

Commons beyond building *presents:*

re-biennale 2008

permanent workshop of design and self-construction of social habitat 2008-2009

Preface

Commons Beyond Building is a cooperative platform created by a net of associations to share methods, processes and competences linked to self-construction, "to describe what cannot be told by the architectural project and what *the power* doesn't understand: the rise, from the bottom, of inhabit as practice of common living".

This project originates in occasion of the 11th International Exhibition of Architecture in Venice and it is made possible by the synergy between curators and architects that attended the exhibitions *Experimental Architecture* (Italy Pavilion, Giardini) and *L'Italia cerca casa* (Italian Pavilion, Arsenale), and also involving other associative realities committed in the experimentation of self-recovery and self-construction as innovative solutions to the housing emergency.

Through *Il Gioco del Mondo*, a performing initiative realized during the opening events of the Biennale, the story of the personal experiences of each and every group becomes a collective resource, a common good ready to be spread and defended: this accrues, though, the choice of giving oneself a challenge in a common process.

For information, adhesions, subscriptions and access to IUVA credits:

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Commons BB Net:

ASC Agenzia Sociale per la Casa www.globalproject.info

Casilino 900 /Stalker-ON www.osservatorionomade.net/

Geologika collettiva www.geologika.org

Sale-Docks www.sale-docks.org

Exyzt (France) www.exyzt.org

2012ARCHITECTEN (Netherlands) www.2012architecten.nl www.superuse.org

MILLEGOMME / REFUNC (Netherlands) www.refunc.nl

Collettivo SottoTetto <http://sottotetto.noblogs.org>

Famiglia Bresci www.inventati.org/famigliabresci

Arch. Emiliano Gandolfi, curator of the Biennale 2008

How the idea of Re-Biennale workshop was born

Quite often grand cultural events, as the Architecture Biennale is, cross the city of Venice in a such imposing manner, rarely interacting with what stays out of the exhibition path. This applies to the citizens (inhabitants, students, workers) and also to the professionals and the artists officially invited.

One other fundamental problem is the volume of the “rubbish” that is constantly left behind every time the exhibition closes: as a matter of fact all the materials used for the installations and even the works conclude their onerous vital cycle fully representing the environmental and economic intolerability and definitely denote the scarce attention towards the active resources of the city. It is from this reality that the idea of re-using those materials for a share project of regeneration was born: an extraordinary occasion to take care of the city as complex net of social, functional and spatial relations that can truly be conceived from those who live it, to explore it and study it, to work for it in order to transform the city itself in a building site of ideas and facts, to give that sense that state institutions cannot give, incapable of reading the real dynamics and invest politically in housing development.

The creativity of research and the hybridation of languages can though guarantee the richness of the urban design and can certainly rediscover the importance of the *common goods* behind the *built*, exactly *Commons Beyond Building*.

From *materials* to Social Construction Sites of *Self-Construction*

This proposal was born from the experimentation of self-recovery realized by the group from Venice “Asc”.

The self-production, each and everyone of them contributing with their own competences, materials and immaterials, has made possible, at the beginning, the recovery of housing units in council building areas and afterwards they opted for the cultural and producing “restructuring” of abandoned areas, from gardens and vegetable plots to buildings, from country fields and courtyards to the garrison-beach next to the construction site of the MoSe. This made possible the better use of the city resources and has created the base for an ergonomic project that outlines solutions with full respect of the social eco-system and the territorial habitat exploiting the social networks already available.

It does exist, though, a mapping of places that aspire to a common dimension, places available for a planning path and for a shared school-construction site.

The objective is to reverse the tendency of the architecture project and, starting from recycled materials, through a virtuous mechanism in which come into play all the inhabitants, the students, the institutions (IUAV and Biennale), groups of artists and international architects, combine the process of regeneration of one or more located places.

Workshop Planning

28 October- Press Conference and presentation of the project to the IUAV

Meeting with the net Commons Beyond Buildings, teachers and students.

The workshop will also be attended by:

Best-Up Circuito for the promotion of the sustainable living, terrASCuola2008, Francesco Careri- University of Roma3, Ida Farè, Gisella Bassanini- Polytechnic of Milan, Judith Revel- University of Paris I, Maurizio Corrado- Nemeton Magazine

15 November/ 28 November- Inspections

Starting from the stalls involved in the project, the students will analyse the relative exhibitional spaces elaborating technical schedules of cataloguing and valuation of the used materials that subsequently will be the starting point of successive projects of self-construction.

This research is meant to define the characteristics of the raw materials and their cycle of production including the environmental impact, the construction techniques for the installation of the stalls and the process of production and disposal of the waste at the end of the exhibition; the aim is to outline the social and economic effects of the process of realization of the event in the city of Venice.

In these first two weeks, starting from a moment of comparison, the students will work on the drawing up of the data sheets, in part within the biennale working with professionals and, in part, in complete autonomy feeling free to deepen and emphasize the guide topics depending on their own ability and knowledge of group affinity or sensibility.

Besides there will be meetings with the collectives of architects that will present to the students their own professional experiences in the field of self-construction, recycle and re-use of materials. In this phase very welcome will be sketches, ideas and suggestions that will further enrich the planning work of the following weeks.

The inspections will end with the collection of all the researches summed up in one elaborate graphic of synthesis and a collective exhibition of the planning traces. The different supports will be used for the editing of an inventory of materials needed for the evolution and development of the projects.

Programme:

1st week (Commons Beyond Building)

The workshop will open with the first gathering of the net CommonsBB, the students and the professional figures.

Afterwards there will be a meeting with the students in the Biennale, the distribution of the schedules, the organization of the work groups, the assignation of the stands and, though, the beginning of the reconnaissance phase.

2nd week (2012 Architecten- Geologika Collettiva)

This week will be dedicated to the collection and re-organization of the datas by the students, also including the realization of a graphic synthesis that afterwards will be exhibited. There will be an analysis of the economic, social and environmental effects, comprehensive of the process of realization of the Biennale event.

In schedule, whenever the students may require, there will be additional meetings to complete the work of investigation and detection within the dismantling stalls.

The result of the inspections phase will then be concluded with the following elaborates:

- mapping of the raw materials;
- analysis of the production cycle;
- construction and installation;
- analysis of the foreseen employment and maintenance sustainability;
- probable disposal of the exhibition (reuse, recycling or discard).

29 November/ 15 December- Transformations

This part will be useful for the productive exchange with the nets of inhabitants, coming into contact, though, with the " social purchaser (commons)" to whom the planning and the self-construction will be addressed to.

The net will present the spaces located starting from an investigation (historical and social-economic) and, with the technical and analytical support of anthropologists, sociologists and philosophers, besides the bolster of the representatives of the Borough Council of Venice, it will analyse the specific hypothesis of intervention and the relative urban problematics in relation to the social composition of the intervention spaces.

The consequent time to end the constructive processes will be regulated by the interaction between the Commons and the different administrative structures, thanks to a permanent verification of the active relation between inhabitants, students, professionals and interlocutors of the citizen governance.

Depending on the result of this important relating aspect of the workshop with the city, it will be determined a scale of short, medium and long-term interventions; at this point there will be the location of the spaces where we will intervene with actions of self-construction.

In a series of meetings to be co-ordinated with the lecturers, the students together with the designers will compare on shared themes that more emerge in the research path for the creative reprocessing of the forms and the uses of the waste materials.

The construction of a handiwork (self-construction by the workshop with the active intervention of the students) starting from the manifold and unexpected uses of a common space will thus conclude the training.

Programme:

3rd week (Agenzia Sociale per la Casa- Stalker On/ Casilino 900 - Exyzt)

Dedicated to the planning of the reuse of materials in the context city as building-site for the construction of the common. There will be a definition of the spaces where intervene in the following phase and an analysis of the different planning possibilities.

4th week (Millegomme/ REFUNC – Geologika Collettiva)

Dedicated to the construction of handiworks that will be installed in the spaces located in the course of the workshop.

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