

IMPOSSIBLE GLOSSARY

G O A I  
L S R O

*Agents*

I P S B E  
M O I L

Es Baluard  
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*Constellations, Glossaries, and Functions*  
 Es Baluard  
 Museu d'Art Modern i Contemporani de Palma

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Beyond their architectural frame, museums today have seen their role and functions subjected to a rethinking that has shaken the very foundations upon which they have traditionally worked. At the same time, there has suddenly emerged new demands on cultural management, above all in the orientation and social responsibility related to new cultural practices whose political and intellectual activities are engaged with their immediate context. This text represents an attempt to summarize the developing practices at Es Baluard, a museum where we are constantly analyzing and testing out the merging of the roles of citizen participation, artists, the institution, curators, administrators, and educators.

We are at the so-called “educational turn” in cultural policy, which seeks to create new forms of institutionalism. This phenomenon arose in response to the current neoliberal climate and the resulting standardization and privatization of education, and is committed to seeing cultural institutions as spaces with a great potential for exploring emancipatory educational alternatives.<sup>1</sup> It is generally accepted that today’s cultural facilities wishing to be socially relevant must establish links with the local context and develop initiatives with different agents, collectives, and communities that fit in with their agenda and interests. This inevitably leads museums and art centers to adopt a self-reflexive and critical form of institutionalism.<sup>2</sup>

Against this backdrop, the team at Es Baluard has put in place a structure based on transversality with the objective of carrying out cultural projects oriented toward the collective production of knowledge for and with the citizenry by means of open, permeable methodologies. To do so, one of our principal tasks is to analyze and experiment with different forms and strategies of collective discussion and work that transcend the idea of *cultural consumption* and that move within a spectrum ranging from participation to collaboration. The difference between “participation” and “collaboration” lies in the degree of agency and implication of those involved; collaboration

1. Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff, eds., *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles* (London: Routledge, 1994).

2. Carmen Mörsch, “At a Crossroads of Four Discourses; documenta 12 Gallery Education in Between Affirmation, Reproduction, Deconstruction, and Transformation,” in *Documenta 12 Education*, ed. Carmen Mörsch et al. (Zurich and Berlin: Diaphanes, 2009), pp. 9–31.



*Mujeres Valientes*  
(Brave Women),  
Es Baluard, Palma  
de Mallorca, 2015.  
Project with a  
group of women  
in danger of social  
exclusion and  
with artist Virginia  
Villaplana

entails bearing in mind matters such as working with difference (of agenda, interests, needs, capitals), as well as the methodologies and power relations that play a role in the processes carried out. On the other hand, participation does not entail a reflection on the subject matter proposed as exists in collaborations, and this results in more rigid mechanisms of inclusion/exclusion that determine which agents can or cannot participate, unilaterally delimiting participation and the form this will take.<sup>3</sup> Thus the museum is not only involved with traditional agents of culture (such as artists, curators, cultural managers, and educators) but also with activists, collectives, communities, and the citizenry in general.

Another of the museum's principal activities has been the development of long-term artistic and expository projects with different collectives and communities on emerging themes or those that are relevant to them. The projects grow out of the social context, which demands the resolution of a specific conflict, but also from artistic agents or the institution itself. As described by Marcelo Expósito in his interview with Manuel Borja-Villel, this type of project may consist of an outward journey from the institution, as in the case of the

Fundació Tàpies with Craigie Horsfield's project *La ciutat de la gent* (The City of the People, 1996).<sup>4</sup> Or it may be a journey returning to it, when it is social demand that initiates the processes, as in the case of *Cabanyal Portes Obertes* (Cabanyal Open Doors) in Valencia or the community actions realized by Juan Aizpitarte and Ibai Hernandorena with the project *Éxodo* (Exodus) in the Bordeaux neighborhood of Saint-Nicolas.

One of the first experiences with collaborative practices initiated by Es Baluard's educational team was *Cartografiem-nos* (Mapping Ourselves, 2006–14), a long-term project aimed at schools and the surrounding neighborhoods with whom work was carried out based on contemporary artistic practices, and in which was involved a large number of social agents (including community, elderly, and merchant associations). The project consisted of different phases: a period for research and listening, another for agreeing objectives, another for production/action, and another to increase public visibility. Over the years, the educational team has followed this same framework in projects with other collectives, such as neighborhood associations and resident organizations, HIV patients, immigrant women, the elderly, etc. As a result the museum has collaborated with a wide range of professionals unrelated to the world of culture, including social workers, therapists, caregivers, psychiatrists, psychologists, and other healthcare professionals.

Lisa Roberts upholds that good mediation (or, in her terms, "interpretation") practices are those based on dialogue, that attend to processes rather than results, and that, as in collective processes, rather than authorship they are created by many agents with differing perspectives.<sup>5</sup> As Javier Rodrigo remarked, education should be understood as a space of collective research "based on long-term processes by way of complex cultural conversations... to generate multiple channels of conversation, negotiation, and translation between social agents serving as nodes".<sup>6</sup>

This shared reflection generates other types of narratives and experiments with other possible relationships within the institutional space. There are, however,

3. Here we follow Javier Rodrigo's (2011) definition of "participation" and "collaboration," which, in turn, is based on the distinction established by Aída Sánchez de Serdio at the first "Jornadas de Producción Cultural Crítica en la Práctica Artística y Educativa," which took place in 2010 at MUSAC. Javier Rodrigo, "Políticas de colaboración y prácticas culturales: redimensionar el trabajo del arte colaborativo y las pedagogías," available at <https://app.box.com/s/zpg13euvxvgle7xe05gt>.

4. [The *City of the People* was] the result of a lengthy process of collaboration between (a) the museographic institution, (b) intellectuals and professionals critical of the urban modernization model promoted since the eighties by mayor Pasqual Maragall, and (c) citizens linked to neighborhood struggles in the late Franco years and during the Transition." Marcelo Expósito, *Conversaciones con Manuel Borja-Villel* (Madrid: Turpial, 2015), p. 23.

5. Lisa C. Roberts, "Changing Practices of Interpretation," in *From Knowledge to Narrative: Educators and the Changing Museum* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1997), pp. 60–71.

6. Javier Rodrigo, "De las políticas de acceso a las políticas en red: experiencias de mediación crítica y trabajo en red en museos," *Revista Museos*, no. 31 (2012), p. 79.

challenges intrinsic to collaborative projects promoted by cultural institutions in which multiple agents intervene, which is where the great richness and potential for reflection resides. These challenges are an integral part of such processes<sup>7</sup> and it is necessary to bear them in mind, both when developing collaborative work and when representing and making it visible.<sup>8</sup>

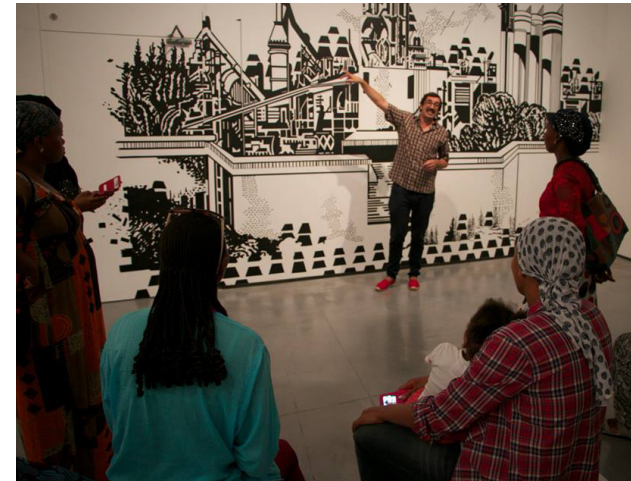
One of the main sources of tension in such projects is the discussion over the role to be played by artists and what should be their position with respect to the other agents involved. This friction is one of the recurring pitfalls in collaborations between the two parts. The difficulty inherent in working from different positions but in a horizontal manner not only involves the artist-educator relationship but also permeates the network of relationships that comprise the very fabric of the projects. The figure of the mediator is vital for addressing this potential point of conflict. While avoiding assuming a central role and thus displacing that of the groups involved, the mediator must ensure that the interests and perspectives of cultural institutions and artists do not impose themselves upon the collectives and communities with whom they are working.

Often it is also the institution itself that extols the role of the artist. Artists are frequently touted as outsiders capable of making proposals that are innovative as well as unaffected by the dynamics and common sense of the institutions or communities with which they are invited to work. It is precisely this distinctive value that is considered the greatest benefit of including artists in such projects. Following this logic is a depoliticized vision of community art, according to which the creativity of artists can heal social problems.<sup>9</sup> And underlying these points of view is a romanticized perspective of the artist as creator, which often results in these types of commissions being participatory rather than collaborative projects.

7. "Critical collaborative art makes it possible for all types of relations to flourish between the various agents involved. Ultimately, relational politics means making the junction of ethics and aesthetics dictated by collaborative artistic projects problematic." Aida Sánchez de Sordio, *La política relacional en las prácticas artísticas colaborativas. Cooperación y conflicto en el desarrollo de un proyecto de video comunitario* (PhD diss., Universitat de Barcelona, 2007), p.13, available online at <https://aidasanchezdesordio.wordpress.com>.

8. The appeal for a critical reflection on the collaborative work promoted by Spanish cultural institutions is gradually producing results, as was also recently demonstrated by Fermín Soria Ibarra, *El giro educativo y su relación con las políticas institucionales de tres museos y centros de arte del contexto español* (PhD diss., Universitat de Barcelona, 2016).

9. In general, the accusations are centered on the fact that this type of project limits itself to celebrating the positive aspects of the communities with which they work and exalting morally correct values—peace, coexistence, diversity, etc.—but leaving untouched the problems and contradictions in the situations dealt with. In this sense, the social domain would have the effect of eliminating the political. See Aida Sánchez de Sordio, "Arte y educación: diálogos y antagonismos," *Revista Iberoamericana de Educación*, no. 52 (2010), p. 50.



*La Mer au Milieu des Terres // Mare Medi Terraneum*, Es Baluard, Palma de Mallorca, 2015. Project with a group of women from the Son Gotleu district related to the homonymous exhibition

But the power relationships between the different parties involved in the projects assume tangible form not only through the interests of those involved and any possible frictions that arise from this; they also have to do with the people who manage the symbolic capital of the initiative, how the representation of the process is handled, and the visibility of the participants. At Es Baluard, we thus try to collaborate with artists who do not position themselves as outsiders or unique creators, but rather as participating collaborators. The museum involves artists in joint projects with the hope that they can contribute, from the perspective of their creative processes, to the collective pedagogical experience, an experience oriented toward social and political transformations fostered by culture.

This horizontal networking with collectives and communities goes beyond the museum's traditional boundaries and may potentially deconstruct its discourses. The educational turn requires increasing flexibility on the part of institutions in terms of times, spaces, and rhythms, because only with a community engaged with culture and comprised of an active citizenry of partners and participants will it become possible to construct cultural models for today's society.

*Vanishing Points*  
Javier Montero

## 1

Projects of artistic production that collectivize methodologies, tools, processes, concerns, knowledge, practices, and secrets have become highly visible. These projects pose interesting and varied challenges to the traditional hierarchies of artistic and cultural production; they stimulate the building of autonomously operating communities; and they can provide a new line to follow—a new form of social unionism—in defiance of “precarity.”

Let us begin with a brief journey back in time and outline a certain genealogy. In the late 1970s, countercultural and political experimentation, which in a collective form had sought the emancipation from Fordism and disciplinary subjectivity, had been practically wholly assimilated into new governments. Strategies of subjectivation, for relating to the *Other*, and of cultural production had taken on a fundamental importance. Many of the forerunners of the transformations of previous decades had assumed a prominent role in a world made by and for a new form of capitalism.

Present-day living and labor conditions take us back to the genealogy of countercultural movements through the 1960s. Within the context of feminism, environmentalism, the radical left, the period’s local struggles and autonomist movements, and dissident practices that sought alternative forms of living, bodily desires, and relationships, there was a wish to move away from the prevailing labor conditions and their disciplinary measures. The voluntary acceptance of precarious employment conditions was, generally speaking, a response to the need to surpass the modern patriarchal division between reproduction and wage labor.

Nevertheless, in recent years it is precisely these alternative living and employment conditions that, increasingly, have become so economically useful, favoring as they do the labor market flexibility demanded by powerful financial institutions. In this way, the practices and discourses of social, political, and cultural movements of previous decades are, apart from their dissent and antagonism with respect to normalization, absorbed in part by the neoliberal imaginary of governability.<sup>1</sup> This implies a profound process of

commodification and co-optation of cultural and artistic potential. In *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, American philosopher David Harvey speaks openly about how late capitalism uses culture to commercialize forms of resistance and creativity in order to strip them of their revolutionary potential.<sup>2</sup>

## 2

To continue with my digression on the commodification/growing precarity of cultural and artistic production: in her essay *Unpredictable Outcomes / Unpredictable Outcasts*, artist-researcher Marion von Osten claims that the figure of the artist personifies the successful combination of an unlimited variety of ideas, creativity-on-call, and sophisticated self-marketing, which today is what is demanded of any person worth their salt on the labor market. Artists seem to be the protagonists in this new way of understanding the relation between work and life, and, more importantly in our context, for articulating it to a wider audience.<sup>3</sup>

This mystification of the figure of the artist, whose way of working is based on self-responsibility, creativity, and spontaneity, is what nourishes the discursive narrative on work. For a decade, employment policy programs in countries such as Holland, Germany, and the United Kingdom, programs later adopted by other countries, conditioned support for unemployed on their capacity to be creative, entrepreneurial, autonomous, and willing to productively combine work hours with their private lives.<sup>4</sup>

## 3

We return to the here and now in order to see how these transformations affect the production of subjectivities. I believe it was Mao Zedong who said something to the effect of, “Our battlefield is the imaginary of the middle classes.” It

2. David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (London: Oxford University Press, 2005).

3. Marion von Osten, “Unpredictable Outcomes / Unpredictable Outcasts,” speech given at the “MyCreativity” conference, Amsterdam, November 2006, in *Traversals* 11 (2007), <http://eicp.net/transversal/0207/vonosten/en>.

4. Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso Books, 2012), p. 14. “Northern Europe has experienced a transformation of the 1960s discourse of participation, creativity and community; these terms no longer occupy a subversive, anti-authoritarian force, but have become a cornerstone of post-industrial economic policy.”

is worthwhile to briefly mention how contemporary art and culture in Spain is constructed upon imaginaries of class and gender developed by agents that typically belong to very specific social strata. Thus their traditional insensitivity to social and political conflicts, or to the extremely precarious tangible and intangible conditions of production, is endemic.

That in this context the figure of the artist has become a model of precarity is symptomatic. Neoliberalism seeks to maximize flexibility in order to obtain cheaper, more easily exploitable labor. So-called freelance employment follows a set of parameters of impoverishment: the search for temporary employment with no entitlement to sick leave, unemployment benefits, or paid vacations; the absence of protection against wrongful dismissal; the lack of minimum social protection standards. The boundary between working hours and life blurs and disappears. It is taken as a given that skills training will take place during off hours without compensation. Being permanently online and connected is crucial for survival... But in the neoliberal imaginary of governability these parameters are kept hidden under the guise of creativity. For capitalism, the art world is a fascinating testing ground to experiment with subjectivities, one which generates everything from models of precarity to a variety of speculative commercial processes.

We will only touch on this briefly, but ever since the consolidation of the Spanish Transition system, culture has been characterized by a lack of critical capacity, the assumption of conceptual and institutional frameworks, and a lack of political and social commitment. As neoliberalism has consolidated itself as the biopolitical DNA of the system, spaces of artistic and cultural production have been traversed, compartmentalized, territorialized by forms of mediation that represent the introduction of a market logic as well as mechanisms of control.

As Harvey points out, one of the functions of official culture is to obscure the process of the growing precarity of people, communities, and collectives.<sup>5</sup> And it is important to highlight how the Spanish political system in the last decades has implemented neoliberal policies in artistic and cultural areas with a particular intensity and bias. Obsessed with stability and stabilization, it has structured this domain as a mediated, regulated, normative, instrumentalized, homogenized space. In fact, it has used every tool at its disposal to try to establish a hegemonic culture with the goal of producing docile,

5. Harvey, *A Brief History*, p. 47.





*La máquina del tiempo* (The Time Machine), Intermediae, Madrid, 2015. Collective art project with senior citizens that seeks to collectivise art production processes, directed by Javier Montero and produced by hablarenarte. (Photo: Javier Montero)

depoliticized, and highly consumerist subjectivities. And this kept them happy, until the explosion of 15M with its practices of collectivizing processes of social construction, its logic of rupture, and the development of thought as action. Thought as action...

How the system uses mediation is a critical issue in the world of art and culture. Mediation has become a formula for introducing and consolidating neoliberal commercial logic and the resulting “precarization” of production conditions. In this context, institutionalizing collaborative practices carries the risk of their being co-opted, depoliticized, their aesthetic potential limited, and a loss of their capacity both for rupturing conceptual and institutional frameworks and for generating conflict. Formulas for mediation have been developed for controlling and domesticating the subversive, transgressive, or simply critical potential of collective artistic and cultural creation, as well as for solidifying the hierarchical institutionalization of those practices.

It is not just a question of co-optation and commodification, but a much more far-reaching process involving a conflict in the construction of subjectivities; or, to be more precise, we are living in conflict with the capitalist subjectivation that pervades society.

#### 4

When we talk of collaborative projects in which the production tools are collectivized, we start from the premise that intersubjective relationships are not solely an end in themselves, but rather they allow the exploration of such complex issues as the nature of pedagogical processes, the role of affectation, the influence of systems of cultural representation and institutions, behavior protocols, gender constructs, the political engagement and potentiality of micropolitics, inequalities and the class system, narcissism, and the concept of value. And we are talking, of course, of precarization.

An interesting point of light that could lead us out of this labyrinth and combat the dynamics of precarity is the reinvention of formulations of unionism. Essential to this process are the roles played by the collectivization of practices, tools, forms of care and attention, knowledge, methodology, and mediation. And it is important that these are not co-opted, depoliticized, or institutionalized.

We need to reinvent formulations of social unionism in order to confront the profound deterioration in the living conditions of cultural production, to challenge

the hierarchical form and position of the institution and its representatives, and to bring about new realities. We need flexible formulations of unionism capable of producing conflict, overcoming dichotomies, and articulating knowledge. We need formulations of unionism that create transversal networks with opposing political projects and the wealth of active cultural phenomena, whether or not these are recognized as such. What we are talking about is the creation of a union of cultural producers faced with precarity, producers that develop thought as action as a logic of rupture of the institutional, economic, and artistic framework.

It would be interesting to completely reorganize what we consider to be the structure of artistic production in order to eliminate precarity. I hesitate to say this, but after reinventing the formula of the political party in order to combat institutional power, it becomes necessary to reinvent the union system in order to change the tangible and intangible conditions of cultural and artistic production. The processes of collectivizing tools, methodologies, practices, and projects are an essential part of this new social, reticular, autonomous unionism that fights the process of precarization to which we are subjected and that is producing new realities.

Phew!



## Interview with Núria Güell

by hablarenarte

The artistic work of Núria Güell (b. 1981, Vidreres) blends with the limits of her daily life in the development of disruptive tactics with the potential to subvert imposed power relations. The explicit objective of all her projects is to repeatedly challenge the assumed identifications and the roles established by agents involved in our social, political, and everyday environments. She seeks to give visibility to abuses perpetuated by the established legality and the dominant morality by addressing their limits. To do this, she flirts with the powers that be and the privileges conferred on her by the art world as well as socially, along with the complicity of different allies.

—www.nuriaguell.net

**Your art projects require you to, in a greater or lesser degree, establish relationships with a large number of heterogeneous agents: people who have been affected, ordinary citizens, art institutions, and administrative entities. To what extent does working with all of these form a part of your practice?**

Yes, all my projects depend upon and are constructed with (and through) others—just like life. It is precisely the work with different collaborators and establishing personal relationships and, in many cases, emotional bonds that is the essence and foundation of all of my projects. I always say I work with my life as a medium. As sculptors need a physical space to support the sculpture and painters need a surface on which to paint, I need my body (physical, emotional, legal), my time, and my relationships with others to carry out my work.

**Would you say that collaboration and management are two of your artistic “techniques”?**

I wouldn't speak of techniques in my case. One of the methodologies I use most in my work consists of creating *counterdispositifs* for listening to the singularity of others. So, taking this into account along with the fact that my medium is my relationships with others, if we want to speak of techniques, then the closest we get to that is dialogue—dialogue as a technique for developing the work: listening and the word. And here is where we would find collaboration, management, and many other factors, different in each project and, frequently, unpredictable.

**How would you define the role of different agents in your projects? Are they a means to a particular end or result, or is the objective of your work rather the process of working with others?**

Everything comes into it. I don't differentiate between the result of the work from the process of its production. With my work I look to generate moments

of ethical interrogation, moments of a suspension of values and meaning, moments in which established values are emptied of content, lose their power, and are thrown into shadow, causing disquiet and facilitating a critical distance. These suspended values do not only affect the "public" but also my collaborators and myself.

The role played by different agents is rather varied, though these roles can be summarized in two categories: accomplices and involuntary collaborators. By accomplices, I mean collaborators that should be aware of the project's starting point, of the premises that put into question the values the project deals with, which is related to my political stance. With such projects in which the level of personal implication is great, I think it is indispensable for the work to run smoothly and it to be ethically transparent. For instance, it was very important for María, the political refugee who offered to play hide and seek with the Swedish people (*Demasiada melanina* (Too Much Melanin), 2013), to have a clear understanding and to share in what we wanted to provoke in the public she was challenging. The lawyers who assist me in these projects are also accomplices. And I typically also demand the same level of complicity from the art institutions that invite me to work with them, as you can clearly see in my current project in Medellín, *La feria de las flores* (The Flowers Fair, 2015–16).

By involuntary collaborators I am referring primarily to government institutions and the staff there who realize bureaucratic functions. They often participate in my projects without being aware of it. They are devoted and committed to do a certain job that as a citizen I make use of. But, as I said before, using my own life as a creative medium they not only attend to me as a citizen but at the same time these services become part of an artistic project. They do their work and I do mine. A good example of this would be *Apátrida por voluntad propia* (Stateless by Choice), a project I've been working on since 2014.

This category of involuntary collaborators would also include actors I didn't intend to engage in a project. I'll explain. Because I work in confrontation with the real world, I include whatever that confrontation leads to, as everything that the initial premise leads to is valuable for my work. This means that collaborators that are involuntary, unforeseen, or what have you, appear. For example, in *Ideologías oscilatorias* (Oscillatory Ideologies, 2015), Levi

Orta and I considered the mayor of Figueres who censored the work to be an involuntary collaborator, and we thanked her for her contribution because she gave the work a new meaning, making it more interesting and pertinent. The same thing applies to the hundreds of readers' comments to the news articles published about the projects. To me this still forms part of the work, another phase of it.

**What is your experience working with cultural organizations on your projects?  
In what aspects of your work with them do you see room for improvement?**

In many of my projects I use my socially acquired privileges as a white, Spanish citizen and as an artist. I make use of my privileges, but I also take risks because I try to get all I can out of them, to stretch them to the limit, and doing something like that makes you vulnerable—your privileges can be turned against you when you use them. After some thought, one day I decided to ask the same thing from institutions that asked me to work with them, as they enjoyed far more privileges than I ever could. Too often institutions want to exhibit politically committed work but don't want to be politically involved, justifying this with the supposed need to be of political neutrality. I don't agree with such a premise: if we put ourselves into something, we all put ourselves into it, and more so when we are dealing with institutions that are responsible for producing, managing, and disseminating culture. Not to take a stance seems to me unethical.

The room for improvement, apart from the conditions of production and respect for the artist's rights as a worker, would be in their implication and commitment. I expect an implication from them equal to my own. In terms of personal relationships I look for complicity, in order to generate the trust needed to complement each other and learn in the process. What I value the most about working with collaborators is that they push me beyond my own limits. Still, I find the principal challenge is when collaborators prioritize political correctness or their personal interests over honesty *with respect to reality*, something that, consistent with my interests as an artist, is essential.



Núria Güell, *Demasiada melanina* (Too Much Melanin), Gothenburg Biennale, 2013



Núria Güell, *Apátrida por voluntad propia* (Stateless by Choice), ongoing since 2014

## An interview with Maria Ruido

by Ana García Alarcón

María Ruido (b. 1967, Ourense) is an artist, researcher, and teacher. Since 1998, she has been developing interdisciplinary projects about the social construct of the body and identity, the imaginaries of work in post-Fordist capitalism, and the construction of memory and its relation to narrative forms of history. María Ruido involves various collectives, associations, and people in her work to configure the representation of imaginaries that respond to social and political questions. To do so, she draws on different agents that, in any way or another, become part of her work, of her research processes, and of the work's final outcome.

—www.workandwords.net

**Is the definition of yourself as an artist important in your work? In order to meet your projects' goals, do you usually play the role of an artist or do you prefer to abandon this role?**

In my work, I step outside the artist's role to use different methodologies, employing procedures closer to research, but also to anthropology, ethnography, and self-ethnography. I am very interested in this last approach, as it uses testing procedures that are similar to documentation. This places me at a considerable distance from the role of the artist, but I don't identify myself with this role. Sometimes, when working with collectives, an artist can acquire an almost shamanic power, understanding their role as someone who speaks for a specific group and, in a way, solves their problems. That strikes me as a big lie and an abuse of people.

**Your work could be described as socially engaged. What relevance do cultural institutions and galleries have in it?**

My work has a social character. I understand representation as occupying a political domain and, by extension, a social one. In that sense, when we work with those agents, I believe we have to be very aware that we are intervening in an institution with very concrete rules. Working in the context of public institutions can be relevant and it can bring out a series of social and political questions. We cannot forget that we form part of institutions, whether on the periphery or more in the center, but we are always there, even if only to tear them down or criticize them.

My relations with art institutions are normally uncomfortable, as is my rapport with the university where I teach. Still, I believe that it is important to be inside—to be *there*—especially in public organizations, in order to analyze institutional limits. This has sometimes led to tense and uncomfortable interaction, but on other occasions things have been more or less fluid. There have been all sorts of relations.



**Many of your works involve the participation of collectives to denounce specific social questions. To what degree do those social agents acquire a specific role in your art?**

Here, I would distinguish between collective and collaborative. I have worked in collectives with other artists and social agents, and that involves a different kind of practice than my projects, where I am inevitably working with people's life experiences.

I believe that we have to be very aware of how far an artistic process can go, and what its limits are. I am interested in work in which artistic practice functions as a social agent, but I must also add that I am very much a realist about the possibility of art's agency to interfere and change realities. These have to be transformed by people on the street and—in other contexts—from other institutions.

When you address an association that works with historical memory or a collective working with immigrants, or with women, you cannot sell them the idea that your work is going to change their lives. If I decide to make a film with a collective—following a strike, for example—I have to take into account the time that the involved agents need for their negotiations, which is not always compatible with the time frame of my work. Even if I want to maintain continuous contact, I have to make decisions, and, in the end, it is my name that appears on the work. Moreover, that can turn a piece into a fetish, an object with no life outside the museum, which reinforces the idea that art spaces address such questions. This seriously concerns me because it can produce a rebound effect.

**What value do you assign to the working process and to collaboration with collectives, as opposed to the final result of your projects as artworks and objects?**

The process is the most important aspect of my work, particularly research, interviews, and editing. That is what most interests me. Turning the study material into an aesthetic experience—I work in the art world, but I am not a journalist, a political scientist, or an anthropologist, although I use methodologies from those disciplines—and negotiating with the agents involved in the work are fundamental aspects of it.

The final result varies considerably. Sometimes it has been a complete disappointment for the people who participated, and other times not. I prefer to be honest in my work, so when I include a group of people I like to let them know that I will have the final word, the final cut in both the real and symbolic sense.

They may think that I am going to deliver them a sort of pamphlet that they can use in their rallies. In that sense, there is a dichotomy between what an association finds politically useful and something more closely related to the formal research involved in an artistic work. And this contradiction between form and content can produce frictions. Consequently, the final results are not always well received, but you have to be responsible and, somehow, not create expectations that you are going to make a campaign video for a specific cause.





María Ruido, *Ficciones Anfíbias* (Amphibian Fictions) , HD video, 2005  
 María Ruido, *Plan Rosebud 1* (Rosebud Plan 1), HD video / 16 mm, 2008



María Ruido, *Plan Rosebud 2* (Rosebud Plan 2), HD video / 16 mm, 2008



**Es Baluard Museu d'Art Modern i Contemporani de Palma** aims to consolidate an open, collaborative working model which fosters a transversal, horizontal approach through the projects that are set up by its departments. With this philosophy it aims to involve different local citizen groups and to activate a network of national and international collaborators. Nekane Aramburu is the director of the museum; Eva Cifre, Sebastià Mascaró and Irene Amengual run the Department of Educational Development and Public Programs.

**Javier Montero** is a playwright, performing arts director, artist and writer. In the past few years he has carried out and directed several projects concerned with collectivising tools and methodologies for art production. His most recent production, still being staged, is *La secta de las vampiras* (The Vampire's Sect, Teatro del Barrio, Madrid); and *La Máquina del tiempo* (The Time Machine, Intermediæ, hablarenarte, 2015) is his latest collaborative work.

**Ana García Alarcón** is a researcher, curator and a Doctor in Art History and Theory with the Universidad Complutense, Madrid. She has recently published the book *ARTE versus PUBLICIDAD. (Re)visiones críticas desde el arte actual* (Universidad de Zaragoza, Zaragoza, 2016). She regularly writes texts and articles, and curates projects on an individual as well as a collective basis. Together with Isabel Durante and Miguel Ángel Hernández Ana makes up the curatorial group 1erEscalón, and she is also a member of the curatorial team of Espacio Trapézio, an offspace in Madrid.

*Impossible Glossary* is an editorial project by **hablarenarte** that will grow steadily until the close of the CAPP project, planned for the end of 2018. This digital edition of June 2016 is comprised of seven independent chapters:

### *Agents*

"Constellations, Glossaries, and Functions"  
Es Baluard, Museo d'Art Modern i Contemporani de Palma

"Vanishing Points"  
Javier Montero

Interviews with Núria Güell and María Ruido

### *Autonomy*

"Autonomy and Modes of Relation"  
Jordi Claramonte

Interviews with Rogelio López Cuenca and Alexander Ríos

### *Authorship*

"Going Beyond Artistic Authorship"  
Diego del Pozo Barriuso

Interviews with Christian Fernández Mirón and Left Hand Rotation

### *Collaboration*

"Collaboration is Inevitable"  
María Mur Dean

Interviews with Maider López and DEMOCRACIA

### *Context*

"Walking in Ice, Artistic Practices in Context"  
Francisca Blanco Olmedo

Interviews with El Banquete and DosJotas

### *Work*

"Down to work! Ways of Doing and Activating within the Social Network"  
Selina Blasco y Lila Insúa

Interviews with Juanli Carrión and David Crespo

### *Return*

"The Return Is the Common"  
Haizea Barcenilla

Interviews with Alberto Flores (Makea Tu Vida) and Mawatres

The Impossible Glossary will be expanded over the coming years, the contents of which will be published digitally at [www.cappnetwork.eu](http://www.cappnetwork.eu) and [www.hablarenarte.com/capp](http://www.hablarenarte.com/capp). A selection of all the texts will be published in a paper edition in November 2018.

We hope for the widest possible dissemination of this publication. When quoting fragments or full texts, the following formula should be used: Full name of the author, "Title," in: *name of the chapter, Impossible Glossary*, ed. hablarenarte, (Madrid: hablarenarte, 2016), p. xx., see: [www.hablarenarte.com/capp](http://www.hablarenarte.com/capp)

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