

## 4th Conference on Arts-based Research and Artistic Research

### *Rethinking arts-based and artistic research, and global/local communities*

June 28-30, 2016, School of Arts, Design and Architecture, Aalto University, Helsinki, Finland

#### **Working the local.**

#### **Transforming the society through art practice**

Working the local. Empowering communities and everyday through art practice is a presentation proposal about some of my last site-specific projects which work with concepts such as the local, body, memory, migration, identity and community. These concepts are part of my Doctoral research: "Art as Resistance. Use of the body as a tool of encounter/resistance".

In the conference presentation I will place emphasis on 3 of my latest site-specific public projects. Memory castle in Lima, Peru; Mobile discotheque in San Petersburg, Russia; and Vuosaari community garden in Helsinki. All of them are site-specific interventions developed with the collaboration of local agents such as immigrants, activists or local artists/residents.

Memory castle was a powerful collaboration with different collectives and individuals involved with the investigation of the forced sterilizations that happened in Peru between 1996 and 2000, where almost 300.000 women, mainly poor and indigenous, were sterilized by force.

After a month and a half of research through primary sources and interviews, I created an art installation in the public space of Lima (city center), a fireworks castle, in relation to the theme with words such as Memoria (Memory) written in fire.

The project Mobile Discotheque happened in Saint Petersburg, where I worked with local immigrant collectives from Central Asian countries such as Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Taking a traditional folk character, Nasridim, we empowered the collective who were suffering in the face of xenophobia, police violence and deportations.

In collaboration with artists of the local scene we created an open parade through the public space of the Saint Petersburg city center. The project concluded with a joke contest on the topic of their everyday problems under the slogan When Humor is the only weapon.

In Helsinki, I developed an interesting collaborative community art project, Vuosaari community garden, where 2 different groups of people, my students from an art school, and the women from a North African association living in Vuosaari, worked together with the problematics of the Vuosarri neighborhood.

The result was a beautiful process where different projects were realized together and an empty field near the metro station was recovered and used as a garden for the community.

All projects had a research period where I engaged with locals looking to develop an artwork which would represent them and their needs, in order to get the different collectives I work with involved and part of the project.

## **Bio**

Jon Irigoyen is an artist, independent curator, organizer and cultural agitator born in Bilbao, Spain. He was a founding member of the experimental contemporary dance collective Liikë in Barcelona. He has been on the Board of Helsinki's Pixelache Festival Since 2009 <http://www.pixelache.ac/helsinki/>.

Jon Irigoyen grew up in the dirty, punk, post-industrial city of Bilbao. In the last 14 years has lived in different European cities: Madrid, Bristol, Barcelona, being currently based between Helsinki and Barcelona.

His research interests and projects span the intersecting relationships between artist and spectator; the interaction between public and urban space; the perception of reality; as well as concepts such as autonomy, body, resistance and memory.

Irigoyen has devised and implemented projects, exhibitions and workshops in Finland, Spain, Ireland, Lithuania, Latvia, Colombia, Russia, Berlin, Peru, USA and elsewhere.

Nowadays he holds his PhD in Art at Aalto University with the supervision of Finnish philosopher Juha Varto.

**\_MEMORY CASTLE.** <http://jonirigoyen.com/Memory-Fireworks-Castle>

**\_MOBILE DISCOTEQUE.** <http://www.jonirigoyen.com/MOBILE-DISCOTEQUE>

**\_VUOSARI COMMUNITY GARDEN.** <http://www.jonirigoyen.com/Vuosaari-community-art>