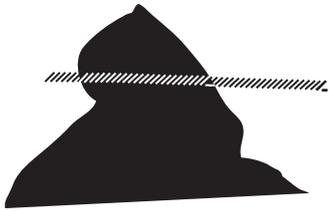


ABECEDARIUM

The “abecedarium of activism” is a co-constructed inventory of what activism was for us, i.e. for members of the Artivism project. Consider this as some mental map that helps to pin down all the associations, concepts that were important for us. Artivism is not necessarily the same for you. By the way this is why we would like to encourage you to create your own abecedarium of activism using the empty abecedarium form. How to do this collectively is described in chapter 3.



RT & ACTIVISM

Artivism is the use of the arts to trigger reflection and communicate about social and political issues.

ODY

is the primary interface, the only means to share with others our inner world and desires, as such we have to cherish it and take care of it. What's more, in many of our European societies the body has been neglected, its representation filtered through a tradition which associates all things noble and worthy with the spirit assigning the flesh to an inferior position, synonym of sin and vulnerability. Today we see the opposing tendencies too: trying to focus on “the body” as if it was something separable from the person. We propose activist practices to respect the embodied nature of our existence, to use it well as an instrument for dialogue and change.

ONFLICT

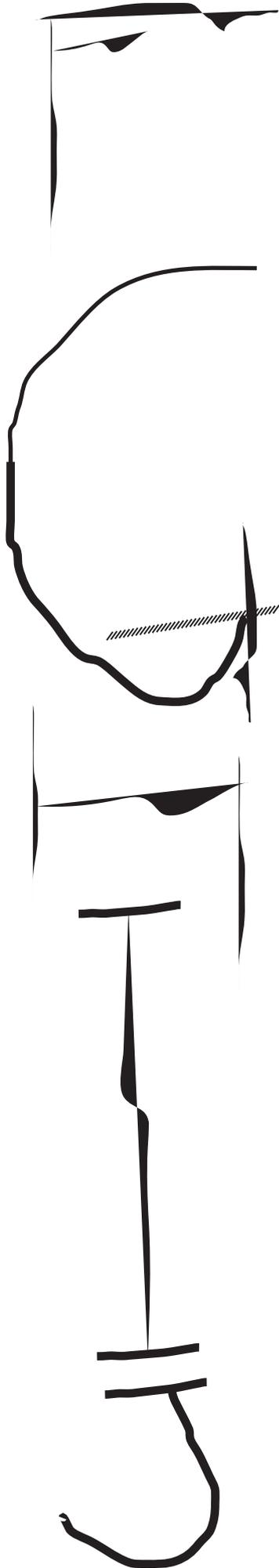
Happens when people stop wanting the same thing, and their diverging desires and opinions become explicit. Conflict has bad reputation, it often stems negative emotions and is considered as a threat to harmony and friendly relationship. But the problem is not with conflict itself. It is in fact quite usual to have different visions and wishes. The problem is how we handle this difference. Whether we can afford the luxury to understand well where the difference comes from and what it implies, and learn from it. Or to the contrary we take shelter along well polarised rigid faultlines, trying to replace solution by powerplay.

IALOGUE

There is no life without dialogue. Our deepest thoughts are always replies and responses to others. Life is a conversation and we should accept entering it with our ideas and aspirations and be ready to change through the dialogues.

MPOWERMENT

Artivism encourages that people who are living situations of oppression, exclusion, inequality to become aware of the dynamics of their situation and envisage ways it can be changed. Artivism calls for the members of dominant groups to become aware of inequalities and become partners of those having less power in creating together more equality and more dialogue.



AILING

The fear of failure is a powerful motive in our everyday functioning. But do we really want to have a compass that only shows where we don't want to go? Instead we propose to embrace the possibility of making mistakes, of failing. The only people who never fail and never make mistakes are the ones that never do anything new and never venture out of their comfort zone. Let us instead celebrate mistakes as a means of discovery.

ENDER

Gender is the "taboo dimension" of cultures for Hofstede (researcher of cultural differences), so much it is surrounded by prescriptions and prohibitions, and so vehement are the judgments that people tend to make on other cultural variants of gender-related behaviour. Think of women's clothing for instance. For some the women should hide most of their body and hair, even if they are on the beach. For others the hair should be carefully displayed as a crown of our individuality, and they should show most of their body on the beach, except their pussy and their tits. On a first level, Artist practices could invite for a playful reflexion on this very defining aspect of our identities, on what we consider masculine and feminine and how we see their relations. Beyond binary roles, Artivism can help liberating the genuine expression of your true self. What's more, activism can give voice and recognition to silenced gender identities.

UMANISM

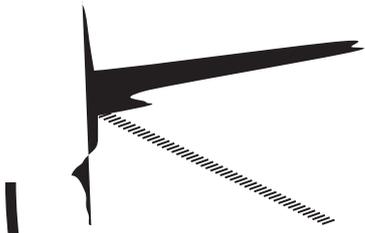
is an ideal that allows evolution through others. Being an activist means to put oneself at the service of the human being, to advance things in order to serve a greater goal than oneself and to enable a better world for all.

DENTITY DYNAMICS

Identity is like a kaleidoscope created of three types of elements: our distinguishing features that make us unique, the positions we inhabit in our relations and the roles, traits we learn as members of communities. Look into a person's kaleidoscope and in any single moment you'll see a constellation of these three elements. Identity is not fixed, it is constructed and reconstructed over and over again, in each situation, in each encounter. And this wonderful flexibility and multiplicity is not an illness: it is business as usual. However, identities can also get rigid, most of the time when someone else tries to fix them, decide what one can and cannot do or be. Identities rigidify in resistance, in the effort of trying to reclaim disputed territory or recognition. Artist practices should assume this dynamic nature of identities and play with it. Instead of cornering people into limiting identities, opening up new positions to embody.

OY

A feeling of pleasure and happiness, the necessary lightness to tackle issues of great weight. As artist Werner Moron often says "what we do is too important to take it seriously". Tackling the problems with humour and good mood helps to overcome the risk of polarisation and realignment according to rigid separations and antagonism.



EYMAKER

A fictional character in Matrix Reloaded, his aim is to create shortcut commands, (keys) which can open doors to different parts of the Matrix reality. Artist practices should be such keymakers, opening access to ideas, to reflections, to solutions in non conventional ways, making shortcuts, not going through the usual mechanised routine.



IVING

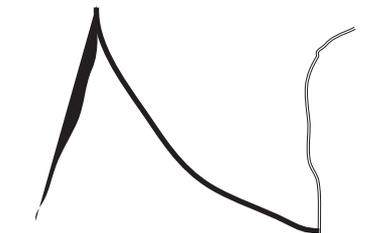
is the starting point. Artivism is to faith a living art, an art of the living and an art for the living. Its source of work and inspiration is found in everyday and real life.



ULTICULTURALITY / MULTICULTURALISM / INTERCULTURALITY

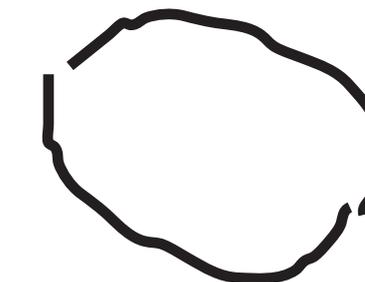
Multiculturality is a characteristic of our modern western societies, denoting cultural diversity: the coexistence of people with different cultural references. Traditionally this referred to a more conservative range of differentiations (nationality, ethnicity, religion) but more and more referring to a wider range of diversities, encompassing sexual orientation, gender, age, musical subculture etc.

Multiculturalism refers to the conscious reflection on this diversity, with prescriptive elements aiming at the recognition of the groups, and their needs and rights for continuity. Multiculturalists have been accused of working towards maintaining separation, leading to the rigidification of “subgroups” that put their own community ahead the great community of the nation or the country, thus becoming a threat to general coexistence. This is especially resented by societies promoting assimilation: the expectation that cultural minorities give up their distinctive features and melt into majority society. In reality what tends to happen is a mixture of the two: some change in the cultural pattern and some elements maintained. This special mix is often referred to as “integration”. In the best case, integration occurs with changes on both sides: dominant societies benefit from the cultural baggage that minorities bring, and minorities have the freedom to develop new cultural approaches and representations, weaving original and new references. Artist practices can valorise these processes of hybridization, of mutual change and development, and they can step up against the excessive pressure expecting only the minorities to surrender and change.



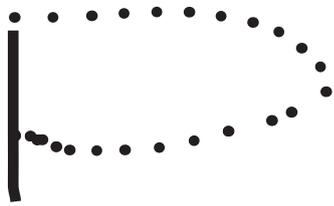
NEGOCIATION

because Artivism aims to lead to reflection, to awareness, to a demand, and even sometimes to anger. But by allowing this, by making the invisible visible, it must allow change, which will necessarily involve some form of negotiation, implicating the artist(s), the spectators, the stakeholders...



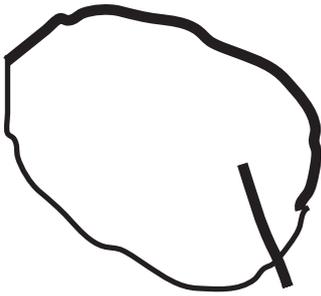
RDINARY GESTURES

artivism invites also for the awareness of our ordinary gestures, overcome the illusion of neutrality in the way we are, we move, we eat and become aware of how society and culture structures our everyday existence. Awareness is the first step to make change.



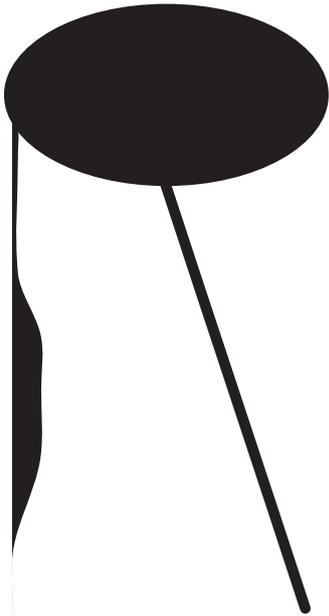
OWER

The power to do starts with the freedom to create. Artivism empowers people with freedom to act and to contribute to social creation. Power to change society, the power to carry voices often silenced, the power to be an agent of change, the power to express through any kind of art, this is artivism.



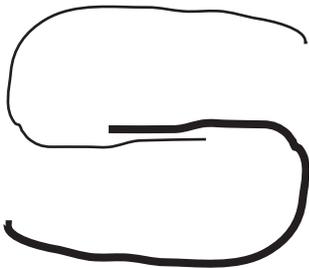
UESTIONS

In western schools children learn a very strange type of routine: teachers ask them questions, to which they - the teachers already know the answers. Questions, that often have one specific good answer. Looking at the big picture, asking such questions doesn't make much sense, does it? Artivism encourages to ask real questions, through which we can learn something new, go somewhere we haven't been before.



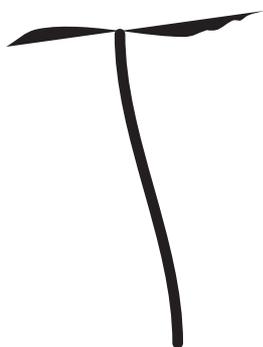
ACE

There is only one human race. Yet the words "race" and "races" continue to be used, differentiating groups of people, maintaining a tradition that transforms the illusion of "race" into reality. Genetics have proven that there is no basis for such distinction: people cannot be classified reliably into meaningful separate groups based on the visible signs of differences. Just think of it. Objectively, "black" and "white" don't make sense: no one is actually black or white, instead we have a myriad of nuances of brown, beige and pink. But here is the catch: on the basis of objective science can we deny the subjective strengths that let's say a "black identity" can bring? The point is not to deny any such identification. Merely to come out of the illusion that this identification and the category itself has any root in the objective, physical, biological world. They are social constructions for the better or the worse, often, more for the worse.



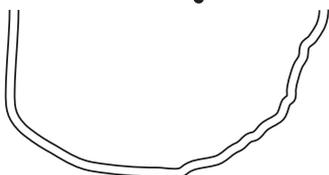
ENSORIAL

Even if we have five senses (Sight /vision, hearing/audition), taste/gustation, smell/olfaction), and touch /somatosensation) we don't use them equally. In most modern societies vision dominates the others, and cognitive reflexion dominates vision. Artivist practices should strive to invite the diversity of senses beyond the vision.



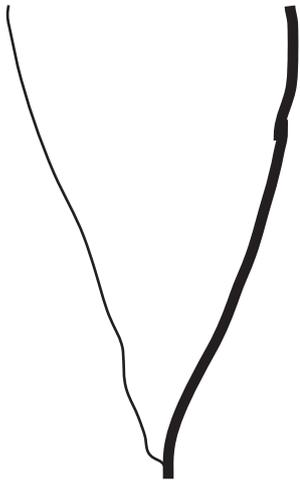
RUTH/S AND TRUTHFULNESS

Some claim we live in a "post truth" era, without any chance of objectivity, of fix reference points which could help us decide whether we are facing a lie or a fact. In fairness, we rarely have access to the objectivity of one single reality, and most of the time we construct that reality through our filters and references. But there is a wide margin between recognising the social construction of reality and authorizing oneself to claim whatever thought as true. Artivism should strive to a truthful expression and fight lies intended to manipulate people.



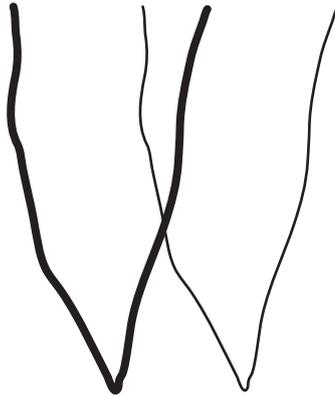
NION

is the essential goal. Because Artivism makes people speak with each other, exchange ideas, and thus allows the understanding of ideas and demands - promoting union among all in the sense of acceptance of the other and differences.



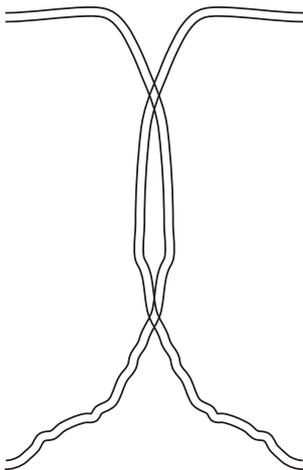
ALUES

Are orientations, pointing the directions towards which we should strive. Values are cultural: different social groups chose different values to follow. Often we take for granted our values, as if they were universal, as if their validity was unquestionable. Often, we are so convinced of our truth that we'd assume others should sooner or later realize we're right and get on board. Worse, we may not even be aware that we think, act and react based on values. We tend to live in an illusion of neutrality, oblivious to the fact that we operate in a space transformed by the forces of gravity of our values. Artist practices should try to bring to the surface such implicit forces, generating a joint reflexion on the values underlying our work.



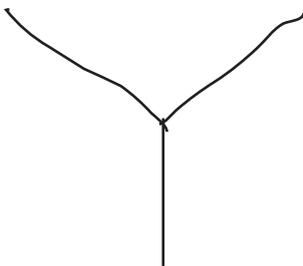
EAKNESS

Weakness sounds like a negative concept opposing its positive counterpart "strength". But like many binary oppositions, this one also serves to position ourselves in simplified way: it is good to be strong, it is bad to be weak. We propose to move beyond the superficial reading. Explore where we feel our weaknesses, vulnerabilities, because that's where important things hide: is what we don't feel certain about, that what is ambiguous, they cannot be described in simple black and white terms. Ultimately, let's draw strength from our vulnerabilities.



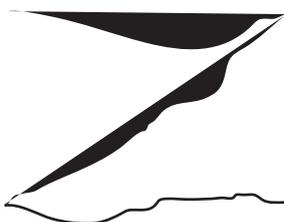
ENOPHILIA

Xenophilia refers to an affection for unknown/foreign objects or people. On a positive side, it implies an openness to difference, to the unknown, a willingness to discover newness. On a negative side, it can turn into exotism, an exaggerated fascination for the foreign and the different, which is more based on the mobilization of preconceptions and stereotypes than on a real openness to the other. Some also fear xenophilia, imagining it as a threat to group identity (national, religious etc.). However, xenophobia is not the same as ethnophobia (the hate towards one's own group), rather it is a humble invitation to oppose to xenophobia: do not fear, do not hate the other just because of the otherness.



OUR OWN BACKYARD

you may be tempted to pick up subjects that seem to you the most dramatic in the world today, and that may be a bit further away from you. Pick your own fights, notice the inequalities in your immediate surrounding, affecting groups that you are member of or that you are in contact with.



ERO-SUM GAMES

All too often conflicts are seen as zero-sum games, where one can win only at the expense of the other. Where the gains of one side are precisely outweighed by the losses on the other side. Artist practices should help us get out of this paradigm, discovering the possibility of changing together in ways that opposing parties could benefit from together. Find a creative third path between the one-sided gains and losses.

