

## Artist as a Public Scholar

Raisa Foster, PhD

Research director, Art-Eco Project

raisa.foster@artecoproject.com

This paper discusses the role of an artist/researcher in exchanging and creating knowledge for and with public. It first describes the different types of artistic activism used, such as culture jamming, poetic terrorism, graffiti, and other different kinds of public art interventions, but it then focuses especially on the artist/researcher's own multidisciplinary and participatory art projects as public scholarship.

Public art intervention happens in the crossroad of art and activism. It challenges power structures through creative resistance. The criticism of society and its phenomena can happen either through the form or the content of an art work. Sometimes artists can purposely work from an activist point of view; sometimes a political aspect emerges unintentionally. The artistic protests can target various issues, such as sexism, racism, socio-economic injustice, ecological crisis, and many more. Many of the activist art projects also criticize the idea of consumerism by invading commercial places, by creating anti-ads, or by interrupting some other ways the unquestioned idea of human as primarily a consumer.

By producing unexpected encounters artistic interventions enable new ways of interpreting and critically evaluating social structures and current issues. Interventions do not always look like works of art: they do not locate in the secure context of art institution, but in contrast, public may run into an art work in a surprising everyday situation. Thus it could be also said that art in a public space often lacks the representative nature of art; instead it presents real gestures.

Artist as a public scholar believes that it is possible to create original and exciting works that speak both to other academics and artists but also to wider audience. Activist art requires an active attitude from an audience. An art work may not offer clear meaning posed by the artist, but instead it invites multiple meanings to occur and for every spectator to experience and interpret in his/her own way. Public scholarship in arts builds new understanding through openness and practice through dialogue and participation.

Instead of promoting a clear political agenda, an art intervention in public space may aim to create an "atmosphere", a holistic affective experience for its witnesses. Atmosphere occurs as a primary experience and it shows the world as it is, and not through concepts and representations of it. This kind of art intervention can help us to see things differently, communicate experience across linguistic and cultural divides, and that way also produce more complex knowledge and holistic understanding.

In order to describe the role of an artist as a public scholar, this paper gives examples of two different art projects (*Rikka* performance and *Break a Brain* festival) that both share a common interest in (1) focusing on the questions of EcoJustice, (2) invading (public) space, and (3) investigating the role of a spectator as a witness. *Rikka* (2014) is a site-specific performance combining movement and sound art. *Break a Brain* (2015) is a multidisciplinary and place-based art festival.

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