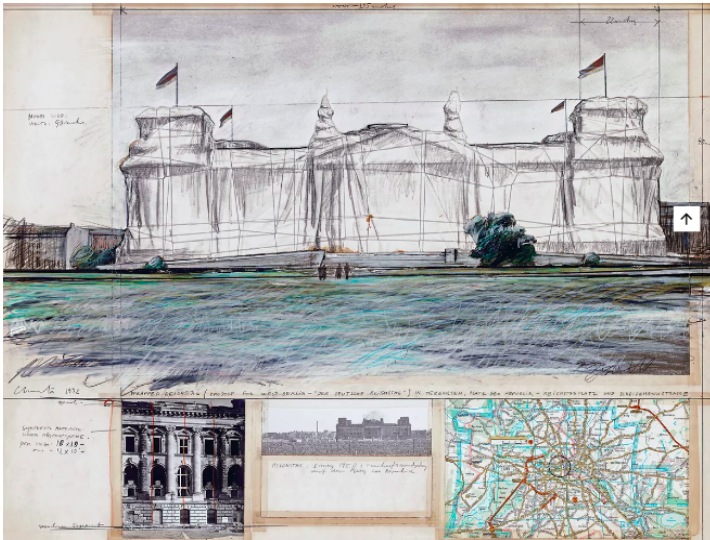


Negotiation تفاوض Verhandlung

By Eugénie Forno

What do these three images have in common?



Wrapped Reichstag, a Collage by Christo illustrating Christo and Jeanne-Claude project to wrap up the Reichstag.
© 1972 Christo and Jeanne-Claude Foundation

Picture of the **Albinet Precarious Museum**, artwork from Thomas Hirschhorn, Swiss artist who lives and works in Paris. The Albinet Precarious Museum is a museum constructed, in the area of Aubervilliers, on the Paris capital's periphery between 2002 and 2004.

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The **Collective Museum of Casablanca** by the artist Mohamed Fariji has been installed in the city center in December 2021 as part of a global artwork project and proposal for the city of Casablanca.

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These three images represent the result of artistic negotiation: Christo and Jeanne-Claude developed their massive outdoor project by negotiating with public institutions, and Thomas Hirschhorn and Mohamed Fariji's artworks are embedded in a long process with cities, institutions and inhabitants. These are examples of how the term negotiation applies in a museum context and more widely in cultural and artistic context.

Introduction

Negotiation has a business and commercial connotation. However, my experience at The Collective Museum of Casablanca and SAWA training made me realize negotiation has its part to play in the museum environment and artistic domain. My essay is written from a focus embedded in contemporary art and limited to three examples to explore the term negotiation. I focus on experiences where artists make a stand by negotiating spaces into the public sphere (spaces as territory but also as political space) where artistic projects counterbalance a state of things in order to organize spaces with their own vision, chain of commitment and solidarity and to make art where it is not invited to exist. I won't analyze the negotiation process inside museum institutions but from the outside: how does the museum interact with the public sphere.

To do so, I chose two museum examples. It is not about the MoMA (New-York) or the Hamburger Bahnhof (Berlin). It is about the Albinet Precarious Museum (Aubervilliers) and the Collective Museum (Casablanca), two small and ephemeral museums that contribute to the contemporary art scene by being both artworks and museums. I also chose to make a reference to outstanding artwork of Christo and Jeanne-

Claude. Their powerful binome reached through long-term negotiation to appropriate and transform cities' buildings or even islands into ephemeral sculptures.

To dive into the term of negotiation, I will first analyze the negotiation process developed by artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude in the 70-90's, Thomas Hirschhorn (the Albinet Precarious Museum, initiated between 2002 and 2004) and Mohamed Fariji (Collective Museum of Casablanca, created in 2012). Then, I will explain how negotiation processes are part of making art. Finally, I will conclude with the idea that negotiation is a tool for creating, building and producing a new territory for imagination in the museum field, shedding light on my experience at SAWA.

How artists have negotiated their ways to the public sphere

How can artists appropriate the public space? How can they enter public institutions to make their voices reach to the public? Many artists have been in discussion and interacting with and within the public sphere. It could be through command from a public institution or from a direct action on the public space. In the case of Christo and Jeanne Claude, they embody artists who go out of their "atelier" and private sphere, who don't just negotiate with their gallerist (they were actually their own art dealers) but enter widely in contact with the society, and negotiate with the public sphere. Their projects to wrap-up symbolic buildings were financially independent from any other source of funding than their own. But they needed permissions from institutions, they needed to convince the political representatives as much as their public. This process of negotiation, made of administrative formalities and population convincing (they might be the artists that gave the most lectures), was

part of Christo and Jeanne Claude artwork. From the idea, the first drawings and the will, it took Christo and Jeanne Claude 10 years of negotiation to wrap up the Pont-Neuf (Paris) and 24 years to wrap up the Reichstag (Berlin). They have spent years drawing the projects, letting the final decision with politicians. In the case of the Reichstag wrap-up, Christo and Jeanne-Claude started the drawing in the 70's. In 1984, Christo and Jeanne-Claude invited Willy Brandt, former Chancellor of West Germany at their home in New York City, to discuss the Wrapped Reichstag project. Ten years later, the German Parliament debated the Wrapped Reichstag project for 70 minutes in its 211th full plenary session. It approved its realization by 292 votes to 223 and the vote finally led to the installation during two weeks in 1995. *"It is the first time a parliament discusses a work of art. Prior to the debate, between April 1993 and February 1994, Christo and Jeanne-Claude visited a total of 352 members of parliament to discuss the project in person"* relate Christo and Jeanne-Claude official website¹. It would be interesting to dig deeper into the negotiation process, but the biggest stones of the project shows that not only the determination and patience of the artists led to the installation, but also the involvement of public figures and institutions (the Chancellor, members of parliament and the German Parliament). Such involvement had repercussions on artists' perception and opened new spaces for imagination and creation. Symbolically, these successful independent interventions expanded the place and role of the artist in the cities.

¹ <https://christojeanneclaude.net/> Last accessed 16 January 2023

A few years later in 2002, Thomas Hirschhorn set up the Precarious Museum, in collaboration with Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers, a cultural organization². It is co-created with an inhabitants pop-up museum in a Parisian suburb located in Aubervilliers³. As a museum needs a collection, Thomas Hirschhorn borrowed actual artworks from the Pompidou Centre by eight artists whom he felt were historically important, namely, Joseph Beuys, Le Corbusier, Salvador Dali, Marcel Duchamp, Fernand Leger, Kasimir Malevich, Piet Mondrian, and Andy Warhol. Here the process of negotiation expresses itself through different steps. First, on a grounded base analysis, the work with inhabitants is a negotiation that allows them to collectively engage in a common project, to take part in the construction of the museum. Secondly, on a symbolic level, *“The project is the result of the desire to share this faith with people who do not ordinarily have access to these works, for reasons that are mostly social, economic and cultural. This idea of transporting major works and bringing them into a slum, on the capital’s periphery, demonstrated the fact that art is an issue that can concern every single person”*⁴, stated Thomas Hirschhorn. It is to say that *“the desire to share this faith with people”* is expressed by negotiating new spaces for art, artworks and museums and shows how the museum/artwork addresses the inhabitants to include them and make them part of the wider project. The museum is constructed in a culturally abandoned space (Aubervilliers being Paris’ periphery and low social and cultural

² <http://www.leslaboratoires.org/en/ctxnode/1475/214> Last consulted 16 January 2023.

³ Bruno Elisabeth, « Thomas Hirschhorn : Musée Précaire Albinet », Critique d’art [On line], 27 | Spring 2006, online on February 14 2012, consulted 16 January 2023. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/critiquedart/1277> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/critiquedart.1277>

⁴ <http://www.leslaboratoires.org/en/ctxnode/1475/214> Last consulted 16 January 2023.

opportunities) making accessible masterpieces by the general public. Thomas Hirschhorn's work is an attempt to reshape the city and to offer museums where there are usually not. He wrote in an open-letter: *"Musée Précaire Albinet" carries within itself the violence of the horizon's transgression. I, myself, must constantly fight against the ideology of the possible, and against the dictatorship of what is allowed. I, myself, must work against the culture administration's logic of facilitating things.*⁵ The museum project and artwork is a negotiation in itself because it raises awareness about museum accessibility and inclusivity and transgresses the previous administrative order. In this case, the museum is also an artwork that influenced society and the art scene by offering new ways of including audiences and new narratives about the city, its abandoned spaces and masterpieces exhibition.

The Collective Museum of Casablanca pushes forward the idea of negotiation. It uses the same administrative process and formalities made available by Christo and Jeanne-Claude (at a smaller scale and in another context) but also reconceptualizes the notion of the museum. The museum is not only a place to exhibit a collection of masterpieces, but a place constantly creating its own collection with artists, researchers and inhabitants' proposals⁶. By doing so, it entered a process of negotiation within the city (because it advocates for more cultural and artistic spaces in the city) but also within the museum institution per se

⁵ About the "Musée Précaire Albinet" (2004), Thomas Hirschhorn, <http://www.thomashirschhorn.com/about-the-musee-precaire-albinet/> Last consulted 16 January 2023.

⁶ <https://www.atelierobservatoire.com/collective-museum> Last consulted 16 January 2023.

(because it distances itself from an usual definition of what a museum is). The Collective Museum has a long-term vision with ephemeral actions inside and outside the wall (artists and researchers residencies with inhabitants, collective project, restitution, exhibitions...). Its collection is made collectively through open-call. It is a citizen initiative, it is mobile, co-curated, participative, close to the public. Then, the Collective Museum is an artistic and curatorial creation. This artistic proposal for the city of Casablanca by artist Mohamed Fariji is made through constant negotiation with public authorities. The latest outstanding realization is the set up of the Collective Museum in two containers, in the heart of the city, in the Arab League park, thanks to its long term negotiation work, with inhabitants, artists, researchers as well as with public actors⁷. To be installed the Collective Museum had to obtain authorizations from institutions such as the city of Casablanca, Casapatrimoine and Casa Baia. Art negotiates the city, it negotiates its space and construction in the city. And at the same time the negotiation process is included in the artistic project of creation. The Collective Museum belongs to new museologies and precisely to “tactical museologies” developed by Gustavo Buntinx⁸. It is situated in a tactical approach to engage citizens, public institutions and decision makers and to re-elaborate museum policies and boundaries. Also, considering the museum history in

⁷ <https://www.atelierobservatoire.com/single-post/le-mus%C3%A9e-collectif-sera-inaugur%C3%A9-le-vendredi-10-d%C3%A9cembre-au-parc-de-la-ligue-arabe> Last consulted 16 January 2023.

⁸ Gustavo Buntinx, “Communities of Sense / Communities of Sentiment: Globalization and the Museum Void in an Extreme Periphery” in *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures / Global Transformations*, edited by Ivan Karp, Corinne Kratz, Lynn Szwaja and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 221-222.

Morocco, its grass-roots with colonization and post-colonial issues⁹, the Collective Museum offers a new museum cluster and approach that could better fit the public needs. Thus, the Collective Museum is a refreshing and playful device that interrogates what a museum could be and creates an artistic response¹⁰. At an international level, the presence of the Collective Museum during ICOM Prague 2022 is significant where at the same time the museum's renewed definition has been adopted. Making this redefinition visible at an international level, the Collective Museum also plays a role in questioning museology practices in Morocco and negotiating new spaces of belonging.

How negotiation makes art

In these three cases, negotiation is part of a process that makes contemporary art possible and accessible to the public. It redefines its frontier, expressed in political and territorial spaces that haven't been explored by artists before. Art uses negotiation processes and negotiation makes art. Both notions are intertwined. The creation process depends on negotiation and each project had to adapt and rely on the permissions given by public authorities. For example, in the mid-1960s, Christo and Jeanne-Claude failed to get permission to wrap two of New York's skyscrapers. They had to rethink their proposal and “*being aware that they would never get permission to realize a project involving the busy streets and walkways, they propose The Gates, a project for Manhattan's*

⁹ Charlotte Jelidi (dir.), *Les musées au Maghreb et leurs publics : Algérie, Maroc, Tunisie, actes du colloque* (Tunis, IRMC/Musée national du Bardo, 2010), Paris, 2013.

¹⁰ Pieprzak, Katarzyna. “Art in the Streets: Modern Art, Museum Practice and the Urban Environment in Contemporary Morocco.” *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin*, vol. 42, no. 1/2, 2008, pp. 48–54. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23063542>. Accessed 8 Oct. 2022.

*Central Park*¹¹. The Collective Museum of Casablanca had to also face setbacks. It lost its agreement earlier than expected to be set up in the two containers and had to rethink its proposal to the City. Those setback in an artistic proposal are inherent to the negotiation process and participate in the creation of the artwork. By constantly negotiating its existence and terms of existence, it acts as a brain teaser and game changer for national and international public institutions.

The search for imposing artwork or museums in public space is full of imaginary proposals and questions beyond the framework of the museum with innovations (participative strategies in collecting or in instituting a museum for example), developing new narratives and depending on the negotiation. In the case of the Albinet Precarious museum and of the Collective Museum of Casablanca, museums became artworks that influenced society and the art scene by offering new ways of including audiences and new narratives about the city and its abandoned spaces and forgotten memories. This negotiation process in itself is artistic using art tools.

Art is a means to negotiate to open new territories. In the museum environment (and elsewhere) we are negotiating: negotiating the new definition of museums at ICOM, negotiating spaces for inclusivity (language representations, communities, ...), negotiating the past (when contested heritage), negotiating multiperspectivity (when narratives have been monopolized), negotiating administrative structures (how to handle

¹¹ <https://christojeanneclaude.net/life-and-work/> Consulted 16 January 2023.

agency and power structures). Negotiation makes it possible to reconcile the institution and the artistic creation together and the artistic tool plays its role of mediator in the negotiation. Negotiation creates a system where artistic and creative tools may play a decisive part.

Conclusion

The three cases helped me understand what is the relation between art, museum and negotiation and how negotiation processes can be analyzed to be part of what is a museum. Through these stages, I also learnt how museum practices are influenced and sometimes reshaped by these processes. Rethinking museum practices and art practices is determined by negotiating unexplored territories, and contemporary art can help redefining established structures.

For this essay, I chose the term “negotiation” because, to me, it seems central when addressing other concepts such as “power”, “diversity”, or “change”. I chose this word because I felt that I, and our working group in SAWA, were negotiating a way to exist together and to renew museum approaches and standards in order to analyze concepts such as “relevance” and “inclusivity”. During SAWA, we also discussed words and concepts’ definitions and explored the new museum definition. We agreed that the definition is a way to fix things, and perhaps leaving it open to interpretation gives space for liberty (liberty of interpretations, communication, change and empowerment). However, even though negotiation opens unexplored territories for art and museums, it is important to build on common values. I also keep in mind this question: Where, how, and why can we find and make available common spaces. In spaces full of potential such as museums, how can we expand our

ability to create something new,unexpected, hopeful, that stirs the imagination and touches visitors in their humanity, their flaws, their strengths, their questions?