

There goes Ballesta street?

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'creative squatting'

In April 2008 an uncanny wave hit the streets of Madrid: 'creative squatters' - displaying the traditional icon of the squat movement - moved in to twelve premises around Ballesta and Barco street where forty-five 'artists' had four weeks to freely occupy two former brothels, one ex-dry cleaning shop, a butchery and other commercial spaces in one of the sleaziest corners of Madrid, right between two main commercial axes of the city centre. This marketing campaign, led by a private company, has renamed the area triBall - 'tri/ángulo Ball/esta'- after the triangle formed by shopping streets Gran Vía (conventional high street style), Fuencarral (cool and hip trends) and Corredera Baja (bars and restaurants), around the infamous Ballesta (sex workers area). triBall SL is owned by a real estate and refurbishment company who has bought, over two years, some 50 spaces in that 'triangle' and has also acquired few apartment buildings in the surroundings. Along with three marketing, communication and PR companies, a consultancy for commercial centres and total the acquiescence of the City Council, they are leading an 'urban surgery operation' that will help 'clean a black hole' of the city.

To the aggravation of the squatter scene, the area used to be the site of the squatted social centre Casa Popular de Maravillas, which lasted only three months but whose eviction provoked a series of riots back in 1997. Moreover, it is on the other side of the already gentrified neighbourhood of Malasaña (appointed birthplace of the mythic post-Franco 'movida madrileña' portrayed by Pedro Almodovar in films like *Pepi, Lucy, Boom y otras chicas del montón*) and 200 m away from El Patio Maravillas¹, a metropolitan squatted social centre that opened more than a year and a half ago, which is now under eviction¹. Even if the 'creative' squatting would have been a genuine job it would have been a very short lived squat.

To the dismay of part of the cultural production scene, the full extent of the triBall social and cultural activity since the opening fashion show ('working the street ... with style' was the slogan) has so far been several themed street markets, an ice rink under some new Xmas

decorations and few art exhibitions inside the commercial premises - much an 'open-air commercial centre' with some 'artistic' input. As far as the 'creative' aspect of the operation goes it has rather seemed to spur the imagination of its critics.

With such a combination of a 'cool' environment appeal, contradictory use of the mythopoesis of Ballesta and Malsaña and total commercialization of public space, it is not easy to discern whether the promoters of triBall (and their public supporters) are simply eager followers Richard Florida's ² guidelines to create cool environments that will attract the 'cool creative people', masters of the new economy at the beginning of the 21st century (pre-crisis times) or they just tried to implement an uncritical small-time version of what John Peck calls "cappuccino urban politics, with plenty of froth" ⁱⁱ

In any case, triBall can for its boldness be considered a fascinating example of culture-led intended regeneration. The last stage of a 'creative city' that is not seeking to be "Tolerant, Technological and Talented" ³ but rather to exploit a commercial niche where the 'new middle class', attracted by the image of an artistic milieu, will form a mass of high-end consumers. ⁱⁱⁱ A niche that somehow fits well in the advance services market generated in Madrid due to its recently position as global city ⁴.

As an economic operation it might not have been entirely correct time-wise ⁵, but its use of cultural production and artistic imaginary is worth an analysis.

Who takes ownership of the neighbourhood?

While triBall launched promotional videos picturing itself as a green triangular island of trendy fashion, family values, art and ecology 'without losing that pinch of history and tradition', the local financial newspaper headline depicted a harsher, and more accurate, description of the situation: "triBall buys a neighbourhood" ⁶.

If the main issue around property and ownership of 'common' space in urban regeneration processes, as Elisabeth Blackmar explains ^{iv}, is the question of who has the right to exclude others from the uses and benefits of resources, then triBall has 'de facto' (because it was not possible to do it 'de iure', as e.g. Liverpool One ^v or the Canary Warf did) privatized a whole chunk of Madrid city centre in a move that follows a straight forward colonization scheme by: 1 -demarcating an area with specific limits which, furthermore, will be associated with a (corporate) image that only they control; 2 -arrogating itself the right to decide (regardless the existence of local urban regulations) who can or cannot run a business in the Ballesta street area (its "if an alternative and healthy life is your line, and you like new trends, you can have your business in triBall" ⁷ statement openly means no sex-related activities or immigrant shops will be allowed) and, 3 – forcing an increase in police control and the first comprehensive implementation of CCTV cameras in the streets of Madrid ^{vi}. All the characteristics of the commercially driven gentrification that could also be described in the same terms of the 3-step Israeli occupation strategy Palestine - as described in Sharon Rotbard's analysis of the 'homa ugmidal': 1- Separation, 2- Seclusion and 3- Surveillance ^{vii}.

² Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*. Basic Books, New York 2002

³ ibidem

⁴ Observatorio Metropolitano *Madrid ¿la suma de todos? Globalización, territorio, desigualdad*. Traficantes de Sueños. Madrid 2007

⁵ It is difficult to evaluate the real success of the operation as the whole real state market in Madrid has been seriously hit by the financial crisis. <http://www.noticias.info/asp/aspcomunicados.asp?nid=381052>

⁶ "Triball 'compra' un barrio en Madrid" in *CincoDías* 14/01/2008 http://www.cincodias.com/articulo/empresas/Triball-compra-barrio-Madrid/20080114cdscdiemp_9/cdsemp/

⁷<http://www.triballmadrid.com/ficheros/flash/324.swf>

These “revanchist”⁸ tactics are aimed at the 'unlawful indigenous' of the new old ground that real estate investment is now fleeing to –as the credit crunch has made it impossible to continue the Pantagruelian expansion of Madrid based on massive infrastructure and extensive sub-urbanization^{viii}. And they urge the hackneyed but nevertheless still relevant question of who has the right to the city: who has the right to benefit from the resources generated by urban culture, to benefit from the social capital as well as from the symbolic capital, the location capital, etc.^{ix} that a thriving – even if conflictual, unruly and impromptu – city life generates.

instant gentrification

The gentrification processes have been elsewhere⁹ categorized in a different set of moves: a first wave - *creation of a milieu for the production of art* – created when artists move into cheap working-class inner city neighbourhoods suffering disinvestment (as happened in the late 60's-70's in TriBeCa-New York or in the early 90's in Prenzlauerberg- Berlin) and this counter-culture move is followed by a small-scale, autonomous, individual set of gentrifiers. A second wave - *commodification and private consumption of this artistic milieu* - is produced when capital infiltrates into gentrified areas, commodifying the cultural assets and social capital created by a certain life style (music, food, bohemian character, etc.). This wave displaces original artists/gentrifiers and attracts the middle-class and yuppies, generating a whole service economy (designer shops, restaurants and bars) around them. This, when developed in the United States towards the end of 80's, was “characterized by the integration of gentrification into a wider range of economical and cultural processes at the global and national scale”.¹⁰ Third wave - *public consumption of art* – operates via public art interventions, artistic events and cultural institutions. This wave is developed in connection with private-public engagements and urban regeneration policies that seek “to use 'positive' gentrification as an engine of gentrification involving the use of public art and cultural facilities as a promoter of urban renaissance”¹¹. It implies the evolution towards “an increasingly unassailable capital accumulation strategy for competing urban economies”¹².

Following this analysis, triBall would be part of a fourth wave - *instant gentrification* - where a private initiative instigates and dominates the process by acquiring massive amounts of urban territory, thereby being able to manage time lines, take programmatic decisions and introduce public control mechanisms. In this phase, cultural producers are endured only if and for as long as they are needed, as specified in their contracts. The result is a re-appropriation by capital of central urban spaces that hold some kind of value (symbolic, logistic, historical, locational, etc.).

triBall/AntitriBall

According to the 'rent gap' theory^x, gentrification occurs when in previously disinvested areas the difference between the rent acquired in its derelict state and the one that could potentially be achieved makes the investment worth it. The potential of revaluation in terms of real estate value in the case of the Ballesta street area is highly territorial and is due to its relative lower rent in comparison to the legs of the 'Triángulo Ballesta' triangle (the hypotenuse

⁸Neil Smith in *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*. Routledge, New York 1996

⁹Stuart Cameron and Jon Coaffee, *Art, Gentrification and Regeneration. From Artist as Pioneer to Public Arts*. European Journal of Housing Policy, Vol. 5 No.1, 39-58 Ed. Routledge April 2005 http://www.scholars-on-bilbao.info/fichas/EJHP_cameronandcoaffee2005.pdf

¹⁰Jason Hackworth and Neil Smith, *The changing state of gentrification*, *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, Vol. 92, No. 4. (2001), pp. 464-477. http://www.urbancentre.utoronto.ca/pdfs/curp/Hackworth-Smith_Changing-St.pdf

¹¹Stuart Cameron and Jon Coaffee, *Art, Gentrification and Regeneration. From Artist as Pioneer to Public Arts*. ibidem

¹²Neil Smith, *New Globalism, New Urbanism: Gentrification as Global Urban Strategy*, *Antipode* 34(3) pp. 434-457 2002

being in a more dubious condition). From this locative condition, triBall builds on the aesthetic appreciation of the 'artists' in their revalue of former brothels and traditional shop premises once its original occupants have been removed, allowing them (the 'creative' class) to admire the inherent charms of those structures, associated to old production spaces^{xi}. It has further relied on the capacity of self-exploitation of the 'creative class' that occupies the previously evicted places with their time, energy and ideas, filling the vacancy with their own bodies— and probably those of their families and friends'. Nevertheless, graphic devices, social networks, reference symbols and imaginary have been used by triBall's marketing strategies but also by its opposing parties.

In fact, one of the most interesting moments of the conflict produced by triBall has been the set of actions launched by the *Amplifying Producer Laboratory* 'Todo por la Praxis'^{xii} whose AntitriBall campaign was set up as a response to the “marketing and publicity campaign that legitimizes their [triBall] activity; the artists and designers in the cultural capital being used as a bastion to achieve this and add new symbolic value to the speculative-urbanistic activity that triBall has begun”¹³. Articulated through a blog, Todo por la Praxis launched '45 Activist Minds'¹⁴, an AntitriBall competition calling for posters to be glued in the streets appropriated by triBall – some of the entries illustrate this article - and later, when AntitriBallists faced difficulties with cleaning and police public forces in the area, moved to stickers¹⁵ and stencil actions. They have been also collaborating with the sex-workers union - whose office had to move out of Ballesta Street after triBall bought they one they were using- in the organization of an alternative cat-walk (Lumi Fashion 08) and with a local association in a counter-image campaign under the motto:

“We are a neighbourhood, more than 35.349 ways to inhabit it, much more than a brand”

On some other grounds, 'social issues' -as sex-work, drugs and even graffiti-, fear management and security devices have been the subject of two very different interventions. In autumn 2007 (after the first urban rehabilitation of a square that pushed the drug addicts and drug dealers to the Ballesta street area) the multi-disciplinary collective Left Hand Rotation¹⁶ started the Cines Luna Project by hanging in the windows of a derelict cinema, posters of well known films related to first drugs, then sex- work, and finally surveillance. Thanks partly to the intervention of a local inhabitants association and mainly because it was possible to articulate with the 'cleaning' discourse, the two first series survived the otherwise faultless performance of Madrid street cleaners, while the third one (which coincided with the implementation of CCTV cameras around Ballesta street) promptly disappeared.

Almost at the same time, fem09 - Festival Madrid Edition Nuevos Creativos - “launch pad and point of reference for the most avant-garde and alternative art”, as the Major says¹⁷ - placed containers in the very same square with an exhibition under the quite timely theme of *The art of Terror* in which the *Force Fields* project declares its objective “to manifest the excess of tension generated with the instauration of ever more complex mechanisms around safety, surveillance, boundaries, displacements and controls”^{xiii} and *Poetic Terrorism* pretends to generate “a disruptive act, one that insinuates itself into the public space, like the uncontrollable growth of weeds on the sidewalk”^{xiv}. The fem09 festival lasted more (not much though) than Left Hand Rotation posters, perhaps because it was funded by the same local government who pays the cleaners.

13 <http://www.todoporlapraxis.es/index/index/id/16>

14 <http://www.flickr.com/photos/tags/antitriball/>

15 designed by provocative artist Santiago Sierra http://www.santiago-sierra.com/index_1024.php

16 <http://www.lefthandrotation.com/proyectos/cinesluna/index.htm>

17 Madrid Mayor Alberto Ruíz Gallardón in the catalogue of Festival Edición Madrid de Nuevos Creadores – fem07 <http://www.fem-festival.com/fem/index.htm>

“canalla”¹⁸ branding

Meanwhile, the areas recent history (made in the sleazy bars, night-clubs and brothels - of which there is only one left) as a “canalla” venue is reclaimed as part of the 'attraction' of the area “both for national and international tourism”. The dark side of Ballesta's past is, on the one hand, totally absent from the storyline triBall presents in its web or in any other public discourse (which tends to be 'positive' and highlight the ‘innovative’ aspects of the place). But on the other, the memory of the city it can not be so easily erased , so it also allows to implicitly connect to a life style that will redeem triBall from being 'just another commercial area' and will link it, in the popular imaginary, to an artistic and bohemian character: a modus vivendi that rejects conventionalities and commercial life (after all, artists work for free), providing certain sense of emancipation with the allusion, in this particular case, to an “underground” atmosphere. This atmosphere, and its inhabitants as recreated in Manu Chau’s videoclip of “Me llaman calle”¹⁹ (literal translation: They call me street), recorded around Ballesta street with the co-participation of sex-workers were also used in a laudatory video of triBall, the very commercial project²⁰ that aims to retire these same sex-workers.

While the private and public 'urban regeneration' discourse advocates the eradication – or simply transfer - of the sex workers so as to stop them from 'selling' their bodies in the Ballesta street (and probably hoping drug users and dealers will follow them) one might ask what else is being sold, with perhaps a more ambiguous reward. What did the designers expect to get when they worked for free, having their five weeks of 'opportunity' to achieve a return before being replaced by wealthier occupants or even the ones that could afford to stay a little longer paying a 'small' rent (in fact the average in Madrid city) while making the area more hip and therefore more expensive? Which kind of capital is generated by the street artists who exhibit their work or decorate the façades as part of a project backed up by a local government who otherwise thinks graffiti is a social curse to eliminate (almost equal to sex-work)? Which capital is generated by the architect²¹ who exhibits his graphic work in a gallery in triBall and also presents his work (with, amongst others, Teddy Cruz) in the 'Urban Buddy Scheme' organized by Madrid Abierto – a programm that seeks to 'have a bearing on the public sphere', this year “dedicated to emerging practices that critically engage with the urban environment”^{xv} that also worked with Madrid Abierto and is funded by the same local government? What was to gain for the local inhabitants who supported Left Hand Rotation 'Drugs' and 'Prostitution' series of film posters but not the 'Control' ones? Or for the 'political minded' curators who articulated a discourse against social control to be placed in the very same place that was going to suffer one of the worst public surveillance schemes known in Madrid? Personal satisfaction, public representation, sense of security and social recognition might be strong incentives in the immaterial production system we live in, but will – especially in the face of the upcoming crisis - hardly pay the bills.

Soho or SoHo?

triBall developers have expressed their wish to create ‘Madrid's own Soho’, at other times it was to be Madrid's SoHo, or Madrid's NoLita, Madrid's le Marais, the Latin Quarter, Notting Hill, Village, TriBeCa, Hells’s Kitchen or Carnaby Street. It doesn’t really matter: anything goes, as long as it involves an urban regeneration with the prospective of high revenues. triBall promoters and apologists have provided a good set of examples of culture-led urban regeneration processes, like an index of gentrification practices where the cultural asset serve as motive and excuse for structural changes in the city’s social and economical composition, but

¹⁸ Canalla is a difficult term to translate, specially when applied to a place. It could be consider a mix of dodgy, rogue, low life and edgy ... but cool.

¹⁹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzZWXUflyls>

²⁰ http://www.soitu.es/soitu/2008/04/11/videos/1207915517_516940.html

²¹ <http://www.luisurculo.com/blog/>

it wasn't necessary to go that far away: the 'Barcelona model' ^{xvi} has been profusely analysed very much by the same creative individuals who, wittingly or not, took part in the creation of it.

But maybe the mix Soho and SoHo is not so absurd. London Soho, the former and still resistant area of sex-related industries now full of bars and clubs and an important centre of the gay scene, and New York SoHo where the artist-driven regeneration coined the 'loft living' concept ²², together seem to represent quite well the situation of the Ballesta street area in its past and uncertain future.

In the general account of urban centres and their Disneyfication processes, this might seem like yet another story of a lost battle against the forces of investment capital twisting a lively and thriving neighbourhood into a mock of bo-bo's paradise.²³ But the situation is far from being so well articulated. It is more conflictual, less structured and, above all, the war is not over: the sex workers union has challenged the implementation of CCTV cameras in 'their' street, and they proclaim that it will not be so easy to throw them away; Antitriball cultural producers have proved that creativity is on their side and they can make more interesting actions while summoning better artists; the local real estate market and retail business are not doing well due to the global crisis and face a possible collapse; Malasaña-Maravillas locals are resisting the triBall attempt to reduce them to a - in this case surely registered - trade mark; even El Patio Maravillas, the 'true' Malasaña squat, might stay where it is or in the worst case will find a new location. The story is not finished here. Not yet.

Ana Méndez de Andés. Madrid February 2009. edited in English by Jaya Klara Brekke

²²Sharon Zukin, *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change*. Rutgers University Press, New York 1990

²³David Brooks, *Bobos in Paradise: The Upper Class and How They Got There*. Simon and Schuster, New York 2000

- i El Patio Maravillas has held, in its 20 months of life, different workshops, discussions, art performances, the 2009 Madrid Social Forum, and runs regular language classes, a Social rights Office (ODS), a hacklab, bike shop and an urban allotment (on the roof) <http://www.patiomaravillas.net/> It has also been involved in the anti-Trial campaign, and recently organized a round table about 'Social centres, cultural production and social expropriation', at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, now under the direction of Manuel Borja-Vilal.
- ii "There is no challenge to the extant 'order' of market-oriented flexibility; indeed, this environment is presented as the natural habitat of the Creative Class. Florida is not asking for a blank check for new government programs, for major concessions to be made to the noncreative underclasses, nor even for regulatory transformation. His calls for creative empowerment can be met in relatively painless ways — by manipulating street-level façades, while gently lubricating the gentrification processes. This, critics justly complain, is cappuccino urban politics, with plenty of froth." Jamie Peck, *Struggling with the Creative Class*, International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, Volume 29.4 December 2005 pp. 740–770
- iii "The image of hip, bohemian, cool, arty tribes who occupies the cafés, galleries and cycle paths of formerly disinvested neighbourhoods once lacking in creativity, is increasingly as a sign of a healthy economy present and future for cities around the globe. In keeping with the discursive strategy of the neoliberal project, which deploys carefully selected language to fend off criticism and resistance [...] we have apparently arrived in the age of regeneration, revitalization and renaissance in the hearts of Richard Florida cities of technology, talent and tolerance." Tom Slater, *The eviction of critical perspective from gentrification research*. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 30.4 December 2006 pp. 737-757
- iv "The Anglo-American legal tradition has recognized essentially three kinds of property rights. Private property is the right of individuals to exclude others from the uses and benefits of resources. (Legal individuals can be humans or "artificial persons" as in the case of corporations). Public property, owned by governments, give state officials the right to determinate who has access to resources on behalf of a wider constituency. Common property is an individual's right not to be excluded from the uses or benefits of resources". Elisabeth Blackmar, "Appropriating 'the Commons': The Tragedy of Property Rights Discourse" in *The Politics of Public Space*, edited by Setha Low and Neil Smith. Routledge, New York 2006
- v Liverpool One – former Paradise Project - was opened during the European Cultural Capital and comprise a 170.000 sqm operation spread in 30 buildings, 34 streets and a public park patrolled by private security guards where some public rights of way have been replaced by a "Public Realm Agreement". <http://www.liverpool-one.com/website/>
- vi Until January 2008, Madrid had only 20 CCTV cameras in the whole city, all of them around one specific tourist point: the Plaza Mayor. The implementation of 31 new cameras in the area of Montera and Ballesta streets was taken under pressure from business and local associations, publicly as a measure against sex-workers and their clients – it seems necessary here to clarify that, in Spain, sex-work, unlike pimping, is not an illegal activity – and had to get the approval of Madrid High Court of Justice. However, sex-workers union, Hetaira - whose office had to move out of Ballesta street because of Triball renting policy - has challenge the permission and their appeal has been accepted, being now the case back in court. <http://www.colectivohetaira.org/recurso100608.html>
- vii "Within the complex relationship between architectural practice, architectural theory and political ideology that usually tends to exist, the political aspect dictated to the Israeli architect a new and paradoxical list of priorities, according to which political ideology and architectural theory merge depend on each other, confront one another yet are kept hidden one from the other [...] *Homa Umigdal* is the origin, the prototype, the model and the mold of Israeli architecture, as well as, to a large extent, the Israeli city. It is the metaphor of the Israel practice of fait accompli". Sharon Rotbard, "Wall and Tower (Homa Umigdal) The Mold of Israeli Architecture", in *A civilian Occupation: The Politics of Israeli Architecture ("The banned catalogue")*, edited by Rafi Segal and Eyal Weizman. Revised edition, first Published by the Israeli Association of United Architects for the Union Internationale des Architectes (UIA) Congress in Berlin July 2002. Babel publishers, Tel Aviv 2003
- viii For more information about the causes and effects of the conversion of Madrid into one of the main global cities of the European region see the book that collects the research made by the Observatorio Metropolitano (in Spanish) *Madrid ¿la suma de todos? Globalización, territorio, desigualdad*. Traficantes de Sueños. Madrid 2007. available in pdf at: <http://sindominio.net/traficantes/libros/observatorio-completo2.pdf>, as well as the upcoming *Manifiesto Metropolitano*.
- ix For an extended analysis of the different sorts of urban capital production and their relationship with cultural industries see *Producta50*. YProductions Eds. Barcelona 2007. available in pdf (in English) at: http://www.ypsite.net/recursos/secciones_proyectos/documentos/producta50english.pdf
- x "the actual capitalized ground rent (land price) of a plot of land given its present use and the potential ground rent that might be gleaned under a 'higher and better' use" Neil Smith, *Gentrification and the rent-gap*, Annals of the Association of American Geographers 1987 77 (3) pp. 462–465 as quoted in <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gentrification>
- xi "the artist was presented as the 'stalking horse' for the needs of investment capital to revalorize urban neighbourhoods. The commodification of the artistic milieu by property and investment capital takes advantage of the 'aesthetic conjuncture' in which 'artist' living habits became a cultural model for the middle class". Stuart Cameron and Jon Coaffee, "Art, Gentrification and Regeneration . From Artist as Pioneer to Public Arts". European Journal of Housing Policy, Vol. 5 No.1, 39-58 Ed. Routledge April 2005.
- xii Collective intellectual and active political subject: a constant Projects Laboratory that functions as a transformation agent inside the symbolic field of the artistic practices. Todo por la Praxis defines itself as an Amplifying Producer Laboratory of cultural resistance aesthetic projects. A laboratory that offers tools for the social intervention in the urban public space, always with the aim to create a activist and oppositional Praxis. <http://antitriball.wordpress.com/todo-por-la-praxis/> <http://www.madridabierto.com/es/intervenciones-artisticas/2008/todo-por-la-praxis.html>
- xiii "The objectives are, on the one hand, to manifest the excess of tension generated with the instauration of ever more complex mechanisms around safety, surveillance, boundaries, displacements and controls and, on the other hand, to make evident these complexities on interpersonal relations, originated as a consequence of the increase of the

suspensions induced by control mechanisms, as well as to analyse how this situation leads to existentialist tiredness, isolation and grief.” Introduction to 'Force Fields' curated by María Díaz and Alexis Callado in the catalogue of Festival Edición Madrid de Nuevos Creadores – fem07 <http://www.fem-festival.com/fem/index.htm>

xiv “Poetic Terrorism is not terrorism. Rather it is an act of a very particular nature. It is a disruptive act, one that insinuates itself into the public space, like the uncontrollable growth of weeds on the sidewalk. It has the anarchistic goal of taking over of the streets. It is art without the hype and commercialism”. Hakim Bey, *Poetic Terrorism* (1985) from the introduction to Poetic Terrorism, project curated byr Elga Wimmer in the Catalogue of Festival Edición Madrid de Nuevos Creadores - fem07 <http://www.fem-festival.com/fem/index.htm>

XV “Madrid Abierto will be dedicated to emerging practices that critically engage with the urban environment. Madrid Abierto 2009-10 aim to include a wide variety of practitioners and art forms that establish their strengths in an expanded role, and that work in the social realm of art practice and audience participation [...] Multi disciplinary initiatives are engaged in processes that formulate new possible relationships with the city and its inhabitants, this while revealing complex layers of information” Cecilia Anderson, Madrid Abierto curator. <http://www.werkprojects.org/projects/03.html>

xvi “ The commercial exploitation of the Barcelona Model as “BCN trademark” to export turns the whole city into [...] the final product of an industrial/cultural production and a marketing production for its commercialization [...] In reciprocity, the Barcelona product ends up modifying the artist intervention nature [...] in the radical commodification which involves the making of Barcelona as trade mark to sell and export, the artist's function is reduced the aesthetic driven creation that enables to add differential value to the urban package to consume. As a result, the aesthetic becomes aesthetification and it anesthetizes, intoxication that woks against and neutralize the active critic conscience on the city. Is the perverted vision of consensus, the aesthetification of politics. Of this, all artist, insofar as cultural producers of a merchandise, art, highly valued in the services urban market , are subjects. Mari Paz Balibrea, Barcelona: del modelo a la marca. Caso de Estudio. BibliotecaYP (my translation) http://www.ypsite.net/recursos/biblioteca/documentos/barcelona_de_modelo_a_la_marca.pdf