

Water System Museum: in Collaboration and Re-imagination

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Abstract

Chen Jianjun and Cao Minghao initiated 'Water System Project' in 2013. The project takes place in the area of Dujiangyan Irrigation System and its downstreams. 'Museum' is an approach in the artists' work, which is a physical place of gathering and action, and also a platform for reflection and debate. In this paper we focus on one area of work in 'Water System Project', a collaboration between the artists and IYouShe, a community development NGO, in No.67 Courtyard East Jiaochangba, Shuijingfang Neighbourhood, Chengdu, China. We investigate three issues in the making of a community museum: firstly, what kind of individual narratives and alternative imaginations are brought in through artists' socially engaged practices? Secondly, how can creating a museum be a tool for the neighbourhood to define their needs? Thirdly, how do local residents, NGOs, artists and other stakeholders negotiate different positions and achieve sustainable collaborations?

Keywords: Artistic Research, Community Museum, Individual Agency in Participation, NGO, Negotiation of Positions.