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Artist Videos

2019-2020

Deliverable 4.5.1

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A-Place

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Artist Videos (2019-2020)

Version 1.0

Editor:

Ruben Verdú

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Executive Summary

This is a report of the video art productions created during the first year of the project which have been commissioned by the LOOP Barcelona festival and screened in its 2020 edition. The video works have been the result of two types of commissions:

- to the winner of the 2020 open call on video art, the collective ZimmerFrei/Anna de Manincor, and to their project [La città dentro](#).

- to the collective Sitesize, composed of Elvira Pujol and Joan Vila i Puig, to carry out an exploration of the territory of the city of L'Hospitalet de Llobregat under the title *TERRApolis*. The work consists of a series of three videos, of which the first one has been already delivered: [TERRApolis: Puig d'Ossa](#). The next two videos will be released on February and May 2021.

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose and target group

For the past eighteen years, Screen Projects has organized LOOP Barcelona, an international meeting point to showcase the latest thoughts and artistic productions related to video art, the moving image and the ever-expanding field of audiovisual artworks. From its very start, one of its foremost concerns has been how to offer artists the opportunity to reflect and enroll in practices that strengthen their social implication. Therefore, most of the artistic practices that LOOP is supporting tend to capture the complex layers that animate public space and the various constructs that define people's sense of belonging, as well as intimating the ways in which they relate to the world. In short, we assume that artists are always eager to uncover the symbolic construction of place, a hidden layer that seldom manifests itself in material terms, and this is precisely what LOOP intends to help bring out in a bid to widen the reach of creative placemaking.

This report contains a description of the process leading to the commission of the two video art productions presented in the A-Place section of the 2020 edition of the LOOP festival: *La città dentro*, from ZimmerFrei/Anna de Manincor, and *TERRApolis: Puig d'Ossa*, from Sitesize.

1.2. Contribution of partners

Screen Projects, the organization that manages the LOOP Barcelona festival, has been the partner in charge to organize the open call and selected the artist-in-residence. La Salle and Urban Gorillas have participated in the jury of the open call together with Screen Projects. Other A-Place partners have contributed to the dissemination of the call and of the awarded works.

1.3. Relations to other activities in the project

The video production *TERRApolis* is part of a comprehensive research on the sociophysical territory of the city of L'Hospitalet which also includes the placemaking activities carried out in "A Weaved Place". The collective Sitesize has also participated in the planning and implementation of the activities carried out in this programme, together with students and faculty members of the School of Architecture La Salle.

2. Open Call Production

2.1. Intent and Goals

In order to support the creative strategies of artists, LOOP Barcelona opened a call to submit proposals to promote a debate about what placemaking could mean. This call was intended to help projects which critically question well-established notions and conventional approaches about the symbolic construction of space and of a sense of belonging. This kind of artworks are meant to enhance public debate and morph social constructions. The goal is to spread the notion of participant citizenship and of a shared public space, issues which lie at the core of the A-Place project.

2.2. Open Call Process

In order to attract and engage a wide range of participants and get ideas about the concept of placemaking in all its possible expressions, LOOP Barcelona has opted for an international juried open call. The announcement of the call (Figure 1) included:

- a) A short description of the project A-Place
- b) A presentation of LOOP Barcelona, the issuer of the call
- c) The object and purpose of the call
- d) The terms and conditions of the call
 - Participants Eligibility
 - Project Characteristics
 - Awarded Grant
 - Selection Criteria
 - How to Submit
 - Application Deadline and Calendar
 - Acceptance of Terms



Figure 1. Announcement of the open call

The submission form was created with JotForm, a free online form publisher and data collection tool that facilitated an organized, secure and easy way to submit proposals. We received thirty-three entries from professional artists from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Netherlands and United Kingdom. The quantity and quality of the proposals was a forewarning of the complex deliberation task which lay ahead of us to choose a winner. The projects revealed a wide variety of approaches to building and engaging communities in art-based placemaking processes. Taken together, the proposals confirmed the potential of the creative placemaking subject, and evidenced that there is plenty of interest for future editions.

2.3. The Jury

A small and compact jury was assembled to ease the complex task of choosing a winner for the A-Place Open Call 2020. The jury was composed of the following members:

- Denise Araouzou, independent curator
- Leandro Madrazo, architect and general coordinator project A-Place
- Teresa Tourvas, architect and coordinator project A-Place/ Urban Gorillas
- Ruben Verdú, artist and coordinator project A-Place/LOOP Barcelona

A decision was reached after two days of intense deliberations. On the first day, the attention of the jury focused on five outstanding candidates, which seemed to indicate that the process was going to be solved expeditiously. Nothing further from the truth, the jury moved on to debate the favorable and unfavorable impressions of those five proposals. On that occasion, the main concerns of the jury were centered around the following issues:

- a) The confinement caused by the pandemic became a relevant issue when judging proposals that clearly celebrated the positive aspects gained from the experience of weeks indoors. Music and dance, for instance, were considered to be excellent practices in response to the relational needs that were lost during confinement.
- b) Much attention was paid also to budgets that took into account the payment of non-professional collaborators in the video productions. Even though only one of those five projects showed a clear commitment toward that practice, it became clear that it would become an issue that the project needed to tackle sooner or later.
- c) It was also interesting to note that a considerable number of projects advocated for a documentary approach when intending to analyze placemaking activities. This brought about a discussion on the differential role artists have in society. It became important to emphasize that artists are neither journalists nor anthropologists, and that their role is not to merely document social attitudes and conditions.
- d) The possibility of co-producing a project with the support of third parties also entered the debate. They were valued as positive because they are a potential enhancer of networks and associative practices.

After that first session, the jury could not reach a decision. As a way to try to solve the impasse, a more methodical approach was proposed. The jury was convened for a second session after having graded the five finalists on four categories:

- a) Artistic Merit
- b) Placemaking Relevance
- c) Social Implication
- d) Budget Feasibility

The results of the proposed ranking showed that the jury reached another tie, but the choice was now reduced to two candidates. In an effort to find additional arguments on which to base a final decision, the jury began to discuss the following matters:

- a) The merit of choosing a professional artist versus an emerging one.

- b) Balancing options of gender or ethnical backgrounds were not considered a viable path to follow, since it further complicated the choices. Both candidates fell into one of those categories.
- c) The estimated duration of the proposed video became a potential determining aspect on which to base the final decision. Even though it was obvious that length would not warrant any assurance of quality, it was hard to argue that a short video would justify the foreseen costs. For some jury members, length was not relevant. In the video art context, there are plenty examples of short pieces of high artistic value.
- d) The jury debated whether an artist could be contacted in order to request formal changes in their proposals. It was decided that the decision should be based on the content of the proposals.

2.4. La città dentro

In the end, external constraints became more and more decisive in the discussion. One, above all, produced a shift in the debate. Being the first edition of this open call implied a degree of uncertainty that an experienced professional might help mitigate. At this point, an agreement was finally reached in favor of one project that seemed to convey that certainty. The jury reached the unanimous decision to award [ZimmerFrei](#)/Anna de Manincor the price of the "A-Place Open Call 2020" in order to produce the film *La città dentro* (Figure 2), an outstanding project that explores a very special construction of space along a political construction of identity

La città dentro (The City Within)

Italian, video, 30 min, 2020

<https://vimeo.com/475416097>



Figure 2. *La città dentro*. Source: ZimmerFrei/Anna de Manincor

What is it like to live in a city you've never seen before? What is it that makes a place that particular place, if we remove the centrality of sight? The city is Bologna, between 2019 and 2020, as perceived by a visually impaired young man -Filmon- waiting for the recognition of his Italian citizenship and a young girl -Ada- who suddenly finds herself spending her days at home.

Filmon has lived in Bologna for half of his life, studying political science, playing baseball in a team of visually impaired people. He strolls through the city's arcades, squares and historic buildings with ease. Filmon does not think of the city as a map seen from above, rather his city expands from under his feet, widens like a star, always passing through the same points, unwinding in the smallest details of an endless ribbon, a maze of possible pathways recognized

by touching and hearing. The urban tangle is domesticated by the physical action of walking; one day with a snappy body and another with a tired body, sitting on the fresh stones of the public library in the summer heat, locating a scent of warm lard in the still air of the autumn gouache or following the pungent smell of the detergent that dries along the streets in the spring breeze.

The second half of the film adopts the perspective of Ada, a ten-year-old girl who suddenly goes from the hustle and bustle of playing with friends under the arcades of the center, to the silence of an empty house in a locked city in the midst of the pandemic. Ada tells the story of Filmon on the day he becomes an Italian citizen, a country he has never seen with his own eyes, while the city of the future Ada imagines is completely different from the one that is about to reignite beyond her balcony.

Credits:

La città dentro (The City Within) by ZimmerFrei

With: Filmon Yemane, Ada Leone Carozzi, Bana Abreham and Giorgio Ruggero Zanolini

Production: Emilia Romagna Teatro Fondazione | Atlas of Transition

Script: ZimmerFrei

Direction: Anna de Manincor/ZimmerFrei

Director of Photography: Roberto Beani

Sound: Massimo Carozzi/ZimmerFrei

Editing: Anna de Manincor and Massimiliano Bartolini

Music: Massimo Carozzi, Alice Coltrane, Nino Rota

Colour Correction: Roberto Beani

Executive Production: Serena Gramizzi | Bo Film

Second Camera: Simone Tacconelli

English Translation: Paul Gummerson

Catalan Audiodescription: Carme Guillamon Villalba | Narratio, llengua i accessibilitat, SCP

3. Artist-in-Residence Production

3.1. Intent and Goals

This is an opportunity for an artist-in-residence to carry out a video work focusing on a specific territory. The chosen location was L'Hospitalet de Llobregat. The artists selected for this project were expected to work alongside the faculty and students of La Salle School of Architecture, as well as with neighborhood associations and grassroots groups, to conduct a research about the physical, historical and social evolution of this specific and symptomatic place. Again, this video production was intended to provide an alternative and contrasting view, which through its empathetic focus, would widen the notions related to the construction of place, especially those that uncover the symbolic meanings of "being in place", in other words, what lies at the origin of any sense of belonging.

Since this art production entails a detailed knowledge of the territory of L'Hospitalet, LOOP Barcelona, together with La Salle School of Architecture, decided to assign this production [Sitesize](#), a collective located in the city comprised of Elvira Pujol and Joan Vila i Puig which is dedicated to researching the phenomenon of the contemporary city, which it does through merging autonomous forms of cultural intervention and community learning. The careful attention they pay to the social component makes them perfect candidates to develop a productive placemaking activity for the particularities of this location.

3.2. Commissioned Proposal

In response to our request, Sitesize proposed the project *TERRApolis*. Its purpose is to trace what can be conceived as the "symbiotic city", the relations of retro-dependence with the living substrate on which L'Hospitalet is placed. It is an approach specifically thought out to establish undifferentiated links between living elements and cultural actions in what can be argued as a nature-social symbiosis. The purpose of *TERRApolis* is to re-establish a dialogue with the ecosystem, to rethink the human factor in it, and to do so using audiovisual tools and the recording of actions. In short, the project aims to invoke the forces and spirit of the place and reconnect it to the communities and citizens of L'Hospitalet.

The project is set to explore and map the territory in relationship to the following issues:

- a) *An Undeveloped Land*. Before beginning to imagine the natural recovery of this super-anthropomorphized territory, it is necessary to explore the substrate on which life has developed, which includes:
 1. The Llobregat river
 2. Smaller rivers and aquifers
 3. The mountains and the valleys
 4. The alluvial plain
 5. The sea
- b) *A Historical Transformation*. As a way of conducting a reverse biography of the land, it is important to go back to the actions that have transformed and perverted it. This is where historical sources and personal testimonies can be used as material manifestations of the transformations underwent by the land:
 1. Selling the river and changing its natural course
 2. Exchanging sea for land
 3. Expelling the peasantry from the land
 4. Expelling the animals from the land
 5. Preserving disappeared legacy at the municipal museum
 6. Questioning the technical environmental reports issued by the city

- c) *A Bio-connected Experience*. To find out about those organizations that have followed the evolutions of biodiversity in the city, that know their history, talk about it, study it, protect it, enjoy it, and fight to overcome the difficulties and ensure their survival.
- d) *A Common Language*. To allow performing actions to establish lost connections with the things that are still alive, to show them, see them, keep them, together with the people who are the real witnesses and rapporteurs of the territory.

As a result of this methodology, *TERRApolis* is designed as an ongoing set of actions that takes place along a journey on foot, from the mountain to the sea. The length of the walk forces the project to take the format of a trilogy. As the research is conducted following these three, markedly different stages, the project becomes a “down to earth” testimony to the underlying living richness that frames and gives structure to the experience of place. The cuts that have been imposed on that territory (highways, avenues and train tracks) benefit something extraneous, something that just passes through in a typical non-place fashion. The journey that *TERRApolis* proposes to do goes precisely against those cuts, it takes, in fact, a perpendicular path to them. Walking brings things to a human scale and emphasizes the epistemological unfolding of learning while moving along.

3.3. *TERRApolis: Puig d’Ossa*

On November 2020, Sitesize completed *TERRApolis: Puig d’Ossa* (Figure 3), the first part of the project. The next installments will be presented to the public in February and May 2021.

TERRApolis: Puig d’Ossa

Catalan and Spanish, video, 30 min, 2020

<https://vimeo.com/478576554>



Figure 3. *TERRApolis: Puig d’Ossa*. Source: Sitesize

TERRApolis. Puig de Ossa is a journey across perceptions, an entrance path that goes from the hill of Puig d’Ossa to La Provençana, a territory full of lush nature that, at each step, speaks of the meaning of being alive. The city, with its fast-paced hustle, will meet us below. We follow a path of subtle echoing: from the mountain to the body, from the body to the city, to the urban

community. We just need to pay attention, to listen and to look; to continue walking with the hope to carry all the gifts of this earth to the inhabited flatland and valleys; to establish a dialogue with the local forces and to rewrite and reconcile how the human factor belongs there.

This audiovisual work is part of a trilogy that focuses solely on the city of L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, and it does so through the physical, spiritual, human and non-human life of its territory.

Credits:

TERRApolis. Puig de Ossa by Sitesize

Production: Sitesize | Elvira Pujol and Joan Vila i Puig

Main Camera: Fina Sensada

Auxiliary Camera: Elvira Pujol and Joan Vila i Puig

Audio Recording: Carlos Gómez and Elvira Pujol

Video Editing and Postproduction: Fina Sensada

Audio Editing and Postproduction: Carlos Gómez

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