not, and I will use the means, techniques, that are available to me to make sure that I can survive here and…I know I belong in Delhi.”
“So we don’t necessarily bring poems and short stories that have a political theme to the street, but, if there is a story that talks about a public official who wanted to be magician and did not become one … If this is not political what is? This is where the political lies.”

“And... it was quite interesting to see how the question of systematization of information and production of journalistic information the same play an important role if you take a side. In general, inciting a discussion about whether or not journalism should take a position, or if the essence of journalism is to be impartial and all that. At Architecture, we do not draw such a clear line between journalism and activism.”
Working Themes / Publication Chapters:

1. Memory and the City

2. Post-Disaster Urbanscapes and Performing Reconstruction

3. Games in the City

4. Surveillance and Big Data

5. Choreopolitics, Protest and Policing

6. Festivals, Events and Urban Co-production

7. Time-based Aesthetics

8. Economies of Public Goods

9. Negotiating Participation and Urban Governance