

My ECTHEC experience in San Miniato by Beatriz Gonçalves

This project has changed mainly my perspectives on what a school is, or better said, it can actually be. Not only for the pragmatic spirit of collectivity it was established since day one, but also for the chaotic yet functional and flexible organization of different spaces of creation and reflection, filled with respect and curiosity. These spaces, or workshops if you prefer, were individually very different and had a very specific purpose of their own (whether it was proposed by teachers, whether by students), however they all linked as this united and mobile structure, that could (and still can) move towards many different directions. Among these, there's a question that went along since the beginning – what is artistic entrepreneurship?

There are many layers attached to this question, and every single workshop was walking side by side with it. What are our core values? What do we have to offer? What do we want to offer? Not as materials, as beings. And through materials, how do we start being? What is the importance of being playful and making mistakes? What are the implications of being aware? It is not only the dreams we have that count, although it is extremely important to listen to them – otherwise, how do we begin? They're seeds of our actual actions – they have to spread out and get a wider sense. Therefore, how is a project born? What does an artistic project imply? What are the realities that go outside our aspirations? Where do I locate myself, among the political, social and economic reality? What is our place here, as independent creators inserted in a community?

In my opinion, the development that these questions took during those weeks, we're extremely important. Each one of them, day by day, were articulated and had an echo, due to the environment of community and to a special ingredient – chaos. By embracing it, it brought out a dynamic way of constant updating; it kept the process open, fresh and new. And by keeping it under domain, the structure has been accomplished.

However, it is clear for me that is a very demanding work still in progress. How will this expedition continue? In a Grand Tour lexic, how will the search for the thing, narrow? Or spread, instead?

At last, in my understanding the conference in Lisbon was a beautiful proof of what is possible to come and to be built. A school where questions like some of these will pop up and grow into something, including and welcoming more people from our different cultures, people that are active facilitators, respectful, autonomous and curious.