

muroil



collective mural making

artist philip coyne and the (nelly&)theo van doesburg foundation propose a public art work in which the artist and inhabitants of the first self build group (cpo) initiative in the new neighbourhood sluisbuurt collaborate on the content and possibly even production of the work together.

the dialogue between coyne and inhabitants is to start with discussing about life as a force, as a reproductive practice and as a fundamentally collective phenomenon.

this use of the term life here is somewhat specific to the artist's practice, and is understood through a particular theoretical tradition that spans from spinoza, through the italian autonomists to the contemporary work of black studies thinkers. within this tradition the term life is used in a broad sense to mean the insurgent force of causation that is created by things relating to one another and reproducing themselves or others. this is understood as a collective force that underpins aesthetic, intellectual and social elaboration, the force which is essential organised and distributed by our economic, political and cultural systems.

the gustav klimt work death and life will play a central role in thinking this topic through and approaching the visualisation of it. the painting depicts a pile of embracing figures, knitted together by klimt's pattern work, and a skeletal figure watching them. this visualisation of life, and the various distinctions that can be made to death within the work would all influence the thinking around this topic, and would have produce an aesthetic direction through which to work.

the mural and other influences

as a historically collective and municipal art form, the mural offers a crucial example for thinking about how an artwork might embed itself within a community; particularly in its modes of address, its complex forms of inclusivity and the artistic priorities that it puts before others.

murals are more often than not embedded within particular communities, both physically and culturally, depicting those things or stories that are important to that community, and often doing so through the forms of collective aesthetic elaboration that pertain to that particular place. compositional concerns become secondary to the inclusion of all the things that are important to whatever it is that is being depicted. if you are from elsewhere you might not necessarily understand all of the aspects of the image, but the complexity and busyness of the image takes up the slack. these idiosyncrasies of the form offer us a different and localised form of inclusivity, one that doesn't empty out the social specificity of a place, but instead welcomes visitors into the thick of the social life that exists around that space.



plan for cpo de nieuwe uitleg in sluisbuurt

furthermore, the relationship to perspective the the mural has is of interest, in particular for the way that it de-centres the individual as the assumed viewer of the work. the mural will take note here from the mexican muralist movement of the mid-20th century, and particularly the work of diego riviera, in this regard for it's wide open and changing forms of perspective and scale. where, for example, depicts of events or scenarios that are happening separately or crashed together without acknowledging the distance between them.

the pointings of pieter bruegel the elder will also be important here, for his continual focus on the social life of ordinary people. instead of showing their plight or difficulties, he depicts their joys. this is taken further in his pointings of religious or mythic events, where he focuses on all of those who attended the sermon on the mount for example, or the farmer continuing to work as icarus falls into the ocean. the relatively simple forms of both riviera and bruegel also work well within the material.

the frescos of the contemporary artist duo hannah quinlan and rosie hastings, and the drawings of ithell colquhoun will provide further inspiration, in terms of the compelling and assured figurativeness of their work.



reference work by diego riviera



reference work by hannah quinlan and rosie hastings

philosophy

from an overarching standpoint the proposed work fits into a particular perspective on socially engaged art. one which doesn't seek to introduce a new context, a new series of practices or a new social scenario into the social space of a community, but instead attempts to contribute to those that already exist within the social life of that place.

this approach asks how it is that art might fit into a social assemblage, how it might become part of the subjective texture of the lives that live around it, contributing in all of these unacknowledged ways to their collective senses of self. and importantly, how it is that this approach to socially oriented artwork might contribute more through these unassuming overlooked channels than it could if it imposed itself upon those who live around it.

the mural then is intended to defer to the social life of the de nieuwe uitleg, configuring itself to fit into, contribute too and reflect those things that the members of the community find meaningful. for artist coyne, it is the ethics of relinquishing this absolute control over the work that he is attempting to grapple within his practice.



"death and life" by gustav klimt

the production of the mural

the work would be made using a fairly unusual application of epoxy moulding clay, that is pigmented, mixed and then pushed against a flat surface and left to cure. once it cures and is removed, a flat pictorial surface is produced on its reverse. the mural would be made up of individual tiles of roughly a meter squared or larger depending on the resources and budget gathered, it would then be assembled and hung on the wall in question. while the work is intended to be permanent, this process does allow it to be disassembled and reassembled if the woongroep were to eventually move again.

the imagery and composition of the mural would first be drawn out by the artist freehand and then would be drawn and assembled digitally. this is so that it can be blown up to scale, then printed and used as a guide. in keeping with the philosophy outlined above, the imagery of the work would be sourced through conversations with the community of the dnu that would be interpreted, drawn and contributed to by the artist.

while the material process has already been developed, the use of uv sensitive pigments is currently being tested to ensure that the colours of the work matches its permanence. this is particularly important as the work would be exposed to light every day.

in keeping with the work of the artists mentioned above, the mural will be densely figurative and busy, however it might not necessarily cover the entire wall. instead it would potentially have different sections floating free of one another. this is dependent on the size of the space that it is installed and the conversations with de nieuwe uitleg.



drawing for a mural by philip coyne

collaboration process of artist and inhabitants

to collect input from the community of the de nieuwe uitleg for the subject matter of the mural, the artist would like to organise a number of visits, if possible to their current premises. a necessary part of the methodology would be for the social engagement to be built into the production of the work, these visits would offer a way to do this. and would importantly give a sense of the community and its members in a social setting. informal strategies would also be used for drawing our topics and imagery. ideally there would be 3 visits organised, the first as an introduction, the second to try to build on the first and the third would be to present the drawings and talk them through.

for the first visit coyne would like to cook a meal for the whole community of cpo de nieuwe uitleg, in part as a simple introduction. beyond speaking together and potentially talking about the project coyne would introduce ways to formalise the exchange. for example, during this introductory meal, the children, and the adults if they feel comfortable, would be invited to draw with the hope of incorporating them into the work. these would then be scanned and returned to those who drew them. alongside this coyne would incorporate some simple exercises, in the guise of dinner games, to draw out a preliminary directions or set of topics.



collage of mural to be developed in the public hallways and interior of building

wall space

the public art work proposal philip coyne wants to work on with the future inhabitants of de nieuwe uitleg continues the artist's search for how to deal with the multiple meanings and interpretations of wall space.

in the exhibition "months of the year" coyne discusses collective labour and social life, which were prompted by a chance encounter with gustav klimt's formally-remarkable yet deeply-reactionary beethoven frieze (1902). the exhibition poses "the collective" as a creative modality that finds itself far in excess of the individualism that's advocated for in klimt's work.

with these problematics in mind, coyne questions the ambivalent relationship between an artwork's formal qualities and its politics, and more specifically the relationship between the flatness of klimt's work and modernity's more violent forms of regulation. the result is a series of murals in projectspace reenee in amsterdam.

an ethical question about art making as an extractive process sits at the heart

of the work; as a potential answer, coyne has opted to turn to an expanded notion of communality and collaboration in his work processes – by directly acknowledging the impact that those who are close to him have on the work. one such expanded understanding of community suggests that communality is not simply phenomena engaged with by individuals, nor something confined to dual authorship or ownership, but rather something more akin to a general condition. with this in mind, months of the year touches on the asymmetry of struggle; monuments and the monumental; cryptid gifting practices and opacity; the mural as a historically embedded and situated collective form; non-liberal notions of time and space; and representations of escape from normative notions of “the good life.”

“months of the year” has been kindly supported by amsterdams fonds voor de kunst and fonds kwadraat.



earlier mural work of artist philip coyne



mural in the making by projectspace reneenee and artist philip coyne

network

the (nelly&)theo van doesburg foundation and philip coyne welcome responses and ideas to further develop, prototype and finance the "mural" proposal. especially the expertise and interest of the following parties is required: blauw architecten, members of cpo de nieuwe uitleg, nautilus sportheldenbuurt and afk.

for more information visit
www.theovandoesburgstichting.nl

colophon

design and typeface: opsoxd

copywriting: kristoffer zeiner, kim wawer, jules van den langenberg

photography: sander van wettum, unless stated otherwise

(c) nothing from this site may be made public or reproduced in any manner whatsoever except as is permitted by law without the express, written permission of the (nelly&)theo van doesburg foundation. we accept no liability for any possible inaccuracies in the content. in case you find yourself mentioned incorrectly or would like to update your information send an email to info@theovandoesburgstichting.nl.