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Design and Art

Contemporary artistic practices and contexts Starting from an afterthought of the public sphere

Abstract

At the beginning of the Nineties, W. J. T. Mitchell in the introduction to the anthology *Art and the public sphere* updated in the light of epochal events, such as the Fall of the Berlin Wall and of the fall of the communist regimes, but also in the light of the development of the elaboration's process of the Holocaust's collective memory in Germany, and the construction of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, US some of the most important issues about the relations among contemporary art and public sphere.

At that moment the main question was if it was still possible to think at something called "public sphere", not only in contemporary art but in the cultural field in general.

It was almost clear that public sphere was changing, perhaps disappearing, perhaps becoming a province of advertising and propaganda, but on the other side Mitchell let open the possibility of the birth of a different public sphere, emerging from the internationalization of the culture, perhaps as a new form of collective resistance to the economic and cultural standardization and to the new dominant ideologies.

After almost 15 years these questions are today still pressing, perhaps more than ever.

The contemporary art world's border are more and more extended than 15 years ago, temporary Biennals but also contemporary art museums are growing in areas historically not included in the circuit, but also in the traditional areas we are dealing with new way to exhibit art, new publics, new way to develop artistic practices. And more, the questions arising from the local and from the global are closely linked and all these changes, determine total different scenario where live together old questions new questions.

The aim of this research is to define a sort of updated map of what we can call today "public sphere in relation to contemporary art". The hotline will be visible through a sampling of pregnant cases, across different contexts.

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