

THE CENTRALITY OF PERIPHERIES

1. Summary of the project:

The “Centrality of peripheries” will attempt to analyse the artistic forms and manifestations that have emerged in city outskirts in order to understand how they have redefined the relationship between the city centre and its peripheral areas. The final goal of this proposal is to determine how these new forms of art have contributed to create a new cultural panorama and has redefined the cultural landscape of modern European cities.

This phenomenon will be observed from a double perspective:

1. Theoretical analysis of its social, political and economic aspects.
2. Experiential approach to peripheral cultural movements and artists in order to gain a direct knowledge of their work and calibrate their influence on mainstream culture and urban policies.

2. Description of the project

The relationship between the centre of the cities and its peripheries has become a hot topic in recent years. Urban planning and the consequent morphology of the different areas of a city, urban and social policies, the history and cadence of periphery formation, the internal and external migration movements that have shaped them, and economic cycles are some of the factors that intervene to configure various periphery types and various types of centre-periphery relations.

In some cities, peripheries have been shaped as *favelas* or “ghettos”, thus becoming isolated, invisible territories that have been avoided by both their own dwellers and the urbanite inhabitants of the city centre. Nevertheless, others have been able to build bridges between the outskirts and the city centre, thus enhancing the potential of its peripheries and the “exoticism” of its minorities in order to build a rich, plural and attractive urban landscape that integrates its social fabric.

Independently of the strategies applied in each case – integration, repression or exclusion of minorities – and of the urban periphery building process, the fact is that in many of these cities the focus of cultural innovation has been displaced from its traditional central position to the margins by a centrifugal force. Obviously, city centres still hold the monopoly of visibility, but they feed more and more on the subcultures generated on the margins. To a certain extent, the cultural effervescence of many of our European peripheries echoes the vitality and urban popular culture of Southern hemisphere megalopolis, which are, in turn, the source of many migratory flows that have historically supplied our outskirts with a new population.

The case of popular music, although not the only one, is paradigmatic: funk in the Brazilian *favelas*, Panamerican *reggeaton* that is so well-known in Spain, the Angolan *kuduro* that has spread in Portugal or the different mutations of the cumbia, are part of a creativity flow that has hit the music scene of Europe and North America. In some other cases, this phenomenon is not about importing styles from different cultures, but about the creation of new musical forms that have emerged in the periphery itself, such as hip hop in French *banlieues*. These new rhythms have served a useful means of communication between the centre and the periphery, counteracting the negative image of outskirts offered by the media.

The project of the Círculo de Bellas Artes (CBA) attempts to open a debate about this issue that deals with the different aspects of these peripheral realities.

On the one hand, this project will try to analyse this phenomenon from an academic perspective in seminars, symposia and meetings. These activities will aim at revealing the effects that the implementation of certain urban policies has had on the outskirts of a number of cities and on its

inhabitants. This will lead to an exchange of experiences at a European level in order to identify successful strategies that can serve a model for the future.

On the other hand, we would like to trace and reveal the cultural manifestations that are emerging in the peripheries and the way they are being used by the “centre”: by the music industry, by television and other media, by cultural institutions... This will be done through a combination of activities including academic meetings and cultural activities such as concerts, DJ sessions, film screenings, debates and exhibitions, among others. The final goal of this project is to detect new channels of communication between the centre and the periphery that has been opened by the positive effect of these new subcultures.

This project will also put a special emphasis on the role of the different agents that, from the city centre itself, have given these margins an attention that goes beyond either charity or economic exploitation. Therefore, our programme of activities include film makers, musicians and writers who have been able to build a lucid and realistic portrayal of the peripheries, as well as urban activists that have dealt with these margins in a non-patronizing way.

As for the theoretical framework of this project, we will consider the analysis of urban and social policies provided by authors such as Jaques Donzelot, Loïc Wacquant, Mike Davis, Manuel Delgado, David Harvey, Tim Butler, Federico Lerner, Julian Coupat, Winston James, Thomas Maloutas, Maro Pantelidou Malouta, Gemma Galdón or Peter Marcuse. This will be complemented by the pragmatic perspective provided by activists and groups that work shoulder to shoulder with the population of the peripheries.

With regard to writers that have contributed to shape a correct representation of our outskirts, we will consider names such as John Berger, Elvira Lindo, Irving Welsh, Douglas Dunn, Kiko Amat, David Torres, Carlos Peramo, Jean-Claude Izzo, Benjamin Zephaniah, Jakob Arjouni or Erri de Luca.

From cinema, we will consider documentary films such as *Straight Out Of Puerto Rico*, describing the social and commercial journey of *reggaeton*; *Louder Than Words*, a vibrant portrayal of Jamaican dancehall directed by anthropologist Norman Stolzoff; or *Banlieues*, a collective documentary about peripheral neighborhoods in France. Fiction films will also be of interest, such as *Barrio*, by Fernando León de Aranoa; *Babylon*, by Franco Rosso; *El pico*, by Eloy de la Iglesia; *El te del harén de Arquímedes*, by Mehdi Charef; *El odio* by Mathieu Kassovitz; *Rossetta*, by Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne; *No quarto da Vanda* or *Juventude en marcha*, both by Pedro Costa; *La ciudad está tranquila*, by Roberg Guédiguian; *El truco del manco*, by Santiago Zannou or many of the movies by Ken Loach.

The abundant music scene of the periphery could provide our programme of activities with musicians such as the Portuguese Buraka Som Sistema; British Damon Albarn, promoter of Africa Express; mythical French hip hop band Supreme NTM; Diplo, the instigator of funk in the *favelas*; Kode 9, Scottish musician who is an expert in London ghetto sounds; DJ Floro, Madrid DJ who conducts Radio 3 program “Sonideros”; El Hijo de la Cumbia and many others.

We strongly believe that these activities will not only stimulate intercultural dialogue, but it will also serve a useful tool for reflection and experience exchange that will boost the potential of the periphery to contribute to the cultural agenda of the whole city. This will include social movements and non-profit organizations, local and regional governments, along with cultural operators and artists in an attempt to build more habitable cities where cultural diversity will allow for mutual understanding between the centre and the peripheries in order to promote social cohesion, to support creativity and boost local economies.

The Culture Programme

The Culture Programme is a funding programme of the European Commission.

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/culture/funding/2012/index_en.php

The Programme has been established to enhance the cultural area shared by Europeans, which is based on a common cultural heritage, through the development of cooperation

activities among cultural operators from countries taking part in the Programme, with a view to encouraging the emergence of European citizenship.

The Programme is aimed at three specific objectives:

- promotion of the trans-national mobility of people working in the cultural sector;
- support for the trans-national circulation of cultural and artistic works and products;
- promotion of inter-cultural dialogue.

The Círculo de Bellas Artes wants to submit a proposal for the next call for entries (**deadline is 3rd October 2012**) under the line **1.2.1.Cooperation projects**.

This category concerns actions shared by at **least three cultural operators**, working within and across sectors, from at least three countries taking part in the Programme over a **maximum period of two years**. Actions that explore means of long-term cooperation are especially targeted. Funds ranging from a minimum of EUR 50 000 and a maximum of EUR 200 000 are available, but EU support is limited to a maximum of 50% of the total *eligible cost*. That implies that the total budget of the project cannot exceed EUR 400.000, where the 50 % of the total investment must be contributed by the partners. Please note that partners' contribution to the total amount of the project can partly include staff costs, and that staff can be part of the organization, thus reducing the real investment of each partner to the project since these expenses already included in the organization's annual budget.

Projects must start after May 2013