

PERMANENCE



Walter de Maria, "The New York Earth Room," 1977
photo Dia Art Foundation, via <http://www.diaart.org/sites/main/earthroom>

There is always talk about artist privileges, but this is something very difficult to see when you are enjoying them. At least, that was what happened to me. Also, there is a sort of guilt you try to solve by extending privileges. I am not too sure how to solve this because, on the one side, it is true that these "outlaw" expectations (at least moral expectations), this being a "free electron" is what help you imagine and at times even "demand" conditions for a different world. On the other, I very much doubt the validness of what is expected from social and political projects created by artists. Especially what institutions think, because of the infrastructures on which they must function. It is good to know that some institutions (an increasing number of them), when asked about a public project they are supporting, answer that they know the topic, the way in which the artist thinks and relate with the topic and the ways in which they have solved in the past the public elements of their works, but they have no idea what

they are specifically going to do. It is not that I think we must enter productive licentiousness or wear out institutions because of a lack of precision, but what this answer means is that the work the institution has done with the artist has to do with the ideas and dynamics which the project will create. This is a symptom that the institution is who is working for the artist and for the piece and not the artist who is working for the institution or that the piece is being adapted to enter into the institution without much trouble and that it is understood that in the implementations of public art pieces with social intentions you cannot arrive with a model to “impose” it in a place because the artist simply wants to do it or because the institution has the money for it. It is not a matter of transporting a bronze sculpture: a social microorganism is being created.

When I see the Land-Art pieces which could remain like permanent exhibitions, or at least temporal exhibitions for some decades – in the appropriate conditions to be experienced inside or outside the institution –, or when I see that institutions have achieved a system to work and collect non-object works, I ask myself: Why are there no institutions doing the same thing today with art of social implications? Why is there no long term commitment by the institutions when they want to have social insertion pieces in their exhibitions and collections? Why is social art collected in the format of a traditional art medium alien to the demands of social art experience? Why do people want to have a conclusion before their eyes when public art works are not seen but understood, experienced, discussed...?

-Tania Bruguera, Paris, before the project starts