

In need

A few thoughts on the first day of my Edinburgh College of Art Micro-residency.

Of course, artists can become a tool to instigate criticality that is a benefit to society..

It might be time to take very seriously artistic endeavours that have the tendency to merge with other disciplines, i.e real estate agents, economist scientists, engineers, planners and politicians, as that might be crucial to the way we might acquire a revitalised sense of wisdom or a sense of progress for delving into the ‘future unknown’.



above: “Δωρίζεται” dorizete = (to be gifted), The artists website

Dutch artist Maaïke Stutterheim through her work that she symbolically gave the name “Δωρίζεται» (Giving something as gift) of posting fliers around public walls and buildings – reminds us that built Space in cities is another material we can utilise. Although maybe not as obvious on a first reading, her invitation is for us to consider the financial and spatial possibilities of the perished ‘real estate’ economy. “Gifting space could potentially offer an opportunity to consider alternative means of commerce and of other exchange networks of goods and services. Nonetheless, ultimately it is a reminder to everyone of how tragically our lives and lifestyle changed after 2004.



above: Hotel Chateau Rouge, Huy, Belgium. Room on top floor.

“The lotto losing 16 year old runaway”

material borrowed from the artists website

Moreover Maaïke’s road trip to Athens highlights those topics at a european level. She drove to Greece from the Netherlands after stopping at several european locations to refurbish the rooms of abandoned hotels (see above). The hotel it self is a symbol that epitomises wealth, prestige, and the emolument of labour.

In Athens where Maaïke worked as a Snehta resident as in the rest of eurozone the architectural traces of different epochs have amalgamated in both institutionalised and privately initiated architectures.

Resources have already been spent and used, awakened and taken shape by industry that has evolved and that has become more efficient. Even in the case of peripheral european countries such us Greece, centralized industrialization has been gradually shaping the urban and suburban landscape, semi evident in wasteland suburban traces that in their majority still seem to exist outside history, strived of any obvious associations with the major economic and industrial history of Europe.



above: photograph of the disused Merenda quarry facilities outside Athens



above: pipework coming out of wall, part of some sort of storage somewhere outside Lavrio, Attica district



above: Improvised roadside cantina on Lavrio highway

I believe that Maaïke suggests that we look at the classical term of what the city is as a finished project. To think ‘out of the box’ ought to be the new if not the only way of thinking. How we can use urban space differently is a crucial question we must all ask ourselves.

Vultures or pray?

What artists see is what they will effectively transform into cultural capital. The dis-used remnants of yesterday will be re used; will metamorphose into a new seed.

Moreover, I believe artists should be christened ‘economists’, as they are the ones that will be there when the streets are quiet, gazing sensitively, emotionally or touching spiritually the world that we have built and that we will carry on building in the name of... Progress of course...