



Project author or developer:
Sandberg Instituut

Where:
NL / The Netherlands / Government of Amsterdam

Website:
www.schoolofmissingstudies.net/

Since its initiation, The School of Missing Studies (SMS) has functioned as a nomadic, collaborative platform for experimental study and research of the public environment (public space, public time, public good) marked by, or currently undergoing abrupt transition. Under the roof of the Sandberg Instituut, SMS operates as a one-time MA programme on Art and Learning. Following the observation that singular disciplines sometimes fail to discern or capture significant knowledge about uncommon or unprecedented situations, SMS invites prospective students to develop, discuss and share possible methods to scout for this information, which seems to flow freely in unbound space and through open networks. Participation in the programme is not restricted to artists: SMS brings together practitioners with diverse educational or professional backgrounds, who share a common ideal to make “the missing” their mission and are interested in artistic practice as a *modus operandi* for imagination and productive speculation. Both art project and MA course, SMS proposes to find common and uncommon grounds for research and practice, from where acute political, social, educational and urban challenges can be articulated and further debated.

Art is a form of organizing relationships between disparate objects and/ideas that can produce new meaning and experiences, thereby effecting disruptions or significant change in everyday life – even if only small. As a way to form and formulate knowledge, art can create uncommon perspectives and bring about new ways for understanding, beyond what is relevant to its own context. One could even argue that art brings change only there where it breaks with the desire to perpetuate its own rules. Transgression is seen as an intrinsic quality of art, and the transgression of art’s institutional limits can be seen as springing from a reflective engagement with those very limits. How can this urge for self-reflection; the continuous challenging of prevailing ideas, and persistent refusal of absolute models, be disseminated as a potentially extra-disciplinary tactic – a way to work with undefined or unclassified knowledge and in spaces that are subject to change? The School of Missing Studies takes artistic practice as its point of reference for the desire to experiment with new *modi operandi* for the production of relations, meaning, and experiences in public space.

URGENCY In a world where the value of art is challenged, it is timely to reinvest in its place in society. The School of Missing Studies embraces the qualities intrinsic to artistic practice, as a means to disclose – make public – what is at stake in public space. The issue of public space has long been articulated in close connection to democracy, and many theorists have argued that when democracy is under threat, so is public space. The discussion of public issues is therefore not exclusively of this time, but all the more relevant in light of the current increase of private ownership and privatization of public space.

With the term “public space” we refer to any site of potential conflict over rights, information, relations, and objects – a space that requires articulation, so that a community can be formed, called to order, and enter the order of the political. “Publicness” does not manifest itself in spatial matters only. In fact, recent debates over forms of common property such as knowledge and culture show that public space is to be understood in the broadest terms possible – as that which holds the

