

# Creative collective process towards the construction of common good

**Methods-Project of research about art-society relations** is a workshop aiming at stimulating a discussion about the complex international net which uses creativity as a mean for activating a social responsible change involving different sectors of society.

The workshop is one of the activities that develop the research started with the project **Geographies of Change**, curated by Filippo Fabbrica and Juan Esteban Sandoval, which was activated in June 2004.

The workshops had compared projects based on the interaction between the subjects and the social contexts, i.e. projects that, starting from specific social problems, realise new sites and new platforms of exchange and dialogue through a new net of communities, corporations and public and private institutions.

The two editions of the workshop (Methods 1, 2nd-3rd October 2004, Cittadellarte – Fondazione Pistoletto, Biella, Italy; Methods 2, 27th-29th January 2006, ArteFiera, Bologna, Italy) were focused on the objective of investigating the methodologies and the processes developed by artistic projects aiming at a social change.

“Methods” joins subjects who use art and creativity as means to solve social and political problems through sustainable and participative models. Methods gives consistence and visibility to these practices, based on the action of joining art and participation to valorise the potentialities of the subjects. At the same time, it promotes the integration among subjects coming from all over the world, which can be trained and supported by organisations and groups who work in the same field of social responsible art.

We find that nowadays in the area of contemporary art there are even more projects for social change or creative projects for the common good. In all of these projects there is a lack of identity: they are mostly not understood, nor recognised.

As we noted in the past editions, even if these projects are developed through similar practices and have similar problems, there are very few programmes of cooperation for them.

The **exchange of values** at the basis of the projects; the opportunity for the subjects

involved in the different projects of finding **similarities** among themselves; the **integration of different approaches**; the **alignment of the language**: these are the basic elements that can create a sustainable network, addressed to sustainable projects for a common good.

In this sense, Methods is a transversal program: it joins projects coming from all over the world offering them visibility and at the same time an opportunity of reflecting on their own identity. Moreover, it will offer the opportunity of creating a programme of cooperation. This is a very important occasion for the subjects engaged in social art also from a didactic level, because a centre of training and documentation in social art still doesn't exist at a regional, nor at a European level.

The aim of the programme is to give identity and visibility to projects that have a **strong policy impact**, because they always concern **social problems** and they try to solve them through the **direct involvement** of the subjects which are affected by these problems in the creative project.

**Creativity** represents the "liaison" between participation and the people of the territorial areas involved in the projects. Communicating to the politics the topics of these practices, we will present them an important means to solve social and political problems, a **new form of programs of social intervention**, that can be efficient and at the same time sustainable and that could substitute the traditional politics of social growth.

From the past two editions of Methods, important issues have emerged. These issues have activated new themes of discussion and reflection, which have helped to conceive the third edition of the workshop. From the attempt at defining a common method of work, the problem of establishing a precise, unique pattern of work has emerged, especially a pattern that could be used, simulated and applied by every single group.

This problem is caused by the diversity among the realities which the singles, during the phases of realisation of the project, have to operate with. For this reason, the participants of the workshop have agreed upon the fact that every context and every social theme have to be faced through methods and tools which have to be ad hoc, because they would not be applied or could not be useful for other projects.

In spite of the differences among the methodologies used by the single groups, we could identify common problems (internal and external communication; fund-raising; evaluation of the processes; local and global training).

## **The 3rd edition**

**Methods - Research Projects on Art-Society Relations for the creation of a sustainable network** is a workshop aiming at creating a programme of **international cooperation** focusing on the issues of **communication, training, fundraising and exchange of methodologies** for subjects engaged in **artistic projects for social change**.

Methods 3 is conceived with the objective of studying these problems in depth and at the meantime using these same problems as a point of departure for creating a network of collaboration between the artists and the operators working in processes of social change.

Thanks to the experience of the past two editions of “Methods” we are able to identify some of the most representative subjects operating in this field and through an open-call we will identify other relevant participants of the workshop.

The one-week long workshop will compare visions, analysis of the needs, the practices and the experiences of the participants. All of them will be used by the participants to structure a **shared and participatory programme** of cooperation concerning the themes of communication, funding and training for social change.

Furthermore, all the activities launched by the workshop will be the result of the shared research made by all the participants. For all of these reasons, the program is original and gives visibility to single projects that are already original for their contents and structure.

The creation of a **sustainable network** will be the **starting point of a series of activities** concentrated on **the empowerment of the practices of artistic and creative processes of social change**. Thus, we expect that the members of the network will propose the next activities, expressing their needs and problems. They will be coordinated by Cittadellarte-Fondazione Pistoletto and Love Difference, which will organise the next meetings and discussions in order to solve the common needs step by step. We will conceive a structure of network as a sort of association, where every member invests some resources for a common project. The resources will consist not only of a common amount of money for participating at the **association**, but especially of the **abilities of the subjects in creating cooperative activities** of fund-raising. The central point of sustainability will be the **involvement of the people** who will activate experiences **for a common aim**. In this way, this form of association will be sustainable in a cultural and economical level.

The meeting of the subjects involved in social art won't end, but will constitute a laboratory which will create a process, a group of cooperation and its rules.

Our long term objective is the creation of a **relational network** between subjects acting in the field of **social responsible art**, in order to create a **multidisciplinary and participatory cooperation**.

Through the discussion about common values, needs and problems, Methods aims at inviting the groups to build and to activate a net of collaboration, where the method suggested will allow the actors **to work** not as singles, but **as** part of a **collective**. This will constitute an important means that will help the artistic projects of social change to obtain **more identity and visibility in the public opinion and in the politics field**.

by **Filippo Fabbrica**, Love Difference project coordinator  
and **Chiara Cardinali**, assistant curator