Text for the catalogue of the exhibition AGAIN FOR TOMORROW, at Royal College of Art, London, 17 March – 9 April 2006

by Claudia Fontes

1.
London calling

'Again for Tomorrow' is an invitation to reflect on the ways in which information circulates within our network, on the build-up of data-and-image bases resulting from our practice, and on their impact on the construction of the local artists network in Argentina.

Throughout its existence, Trama has made enormous efforts to document and publish the outcomes of its activities, emphasising on the urgency of disseminating the actual results achieved.

In a context that poses a constant threat to memory, building an archive is a strategy leading to power. The Argentinian artists community is specially constrained by endemic evils including precarious documentation, a short-sighted reliance on collective memory, an insufficient number of specialised publications, and the limited circulation of information, whether oral or written, among the various generations.

When an archive's latent content is organised and distributed through a network structure like the one devised by Trama, a powerful potential is unleashed. Transparency and a willingness to share information gives rise to trust, and trust is known to be the basic condition that keeps any network alive. As information sets different parts and forms of the network in motion, there arise multiple associations that allow for a richer diversity of meaning at artistic, organisational and social levels. Thus the archive grows into an engine that pulls forward a collective imaginary, which, in turn, triggers off new narratives every time it is activated in a multiplicity of possible readings.

2.
The 1:1 Maps

For several years now, Trama has been collecting a series of maps of the world spontaneously drawn by audiences under various circumstances. This archive became our *Atlas*. This project began as an attempt to question the assumptions set in motion by the international art establishment whenever it organises its discourse about the globalisation process and the dynamics of local inclusion into exhibiting strategies or strategies for international artistic exchanges. When these strategies are seen from a deliberately decentralised stance like Trama's, they prove disappointing insofar as they lack the determination to discuss some basic, essential issues: What does globalisation mean to different people? Who has the power to access which culture? Which currency enables us to join a globalised cultural game?

Maps are devices of power. When we ask people to draw a map of the world, geographic representation is just an excuse, a shared reference, a universal text to be translated into as many renderings as the number of people performing the action, by using the language of drawing. Thus drawing becomes a *lingua franca* as well as a catalyst in the translation process: a tool to turn ideas and concepts into actual purpose and physical evidence.

In the specific case of *The 1:1 Maps*, the action and the scale of the collective drawings will necessarily demand great physical involvement from the participants. That which cannot be shared through language, and which becomes evident through the drawings, will ultimately be

shared in these actions through physical encounters and incidental discussions resulting from the common goal of drawing a global map.

The action itself is only a tool intended to induce spontaneous means of organisation in a temporary territory of belonging which, hopefully, may inspire and nurture collaborations, discussions, and exchanges of viewpoints on the issues posed above.

3.Graciela Carnevale + Lia Perjovschi

A dialogue on the use of archives as a survival strategy.

In a context of profound social mobilisations, where new ways of survival and organisation arise, there step up artistic practices that are alien to what traditionally goes by the name of art, and artists take part in new activist proposals involved in debates where the current conditions are discussed. This gives rise to unavoidable analogies and connections leading back to the 60s.1

To recreate ways of being inside and ways of being outside; to try new ways of "doing" or "showing", or "calling" or "lodging". Perhaps in our days to seek new spaces and modes of relating to others is the political in art.2

Trama has always been interested in setting up public dialogues among artists from different contexts and generations, but with certain common concerns in their practice. Deliberately, these encounters are set up as direct confrontation, without the presence of a moderator or of any other mediation between the audience and the artists.

Trama propose a public dialogue and debate between the Argentinian artist Graciela Carnevale and the Romanian artist Lia Perjovschi regarding their respective archives in progress: *Archivo Grupo de Arte de Vanguardia* and *Centre for Art Analysis*.

At different points in their careers both artists have felt the urge to preserve and share information, through archives that were built as personal strategies of survival related to their artistic calling. It seems that, in both cases, these archives fulfilled the function of providing evidence of resistance in very different political and authoritarian contexts, in which policies of censorship and denial of the other were the rule, while critical expressions of independent thought and defiance of the establishment were persecuted, and projects empowering vulnerable communities were threatened.

However, the contents of both archives, the understanding and positioning of each artist regarding the international art scene, and the personal artistic strategy each has developed is completely different. In some respects it could even be said that they are opposed.

A confrontation of the processes of construction of both archives, and the mutual questioning of their respective conceptual frames, editing choices and strategies of display might bring to light different approaches to the notion of the archive, to historical reconstruction, and to the construction of fictional collective memories.

Carnevale's archive is grounded in those documents that are left , towards the appearance of those images and voices that are missing, a rescue operation of a piece of history, that otherwise would be forgotten and denied, and therefore, in danger of being repeated.

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1 Carnevale, Graciela, 'Reflexiones', 2003

2 Carnevale, Graciela, 'Reflexiones', 2005

For some decades after starting her archive, Graciela abandoned her artistic practice, profoundly disenchanted with the art world, but she never abandoned her archive. The ethos that she kept intact through the years took her from her first collective experience in *Grupo de Arte Vanguardia* in the 60s, to the co-foundation of El Levante with the artist Mauro Machado in 2003[3]. Her journey has been an inspiration for all the new generations of artists being gathered by Trama.

3 El Levante is one of the core artists' organisations members of Trama. (www.ellevante.org.ar)