

OCTOPUS COLLECTIVE

Ideas for a decolonial
learning space
Hangar X

WHO WE ARE

Octopus is an interdisciplinary artistic collective formed by a network of artists from different parts of the world and with diverse professional backgrounds (theatre, dance, performative arts, anthropology, philosophy, audiovisual arts, project management, production, academic research, social sculpture, education). We all have various experiences of moving from one national, cultural and artistic context to another. This contextual fluidity has also shaped our shared space of encounter. We recognize each other as hybrid subjects with a strong belonging to our bodies and the historic memory of our territories rather than to the nations we come from. We share a desire of transformation, of crossing and mixing different languages and artistic practices rather than a feeling of belonging to one discipline. The principle of movement and transformation (from the intimate to the external) connects our research and desire to open spaces where we can collaborate / think / create / learn about contemporary artistic practice from a critical perspective. This implies an understanding of our situatedness from an aesthetic-political view of our contemporariness as a shared present, where we are agitators and activators of a possible reality.

We collected collective and individual experiences in self-organized structures with a focus on creative learning and arts education. Those include among others: filmArche (Film School, Berlin), Brecha Coletivo (Artistic Research Platform, Brazil), Utopia Summer School (Artistic Residency, Berlin), Escuela Popular de Cine (Film School, Chile), Cinetaya Intercultural FilmLab (Film Education Project, Nicaragua-Germany), Arrecheras Heterodisidentes (Queer Film Festival, Colombia), ASA-Programm (Global Citizenship Education, Germany), LABo Artes da Cena (Artistic Laboratory, Brazil), FECISO (Social and Antisocial Film Festival, Chile), University of the Trees (Social Sculpture Lab, UK), Draufsicht GLOBAL (Educational Arts Exchange, Cameroon-Germany)

WHAT DO WE WANT TO REALIZE IN THE SPACE?

We want to create in a partial area within the 5.000 m² of Hangar X a self-organized space and a community with co-living structures that allow for the emergence of diverse ways of "here and now" of shared artistic practice. That involves long-term and short-term artistic residencies, studio and exhibition spaces, open stages, learning programs, workshops etc. beyond the modern reproduction of colonial-capitalist realities. We understand artistic practice as a constant process of unfolding desires born from resonances within our bodies to decolonize our unconscious. We want to create a playground to awaken and follow these inner movements, a communal space open to people of diverse backgrounds, disciplines and theoretical and practical approaches. A space of learning and creation free to be used by everyone who is willing to critically engage with modern realities (created and reproduced), everyone who is willing to share the questions and findings of the research done on site and who invests back into the structure and development of the space itself. Octopus wants to open and hold this space by creating a network of artists who engage in artistic creation/research outside the logics of "artistic production" and propose frameworks that understand contemporary creation from a collective and critical perspective.

Following this approach it will be up to the people who live and create in the space itself to decide what will be realized and offered back to its communities and in dialogue with the city it is a part of. Possible ways of using the space could include these or completely different ideas:

- Short term residencies (from 1 to 3 weeks) of two or more artists with a common theme/practice/question
- Long term residencies (from 1 to 3 months) from one to three artists working on individual projects but generating collaborative strategies.
- Site-specific residencies, short or long residency processes focused only on interaction with the place and the city (group or individual).
- Short-term learning programs (intensive between 1 to 3 weeks) that bring together several workshops, laboratories, work tables, ... with a common theme and perspective.
- Regular workshops (lasting between 1 and 6 months, once or twice a week), which propose to deepen in a specific theme/practice/question during an expanded time with a group of people.
- Artistic meetings/encounters, based on the invitation to diverse artists interested in some theme/practice/question, that will work from the affective encounter of the other to produce collective knowledge, organization and reflection on contemporary artistic practice.
- Open studios, exhibitions, performances, by one or a group of artists.

We understand that artistic research and practices are not limited to the classic ideas of fine arts, visual arts, performance arts, ... but follow the premise of "life = art = research". We consider artistic research/creation not as something pre-defined by formats and disciplines or by the search for a result, but as a process in constant transformation that immerses itself in unknown territories to discover step by step the activations we wish to put into practice. To follow this question mark can be a defining element for people active in the fields of work mentioned before, but it can also emerge in the everyday (work) life of cooks, gardeners, teachers, therapists or administrators.

We want a space to freely experiment and create from our inner movements, but always connect our inner research to the outer world, to the struggles and realities we are confronted with and to the people we encounter within the space and their own movements that brought them there. We understand the creation of a space from a performative perspective which implies the idea of a social space which manifests itself in the form of "meeting, assembly, simultaneity" of "everything: living beings, things, objects, works, signs and symbols (Lefebvre). We understand space as a product of interrelationships, "as something constituted by interaction from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny" (Massey). Thus, being the product of a multiplicity of contemporary and diverse relationships, space is always in the process of becoming.

From this ever-changing premise of becoming Octopus collective is currently working on the idea of a network of spaces that invite people to share and grow this perspective by learning and collaborative processes. Hangar X can be one of many spaces connecting multiple people and locations working around decolonization all around the world. What is happening "there" also happens somehow "here," and if what is happening "there" depends on what happens being recorded in "other places," then it would seem that the ethics that claim the event would always take place in a "here" and "there" that are somehow reversible (Butler).

The vision of this space can take diverse shapes and be transformed according to the needs of its users. We would like to inhabit both indoor and outdoor areas of the hangar by building a light-weight and easily transformable structure using recycling and upcycling materials such as discarded scaffolding, wooden floor boards, old fabrics etc. The structure will include living spaces, work / studio spaces, a kitchen, bigger communal areas etc. and stretch out on several floors towards the ceiling of the hangar. It will have the capacities to host up to 10 artists in residency and provide space for bigger audiences when there are public events. The blue prints and concepts of the structure will be designed in a way to easily be replicated in other places and made available to anyone who wants to recreate it.

WHO DO WE WANT TO INCLUDE IN THE SPACE?

The space is free to anyone who feels called by its vision and who sincerely feels the desire to let go of thoughts, behaviours and drives that were created by the capitalist-colonial regime and modern myths of separation. We want to invite people who seek to learn about contemporary artistic practice from a different perspective, not based on obedience to pre-established forms, formats and aesthetics, but as something that is moved by a burning question they can feel in their bodies. The space will invite people who are willing to let thoughts, ideas, feelings, creation etc. emerge in a shared field of affects and desires. The only requirement for people to be included in the space is that they agree to sharing their (artistic) research in one way or another, be it workshops, discussions, invitations to co-create, presentations, performances, exhibitions etc. The space will inspire a fluid movement between learning and teaching. Both within the structures of the space itself and its associated communities.

HOW DO WE WANT IT TO BE STRUCTURED?

The space doesn't belong to one person or one group of people, it's a self-organized structure based on the guiding principles mentioned before, but permeable and shapeable in accordance with who is currently using the space. People should not permanently stay in the space, there should be either a time limit for the use of it or a rotation system that ensures that the space stays open to new people and there will be no gate-keepers. This space seeks to be part of a network of spaces and people who find in the movement a common desire, a common ground based on the nomadic and the affection-exchange with others as a way of going out of the comfort zones and as a challenge for ourselves and others to engage with the contemporariness from an aesthetic-political perspective. The space will be run collectively on several levels, administratively and creatively. Everyone who uses the space also needs to participate in committees and work groups responsible for its maintenance, administration, organization and further development. The artists who are working and involved in the development of the space during one interval are invited to form a committee consisting of former and current artists who organize/hold the space to structure the selection process of the artists of the next interval. This selection process will be based on the guiding principles of decolonization and a search for diversity.

