

LET'S DEMOCRATISE DEMOCRACY

daniel g. andújar
let's democratise democracy

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Works by Daniel García Andújar (Almoradí, 1966) propose a critical approach to current topics of great interest. Through research and action, the artist and activist questions communication strategies in our society. Andújar uses subversive methodologies and *appropriationist* tactics in order to expose oppressive power relationships. His interest focuses on the public space where communication is developed and, consequently, where the social structures are established; that not only happens in a physical territory (the cities) but also in an virtual one (the Internet).

Assuming also the role of theorist, Andújar seeks to give visibility to those disparities that are generated by social interaction. This is why he appeals to an audience that ceases to be a mere spectator. He does this through collaboration and inclusion which later becomes an essential part of his proposal. Using irony and humor, the artist connects with the people who help to spread his message and also contribute to create new ones. By doing this, Andújar revises those (failed) technology promises such as pluralism, tolerance and integrity, and proposes to use media in our favor in order to question them and, to create alternative cultural discourses for a more democratic social arena.

The artist refuses to accept the imposition of a historical narrative written by those who own these new tools of social communication and who manipulate us without any consideration. Andújar's projects suggest then to take action on this situation through this theoretical, aesthetic and collaborative proposal which always has to deal with physical and virtual arena. Both of them, cities and the Internet, are understood as political scenarios where citizen participation is key. Having said that, even though Andújar could be considered a *net.artist*, the designation doesn't come close to covering his entire project.

In 1996 Andújar started Technologies To The People (TTTP). With this virtual company he aimed to demonstrate the unseen side effects of the internet's popularization and to actually bring new technologies to the unprivileged. It consisted of a corporation which used the same persuasive language and marketing strategies that those big commercial companies were using at that time. Created during the Internet *boom*, the initiative pointed out the false honesty of those companies who appropriated that virtual territory, a place which had to be free, transparent and available to everyone.

In the same context and always under this critical yet constructive attitude, Andújar presents in ADN Platform, a project that has been materialized in different actions around the world. Under the resounding slogan of "Democratizemos la democracia" (Let's Democratise Democracy), Andújar insists that public space belongs to everyone and it must be continuously conquered. That is why he proposes an exercise of action and interaction to all those who want to take part in it by using *detournement* and "Hack the system" strategies. The project started on May 1st, 2011 with the initiative called "A vuelo de pájaro". During the celebration of Labor Day, Andújar launched his impressive message and flew it along the coast from Murcia to Alicante. Two weeks later, the 15M started in Madrid, and a few days later in Barcelona, where Andújar actively participated. On May 22nd of the same year, the yellow banner that read "Let's Democratise Democracy" reappeared. It was during the electoral period that the plane flew over the coast of Barcelona. Those days, lots of demonstrations against government took place.

This was an important time in Spanish history due to the outbreak of the banking crisis and the worrying growth of unemployment rates. Andújar then raised the question of democratizing democracy, referring to the Alicante and Barcelona coasts, both examples of corruption, inflation and overspending. His intention was to warn us of the need to reclaim this space (physical and social), which had been taken from us. Andújar invited people to collaborate on his project by documenting what they saw and therefore becoming a part of it.

It became clear once again that, in the oversaturated visual panorama in which we are immersed, new ideas can be developed in order to change the relationships with our cultural imaginary. In a world in which content is generated and consumed at rapid speed, Andújar urged us to recover, modify and share them as quickly as new technologies enable us. He uses them in favor of equality and, above all, democracy.

This project presented at ADN Platform under the motto "Let's Democratize Democracy", has been publicized in different exhibitions and in different forms (stickers, posters, graffiti or installations) always located in significant places such as the Ministry of Defense of Belgrade (bombed by the OTAN in 1999); the nuclear shelter of Tito (in Bosnia Herzegovina); the industrial plant and residential area of Urlamash (Yekaterinburg) and a refugee camp in Western Sahara (as part of the ARTifariti festival), among others. This exhibition in ADN Platform is the first, however, in which the different actions and proposals are grouped and presented jointly and retrospectively.

Undoubtedly, Andújar's project is still alive and will continue to be so as long as the foundations of our democracy are in danger of breaking down. This exhibition aims to give continuity to the "Let's Democratise Democracy" initiative. It is clear that Andújar uses art as a tool to propose real possibilities of change and to show that we can all participate in it. Whether in the form of a flag, banner, sticker or graffiti, the statement "Democraticemos la democracia", the main axis on which Andújar's thinking revolves, continues to expand and encourage everyone who stumbles upon it to challenge the hegemonic structures of a system that is still far from being democratic in a full sense.

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Works by Daniel G Andújar explore issues of democracy and inequality in our current information society. Always with a touch of irony, he questions how the use of new technologies affects and transforms us in our daily experience and he also criticizes the will to control that which is hidden behind their apparent transparency.

Among his works we also find: *Technologies To The People* (TTTP), a project that began in 1996. In this project we become aware of the reality that surrounds us, by investigating the material and immaterial infrastructures of our society with respect to democracy, politics, economics, culture and knowledge.

His work has been present in many museums, cultural institutions and international events around the world, among which we find dOCUMENTA14, the 53rd Venice Biennial, the Total Museum of Contemporary Art in Seoul, the DOX Center for Contemporary Art in Prague, the Künstlerhaus in Dortmund, the Ärthus Kunstbygning or the Württembergischer Kunstverein of Stuttgart. Among his most recent projects are "The Disasters of War. Trojan Horse" which was exhibited at dOCUMENTA14 in Athens and Kassel (2017) and at the Centro de El Carmen for Contemporary Art in Valencia (2018). In 2015 the Reina Sofía Museum in Madrid presented the exhibition "Sistema Operativo" (Operating System) which brought together its most recent projects, together with previous works that were presented in Spain for the first time on this occasion.

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Irene Pedrico: communication@adngaleria.com

Tel (+34) 934 51 00 64

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