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## Report Khoj 'In Context - Food Edition' residency

Overall the residency at Khoj has been really a very important experience for us. We wanted to confront ourselves with different people and culture, we were looking for new grounds and territories to explore, new experiences that could influence our way of looking at and perceiving the environment, spaces where experimenting new possibilities for our art practice ... in Delhi we had all these opportunities.

During the residency we immerse ourselves in the new environment experimenting the utopian attempt to connect ourselves with the field of forces driving the food cycle of Delhi, exploring the specific "relational field" of the place, following the fluxes of organic matter getting through the city. We explored different places and situations in relation with the food cycle in all its stages: from the fields to the market and the consumption. We visited Azadpur Mandi Vegetable and Fruits whole sales market, the ancient orchards of Delhi, urban agricultural fields, open air markets, urban farmers, etc, trying to explore the food cycle in all its different aspects. This process of discovering resulted in different artworks (cowdung sculpture, Yamuna drawings, silver soap, golden laddu), realized experimenting new techniques and materials; in the exhibition these objects formed a "systemic" constellation of elements telling something about food cycle and the relations between its different components. We performed also a public action with a hand cart by which we tried to reflect on what's essential for human being, exchanging artworks for food with the public in the street.

For sure the experimentations with new concepts and materials we did at KHOJ will be the base for new theoretical elaboration and works in the future. In the last period we have shown the Yamuna drawings two times and, at the moment, two of them are part of a work we did for an exhibition at GAM (Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art).

We really would like to edit a little catalogue of the work we did on the Yamuna river, documenting the action on the river and the collection of drawings resulting from the process. We are also thinking to go on with the experimentation on the cowdung as a raw material for sculpture.

We think that the main difficulty we had during the residency was related with Time. We think that the residency period was too short in relation with Khoj expectations. If there's the intention to have a true exhibition (and works really site specific, related with local community) at the end of the residency and not only an open-studio, the residency period is really too short. Most of all for project involving community, we think that it's necessary to have more time in order to deepen the relation with the place and community. In 6 weeks you haven't really the possibility to get inside the things and follow the process in the proper way. For the artist from abroad (most of all if it's their first time in India) in the first period is quite difficult to work... It takes maybe two weeks only for the physical adaptation to the new environmental conditions and then a long time to start to understand something about Indian culture, society, etc.

For what concern our plans, we've just opened a solo exhibition at GAM (Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art) of Turin (<http://www.gamtorino.it/en/mostra.php?id=332>). We just come back from very short residency period in Frassineto Po, a small village on the Po River for a public art project (<http://www.parcocii.org/main/>).

In autumn we really would like to have the time to sort out all the materials from our last works (2011-2012), update and maybe redesign our web site and try to go on with the project of a catalogue/book concerning our works of the last 10 years. We also apply for a 6 months residency period in Montreal (2013).

### **Residency Feedback**

During the residency we had the great opportunity to confront ourselves with other artists (indian and international) exchanging ideas and experiences. It was a very interesting group of people, each one with a different artistic practice but all open to discussion and confrontation.

Living together in the residency was very good because we shared all the experience in Delhi in a continue dialogue between us.

The presence and involvement of Indian artists (+ Suresh) was really decisive. They were able to give us many information and knowledge about Indian culture, traditions, religion, ecc. And that was really essential for us to try to understand Indian situation and start working. They also give us many important practical information that facilitate our everyday life.

In Khoj we felt free to experiment new materials and practice without any restrictions. And this is a very important aspect because the spaces for a really free experimentation in the arts are becoming more and more rare.

Also Khirkee Village social and urban context was very impressive for us: the use of public space by inhabitants, the spontaneous architecture, the craftsmanship of the jobs, the class differences...all these experience would shed for sure a new light also on the context in which we currently live.

It would have been good to spend more time with Khoj curatorial staff (probably we spent more time with the administrative staff than curatorial one...) and also with Ryan, in order to share more deeply concepts and ideas during the residency. The weekly meetings were important moments but we had the impressions that weren't enough to go deep in the confrontation.

We know that for you was a very particular period (move, restoration etc.) and so you hadn't so much time to follow our activities but was a pity not to have more time to spend together, also out of Khoj context.

Maybe it could be interesting for you to differentiate the duration of the residencies depending on the objectives you have. We think that six weeks are not enough to work at the realization of a complete project with final exhibition. Probably for Indian artists is different because they are already adapted to the local "environment", but in general, for a site-specific project (involving the community) is a too short period.

We think it could be important for Khoj (in the new building) to promote some longer residency to develop long term public-art projects that can involve, in a deep way, the territory of Khirkee Village and his inhabitants, and facilitate the rootedness of Khoj in the context.

Another interesting things could be to organize more studio visits and public lectures in order to present and share with the public, professionals curators, the press corps as well as partner institutions and other cultural workers (local and visiting) the work carried out by the artists in residence. It could be also important to have more opportunities to discuss the projects with other curators and entities operating in the Delhi area, establishing new relationships, meeting experts and artists working in similar fields (as we did when we visited Ravi Agarval).

It was a pity not to have had the time for some collective visits to significant places outside Delhi. For our work we missed a lot the point of view from outside the city.

We think it would also be important to have a skilled technician equipped with a basic technical equipment: screwgun, jig and circular saw, basic tools bag ( hammer, saws, pincers, screws, nails, plugs, level, measuring tape, square etc.), and more assistants (interns?) or collaborators involved in the residency. The involvement of local artists (for ex. Pratik, Rabindra, etc.) was really a very good idea but we think it could have been even more productive if it had started since the beginning of the residency period (or better if the residency had been longer).