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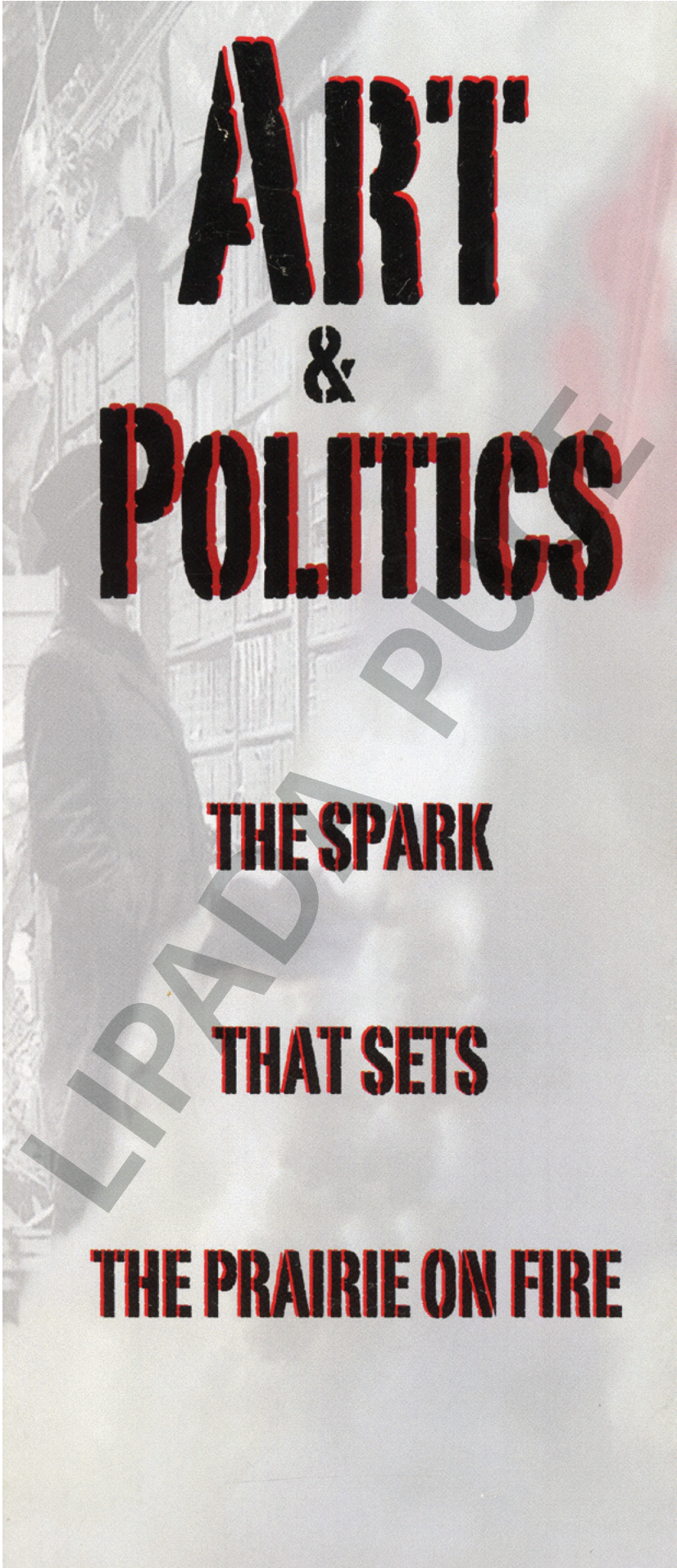
Resumen:

Invitación tipo tríptico al evento realizado en la Universidad de Denison (Ohio - Estados Unidos); Art & Politics "The spark that sets the prairie on fire" el proyecto es una propuesta comparativa entre dos visiones y universos simbólicos, el arte y la política. Su transformación mutua, sus influencias y reconfiguraciones. El proyecto es una invitación a la reflexión de la política desde el campo de la estética. Participaron: César Portilla con el tema "The artist as political subject" realizado en Knapp Performance Lab y Gabriela Ribadeneira con un conversatorio en Mix Gallery @Mulberry House.



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ART & POLITICS

THE SPARK

THAT SETS

THE PRAIRIE ON FIRE

Nowadays, with the appearance of revolutionary projects, the overthrow of oligarchic governments through social action, and of diverse organized processes taken from collective active figures a new questioning takes place as does the renewal of political action, as well as the very principle of politics.

In this sense, it seemed to us relevant to examine certain practices and dynamics at work that function in the border between art and politics. In March 2012 we started in Quito, Ecuador, a series of academic and artistic encounters that contribute to the analysis and exchange of the knowledge and perspectives about the relationship between art and politics. This project, "THE SPARK THAT SETS THE PRAIRIE ON FIRE" proposes a comparison between the above two notions, their symbolic universes, their mutual transformation, influences and reconfigurations, through a collective reflection in the center of a community of both artists and researchers who have developed their thoughts within key questions about contemporary aesthetics and its interface with politics, placing art as a way of thinking the world and as a means of being in it.

The project is an invitation to reflect upon the notion of politics from within the aesthetics field. The concept of politics is understood in this project quoting philosopher Jacques Rancière, who sees politics as a relationship, an in-between space or an 'interval,' and like the creation of a common space of relationships between subjects of a community whose practices are guided by the presumption of equality.

Our project proposes to enquire about the possibilities for artistic practices and the contemporary transformations of the status of art, exploring the characteristics, the forms, and the conditions that make possible the constitution of art's common space, through the politicization of the aesthetic forms.

Art nowadays forms a vast, symbolic field whose practices are not necessarily traditionally artistic, however by all means function as 'works of art,' in the sense that they participate in the construction of "art's common space." The term, 'artwork' does not mean an already finite concept, being one of the problems of contemporary thought, to discern what distinguishes one ordinary thing from a work of art. In this regard, one of the best examples that continues to give much to talk about is Marcel Duchamp's famous Urinal. It is agreed that this urinal is not simply a urinal. What continues to be ambiguous however, is whether or not the urinal is or is not a 'work of art.' This indecision is precisely what makes it so interesting. According to theorists, Duchamp effectively transformed or transfigured the urinal into a work of art, in "Fontana." This paradigmatic case of almost a century ago (1917), is exemplary to clearly comprehend that a work of art is not simply an 'object' but a grouping of gestures and procedures.

In consequence, we have established three main conceptual ideas or 'key moments' that organize the collective process of investigation within a setting. These three 'key moments' in the process of art configuration and that we have called 'Contexts of Inscription' are: the context of production, the context of mobilization, and the context of activation.

Context of production

In which we will address the process of creation or production of art, putting attention on the artist and the formal or symbolic decisions carried out by him/her and how this process is a fundamental part of the work. In this sense, we depart from the assertion that 'works of art' would contain multiple signals, strategies, and individual projections of the creative process of conceptualization of the piece, characterized by a succession of precise selections that precede in the establishment of a particular "thing" in the world.

Context of mobilization

We will center our attention in the ways of occupation of the common space of art or of infiltration of art in everyday life, and in the mechanisms of mobilization of its contents. The context of mobilization will allow us to analyze the mechanisms of display and strategies of circulation of art as components in the process of significance in a work of art, at the same moment of establishing a piece of art in the world.

Context of activation

As mentioned above, art is a detonator of social relations that compromises distinct types of approaches. In this third concept, we will focus primarily in the analysis of the space of reception. The space of reception is specifically the public space or the social space of art, in which the functioning of diverse mechanisms of visibility come into play, much through strategies of activation from an artistic occurrence as the authentication of its value, setting forth institutional systems of mediation –between the piece and the public- or other platforms that establishes a complex semiotic grid of the approach to art.

In summary, "THE SPARK THAT SETS THE PRAIRIE ON FIRE" suggests approaching the relationship between art and politics through the analysis of a triple arrangement we have denominated as 'Contexts of Inscription,' designating as 'context of inscription' the group of circumstances in which an artistic event is inscribed. This triple disposition will allow us to think of art as a series of encounters (between heterogeneous processes) and relationships (between subjects) whose ends would aim to the (re)configuration of arts common space.

GABRIELA RIVADENEIRA
PROJECT DIRECTOR
CEAC FOUNDATION

Artists participating:

Manon de Boer (India)



Resonating Surfaces, 2005

Cildo Meireles (Brasil)



Insertions into Ideological Circuits, 1970
Coca-Cola Project

Eric Baudelaire (USA-France)



Sugar Water, 2007