Loes Jacobs (nadine): “Q(ee)R Codes BxL” is the Brussels edition of the itinerant project “New boundaries of the well-being of the vaginal ecosystem” that you initiated in 2017. It explores the experiences of self-identified women in cities through the process of listening resulting in a series of sound-walks and sculptures. It is a platform to rethink the spatial and symbolic positions of women in public space and it always has site and context specific formalisations. How did this project come to be?

Anna Raimondo: Once my brother, who is a gynecologist, sent me a picture of himself speaking to an audience about his research titled “New boundaries of the well-being of the vaginal ecosystem”. I found a kind of synthesis of my research in this title combining territories, bodies and feminisms. I thought to reflect upon the boundaries our bodies activate, break or become subject to in public space. I also found the notion of “well-being” in it which I am attracted to because I believe everyone should have the right to a state of comfort in her city. Finally, the “vaginal ecosystem” reminds me of a potential coexistence of feminisms: to both the biological and symbolic vaginas. This title synthesises the relationships between space, gender, social behaviours, powers, education and urbanism. It takes as a starting point encounters with women from different backgrounds and their storytelling of everyday life in their cities.

Nevertheless, by using “vagina” in the title I am aware of its potential problematic aspects. But I need to name it because it is still a place of possible pleasure and abuse, and I wish to hear it as much as “mouth”, “ears”...

LJ: How did you come up with this title for Brussels?

AR: “Q(ee)R Codes” is a synthesis of queerness and bodily gestures not yet codified, while phonetically alluding to the QR Codes used for the sound-walks during which the public, equipped with headphones and a mobile phone, will be able to experience public space from the very situated experiences and perceptions of the participants of the project.To me, queerness is a potential space of inclusion made of differences, a space of interconnections where identities are recognised as fluid.

LJ: You are also collecting so-called “Codes”. What are they?

AR: They are daily gestures. For example, Gaia Carabillo (in the photo) opens her arms 180° as if to welcome "her" building in her arms, but she also did it for expressing her attitude in public space. If the code is an expression of a norm, queer codes is thus, a paradox: signs beyond the limits of codification itself, subjective attempts to escape the normativity of language. These gestures will become sculptures accompanied by the silences and hesitations of the participants, exploring the gaps between visibility/invisibility – audibility/inaudibility in the process of communication process.

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