

Birgit Eriksson

Participatory art among billiard players and embroiderers

When artists and cultural institutions try to engage rural (and other) communities in socially engaged and/or community-based art projects they easily have to face two dilemmas. The first is that the local people are not necessarily interested in participating. The second dilemma is the self-contradictory character of trying to design other people's participation. In the paper, I will relate these two dilemmas to questions of site, of materiality and of sociality. Drawing on theories of participation in aesthetics, development and media studies (Sternfeld 2013, Cornwall 2008, Kelty 2014), I will present – and discuss – how two participatory art projects deal with the dilemmas by engaging in site, materiality and sociality. My two cases are *The route embroidered at my feet* (2016) made with members of an embroidery club in a small village in the Spanish Pyrenees <http://www.lauramalinverni.org/2017/02/el-camino-bordado-a-mis-pies/>; and *War (you should have been there)* (2013) made with the citizens of a small village in Denmark <http://matthaei-und-konsorten.de/en/projekte/war-you-should-have-been-there/>.

Bio:

Birgit Eriksson is PhD and Assoc. Prof. in Aesthetics & Culture, Aarhus University, Denmark. Her current research focuses on participatory arts and culture; cultural taste and communities; the uses of the arts; aesthetics and politics. She is the director of *Take Part – Research Network on Cultural Participation* <http://projekter.au.dk/en/take-part/>, and co-director of a research program in *Cultural Transformations* <http://cc.au.dk/en/research/research-programmes/cultural-transformations/>. For publications, projects and more, see <http://pure.au.dk/portal/en/aekbe@hum.au.dk>