Vietnamese independent groups in the arts

Presented by Tran Thuy

Keynotes

- The research conducted in Hanoi under TRYSPACES

- Other findings (from literature review and other studies/observations)

Introduction

TRYSPACES

- a team of interdisciplinary researchers and students, multimedia artists, youth workers, urban professionals and youth from Mexico City, Montreal, Paris and Hanoi.

- three research objectives: *Transgression, Regulation, Intervention*

Introduction

TRYSPACES: Research objectives

- **<u>Transgression:</u>** To compare how adolescents and young adults in Montreal, Paris, Mexico City and Hanoi use and appropriate physical and virtual public spaces; to understand how this contributes to the constitution of their identity, allows them to express their world view and to carve out a place for themselves in an increasingly urban and interconnected world.

- **<u>Regulation:</u>** Understand and explain the consequences of these transgressive practices of spatial appropriation by young people on the regulation of public spaces and urban governance.

- **<u>Intervention:</u>** Stimulate collaborative research between young people, researchers, decision-makers, artists and associative actors.

http://tryspaces.org/

Creative spaces

- Art-linked creation/creativity (literature, painting, design, music and performances…)

- Co-working spaces might be present, but the focus is not on sites only dedicated to co-working nor predominantly IT-hubs

- Features such as IT, bar, café… might be present in large spaces

Creative spaces
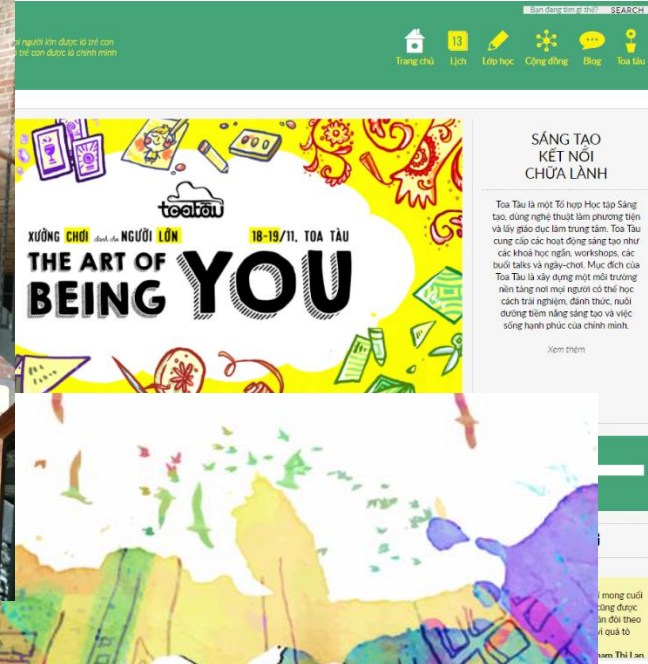
Research areas and context

- Alternative, community-led formations of cultural and artistic spaces across Asia

- A proliferation of creative spaces in Hanoi where young Hanoians meet to socialize and collaborate.

- The spaces face existential challenges

Research areas and context

Vietnam: Changes in the culture sector – Policy level

- Resolution 33-NQ/TW on culture and human development in the context of sustainable development, 2014

⟶ Culture as

- values and standards (Arnoldian "high culture")

- everyday life (Edward Tyler's anthropological approach)

- cultural industries (first time mentioned in a policy document)

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Research areas and context

Vietnam: Changes in the culture sector – Policy level

- Decree 1755/QĐ-TTg (National Strategy for the development of the cultural industries), 2016

⟶ Economic values of cultural industries

Research areas and context

Vietnam: Changes in the culture sector – Grassroots level

- Mapping by British Council, 2014: *40+ creative hubs across the country*

- Research by UNESCO and Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2016: *creative hubs struggled financially; not legally recognized; no support policy.*

- Mapping and research by British Council, 2018: *the situation remains, but the number of hubs increases to 140+*

Research areas and context

Vietnam: The formation of independent groups in the arts

- "The **role** of creative hubs in the creative **economy**" – reports by UNESCO, British Council, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism;

- Academic research: **youth** and changes in **urban lifestyles**

- **Why and how? Other perspectives?** – more attention needed

TRYSPACES: Youth and Transgression

Research objectives

- to understand the patterns of emergence and disappearance of creative spaces in Hanoi, Vietnam which are operated by or attract youth.

- to investigate how such individuals either believe they are or (actually) are transgressing official and cultural norms with regards to their use of/actions in creative spaces and their surrounds.

- Video: http://tryspaces.org/presentation-du-projet-tryspaces/ (Transgression - 3:17')

http://tryspaces.org/

TRYSPACES: Youth and Transgression

Youth:

The process of building independence, autonomy and responsibility

A phase in the process of identity building, status positioning, biological changes

Transgression:

Synonymous with survival as much as with resistance

Could be deviance but not necessarily

A difference from the norm

Freedom

A system of norms and rules which get broken

New paradigms

Movement

Relations to the norm

Relational

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TRYSPACES: Youth and Transgression

Case studies

- Focusing on the now-disbanded 'Zone 9' creative space and its tenants + 'Hanoi Creative City', supposedly a replacement of Zone 9, and its tenants

http://tryspaces.org/studycase/youth-transgressions-vietnamese-creative-city-copy-2/

- Other creative spaces in the city

  ⟶ 70+ interviews conducted in summer 2019

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Zone 9 in 2013

TRYSPACES
MONTREAL PARIS
MEXICO HANOI
transformative youth spaces

Photos: Vietnamnet

Photos: Tran Thuy

Hanoi Creative City

Photos: Hanoi Grapevine (left), TRYSPACES (right)

TRYSPACES: Youth and Transgression

Research questions

- RQ1: : where have tenants/individuals **from Zone 9 re-located to**, and have they been able to recreate a **similar style** of 'creative space', or not? If not, what have they decided to **do instead** and why?

- RQ2: what are the **motivations and strategies** of the individuals creating/organizing/appropriating the **Hanoi Creative City** creative space in Hanoi (including possible former tenants from Zone 9)?

TRYSPACES: Youth and Transgression

Research questions

- RQ3: For the three creative spaces, what are the **motivations and strategies** of the individuals creating, organizing and/or appropriating these **different creative spaces** in Hanoi?

- RQ4: While the tenants of these creative spaces might not be youth themselves, we are interested to know: how are **youth being considered** in the creation of these spaces by others (if the creators are older), and how **youth interact with these spaces** and in what roles?

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TRYSPACES: Youth and Transgression

Expected benefits

- provide insights into the formation of alternative cultural spaces in Hanoi

- how these alternative spaces depart from the visions of official state policy

- how youth culture is actively being formed and contested in the contemporary Vietnamese city

TRYSPACES: Youth and Transgression

Initial findings

- Too diverse to be generalized

Motivations:

- To collaborate, to express creative selves and energies, to build communities, to provide entertainment services, to be cool…

- Hubs as the work of individuals, groups or communities?

- The influence of Western models

- Changes over time: self expressions as political and social activism or mere entertainment

TRYSPACES: Youth and Transgression

Initial findings

Strategies

- Being open and being adaptive

- With or without a space? What kind of spaces?

- Funding strategies and project-based approaches

- Strategies for survival, "business models" and questions of independence and sustainability

- The delicate balance: Being independent and being commercial

TRYSPACES: Youth and Transgression

Initial findings

Youth

- Youth is always at the center of hubs, but hubs are more than just for youth

- Discrepancies of perceptions between hubs' founders and users

- Different ways and levels of youth participation

TRYSPACES: Youth and Transgression

Initial findings

Transgression

- Being different, being interesting and being yourself: expressions from fashion styles, social behaviors to the transformation of spaces and the practices of experimental arts

- The sense of freedom (and individual rebellion among youth against family/community/social norms)

- The relationality of being transgressive: "No, I do not think that we have done anything transgressive"

- Different perceptions among generations

- Transgression and institutionalization

TRYSPACES: Youth and Transgression

Initial findings

Creative projects as assemblages

- "temporary and provisional connective arrangements"*

- "a mix of horizontally and vertically organized elements"*

- Creativity as an interactive process

* Mar, P. and Anderson, K. (2010) 'The Creative Assemblage: Theorizing Contemporary Forms of Arts-based Collaboration', Journal of Cultural Economy 3(1): 35–51.

http://tryspaces.org/