

## Canal Contributions

### Presentation

*documenta 12 magazines* by Canal Contemporâneo, published on August 14th, 2006.

Introducing 90 publications from five different continents in a dialogue about the perspectives of the largest contemporary art exhibition of the world. For Canal Contemporâneo, the mere initiative by *documenta* already points to the self-analysis of an institution of fundamental relevance for the production, market and thought of artistic tendencies. In this text, you learn the reading Canal Contemporâneo makes of the project and the reasons that brought us to participate of *documenta 12 magazines*.

### Tying up the network's knots: *documenta 12 magazines perspectives*

The *documenta 12 magazines* project features in the international circuit as a healthy risk taken by the most important contemporary art show in the world. We are observing as we have been invited to take part in the developments of the process started off in the last *documenta*, when curator Okwui Enwezor (the first non-European to head the show)'s work has stimulated the reflection on contemporary political-cultural issues, grounded on discussion platforms carried out before the opening of the Kassel exhibition in 2002.

Roger Buerger, *documenta 12*'s artistic director is the name behind the *documenta 12 magazines* project. The main advance regarding the show's last edition is the recognition of the emergence of new spaces for the production, managing, critique and resignification of art. In 2002, we witnessed an interesting sketch of the *documenta*'s decentralisation, which aimed at transforming the show into the last and most elaborate product of a process that has involved symposia in four continents. However, for *documenta 12*, a more complex and considerably more daring structure has been proposed: from an initial selection of 70 printed and electronic publications on contemporary art worldwide, not only debate and collective thinking is encouraged, but also the very creation of art work focused on the three central theme sets that regulate the event's curatorial work.

*documenta 12 magazines'* proposition can be taken on and discussed from many points of view, but it should not be taken lightly: it is an ambitious project and one without precedent in the show's history. *documenta* has, for a long time now, consolidated as a space for the definition of tendencies and practices, for symbolic and valorised exchanges, in short, a space of the order of art on a world level. As a series of interlocutors are invited – open to many other local dialogues – to produce critical records of their circumstance in the world of art, *documenta 12* inscribes a delicate comment of its own role as centre of the avant-garde.

If the three themes proposed (Is modernity our Antiquity? / What is bare life? / What can be done?) border generality and point at a *documenta 12*'s possible interest in the conflicts of history, of the subject and of the transmission of knowledge, they have proven to be fertile themes so that the local realities have the freedom to launch a self-confronting exercise. They are changeable questions, but pertinent to different contexts, and which can serve as interesting resources for the manifold expression support that the projects stimulates – theoretical texts, essays, and, of course, artistic interventions.

For Canal Contemporâneo, the invitation to participate in the *documenta 12 magazines* project configures a welcome form of international recognition of the work we collectively carry out since 2001 and which legitimation has been taking place in Brazilian daily life. It is also an adequate occasion to put to the test *documenta 12*'s capacity for interacting with alternative territories that have established themselves in the crevices of the big mass media, and that respond to the natural– but nearly always asphyxiated – demand of building new discourse possibilities.

A mediation space between the spheres of production, of critique and of the art market, Canal Contemporâneo presents itself to the project not as a publication, but, instead, as a digital community originated from these objects, and is exactly from this attribute that emerges the potential of our contribution: it is directly related not to the response from a “audience”, but to a network built between individuals and organisms featuring different competences and aims. From the alterity of this environment we seek the singularity of our participation – from the sum of different ideological positions, origins of action and work projects.

The great key to understand the *documenta 12 magazines* project's possibilities is to decipher it as a powerful network between different thinking forms (and forces) around contemporary art worldwide. Taking into consideration that within the universe of 70 publications we find representatives as distinct in their reach and stances as *Critical Inquiry* (USA) and the Colombian collective *Esfera Pública*, we realise that the establishment of a database that gathers and stimulates the interaction between these perspectives of contemporary thinking is, in itself, a valid adventure.

Canal Contemporâneo holds as one of its premises the activation of the dynamics of diverse Brazilian art networks and sees in this international process an interesting opportunity for the enriching of our very existence.