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International Conference and Exhibition on the Women's Prison of Les Corts Future Memorial

25 - 27th November 2014

Les Corts District. Comas Sq., 18 (Conference)

Joan Güell St./ Europa St. corner (Exhibition)

WOMEN / PRISON

International Conference and Exhibition on the Women's Prison of Les Corts Future Memorial

The recovery of the memory of what was the Prison of Les Corts, in Barcelona, is a process that is being carried out by the civil society. There is still much to be done, though. We demand a public expression in an urban setting that pays a tribute to the women and their children who suffered repression and condemnation in this institution, now completely invisible in the territory of Les Corts.

Collective memories may fade gradually, but the individual ones remain, and become the engine that produces the recovery of that forgotten past. This recovery is the sum of individual actions that can be forged into a network shared images of a common past.

This way the memory of the women's prison is being recovered in Les Corts since 2010. Called "Provincial Women's Prison of Barcelona" during the dictatorship (1939-1955), it had previously been the Catalan republican government who established it as a prison under the name of Women's General Correctional. During the Civil War political prisoners were kept there, both of right-wing ideology and from the POUM (Worker's Party of Marxist Unification).

With the entry of the rebel troops in Barcelona in January 1939, the Prison of Les Corts became the Provincial Prison for women, run by the religious order The Daughters of Charity, following the usual practice of female prisons in the Franco regime. In mid-1939 there were about two thousand prisoners and forty children imprisoned in this institution. Eleven political prisoners were executed between 1939 and 1940 in el Camp de La Bota, in Sant Adrià. In its extensive garden, hundreds of women were forced to work for the benefit of the religious order, especially during the early years. A sewing workshop was started in the early fifties. In October 1955 the prison was closed, and a group of two hundred sixty-three women and nineteen

children was transferred to the prison Modelo in Barcelona. A few years later, the prison building was demolished in order to build the department store El Corte Ingles at Maria Cristina Sq. The rest of the land was reparcelled and rebuilt. This radical change in the uses of the area promotes the physical and social forgetfulness of one of the most important repressive institutions statewide.

It is the civil society that initiates the recovery of the site: Former prisoners' relatives, organizations and associations within and outside the district, academic research groups... Citizens engaged in an open and collaborative process, which has served to restore a part of the collective memory of the city.

It is in this context that we started working in 2012, developing a process that is still alive, which reflects on the creation of a monument as a form of public expression to support and honor the women, as well as their sons and daughters, who suffered repression and condemnation in this institution. The development of a series of public art projects within the framework of the Master's Degree in Urban Design at the University of Barcelona has served as a think tank to start the debate at the citizen's level, while the International Conference and Exhibition on the Women's Prison of Les Corts Future Memorial on November 25 th, 26th and 27th will extend the debate to both experts and citizens.

In the context of this event, we will discuss the ability of contemporary art for socializing collective memory and dignity of the victims, encouraging transversal and collective reflection and debate on the creation of public spaces of memory.

**> Visit the online exhibition of projects <
<http://blocs.lescorts.cc/presodedones/>**

Tuesday 25th

- WORKSHOP -

11:00 - 12:00 h

“The invisible prison” route: tour around the territory from the perimeter of the former prison in Les Corts. Visit the exhibition Women/Prison.

12:00 - 13:00 h

Visit the exhibition “The invisible prison”, Centre Cívic Pere Quart.

- OPEN SESSION -

17:00 - 17:30 h

Opening conference session

17:30 - 18:00 h

History and memory from the imprisoned woman, the case of Les Corts. Fernando Hernández (historian, Madrid)

18:00 - 18:30 h

Memory and experiences, the voices of family members. Anna Maria Batalla, Maria Rosa López

18:30 - 19:00 h

Debate

19:00 - 19:30 h

Opening lecture:
Countermonuments, ways for socializing: Memory and public space
Horst Hoheisel (artist, Germany)

19:30 - 20:00 h

Table A: **International Examples**
Stefanie Endlich (professor, Germany), Valentina Rozas (architect, Chile/EEUU)

20:00 - 20:30 h

Debate and conclusions

20:30 - 21:00 h

Reading tribute. **The voices from Les Corts**

Wednesday 26th

- WORKSHOP -

10:00 - 14:00 h

Discussion about the projects of the future monument.

- OPEN SESSION -

17:00 - 17:45 h

Table B: **Organizations and participatory processes, an invisible prison for a shared social memory.** Mercè de la Torre (Dones & Co) , Jordi Guixé (Eurom), Núria Ricart (Cr.Polis)

17:45 - 18:15 h

Women, monumentality and public space. Les Corts, Barcelona. Isabel Segura (historian, Barcelona)

18:15 - 18:40 h

Memory assaults, Former prison project. Daniel Godia, Daniel Raya, Joaquín Jordán (Colectivo Ex-presó)
Reaction in Women’s Square on 1936. Arran Gràcia

18:40 - 19:00 h

Debate

19:00 - 19:30 h

Fragmented Memory. Francesc Torres (artist, Barcelona)

19:30 - 20:15 h

Table C: **Art, memory and public space, a European and international perspective**
Fernando Sánchez Castillo (artist, Madrid), Pedro Brandão (architect, Lisboa), Kristina Norman (artist, Tallin)

20:15 - 20:45 h

Debate and conclusions

Thursday 27th

- WORKSHOP -

10:00 - 13:00 h

Conclusions and final report.

13:00 - 13:30 h

Closing session.

Organized by:

Cr. POLIS – Grc. art, city, society (Universitat de Barcelona); EUROM – European Observatory on Memories (Fundació Solidaritat UB); ACME – Associació per la Cultura i la Memòria

Promoted by:

Associació de Veïns de Les Corts; Associació de Veïns de Sant Ramón Nonat; Banc Solidari; Conèixer Història; Cor Cremat; Cup Les Corts; ICV Les Corts; Xarxa Ciutadana de Les Corts; Relatives of former prisoners: Anna Maria Batalla, Libertad Canela Conejero, Flora Duran, Teresa Duran, Esther Lacort, M^a Rosa López, Joan Mercadé, Conxita Romeu, Montserrat Vicente

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