

ART DISCOURSE BINGO

(Hi)story

This project was thought to be carried out during the 28th Biennial of São Paulo [28^a Bienal de São Paulo], in 2008. The concept of this biennial was consolidated only a year before its opening, after many curators had been invited and refused to organize it. The institution had been going through financial and political problems, which involved, among other things, some questionable contracts signed by the president of the biennial between the institution and his own financial company and his wife's landscape and gardening company. The curator who finally accepted the job decided to turn the whole event into a stage for a discussion about the problems the biennial was going through. Yet, this did not happen.

News about the biennial was only sent by e-mail to the curators' acquaintances and the actual experience during the event was in no way a democratic one. The press releases were extremely controlled and poorly written. My idea was to take part in the discussions using the Art Discourse Bingo (see explanation below), in order to question if the debate was a real or democratic one, if the words used had real meaning, and if the intent was not merely self-promotional. The project never materialized because information about the dates, subjects and speakers in the biennial was very hard to come by. Not only did I not have access to this information, but also, when I did happen to be at the biennial when a conference or debate was taking place, the audience was very small. Because I did not have access to the times, subjects and speakers of each conference and of the low attendance at each talk I saw, the Art Discourse Bingo was abandoned.

Should it have happened, with more people, it might have stimulated a real debate. First, it could have united and motivated young artists, critics and students, that is, it could have been another incentive for people to come. Second, it would have tested the capacity of the institution and of the curator to accept independent actions directed at making the debate happen (let's not forget that in this biennial a girl was put in jail for tagging a wall of the "empty floor" of the building on opening night). Third, it could have led to a discussion about the words used in the art discourse, about which of them really have meaning. Finally, it could be connected to many other questions, such as the art market and the commercial role of the biennial (in the auctions, the bids are made by lifting the hand, just

as one would indicate 5 words in a row), and the unjust Brazilian legal system (all forms of gambling are illegal in Brazil, except the official lottery; but underground bingos do exist and their owners are often not punished; only people like the tagger who was put in jail are treated with severity).

Project

- The idea came from Business Bingo, which was seemingly invented in the 90s (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buzzword_bingo)
- First, it is necessary to create a long list of buzzwords from the art world discourse. These may be chosen:
 - from conferences and talks that have already happened, by using any word counting tool on the internet (from which we can get to words such as collaborative, critical, social, ethical, market, value...);
 - by simply thinking about the buzzwords that we hear in most contemporary art conferences and talks (such as rhizome, global, local, commodity, interdisciplinary, interaction, Duchamp etc.)
- This list of words is used to make several different Art Discourse Bingo cards (it is possible to use a computer program to generate random cards)
- Prizes for those who complete their cards may be thought of, such as asking artists about good ideas for symbolic prizes. The prizes are only won by those who lift their hand up in the middle of the conference to say bingo!
- The cards are to be given out at the beginning of the conference (this is not to be done through the conference organization, but independently)
- The cards should look something like this (only an example, not meant to work in any conference):

global	collaborative	real	young	programme
Duchamp	critical	interaction	curator	build
ethics	rhizome	FREE WORD	negociation	temporary
market	relational	value	architecture	design
body	social	project	political	memory

- As the conference goes on, people must pay attention in order to hear the words that will complete their Art Discourse Bingo card.
- People who complete 5 words in a row (or 4, in case they use the free word in the middle of the card) will lift their hands and say bingo immediately. The others may continue trying to finish their cards until the end of the conference.
- Prizes will be given out at the end.