

English version. C.C. 3.0. Toxic Lesbian

Event: **From feminist upheaval to Public Art: the Far West of opportunities.**

Participants:

TOXIC ELENA (FROM TOXIC LESBIAN)

GLORIA G. DURAN

SUZANNE LACY

ZOE LOPEZ

AZUCENA KLETT

PAQUI BLANCO

LILA INSUA

STUDENTS

TOXIC ELENA.- Alright. Let us start the event we prepared for today: "From feminist upheaval to Public Art: the far west of opportunities". First, let's greet and thank our guest today, SUZANNE LACY.

Hello, SUZANNE, can you hear me? How are you? Could you say something just to hear you?

SUZANNE LACY.- Hello everybody.

TOXIC ELENA.- We already explained to the audience how the technical part of the event will work, so I am not going to repeat it and I am going to introduce every participant.

SUZANNE LACY is an American artist who represents the north-American 70's feminism. You also know she is the dean of the concept, or gender, of public art. Back in 2010 TOXIC LESBIAN, whom, as you know, organizes these *Open Dialogues*, started collaboration with her.

Besides Suzanne here it is GLORIA G. DURAN the person I introduced before. She is a researcher and one of her research and intervention fields is, precisely, SUZANNE LACY'S artwork.

There are also representatives of this location, Intermediae at Matadero de Madrid: PAQUI BLANCO, ZOE LOPEZ and AZUCENA KLETT. Intermediae is a public institution belonging to the Arts Department of Madrid's City Hall, and TOXIC LESBIAN collaborates with Matadero-Intermediae. We would like to thank them for hosting this event. They will also join in the *Open Dialogues* we celebrate today.

Lastly, here there are all of you, Fine Arts students of Complutense University of Prof. LILA INSUA, who is hidden over there. You can, as you already know, and if you would feel like, ask freely between the questions object of the research on LACY'S work we will start posing.#

The study objects are the last projects Lacy's executed in the last years. We have a special interest in two of her artworks: *Between the Door and the Street* and *Three weeks in January*, which is an older project in which she already worked. We would like to hold a discussion with her related to these two artworks and the paradigms these arise in us, about her opinion about some concepts she introduced in these pieces, relatively new to what her previous work used to be.

In these art pieces you might have seen –if you had the chance to look close to them- that she uses a lot the information and communication technologies (ICT's) and all Internet codes. Firstly we would like to ask her in which moment in the public art developments she does, she decides to use these technologies for her work. So the question is: when did you decide to use these communication technologies such as internet and social media in your artwork? When did you decide to put them in practice?

SUZANNE LACY.- So I am a community organizer, I am not a technology person. I have been always been interested in ways to communicate with people whether that would be to open the door, person to person or news or media. In the 70's I became very interested in new media communication - Television and radio.

As the Internet became available in the 90's I became interested in it as a communication device for community organizing. But it was not clear to me how effective it could be to organize the issues. So it was not until rather in 2008, 2009 or 2010 that I began to try to do communication through internet technology as a means of community organizing.

I should say that there are many people including Toxic Elena and Toxic Lesbian who have been much more experimental in this. In fact in 2010 when we have worked together, at the Reina Sofia Museum, Toxic Elena was very instrumental in creating a portion of our projects that was communicated through web technologies.

So there's not an invention in that case of neither Toxic Lesbian nor myself. However since I was inspired by those works, envied much of the organizing that had been going on to Middle East with different kinds of electronic media in the service of local revolutions; I decided during *Three weeks in January* to include the communications technologies that were along with more traditional communication forms, for example television, radio, news scrap and so on.

In *Three weeks in January* I started with the question about where could I organizing women around the subject of violence and particularly rape in Los Angeles, got a person-to-person organizing, personal organization or online organizing. And one of the questions I had once, in the 70's, the awareness of violence against women came from small consciousness groups, groups sustaining women to get together and they would talk about personal experiences. And doing that experience they would begin to reveal their secrets of what their experience was. They were intimate groups so they were formed through relationships and people's secrecy would be maintained through relationships and there was a physical embodiment of the experience and people listening to their experiences, that is, groups were small and you could comfort each other, you could hold each other, you could cry; now there was a really direct embodied experience. So the experience of rape became communicated to the larger culture through such small feminist groups. Slowly that experience was communicated through media, through television, to radio, to articles, and through speeches; all these were more traditional forms of communication.

Now you come to 2010 and the extreme prevalence of communication by this generation to web technologies which include Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and so on and the question I had was whether or not the embodiment of the original revelations of rape would carry through to the disembodiment of the web culture and would in a way provide a welcome ability for women to remain

private while revealing personal issues or would it allow for actually less human contact and ultimately there would be less political through the revelation of political experiences.

So that, that was the question. I know the forms of community organizing now in this generation are very web-based you know very media technology-based. So that I know my students for example believe that if they sent an email to somebody that email would be answered and they presume that people get an email and respond to it now. I would, in my organizing, I would never make that presumption, I would need a confirmation of that. So there are very different forms of organizing and in *Three weeks in January* we decided to try both: person-to-person organizing of 50 organizations, and we tried online organizing of larger numbers of people, just people that worked, not necessarily connected to organizations.

TOXIC ELENA.-Talking precisely about offline communities created for *Between the door and the Street* and *Three weeks in January*, you said that you have created with them a different model of communication.

SUZANNE LACY.- Another relationship with offline communities, what do you mean by that?

TOXIC ELENA.- One could say that, as there was not physical contact, there was a willingness to tell other kind of things online, wouldn't it?

SUZANNE LACY.- Well, let me explain it in the example of *Three weeks in January*. To talk about an online component let's say there was not a device to see how many people had been raped or experienced rape or invite those women to share their experience; and so through Facebook and Twitter we developed a campaign and rather than create the campaign around 'Have you been raped?' we stated, decided, that it would be better to displace the violence onto a possible other person by saying a campaign that says: 'I know someone who's been raped, do you?'. So our campaign was: 'I know someone, do you?' and we created tasks and we created a web presence and a Twitter presence on 'I know someone, do you?' and I should invite people into the conversation without having to reveal the fact that they themselves had been raped: maybe they had, maybe they hadn't. But that would be their decision.

And so that was the idea of that Hollaback project: create an online organizing, 'I know someone, do you?', using that phrase and offline organizing with people communicating directly, calling, emailing and inviting organizations to come to, or offer, an specific advice.

So I cannot tell you much about the online community because all I know about it is what occurred, you know, in either Twitter or Facebook conversations and I mean I just, I do not know anything more about them except online and indirect communication many women had experienced violence against women. I know that but online community was not particularly available to me because it was not a 'discursive environment', does that make sense to you?

TOXIC ELENA.- So somehow, like you already worked in other occasions, with mediators, also in the case of that interlocution with the online community, you gathered, as far as I could research, a group of community managers. I can imagine that, somehow, you had previous meetings with those community managers, because those community managers were talking to their followers from their own Twitter

and Facebook accounts and with the communication style they already used to use. They were somehow your vehicle, the mediation between you and the online community, right?

SUZANNE LACY.- Yes, I see where you are going with that. Particularly in *Between the door and the streets* we did not use electronic or online communications as an aspect of the work, as we got in *Three weeks in January*; we only used the, advertise and communicate, but it was not centralized in the way TOXIC ELENA'S work is, or in the way *Three weeks in January*.

I see where TOXIC ELENA is going with this. It seems that if we are talking about mediated relationships, it can be mediated through technology or it can be mediated through people, and so in the project *Between the door and the streets* there was a lot of mediation between me and the actual performers, our various organizations and organizers. So I would communicate with a group of ten organizers who would each go out and communicate with ten organizations. So, in a sense, while communication with the performers was mediated through people, just like in *Three weeks in January*, my communication between people involved in the project was mediated technologically. Is that what you are suggesting?

TOXIC ELENA.- To some point, yes. What I mean is that even if you declare that you are not a social media specialist, you are using the profile of other people that do have an online identity to cultivate and spread your project and to make that online community exist.

The fact is when we research on the Internet the traces of what this project produced as a whole (at Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.) we do not perceive that it was not you who created or not the online community. The fact is that that project generated the online community. You simply communicated your project to some mediators, the same you did when you worked with leaders of the chosen groups, which are social mediators as well. It would be something similar; didn't you conceptualize it in a similar way?

SUZANNE LACY.- Yes, I think you are right and I think that a lot of my relationship to social media is extremely out of my generation. And what I mean by that is even I do not even have meetings, indirectly I like to have a physical body next to me and that in a sense of, an aspect of my generation as well as my personal character. The question for me is what forms of communication and what forms of organizing take place in different ways. So for me the question is not fundamentally one of technology or one of organizing. And in the case of violence against women, there, I think the case could be made for both forms of organizing. It is more likely that women are going to online share their experiences of violence and psychologically process those experiences, in a direct embody relationship.

However, I think that me knowing about violence growing that is we can organize around the globe, women in India can organize with women in Nigeria through electronic media so the question by guess has more to do with what *value* that each form has. And I think the question about sharing an experience, and processing an experience a personal, direct, experience of violence, is fundamental to the politics of global organizing. And if, in the 70's, for example, women did not speak about experiencing rape, they just did not talk about it out, they just did not talk about, they did not even talk about it to their friendship circles. So, as they began to talk about it, it began to be seen as a larger and larger and more significant phenomenon and that allowed for a political analysis in ways that did

not exist prior to 1970.

Now how to communicate that political analysis as well as how to bring women who directly experience violence into the process of the global analysis and revolution as it works. I mean, to me that is the question. So the online communication, that web technology, meets the women who are trafficked? I doubt it! On the other hand that information about trafficking reach a global audience and because of them to take action to form organizations? Yes, I am sure of this. So, in a sense, I can clear just now beginning to understand the implications for organizing of web technology, been obviously always been there since the 90's; but I think now is becoming much clearer in the work of recently years that organizing, serious organizing can take place specifically linked to electronic media.

TOXIC ELENA.- You can ask whenever you feel like -otherwise we will keep asking her more questions. Concretely, about this topic you are talking about, you mentioned at the beginning -using social media or internet also has a political implication. In the case of other female artists who are colleagues (well, even friends) such as FAITH WILDING or SHU LEA CHANG -who appears at LACY's book *Mapping the terrain*, as a representative of public art- these female artists use all these technologies from a political viewpoint. They use networks from a political standpoint; you too but from an absolutely different perspective. Could you explain that difference to us?

SUZANNE LACY.- I do not know how SHU LEA is working now. So I would be better off coming on what FAITH WILDING is making now and I think one significant difference is that FAITH WILDING does not organize large numbers of people, that's the way I do operate. So her questions are much more about the media itself. My questions about Internet technology have to do with how it operates within a political and organizing capacity. I mean I use it like we all do to communicate it's like what we are doing today, it's very valuable as a way of communicating but that's very different than what FAITH WILDING might do or you know her organization is they work in a more experimental ways like ELENA TOXIC does, I mean I think TOXIC LESBIAN uses electronic media in a highly experimental way. For me that is not different to Nam June Paik, who used video technologies in ways that were specifically about the technology.

When I used video in the 70's, I was very involved in the electronic impact of video and communication technologies, I was not thinking about it as a technology itself, I was thinking about its relationship to organizing, for example, if you look at *In Mourning and in Rage*, a performance that was with LABOWITZ-STARUS, that is very much about technology, it is just about video and media technology coming out of the 50's into the 70's, the technological debate and the social debate was around television as a media form and the way television, around whether or not violence was increased by media technologies or not. I mean there was a huge debate in the 70's about whether pornography, for example, caused violence against women or not.

So I would be more interested in the use and the impact of technology on social conditions than technology, experimenting with technology for its own sake.

TOXIC ELENA.- However, you do not mention something that if for instance we do search "cyberfeminism" at Wikipedia, you can find that women artists work with technologies because they presume that will be an empowerment per se. and that way the artist places herself at another place. You in your artwork, talking about what we can see from outside, at these art pieces where you introduce social media, internet, etc., you are not placing yourself at that empowerment place, but at

that old mass media-paradigm. You're interested in audiences widening, expanded audiences but not the empowerment and gender redefinition that cyberfeminists are talking about.

SUZANNE LACY.- I think that TOXIC ELENA is much more developed in this area than I am. I do not position myself as a cyberfeminist although respect for those people who are much more sophisticated and focused on this issue. I think (and certainly that gives me much to think about) my experiments with cyberfeminism have been relatively small in my explanation. I do want to tell you about the one story concerning rape during *Three Weeks in January* because I think that could be an example for us to talk about.

At the top of the City Hall in Los Angeles I convened the conversation between eight people who were in one way or the other involved in violence against women in Los Angeles *and* some form of organizing, communication or production of action and activity around those issues of violence against women. so there was a police chief; there was the woman at the funding Cold Pink, the international activist organization; there was a rape activist who's been working for 40 years; there was the assistant to the major who has been working with public policy; there was a man who had been working in sports psychology and violence, male culture and violence; there was a police chief; there was a woman who wrote literary theory, and particularly looked at violence against women, as a social protest to organizing through media; and there was a screen writer; and there was also a news journalist, a very well-known journalist.

So all these people who were sitting around a table and they had a conversation on violence against women but, instead of having a conversation on the kinds of activities that they did or the way they normally talked about it I asked to talk about it through narrative theory, literary theory, through deconstruction of the narrative. So it is a little bit what we did in Spain on our project. So the police chief had to talk about not about crimes but about victims and perpetrators. They would work with the general public; they would work with the police and so on. And the purpose to this was to de-center the conversation and the normal positioning with respect to violence against women and to ask them to create new knowledge by having to strength their ideas through literary theory.

Around the outside of these people there was videotape and there was a small audience. Around the outside of this group there was a group of 15 people who were online and they were communicating through blogs, through Twitter, through Facebook, and so on, about what they were hearing, so the general public actually could only access this performance through social media and that's probably the closest to the kind of thing that Toxic Elena does which is, you know, to basically do a performance that took place in cyberspace. However, in this case, that took place in cyberspace *and* for small audience and then it was later videotaped the place to a larger audience. So there are layers of audience, and I think that is a good example of the way that I would work with technology. I think to think about my work as cyber-feminism or to think about cyber-feminism implications of my work is really quite interesting and something I appreciate as a result of knowing people like in particular ELENA TOXIC and TOXIC LESBIAN.

TOXIC ELENA.- Would you like to ask anything? LACY is a person who experienced during the 70's a revolution that was this women artists generating the new feminist art. When GLORIA G. DURAN and I talked with her about that period she used a term we did love and that gave the title to this project. You said public art was for female artists the far west of opportunities, and you feel it like this, and

that is why you worked with other women artists or women's communities -not necessarily artists but social communities-. Do you think that somehow that *far west* of opportunities' sensitivity is developing now through the internet in a parallel way to that you experienced in the 70's?

SUZANNE LACY.- I think I might have said '*The Far West*' but I meant '*The Wild West*' of opportunities when I was referring to obviously the relationship California has with the rest of the United States as a place that outside the mainstream institutions (that's not true anymore but it was very true in the 70's) very mainstream operations in the art world and the web, everything new (performance art, Chicago, the progressive an esthetic revolution) took place in California. I think is as true as never before, to talk about the internet as the 'Wild West of feminism'. I think we still have to resolve this issue: who has access to the internet?

I think there are two problems. One is that a lot of the people I work with, or I am concerned with, don't have access to the internet. And the second is the problem of "embodiness" and its relationship to different groups. So if I show up at the African American huge community and the idea often is that that helps a different application to my relationship with that community than if I will do online communication. on those ways, that, when I show up I represent a certain ways of generation or you can use, say, my "embodiness" and my "relationality", my physicality are used for more consciousness or trust.

So one of the issues that we have to deal with is access, in terms of internet organizing, and the other issue we have to think about is this issue of trust. And I think maybe the third is mobilizing through the web, like, right now, you can sign any day, like, hundreds of petitions on the web. Now, do those petitions make a difference? I think that they do but now do they make sense? Does my signing of a petition encourage a person? Do they do direct social action or do they encourage me and encourages my social action?

I think there's is a lot of questions like that and it goes in: Activism, revolution, if I go ah you know, experimenting with ICT technologies and I would say my goal is pretty clearly to support social change so the question is in which ways does technical evidence, web technology supports that and supports our right to information and supports our global rights, and supports, for example, a comparison between the situation of women in Iran, the young women kidnapped these days in Nigeria and the recent uprising around rape in India...

You know how all those impacts local mobilization. I would say global organization is working very well and there are many... And one that is working very well is Code Pink. Another one is the organization Hollaback and these both organizations are using social media as a means to organizing. I also think that despite opinions I would suspect, although I do not know, that these spontaneous demonstrations in India were supported by social media. But I do not know if I answered you question, now returning to it perhaps Toxic Elena...

GLORIA G. DURAN.- Could you repeat the names of the two organizations?

SUZANNE LACY.- Yes! One is called Code Pink and one is Hollaback that is an international organization organizing women in small cities to shout back at street harassment.

TOXIC ELENA.- In your last public art projects you worked with institutions like the BROOKLYN MUSEUM but

also with more professional organizations, such as CREATIVE TIME. I guess those different kinds of organizations do have a very different role and that these institutions' role is not only organizational. For example, CREATIVE TIME and BROOKLYN MUSEUM do have their own voice in social media. Which role do these institutions have in your last projects, how do they intervene in your art pieces?

SUZANNE LACY.- Well first I most work with institutions but in the last few years the institutions has invited me instead of me inviting the institution. Since the 70 I invited institutions to collaborate but I reminded the producer at the work That shifted into a different relationship and that is because the form of social practice became more accepted. When I am invited now by an institution (Tate Modern or Museum of Contemporary Art, or even Reina Sofia), I remain just as the organizer. When I am invited to do a project by these organizations and they provide funding, instead of raising it I, there are a lot of problems that arise that I didn't have to deal with earlier. And those problems have to do with pre-existing institutional' protocols so when I spoke about the *Wild West*, that also was an aspect of my work that I could pretty much independently produce but I also of course had the obligation of raising the money and doing the advertising and excellence my ability with that.

When we work with Creative Time they come with this gap, they also come with the protocols, including an agenda for when the piece has to take place, within their schedule of the piece. So all of these relationships create a different set of practicalities, supports and influences to produce this kind of work. You are right that in producing a work with Creative Time then I am also operating within their media voice. In this project, Creative Time used electronic media mostly for advertising the piece although it did use it as a support function for organizing participation. So in the contract, we had a group of organizers who would contact organizations and create leaders, group leaders, within each stood, or with any step, set of stairs, so there would be a group of women but then would be a group of leader from home organization and they would contact people from Creative Time.

However we would use electronic media to reinforce the organizations the organizing that we did directly. Creative Time used electronic media to advertise the piece and we were clear that was very different.

Now, in one instance of participation with Creative Time that is simpler than that and that has to do with their called *Creative Time Reports*. *Creative Time reports* are an online newspaper or journalistic device to communicate artist ideas on significant political issues around the globe. So we did want a project within the larger project; that was a conversation on Creative Time before about women and migration and economics, it had to do with global, with different women viewpoints, on global situation of women and economics. So I would call that an artwork within the art work and that was not the same thing as the advertising aspect of the media that Creative Time means. Does that make sense?

MALE STUDENT NR. 1.- I have a small question. How did you manage to organize the *Crystal Quilt*? How did you manage this different way of working?

SUZANNE LACY.- There were similarities and differences too. In the *Crystal Quilt* is a state is a very bad long process, about people from, you know, 3 hours away and we also had 9 months to organize and in time piece we only had little time it is not a very long process. So in *Crystal Quilt* to organize pretty much everybody a person helped me: she organized through organizations and she organized on the

streets and she organized by going to different towns around the state and she organized in a basically physical form and through personal communication. There were 400 knitting people who performed in the *Crystal Quilt* and there were 360 people who performed in *Between the door and the street*.

I think the real interesting project to look at in terms of global reach is the 1979 project that I did call *International Dinner Party*, in which I organized over 2000 people having dinner around participate on the same day in a dinner. And because they all participated on the same day which is we created a 24 hours celebration. We were calling us through telephone and, you believe it or not, telegrams, you know things like telegrams. There was over 2000 women, in the era before the Internet.

MALE STUDENT NR. 2.- My question will be different than the one we prepared. I have two questions to ask SUZANNE LACY. The first one is, how can you approach aesthetically the world of women? The second one, linked to the former, which esthetic, artistic language could be used in order not to fall into the androcentric (men-centered) discourse?

SUZANNE LACY.- I do not understand the question.

MALE STUDENT NR. 2.- If we are talking about a feminist or women-centered language from the 70's, a language that considered that this issue would be solved through communication, moving from an object-body to a subject-body, how to approach esthetically women world nowadays? We are talking about an aesthetics that existed when female artists started to 'action' in the 70's, and there is a certain aesthetics... How, from your point of view, how do you approach esthetically in 2014 this question?

SUZANNE LACY.- I think that I am not very interested in feminine Aesthetics. I think that there probably are different sets of social circumstances but that's not an issue that's interesting to me -as the issue of feminist aesthetics. And by that I mean is not related to gender and more related to a political position. I think feminism is a political position that men *or* women can adopt it is not really gender-specific.

So I think feminist aesthetics in art, particularly in my form of art, had to do with "multi-vocalities", for example, multiple voices; had to do with raising questions of political importance within the construction of the work; Probably had to do with challenging authority and power -and I do not mean by "challenging it" not having it, I mean raising the questions around power and authority within the construction of the work.

So that's how I think about those kind of issues now but it is true that in the 70's we wondered if there was a specific 'feminine aesthetic', you know, pink, the color pink, simple colorimetry, relational art, and so on. Now I think the issue is, for me, more, about how do you manage politics, within your aesthetic practice.

FEMALE STUDENT.- In line with what my colleague said and thinking that questions like the multiplicity of voices are also aesthetic in another way, how does she think that the topic of anonymity can be related with this feminist way to challenge the power in the web? Do the ways to dissolve the authorship arise as a question for her?

SUZANNE LACY.- I agree. Is that the question?

GLORIA G. DURÁN.- Do you agree? Are you interested in that idea?

SUZANNE LACY.- Yes, I am interested in that idea but I think it's complicated. At the same time as we are able to express resistances there are, of course technologically, as in China, as in several Middle East countries, there are ways to shut down the voices of resistance. So that is technologically a double-edged resource: we can express resistance, and, technologically, resistance can be shut down. But there are two problems that I see with that.

One is in challenging authority: the social media and the web has become so successful in challenging authority that there is a problem we face with, for example, in the conversation on creationism or evolution, there are people who would line up on the side of one tradition or another based on facts that might yet on the web and the web is so effective, but maybe is not, but theoretically is effective in deconstructing authority, that there is a real problem now about what we know as scientific facts, or truth, and you see that, in American media, where on television, for example, when on one channel, Fox News, you can see at the same time an event, completely reconstructed than what you would see on CNN at the same moment based on a real life event.

So the Questions of 'evolution' and 'creationism' and so on are: Where, what, who is *authority*? So while we're deconstructing authority but we are also using the lack of authority to create, particularly in the United States, television and mass media are reconstructing authority around x interest, political interests. So, for example, the Lehman brothers can create new social media and television media and crap media as a way to perpetuate an opinion on the BP oil state that might be very different than a set of alternate facts.

So that's one problem. The other problem with the fact that the web, the anonymity allows us to potentially have a stronger empowerment is because it's dislocated and disembodied the possibility to resistance and less people mobilize to an embodiment like in seriously mobilizing and begin to fight back like in Libya or so on. You got to be much synchronized to deconstruction of authority you don't have, I mean, what does that do, you know, to the oppression in Syria? Probably not a lot! So those are I think concerns that we could help around these 'multi-vocality' through new, or social, media.

TOXIC ELENA.- In which sense do you think the art institution has been transformed with your work? Do you think there has been a transformation in the institution in the way it has been working?

SUZANNE LACY.- I think there has been a tram to transform the institutions. That is what has been going on for the past 30 years: the world has changed, institutions have tried to embrace performance art forms and, now, social practice forms. I think the greeting of real social practice is very difficult for institutions. I don't think that they comprehend the engagement in any way other than in very small and intimate ways. In other words, you can work with a group of camp teenagers in Ireland and institution can understand and grab it with that because it looks much like museum educational programs. But when you go to an institution like Tate Modern and say: "I want to work with one thousand people" they understand the concept of mass. I think it's harder for them to grab what it means to have a relationship with that people that goes beyond putting an announcement and having people showing up. And that goes to the issue of community organizing.

And of course, it makes sense; museums are not configured around ideas of community organizing. However museum's education departments *are* configured around those kinds of ideas of increasing participation and increasing specific kinds of participation, and increasing that participation. So I think this is a tendency, the separation between Museum's educational and the curatorial parts, curatorial is still prevalent, much more prioritized, in art institutions.

MALE STUDENT NR. 3.- Something that has to do with the answer of the elements, of the social and political and private/civil agents that do own a message that is convincing, powerful, precisely because of the very media disposition and its structure. My question however was: what do you think of the resistances or the possible powers that would, let's say, oppose to this message or these possible social reflection messages? In which way could these messages be implicit, hidden or confronted to this kind of insurrections or let us simply call them dissident messages?

My question is specifically if inside these networks that look so easy and massive for the private power or the critical, cultural, political agents, if you think that there are tools against them. If you think that in Facebook, in Twitter, as elite- and media-conceived structures, do you think that these messages allow the power they contain or are there mechanisms, strategies of the institutions that soften/silence them?

TOXIC ELENA.- If, definitely, you think the message is deadened by the context where the communication is funneled, as the social media context is very mainstream (Facebook, Twitter...).

SUZANNE LACY.- In a way it is a theoretical question because there is the theory that in a deconstructed authority and allows for participation but the reality is that everybody does not have access to technology and the internet and the internet can be blocked by political interests.

But theory that Facebook provides a media for an immediate conversation can also be countered by the reality that Facebook has become meaningless and people use it to tell you where they have coffee in the morning. So all forms of communication, particularly media communication, can be and have been, I believe, co-opted by authorities. That's what I was trying to say that in the USA you cannot only buy new media, you can buy a political position -you can be Coca-Cola you can be a corporation and legally you can purchase your own television station essentially.

Ah so every form of communication -probably even the web- but every form of mediated conversation we had to have in order to organize, is not only has been co-opted, but can be co-opted. I think that this is a difference the theory versus what we have, as a response to pragmatically organize. So, theoretically: yes, Facebook is attached to a form of power that prohibits genuine resistance. On the other hand is a media, what means that is *available* to us. Does that make sense?

MALE STUDENT NR. 3.- Yes, she answered me indeed. Thank you very much.

MALE STUDENT NR. 1.- Do not you think that marketing, aggressive advertising, this image expanded through the communication media is to enter in a sick politics concerning aesthetics of what women, even men, should wear nowadays? Do not you think that what should be encouraged as a cure is

people's own judgment, the ability to independent thinking? How should that be done? I think the educational system does not help in that, what do you think about it?

SUZANNE LACY.- I think that is happening is always been true in America that educationally we do not really support critical thinking about media. When I look to a country like Canada even in the 90's they had media literacy at an important part of their curriculum... younger people's curricula about the time they are maybe 13-14 at least you would start learning about media literacy, learning at curriculum.

In the US we never had that, to young people and I think that the result is that we have a society that is what I would call 'dumb dull', which is it has not educational system, is progressively degrading and I think this has big implications for independent thinking and for critical analysis of the massive lies that we get through media. That is why I have a problem with the de-construction of authority on the internet because you can pretty much set facts that support your position and now you would have arguments -as I had with people-. well they'd say: 'my set of facts are the ones that I want because they support my belief system and you can have your set of facts I do not care where you got yours; they don't support my belief system so I might ignore them'. And I think this is a result of years and years of not teaching people how to critically deconstruct media and ask: in whose interest is this message been communicated?

LILA INSUA.- Hello SUZANNE, I would like to ask you, in relation to what Alvaro [male Student who asked before] was talking about, how do you as a teacher, construct that space of resistance generation/creation or critical thinking, or how do you, as an artist, think the pedagogical/teaching practice. Thank you

SUZANNE LACY.- That's something I think about a lot. In a way it has two answers: one is how you construct curricula and I think the difficulty of social practices and something I am thinking about a lot, is how do you create a curriculum that teaches a critical analysis of social problems? Because a lot of people come to social practice with very good intentions but they really do not understand the issues deeply because it takes a lot of work to understand for example an environmental issue or a race issue or a class issue takes a lot of work. So, what we have to do is think about how to construct curricula that leads people through the process of analysis and that includes: research, it includes both research -in terms of literature but it also includes research in the field, I would say, which is, you know, leading people and talking to lots of people and then there is this critical thing where you have to teach people to ask why the social condition in this and why the various positions on it exist.

So includes, goes back to the question, it includes interest, is this message so I think one issue is the construction of the cv the other is err the process of authority or the scenario of authority within the classroom, you know, the talks about, you know, like teaching about pedagogics, how to deconstruct the classroom where authority is challenged and how do you resolve the complex and the limits that come up around challenging authority including your role as a teacher, does that make sense?

TOXIC LESBIAN.- Does any of you want to ask the last question?

4TH. MALE STUDENT.- Where do you reside?

SUZANNE LACY. - I am in the south of California and there is a beach right outside, would you like to see it? Can you see it? It is the ocean.

GLORIA.- We envy you.

SUZANNE LACY.- Yeah but there's better food in Madrid.

AZUCENA KLETT.- well I am going to try to be brief, even if it's not my specialty. I prefer that you translate my words. Well, first I would like to thank publicly to the students and Lila Insua for their interventions.

And I would like to recuperate the question about The Institution. We at Intermediae share the wink and the critic between the lines to Tate Modern and the distinction between educational departments of museums and more 'curatorial' departments. Talking precisely about 'institutions', right now in Madrid there is a very strong reflection on what an institution means, what an institution is, from the social practice. Perhaps rescuing the tradition that GERALD RAUNING opened with the 'instituent practices'. So making the wink, you were talking about if an institution can be ingrained or committed to social practices, and I do not know to which extent, and winking, to which extent, how, you yourself are an institution in the concept of 'new public art'?

So I would like to try to finish the conversation (*Open Dialogues*) -and I thank you for it- jumping from the new public art to how to do things public, which is, I think, what somehow articulates right now the debate of new social practices in Madrid; What we have tried to do with this meeting timing; and what TOXIC LESBIAN tried to do making her research public. I think that if you understood the question we can finish like this, or we can clarify it more.

The question is: I think that what TOXIC LESBIAN tried to do here was her public research on what we [Intermediae] tried to do hosting her intervention is how to make an institution more public. So my question would be: how could you, from the institution you represent or actually *are*, with all my love and respect, try to think a way to jump from public art to how to do things public? If you could tell us a few sentences on that topic...

SUZANNE LACY.- I do think about that but the problem is complicated by, in my country, actually globally, the idea of celebrity and I am absolutely not interested in having that kind of public presence. I am interested in the issues having that public presence. But if you think about it celebrity is used as a valuable way to generate attention, you know, you get a movie star attention about an issue. I am a community organizer and I do think a lot about how issues can be more public, can whether changing the art world is enough or should we be thinking of changing the entire world. So I think about that all the time. But the ways that people, like, for example EVE ENSLER, had made a billion women raising into a global phenomenon had been to program her persona and that's not a strategy I am not particularly interested in.

So I have to work with organizations and promote the work of the organizations because that's the strategy that I am more comfortable with. I was saying that I appreciate people who work with these technological ideas and I really appreciate being in a TOXIC LESBIAN artwork today and I am very aware that I am in her artwork and I really appreciate that experimental nature of what it TOXIC ELENA and

TOXIC LESBIAN does.

(Applauses) Just one last thing more I deeply apologize for not knowing Spanish I am sorry! I assure it, I wanted to learn Spanish sometime... anyway thank you very much all of you. Bye-bye.

TOXIC ELENA.- Thank you very much to you all. I hope it was interesting for you.