



AGAINST INDIFFERENCE

Live Project by Sarita F.A.V.

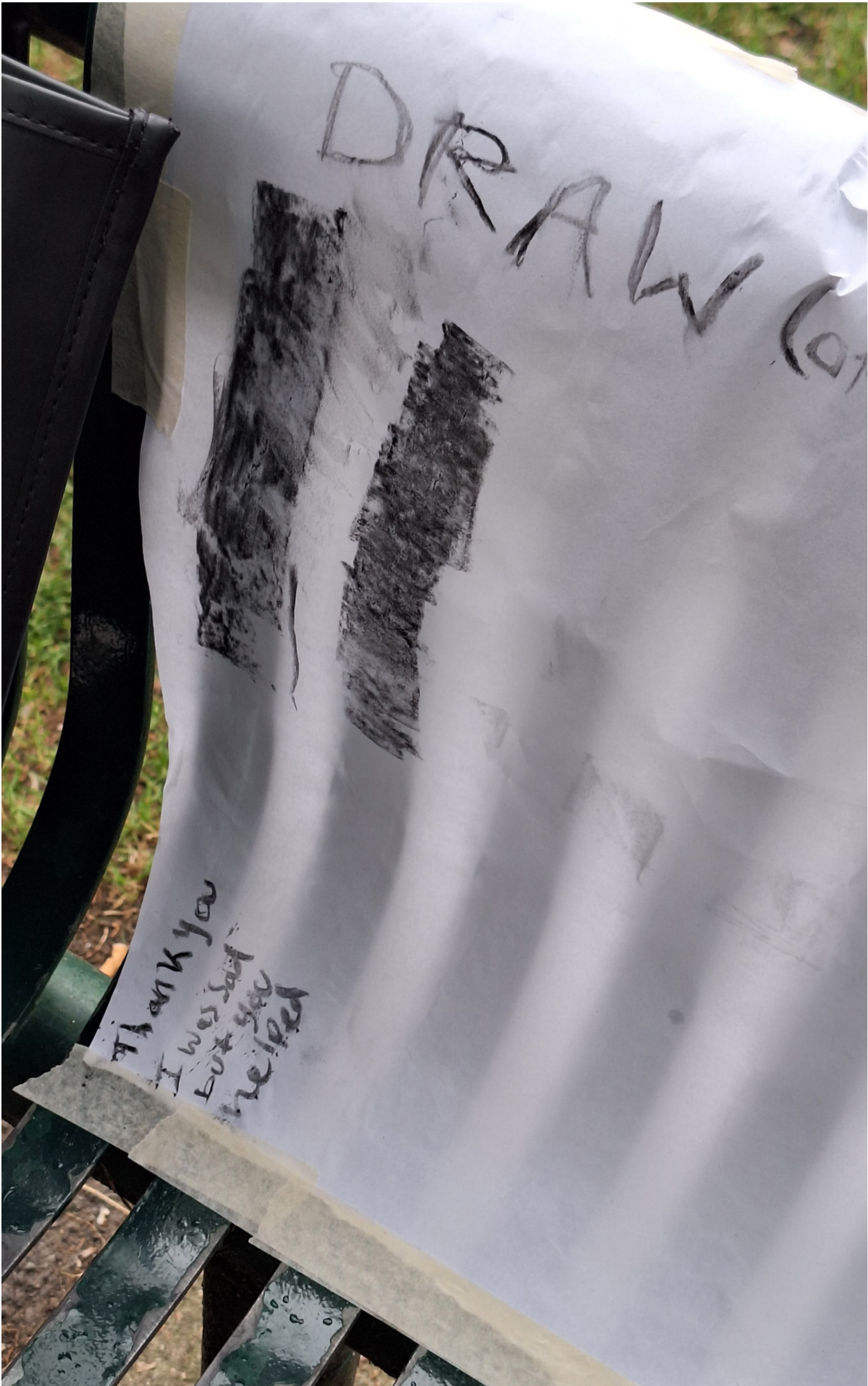
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2023

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Weaponize Art by taking it out of its preconceived context and in its turn redefine Art to bring it closer to life. Allowing for the integration of Art into quotidian life. Acknowledging Art as part of our lives. Art as a leisure activity being a privilege for only some. Art as a universal lifestyle rather than reserved to those that choose to call it so. Authorship of the artist. Acknowledging Art. Sharing Art. Accessibility to the Arts. Defining Art. Creating Art. Art as action. Art as thought. Art as a tool. Art as a weapon.

INTRODUCTION

How was I to decentralise Art from its socioeconomic historical context/deinstitutionalise Art/decolonise Art/deconstruct Art?

- 1- Find Art
- 2- Take Art outside
- 3- Share Art
- 4- Wait for Art to reproduce
- 5- Catch Art
- 6- Present Art as my live project

SITE CONSIDERATIONS space, time and scale - Where was I to find Art?

relational art: an art taking as its theoretical horizon the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an independent and private symbolic space (Bourriaud, N. 2002 p.14)

Could Art be found around human interaction? It makes sense since Art is often classified as a humanity. Rather than Art being born out of myself and for myself, I decided to look for it in relation to others as a way of taking Art a step further than simple communication. Art could be the means for momentary connection, a response to solitude and carelessness for each other, Art against the lack of humanity.

Fig. 1





Fig. 2

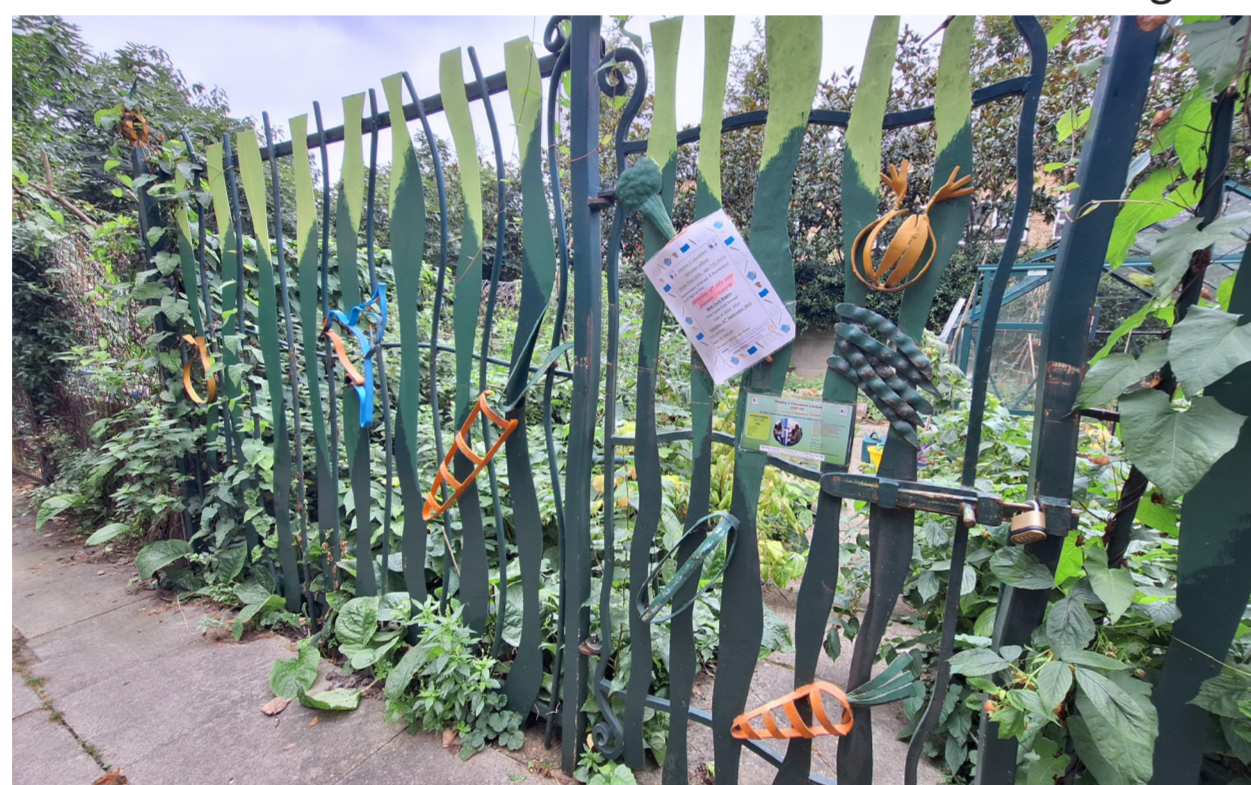


Fig. 3



Fig. 4

I wasn't the only one looking for this Art; institutional bodies such as the Turner Prize in 2021 also caught on with *the idea of focusing on collectives that worked with specific communities as a response to the emergencies of our times*^(TheGuardian, 2021) where Art was recognised for being used collectively, publicly and for a greater purpose. Historically artworks were first situated in a transcendent world, within which art aimed at introducing ways of communicating with the deity; in renaissance the focus shifted to the human condition; later human-object in the 60s and 70s; now the inter-human relations that 1990s artistic practices defined as *experiencing art's capacities of resistance within the overall social arena*.^(Bourriaud, N. 2002 pp23-41)

Looking past ownership, dimension is to be discussed too as *large works are not inherently more domineering than small works. It is the attitude toward the land, the artist's sensitivity to the place that determines the effect of the imagery*^(Lippard, L.R. 2010 P.52). In a modern private state where few own land and much less have the disposable income for expensive decorative objects I felt the need for Art to be in a public space so that it would benefit the public. It is not only my attitude but everyone's perception of commodities that has been affected by the lack of land availability; increasingly crowded urban settings mean a decrease in Art's size and a consequent change in its functionality past a merely decorative *false aristocratic... feeling of territorial acquisition*.

But where was I to find Art and sensitivity within the urban density of London, where material overcomes humans themselves, artificial obstacles limit social interactions, singularism rules at a cold-weathered, and cold-hearted, world capital, where indifference tends to reign? The historical growth of cities and connections caused an *extraordinary upsurge of social exchanges* but also much *greater individual mobility and isolated spaces* where people are compartmentalized.

If the role of Art was to *no longer to form imaginary and utopian realities, but to actually be the ways of living and models of action within the existing real, whatever the scale chosen by the artist*^(Bourriaud, N. 2002 pp 13-15) then how much indifference could my project displace? What was my scale?

I turned to my nearest community for the search of a site where Art was likely to happen on whatever scale that might be. Peckham with its busy streets and endless interactions between goods, services and people seemed the perfect spot. Ironically I immediately thought of a private garden I had often seen on my bus ride to university; it consisted of a basketball court with a sole hoop that was rarely used however perfectly framed by its elevated cement walls. I tried my luck leaving common objects within it.

1st Intervention: adding a trolley



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

It disappeared.



Fig. 8

2nd Intervention: adding paper with charcoal

Residents uninterested/indifferent to any foreign items. I hadn't at the time realised Art wasn't to be entrapped or framed within concrete walls but needed an open space to welcome interaction and creation. Furthermore, my initial idea of a more intimate community feel at an interior garden which I supposed would have a higher chance of interaction, being a residential area, proved to be wrong. The low frequency of passers-by and mistrust of foreign items combined with the playground nearby that already served its purpose of relaxation left no need for me to intervene in that area. Decided to change locations.



Fig. 9

For my 3rd Intervention again with paper I chose a location with more transit that connected Warwick Gardens with Peckham high street. Looking at the systems already in use I adapted better to my chosen site and community by expanding the possibilities of the space in using the existing infrastructure rather than introducing my own. I had found my scale in relation to the location: shared authorship and shared structures.

Celine Condorelli was a main inspiration when considering architecture as part of the environment. She has many interests which I share: her installations reutilise space, she questions the boundary between private and public art, the role of artists within the structure of society, art and its function towards culture and, most importantly, *the notions of labour and leisure within society*^(NationalGallery.org.uk, 2023) as I have explored in deliberately choosing places of rest nearby main roads that provide rest. 'Spare time' is one of the main concerns within my practice from its meanings to its implementation in our consumer producer circles.

I am interested in framing, in the structure underlying the way things appear to us^(CelineCondorelli.eu, 2016)

After I had realised that rather than intruding with a new physical space to be admired; I was looking to produce temporary sculpture in borrowing space by changing it for a limited *period of time to be lived through*. To create interventions and the opportunity for Art in the unpredictable.

To fight back *mechanisation and the law of profitability* predictability has to be reversed so that *accordingly planned outlets* are not met. Reutilising space for different purposes to the ones set by the market to make us a *consumer of time and space* pushes our perception of socialising to a truly free space for creation. The fleeting space I want to create is one of Art, one *protected from the uniformity of behavioural patterns*^(Bourriaud, N. 2002 pp 9-15).



Fig. 10

MATERIALS

In the past I have looked for Art in the creation of unimagined spaces and occasionally the recording of said moments. Lately this had led me to organize meals with room for uncertainty in the style of participatory Art and, more independently, to the recording of public spaces in pastels, chalk, screen-printing, charcoal, breadcrumbs, acrylic paint or whatever means necessary.

For this instance, however, I used a range of materials more easily accessible, economic, disposable, transient, welcoming... that interacted better with the green of the environment due to its mostly biodegradable and purposefully finite lifespan, as well as its people.



Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13

Appendix 1: Paper

3rd intervention:

Form proved ominous, only reaction was to take photos or stare in awe making both the seat and the paper unusable. Caused a fearful reaction from the public and was respected by park cleaning staff.

3.5th intervention: various attempts at changing form of paper closer to that of the bench to be more welcoming both working days/weekends, with/without daylight/rain:

Smaller and more traditional shapes caused a greater number of interactions including images/words/signatures. A big reaction at different times of the day from a wide number of people.

Directed phrases and conscious use of time and space proved highly encouraging.

I was dealing with an existing space of respite and adding the prompt DRAW (or not). In choosing the message I wanted to acknowledge the two ways of suggesting *trading possibilities that those in effect within this system* (Bourriaud, N. 2002 p.16) in having the option whether to participate or not as I believe rest could constitute as Art in being an activity against the relentless system of productiveness we are so used to. This is what Bourriaud referred to as *insterstice*, drawing on Marxian language it is a pocket of trading activity that stands outside the capitalist framework.

Aside from leisure and play I also consider rest and respite to be a space for Art to be present. I realised all four options could be activated thanks to public furniture, this in turn attracted me to the sites I explored, and here I tried to uphold the passiveness of my live project in its subtle approach to the public by clearly stressing human choice as dictating of the type of artwork that will be created within such spaces.



Fig. 14



Fig. 15



Fig. 16

Rather than passive he describes his work as disappointing, and it is this *cryptic and deceptively low-key touch* what I admire most about his work. Gabriel Orozco's *counterintuitive approach* is what has made him a celebrated artist. His interventions and artworks deliberately try not to fulfil the viewers' expectations *because only if your expectations are unmet can the poetic happen*.

His small, subtle acts enable for the *possibility to see reality differently, to see things in a new way*. The objects are just *vehicles for awareness*. Orozco refers to his chosen objects, or in my case materials, as simple *vehicles* leaving to the eyes of the beholder or the interpretation of the public *what's really important about art*.

I find Art and comfort in his everyday poetry especially specific interventions such as 'turista maluco' where he reutilised an abandoned marketplaces' produce for a new image/circumstance to be created, his choice of an organic *vehicle*^(Marian Goodman.com, 2009) means the artwork manages *its own temporal structure*^(Bourriaud, N. 2002 p.29) which I find magical and try to reflect within my own temporal sculpture.



Fig. 17



Fig. 18

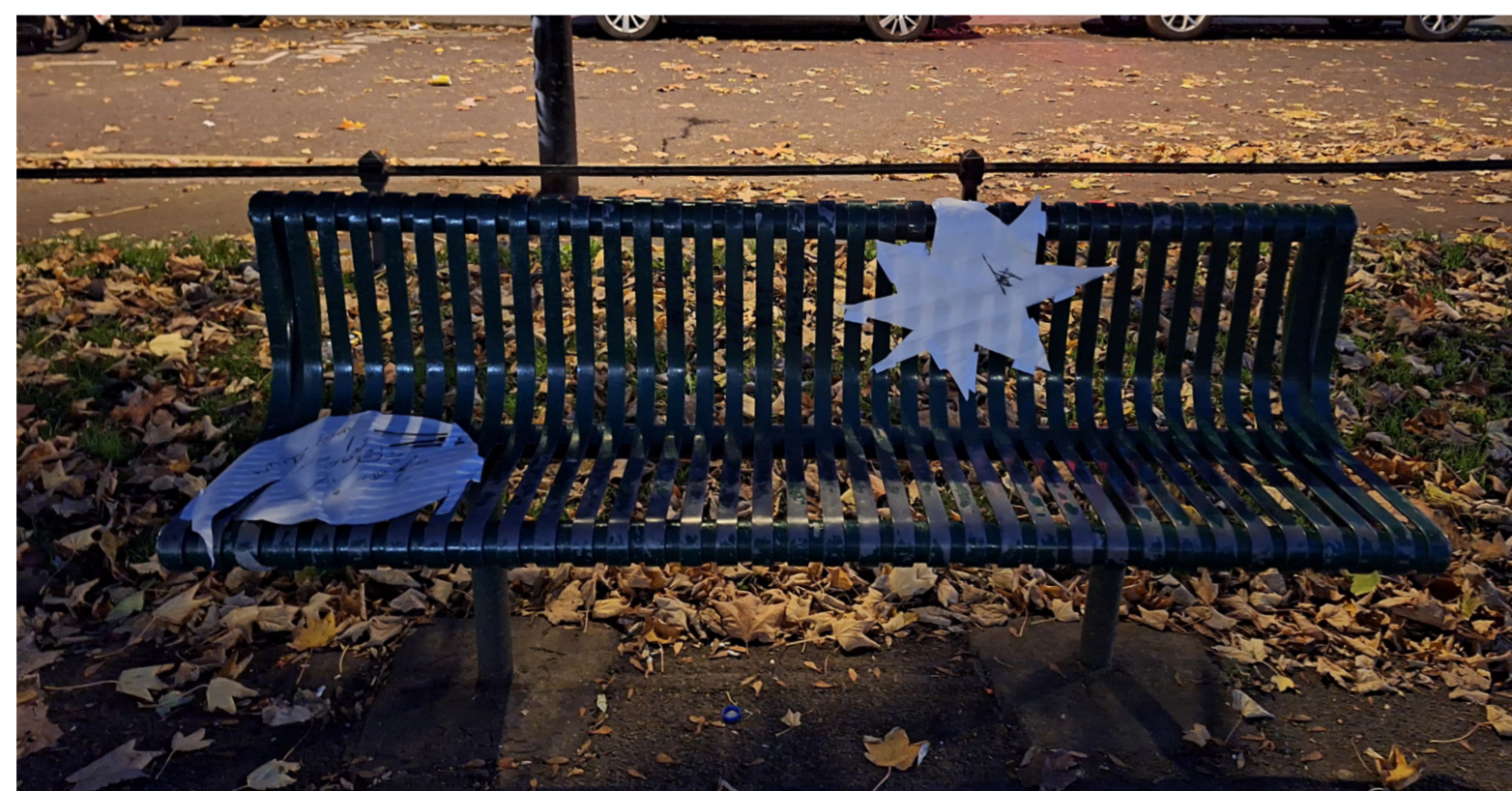


Fig. 19

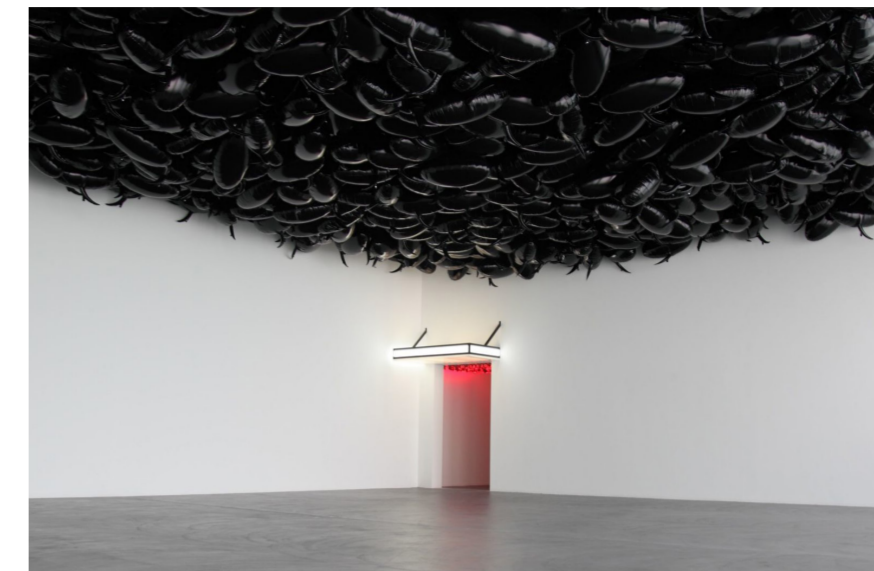


Fig. 20

Encouraged by the reactions to the prompts, which showed the want for the public to communicate their thoughts, I thought back to Philippe Parreno whose placement of helium dialogue bubbles in 'Speech Bubbles' (1997) which at the time reminded me of 'Proun Raum's' rethinking of space. Parreno also confronts the hierarchy of societal roles in his speech bubbles that challenge the spectator to become narrator and protagonist; he combats the idea of producer and consumer in the style of relational Art.

paying less attention to the architecture and more attention to the story
(PublicDelivery.org, 2022)

Based on his work I chose to vary the positioning of the new items which I wanted to integrate within my chosen area as two-dimensional speech bubbles to call attention to certain areas that would otherwise go unnoticed but now allow for the walkers-by to inject their own meaning.

5th Intervention: still using the medium of paper but in different shapes and positioning inspired by Parreno's experimental play on relations of power between the creator-observer. Last attempt at discarded site due to its compositional possibilities to place paper at eye-level as well as flat.

No interest to narrate their story to others.

5.5th intervention: same exercise but at usual location

Better reception after simply two hours. One speech bubble with prompt and one without yet both enacted a response.



Fig. 21



Fig. 22



Fig. 23



Fig. 24



Fig. 25

Appendix 2: Graffiti

4th Intervention: Semi-permanent intervention in the form of graffiti - as long as it is allowed to exist, more weather resistant than paper.

Given concrete language proved to be encouraging I used text specifying an action, in this case 'CHEWING GUM' asking for a specific interpretation of a theme.

After a week no incidental disposals recorded.

Supposedly provoking statements in a highly religious population received no special comment/reaction.

Although quick to apply and slow to vanish it is a more defined medium that proved hard to interact with, perhaps to its common use in urban settings which didn't disrupt or subvert usual routines. The 'chewing gum' attempt was the most directly available resource for me to incite, as many people tend to be chewing one, yet to no purposeful effect but rather an unevenly distributed chewing gum pattern rather than any specific signs of participation.



Fig. 26



Fig. 27



Fig. 28

Appendix 3: Sand

6th Intervention: random placement

Mild interaction both by humans and wind in uneven dispersal of material.

First thoughts of Smithson's sculpture as *in its very form, is dispersed rather than permanent and whole*¹⁰.

Some successful capturing of personal traces in the form of footsteps.

When translating sandworks into public space the lack of a controlled environment proved to be my biggest opponent. I wanted once again to capture lost moments otherwise known as footsteps which brought to mind Twomey's work in the form of footsteps.

Clare Twomey's ceramic installation 'Consciousness/Conscience' is a perfect example of the effective recording of human interactions and traffic. Her work was said to *effectively destroy the floor to gain access to other works*,^(ClareTwomey.com, 2004) however I see it as a monument to time in its finished state.

Twomey's hollow ceramic China tiles became an even greater sculptural work through entropy and put into evidence human presence into what I would have otherwise found to be another void gallery space.



Fig. 29

Looking at Smithson's 'Spiral Jetty' I thought of my own site with its limited amount of earth, water, land... and its tendencies more towards the surrounding *industrial ruins, or entropic residues*.^(ModernaMuseet.se, 2012) 'Spiral Jetty' went on to become a historical monument in my mind and when I thought of creating sand patterns it was the first image that came to mind. Its foreseeable demise and temporality, which attracted me to it in the first place, was then defeated by proving to be a permanent record in my mind.

Constructions that don't *fall into ruin after they are built but rather rise into ruin before they are built*^(Smithson, R. 2006 p.72). That's what I wanted to create: a form destined to be changed by the environment and the users of my dirty, windy, uneven, urban site which will spring to mind for those who lived it when a spiral or path next crosses their mind.

After all, visual image creates a *linkage*^(Grassi, C. and Maffesoli, M. 1995 p.15) and *producing a form is to invent possible encounters, receiving a form is to create the conditions for an exchange*^(Bourriaud, N. 2002 p.23). These Show/See pairings by Serge Daney proved inevitable to be acknowledged and informed the shaping of my sand.

7th intervention: meditated pattern testing the ability of form to create meaning

Before and after of the central part of the spiral. Weathered mostly by rain and whether rather than humans.



Fig. 30



Fig. 31



Fig. 32



Fig. 33

Initial shape placed two types of sand, one from Valencia and one from London, in a spiral shape which I had come across reading OVERLAY where the spiral is referred to as an archaic shape with many meanings throughout the history of humanity from Native American serpentine mounds to references in the Nazca lines^(Lippard, L.R. 2010 p.11). I figured such a universal shape was likely to generate more meanings.

According to physical theory, the state of organisation of any closed system can only decrease over time. Robert Smithson illustrated such entropic ends in mixing different colours of sand in a sandbox to end with an irreversible change such as would be scrambling an egg; 'Spiral Jetty' also holds the concept of temporal decay when faced from the shore in its anti-clockwise fashion. On the other hand my Jetty's orientation isn't as premeditated, that I leave to the destination of its users, they will direct their walk and create their own meaning. I will watch the sand mixed irreparably knowing unknown entropy is there whilst they stand (or walk) unaware being Art, cause and effect of it.

Most interactions were of wonder and respect. Only kids interacted with it. Dogs weren't curious either. Looking at the high uptake of responses by children I decided to design a sand shape aimed at them.

8th intervention: hopscotch

Instead of its usual chalk format I wanted to recreate the classic game's shape in sand so that it would record the traffic's interaction and in turn mould itself to the environment.

The malleable material of sand proved longer lasting than expected, it engrained itself to the cement so that traces of the 7th intervention were still visible below by the time I created the hopscotch.

A great number of children interacted with it, some even taking photos similarly to the paper results, however it caused confusion on the adults who chose to go around it.

EVALUATION

In relational art it is this rendez vous factor that gives it its live relational dimension- suitable of a live project- being traditionally the figures of reference meetings, festivals, games or meals which I chose to give a terminable format within the streets of Peckham as interventions combining both elements of reunion and play. And so my hunt for Art -my live project- was a documentation of life in relation to each other and the space we occupy.

I can see how exhibitions would also classify as a live project, they are a space of relations open to the public with immediate discussion, an often time exclusive arena of exchange.

Per contra when it came to my live project I chose a public space of relations so that it could have real impact away from reflection and discussion of *imaginary and utopian realities* but rather a grounded act through natural elements, a *ways of living and models of action*. (Bourriaud, N. 2002 pp 13-15) The time people took off their daily routine was all the discussion I was looking for.

What people did with their time was varied; whilst most stared in awe or confusion; some signed, some took pictures, some muttered, some stepped on it, some sat, some hopped, some drew, some kicked, some wrote me (an unknown creator) a message, some ripped... their different uses of time were Art.

If Art, alike time, is an abstract noun I couldn't treat it as a physical product and so I attempted to temporarily catch it in the form of paper, graffiti and sand. Against time (weather) and time (temporal) I left these materials to withstand and hold the Art even if only enough for my camera to capture Art and show it to you now.

In relation to human nature the materials that proved most effective came from further nature- paper and charcoal are both products of trees. Perhaps it was the reformatting of the trees around my temporary sculptures of paper and charcoal what

allowed for exchange to happen naturally on-site. Or perhaps it was their familiarity to us what meant people were most comfortable to spend their time exploring and therefore allowing for the most amount of Art to be created with them. Or perhaps it is our human condition within the city that somehow still looks for a natural connection with the Earth, the planet, and each other.

Ultimately all materials were used to document or enable human participation, in turn using features of theatre where *people constitute the central artistic medium and material*. (Bishop, C. 2012 p.2) This added an element of performance to my work despite it being a performance for none other than themselves. All interventions in disrupting are a change to the human state, here the change had to be relational yet non-profitable which I achieved best as a natural performance of shared authorship in the form of temporary reactions to the established site through finite natural elements- sand, paper and charcoal.

Exchange is what I believe to have found and what attracted me to the format of live project in the first place. Humanity in relation to each other and the space we occupy against indifference, Art against indifference, Art against inhumanity.

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LIST OF FIGURES

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Fig. 1 Acosta Vargas, S. F. , 2023 - Untitled

Fig. 2 Acosta Vargas, S. F. , 2023 - Untitled

Fig. 3 Acosta Vargas, S. F. , 2023 - Untitled

Fig. 4 Acosta Vargas, S. F. , 2023 - Untitled

Fig. 5 Acosta Vargas, S. F. , 2023 - Untitled

Fig. 6 Acosta Vargas, S. F. , 2023 - Untitled

Fig. 7 Acosta Vargas, S. F. , 2023 - Untitled

Fig. 8 Acosta Vargas, S. F. , 2023 - Untitled

Fig. 9 Photograph by Gremaud, Julien, 2022 - Ouah Wau (to Donna Haraway) by Celine Condorelli Material: Painted stainless steel. Dimensions: 800 x 390 cm.

Fig. 10 Acosta Vargas, S. F. , 2023 - Untitled

Fig. 11 Acosta Vargas, S. F. , 2023 - Untitled

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Fig. 16 Orozco, Gabriel, 1991 - Turista Maluco, Chromogenic color C-print Image: 31.1 x 47 cm

Fig. 17 Acosta Vargas, S. F. , 2023 - Untitled

Fig. 18 Acosta Vargas, S. F. , 2023 - Untitled

Fig. 19 Acosta Vargas, S. F. , 2023 - Untitled

Fig. 20 Photograph by Damage, Marc, 2017 - Speech Bubbles (Black) by Philippe Parreno, mylar balloons, helium, black ribbon, each balloon: 109 x 68 x 29 cm

Fig. 21 Acosta Vargas, S. F. , 2023 - Untitled

Fig. 22 Acosta Vargas, S. F. , 2023 - Untitled

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Fig. 26 Acosta Vargas, S. F. , 2023 - Untitled

Fig. 27 Acosta Vargas, S. F. , 2023 - Untitled

Fig. 28 Twomey, Clare, 2001-2004 - Consciousness/Conscience, several thousand hollow unfired Bone China tiles

Fig. 29 Acosta Vargas, S. F. , 2023 - Untitled

Fig. 30 Acosta Vargas, S. F. , 2023 - Untitled

Fig. 31 Acosta Vargas, S. F. , 2023 - Untitled

Fig. 32 Acosta Vargas, S. F. , 2023 - Untitled

Fig. 33 Acosta Vargas, S. F. , 2023 - Untitled Back cover Acosta Vargas, S. F. , 2023 - Unquote

