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My intervention is comprised of 3 parts:

1° A presentation of my position as an artist.

2° An exposition of the relation between competence and invention using an animation about the location of artistic competences.

3° Two method-devices proposed within the framework of this seminar.

1. Artist consultant.

After a career distinguished by drawing, sculpture and installation, in 1992I I opted to differentiate between *plasticity* and *visibility*. In order to explain the perspective from which I currently develop my work, I shall make a rapid sketch of:

- *Conceptual art.*
- A context characterised as *economy of knowledge.*
- An activity defined in terms of development of a *role.*

To present my position as an artist, I will provide a broad picture of the *conceptual art* that sprang up in the early 1960s. This movement –which was heterogeneous– developed reflexiveness about the context of art. At play were the very definitions of art and its superposition. Artists of very different kinds defended the primacy of idea over execution. Among the generic forms proposed, we find *statements, declarations, protocols, contracts, modes of use, rules of play*, etc. Although this movement had a special influence on the contemporary art field, the gap that existed in relation to a society still dominated by the economic model of Fordist production did not allow integration of these dematerialised proposals within a broader context. So, little by little, under the pressure of the art market, most artists went back to materialised forms.

Today we can formulate the hypothesis of an *economy of knowledge* in which the development of wealth is based on the organic co-development of digital technologies and of intellectual technologies. In this context, knowledge constitutes both a resource and a product of activity. This new context, which is at the same time that of art, implies, in my opinion, reflexiveness on the traditional economy of art. While the practices of many artists in the 1960s were conceptually ahead of the technologies that induced a transformation of the general economy, the present economy of art, grounded in the speculative market of art objects, is, to my mind, running behind the culture and actual modes of exchange of the knowledge economy. The logic of objects brought about by the art market as it is today makes legitimate formats redundant and, consequently, puts a brake on aesthetic invention. So it becomes necessary and interesting, for aesthetic and artistic reasons, to create within the framework of new transactions.

How can it be that the art economy is dominated by object transactions, when value creation has shifted towards the services sector? The artistic interpretation of the services area offers numerous possibilities that the art economy, restricted to objects, does not allow. The services economy model, however, permits the opening up of business spaces in which the *sleeping partner* replaces the *customer*. The sleeping partner notion is more complex than that of the customer. Instead of the linear process that leads from the production of an art object to its acquisition by a collector, the order instigates a *space of negotiation* that is likely to set in motion cultures, aesthetics and objectives. This means that the greater complexity of challenges, owing to different actors being taken into account in the process of conception, enriches proposals and opens new doors on to the process of creation.

The question of *roles* and of their *plasticity* is in my opinion a fundamental question for any consideration of *decision* and involves an increase in the available levels of liberty. The value of decision increases, it grows within an uncertain world. Finding one's bearings involves the need to *identify problems* whose formulation is a priori uncertain. Decision is an effect of the problems as they are posed; they permit certain solutions, while blocking others. The production phase of problems is consequently a strategic space of an increase in possible choices. I name the development of this phase *aesthetic of decision*.

This was the context of conceptual preparation in which I chose to adopt the role of artist consultant at the beginning of the 1990s. This role, expressed through an activity inherent to the term, implies the development of *concepts*, of *mechanisms* and of *methods*. The notion of consultant defines a reciprocity: *to be consulted and to consult oneself*. The principle developed from a *reciprocal investigation* lets simultaneous displacements of actors and of knowledge itself take place. The co-development of methods characterises processes in which my proposal is to postpone the stages of resolution or of solution, directing all the attention to the stages of questioning and of posing problems.

The interventions take the form of workshops, of seminars, of public debates, and of shared projects, which will last for different periods of time. The projects take in urban investigation, as in «*Intersticios Urbanos Temporales / Temporary Urban Interstices*» in the la Chapelle neighbourhood of Paris ; reformulation of the challenges and practices of a city planning agency; a publicly commissioned device that accompanies work to renew cultural facilities in Grenoble; a process of public debates about the future of an art centre in Brest; the co-construction of a board game in connection with the project of an association; and also the role of a consultant for art biennials, in Paris and in Rennes, etc.

2. Reciprocity of competences and incompetences

I should now like to evoke the notion of competence. Whilst artistic activity is seldom defined in terms of competence within its own field, sociology, in particular, has managed to locate qualities within artistic practices that make it possible to establish many relations with the general field of activities in process of transformation.

When we express activity in terms of competence, we strengthen interactions with the entire set of activities. Nevertheless, I feel that the institution of rigid boundaries between competences and incompetences is problematic in an uncertain contemporary world in which unforeseen situations tend to be the norm. Negotiation between competence and incompetence is a space of invention if we accept what has been stated above regarding negotiation. Art cannot be summed up within a series of competences, however extravagant they might prove to be. To speak of art in strict terms of competences would make artists experts, which would be in contradiction with the uncertainty that is at the core of their activity and defies any notion of competence. Artists are often forced to forget some of their acquired competences in order to situate themselves in a state of non-knowledge and of re-configuration of their memory. Creation does not exist without some jettisoning of what is known. Competences, professionalism, can hold back the intelligence of a project and its opening out, while incompetence can be a source of renewal. Incompetence is a potential space for doing things another way, in the sense that one can skirt incompetence by inventing unforeseen solutions. In artistic terms, incompetences are as interesting as competences when the former become transformed into question. In a more general way, crisis clearly evidences the limits of specialisation and stimulates doubt concerning the distribution of knowledge. After this observation, we can write the equation: competence = incompetence. And those through whom the crisis becomes manifest, reveal knowledge ignored by the previous order. The equation: incompetence = competence is then complementary to the one preceding it. The reciprocity of competences and of

incompetences causes a common element to appear, which acts as a boost to resources and change.

3. Two protocols: *taking on the improbable* and *question banks*.

I would now like to mention a method-game we will be using tomorrow and a device I propose be activated during the various contributors' presentations.

• *Take on the improbable*

The game *Take on the improbable* is about sharing thoughts on methodological principles and drawing up new ones. Through different experimentations, the initial proposals have enjoyed contributions from a lot of participants. As opposed to the idea of a « good method », the game looks into: desires, points of view, experiences, roles, education, habits, styles, resources, tools, rhythms, etc. Tomorrow morning, I shall spell out the rules of this game.

• *Question bank*

Today, I invite you to activate the *question bank* device that has been employed on several occasions since 1995. Questions possess a series of qualities:

- Asking a question is equivalent to establishing a guide within a flow of information.
- The questioning mode enables one to momentarily suspend the true and the false. A preference for question as opposed to statement has a thrust that opens up to experience and knowledge.
- Question is the avenue of hypothesis and, consequently, of invention.
- Due to its condensed nature, the question permits various organisations of series of questions and, therefore, the exchange of heterogeneous information.
- These specific organisations of questions are knowledge accumulators. So we can move on from the question to fashion more complex problems that become *resource problems*.
- The questions do not come just like that, they are specified, by being written down. To manufacture a question is to take a decision.

This device has been developed through different stages, which run as follows:

- Series of thematic questions ordered according to key words.
- Question banks intermeshing different disciplines.
- The practice and development of protocols of debate.
- Transmission of these protocols to the different actors taking part in a project.

• *Question bank within the Disonancias framework*.

Each participant has a *card of coupons* on which to jot down questions; these questions are collected as the process moves along and are shown on the screen simultaneously with the presentations. After each intervention, 3 coupons will be chosen by lot; the person intervening at that point will be asked the questions and will reply, starting with the question s/he prefers. The set of questions constitutes a kind of record of your presentations, and this will be reactivated tomorrow after the experience of the *Take on the improbable* game.