

INTERVIEW WITH ESAY



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The ESAY is, because it still works, an art education graduate school in the state of Yucatan in Merida. The school has education on theater, music and visual arts. It was an initiative of the former Government of Yucatan. The goal of ESAY education was purely academic. To start a professional training in the state, which had not existed previously. Each school was conceived differently. The visual arts, was conceived primarily from the México City elaborated by five people who work in the curriculum plan: Humberto Chávez Mayol, Luis Rius, Jose Miguel Gonzalez Casanova Felipe Ortega, Edgardo Ganado. My interest was to bring together people with different backgrounds, theoretical and artists. In this way, my intention was to take into account these different positions. The difficulties started when we arrived with curriculum to the local artists. It was an affront. I would do differently now, in the sense that I think that to bring a curriculum to a locality, there should be a lot more of input from local artists. In addition to building the institutional setting, for me it was very important the experience of the leadership of this school. I encountered a shock and provocation resulting from a practices that where decontextualized. I think from an art cultural perspective this is it was what interested me the most and moved me the most. The culture that we were bringing was a culture, indeed from Latin American, but also American or European, which it is something that has come to Yucatan in fragments. Yes, it also happens in Mexico, but in Yucatan is even more fragmented. As a country that is isolated, curiously even the Internet, there is a tradition of isolation. A society are confronted for first time with art produced in super violent contexts, such as with art after the Second World War in Europe, or the questions on artistic production from the 70s 60. However, as much we want to turn the project over, in Yucatan there were some overtones of colonizing. In many cases was because we could not addressed it differently, for instance with development studies plan, and others simply because that kind relationship is fully internalized in a Latin American culture. As much as all the agents wanted from the starting point to avoid this tone, it happened many times. They are clichés that do exist, that can happen at any given time. Neither when we arrived in Merida nor the people from Merida could fought against this issue. Do not think that this just something that has been there, this can happen in any situation where there is symmetry in an encounter, in a relationship.

Teachers that worked very well in ESAY were teachers that, in one way or other, had internalized pedagogy of emancipation. Those were the teachers that worked very well in the school. Those who thought we were going to teach as if we were in the Mexico City had many more problems. There is a very dominant need for empowerment in education. I think that, at some point in the art, would be very important to start with something in this way and then, obviously, make a rigorous construction work in relation to creation. On the other hand, I think it is important to emphasize the locality in education from the very beginning: how group work can run a community project, how to expand public, how are the projects for specific audiences. The artists have to relate first and foremost to local context, and strength that part. To give less of importance to this fantasy of export, the artist that is exported abroad.

The last years what I was specifically doing an investigation on a case of an artist who works as an artist with students. I was looking: where is responsibility of artist that works as teacher, how far goes the responsibility as an artists, and the responsibility from a any person against other. When I have presented the project, the comment that is repeated is "but this is not art". That what interests me the most, I really think that is secondary if something should be considered as artistic event, or, if we had any products or not, because in fact, we did had pseudo products. But what interests me the most is the learning experience that took the students and what happens after, to them and to me. To hear what a student has to say about a teaching experience. The art formative experience as an artist transgresses boundaries. I am very interested in training not a scheme of institution, or the institutional. But, where there is a possibility of creating significant situations that involve the site of artistic creation, than with teaching by delivering of material. I think this is something that can complement very well the type of training we have in Mexico on this type of school. For the ones that are involve in this are, regularly to ask yourself: What are you doing? What are the reasons to do this? And, for whom you doing this?