

Elementar

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[Elemental: Making It Together]

To make something together is a matter of choice and principle. Situations of making together challenge us to experience the many senses of belonging and participation, whether that is through notions of living together, or through the cooperation or collaboration made possible by collective work. It involves a set of strategies that can be turned into methods or not.

The artistic and educational works and experiences that make up the exhibition *Elemental: Making It Together* are part of the collection of the Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo [Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo]. The institution values the ecology of knowledges that constitute its collections of artworks and educational experiences, linked to myriad repertoires and creative processes of artists and nonartists.

Elemental is that which inherently resides in the nature of things, in their essence, it is the basic component of the world and its matters. Artists deal directly or indirectly with earth, water, air, and fire, natural elements that compose the most varied materialities, poetics, and processes in life and the arts.

As elaborated by Richard Sennett, working in cooperation presupposes disposition and receptivity. The show's exhibition design encompasses poetic experiences and a "Space for Making Together," in addition to propositions carried out with artists and educators.

In the museum, "making together" is elemental. It also represents the possibility of proposing situations and establishing ways of relating to the collections and different audiences through convivial experiences. It involves that which is artistic and the knowledges that art sets in motion, bringing together people who devoted their attention, presence, and openness to the connection that generates meaning.







Narratives: Flows: Connections: Transformation

Which verbs and conjugations can we use for fusing lived stories?

The foundations of making something together are collectively agreed upon and constantly revised. The decision of making choices is up to each individual, employing connections as a central element.

Earth, water, and air are linked in such a way that it does not seem necessary to completely separate them. Me, mine, you, yours... Personal, possessive, demonstrative, relative, interrogative, or indefinite, pronouns move through all narratives of making something together. We and others acting for the construction of meaning. When me(s) and you(s) become a first-person plural, no one ceases to be first-person singular in the complex balance of presences and bodies.



Territory: Environment: Contexts

More than a geographical extension or an area occupied by a nation, a territory is also a delimited location where social relations establish themselves and it is hence a collective construction that transforms and unfolds itself over time. The environment, on the other hand, surrounds and enfolds us completely, and thus it is impossible to be outside of it. The environment is the medium where we live and where we forge relationships with the world and with others. It is that which enables the many different life forms, in the same way as it is precisely within it that difficulties, whether biological or cultural, are manifested. We behave differently according to the environment in which we find ourselves. Contexts are the circumstances that occur in a particular situation. The context makes all the difference for the meaning of an action; it is linked to a conjuncture and a particular point in time when a fact occurs. Ibirapuera Park, however, can be regarded as both a territory and an environment, and it can also provide a context for the concatenation of circumstances for an action.

Communication Networks: Communion: Resistance




Making something together requires generosity in the processes of listening and learning. It summons us to make visible what we have and what we lack in communication networks that involve partner forces and competitions, personified in figures of collaboration and antagonism. At the collective level, processes of communion and resistance are instituted—the ideas, decisions, gestures, acts, and worldviews. It may also be necessary to break with former agreements and bring into play possible friction caused by the participants' different rhythms. Making something together presupposes breaking protocols and requires us to catch up with our real desires, which leads us to construct meanings for all that we find important to accomplish. In addition to demanding greater flexibility and complexity in uniting interests, intentions, and efforts, it can provoke attraction, repulsion, courage, or insecurity in relation to the possible results, making evident the limits of our knowledges.

Traces: Record and Time



To materialize the invisible, to say the unsayable, to mark that which could go unnoticed is part of the dynamics of making something together, which presupposes working in pairs, at least.




What we learn from the other marks us in ways for the making of something together, impacting our choices, even when we are alone. Recording is a way of ensuring that what happened remains documented, be it on the sand, on a wall, or on paper. The record is a way of perpetuating an action that time tends to erase. How to record that which continues to reverberate in space and time after the encounter with the other? Even that which leaves no visible trace can remain in our memory. Encounters with the other help us see what is hidden. Like a mirror, that object that exists outside of us and which reflects and reveals who we are.



Transmutation: Exchanges and Transformation



The notion of transmutation is linked to the conversion of one element into another, a type of modification or alteration in the structure of something. Various mutations may create a transmutation. In alchemy, one seeks the transmutation of a common and ordinary metal into another that is noble and rare. If transformation presupposes displacement, going from one place to another, or an element changing its state, from liquid to gas for example, in transmutation the formation of new elements takes place. In the act of exchanging, however, there is a substitution for something equivalent. In exchanges, we offer something and we receive something else of similar value in return, that is, there is reciprocity. But in general, we only exchange something for something that we do not have. When breathing, we exchange oxygen for carbon dioxide with the environment. In photosynthesis, water, carbon dioxide, and light are converted into oxygen. Exchanges are fundamental both for maintaining balance and for life on the planet.



Games:

Rules:

Intentional Ways of Taking Part

Games are linked to enjoyment, to playing, to learning an ability, or, at least, to an experience lived. Whether physical or mental, games always presuppose rules that circumscribe how our bodies can act and with what aim. In some games, luck is fundamental; in others, technique is essential. Apart from the solitary games in which the player competes against themselves, the opponent is the one who allows the game to exist. But to win the game one has to choose a side, form teams, work together. Those who enter a game know that they will not always achieve victory. And losses teach us and indicate ways to overcome failure. It is common for games to arouse our imagination, fantasies, and not infrequently they are linked to passions. Certainly, games reveal a lot about the relationships between people and the world. Games fascinate us because they are unpredictable and can make us reach ecstasy. And even if it is not reached, another game can always be started.

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