

As we have already announced in May, two of IACSA's Advisory Board members have passed away: Elisabeth Katschnig-Fasch (Graz) died on February 4, 2012, Colette Pétonnet (Paris) on November 4, 2012. As announced we want to commemorate them by presenting English translations of articles, starting with Colette Pétonnet, a pioneer in French urban anthropology. A seminary in her memory will be held in Paris in October (see information below).

Content:

- 2 Colette Pétonnet, *With no fanfare and celebration* (1997)
- 5 Announcement of Commemoration Seminar in Paris, October 3-4, 2013

Short biography

Colette Pétonnet (1929-2012) has been doing her degrees in Poitiers and worked for seven years in Morocco. She returned to France after 1956 and came back to study, in 1964, ethnology under Roger Bastide and André Leroi Gourhan. She completed her doctoral thesis in 1967, dedicated to a transitional city in the Paris suburbs, subsequently published under the title "Ces gens-là" in 1968. In 1969 she joined the CNRS, where she completed a state thesis on the urban neo-proletariat of Spanish and Portuguese immigrants. The novelty of her approach and her sharp-sightedness made her an authority in urban anthropology.

Tribute by Claudia Fonseca, *Un hommage brésilien à Colette Pétonnet*, URL: <http://www.iacn.cnrs.fr/lau/spip.php?article586>

Impressum

The *International association for Cultural Studies in Architecture* IACSA is an association according to Swiss law, founded in 2008. It consists of the *Advisory Board*, the *Working Board*, and the *Network Editor*.

IACSA membership is open for everyone interested and willing to contribute to build the network. IACSA's registered office's address is at Hammerstrasse 14, 4058 Basel, Switzerland. The IACSA Newsletter is published every two months in electronic form.

*Membership:* Membership is free. If you sense that the idea of IACSA covers the fields of your interest you are welcome to participate as a member of the *Working Board*. Simply write an informal request to [iacsa@iacsa.eu](mailto:iacsa@iacsa.eu).

*Advisory Board members:* Pauline von Bonsdorff, FI • Ingrid Breckner, DE • Catharina Dyrssen, SE • Lucy Ferrari, CH • Jane M. Jacobs, SG • Angela McRobbie, UK • Johanna Rolshoven, AT.

*Network Editor:* Justin Winkler, CH

« Sans trompettes ni fanfares », introduction to chapter « XXe siècle ». In: Sous la direction de Florence Gétreau, *Musiciens des rues de Paris*, 80-86. Catalogue de l'exposition au Musée national des Arts et Traditions populaires 18 novembre 1997-27 avril 1998. Édition de la Réunion des Musées nationaux (RMN), Paris 1997.

By courtesy of the Réunion des musées nationaux Grand Palais, April 9, 2013.

Reference: English translation by Justin Winkler and Mark Angus of:

## With no fanfare and celebration

Colette Pétonnet

In 1987<sup>[0]</sup> I wrote that we lack the observers who would describe “the street scenes”. While the latter still exists it is perhaps though too faint to provoke coverage by an indifferent world. Mentalities continue to change. What is it about the human climate of streets in the capital which has been enjoyed by historians and artist?

Things have disappeared gently, one after another, without public commotion—things of life which have magnified the days, or which have broken their flight, sounds, colours, odours... No more are there elegant ladies on the bridges, no parades, no pennants. Nothing that gleams or glitters, except around Christmas, as if a mirthlessly performed task. The street becomes morose, never again variegated, colourful, decorated in purple and gold. Even the Republican Guard has stopped to walk up the boulevard with the noise of boots to the rhythm of drums hanging from the flanks of horses. No other odours, evening and morning, than the scent of burning gas. Yet, Paris had, still twenty years ago, a pleasant scent during the early hours of the morning when the freshness of the night had washed off the night's miasmas. One sees nothing but the ceaseless roundabout of the cars. Technique has become the accomplice of monotony to such an extent that formerly spectacular incidents can now do without men and comments.

The cleaning of the façade no longer splatters passers-by. It is accomplished behind a waterproof tarpaulin attached to the walls, and concealed from sight like the relocated goods and furniture taken to the upper floors, and which glide up in a closed retainer. Construction is executed rapidly thanks to a crane behind the palisades, and demolitions are—luckily—no longer executed at the scale of a neighbourhood, as was the case of those blocks where the Parisian people have, for a long time, contemplated the increasing excavations. They merely surreptitiously eat away within a block.

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[0 In: Jacques Gutwirth, Colette Pétonnet (éds.), *Chemins de la ville. Enquêtes ethnologiques*. Commission d'anthropologie et d'ethnologie françaises, Laboratoire d'anthropologie urbaine. Éditions du CTHS., Paris 1987.]

Nothing but the sound of labouring engines can be heard, and which have put an end to the other sounds, cries, calls, shouts, snorting of which contemporary authors have complained, the deafening din of many lives in the street.

There is no identifiable sound, except in rare moments—at Angelus bell's time on Saint-Sulpice square—, a single noise which one tries hereafter to compensate for this syrupy music that saturates public space, from train stations to shops, with its inflicted sonority. You don't hear the saw of the neighbour, his workshop having been sold. The number of cafés decreases. Nobody plays Three Card Monte in rue de la Traversière. The shops are painted but no worker is heard singing on his ladder. The market also changes, almost without anyone noticing it, because it is still busy. But are there still barrows? Nobody calls any more to the customers with modulating cries. In contrast, a barrel organ player shows up on Sundays as if having to keep up an illusion.

There are enclaves, passages, where the tailors work with doors open, where in the evening the steps of the pedestrians resound and where, in the dawn, the buzz of the brush engine moving along the gutter is heard, —but these are just the survivors. Life has retreated behind the double glazing and the doors locked by secret codes, turned inward towards the private sphere. Chased from the street since ancient times, will it finally have ceded to the combined powers of the universes of cars and the byelaws of local authorities?

The street is a public circulatory space that doesn't need many restrictions, a space where everyone, all the while representing nothing but himself, has a certain liberty. The public authorities have always taken care to regulate the expressions of social and affective life, to restrict all spilling over of love, hatred and joy, and they seem, close to this end of the century, to be approaching an optimum result. In February 1997 an obstinate singer appears in court for having disturbed the quiet of a neighbourhood with his musical noise, having always placed himself in the same spot in Montmartre with his barrel organ. One can indeed understand that in a saturated environment certain people would be irritated by these ballads from another era. But some journalists, outraged by this severe judgement, proposed, (without noticing that their wish might be laughable), that the mayor of Paris should issue singing licences. Actually a council order had already banned singing and the use of musical instruments out on the street, except for the holders of a permit for itinerant activities; a permit that the incriminated individual, apart from not having been sufficiently itinerant, didn't possess.

The street is not intended for standing still, with some exceptions with authorisations, and everything contributes towards discouraging us to do so, to sever the rambler, the by-passer, from the temptation to live for a moment on the spot. The small pedestrian squares are haunted by old men and littered, like coves, with stagnant water, away from the river current, and contemporary urbanism suppresses the nooks and crannies of the old urban fabric which could serve as refuges. One no longer builds in recesses within narrow streets,

but along the alignment of façades in a rigorously stiff scheme. The street is made for circulation, without showcases, it becomes an express-way, it is dehumanised.

The ordinary street with all its diversity represents, for the city dweller, the nature of the city, its *raison d'être*. The urbanism of the sixties, believing that it could dispense with this, was heavily wrong. It is so necessary, so vital, that the interdiction to express emotions on the street could never be absolute. Two valves were, therefore, institutionalised: the National Day ball on July 14<sup>th</sup>, which is already showing its' age, and the more recently introduced music festivals which allow, during the long evenings of the summer solstice, all kinds of music to be played and enjoyed. Dance, crowds and the orchestral cacophony give these few nights the role which earlier, in traditional societies, carnival had had; the reversal of the everyday and trespassing of interdictions which guarantee the discipline during all other days of the year. The success of June 21<sup>st</sup>, the music festival, proves the health of the tradition.

In the seizure of Paris in the 19th century the public gardens were opened, and one could always ask the plants, their colours, their silence, for solutions for our dilemmas. In certain modern parks accessing the lawns is already tolerated. Madame de Panafieu, deputy mayoress of Paris, hopes that research on the grasses will result in delivering lawns that can be walked over, and that they will install sun beds on the grass of Bagatelle<sup>1</sup>. But the lawns will never dissuade anyone to step on the sidewalks. In the same spirit the environs of the new National Library of France, built in close proximity to an inhospitable embankment, proposes a highly symbolic model. The terrace that accompanies the embankment, and that has been dedicated to become a public parkway, was, in the end, planted with two rows of trellised willows.<sup>2</sup> These osiers have the capacity to quickly take root and will, in spring, be covered by new shoots. So the humble practice of rooting plant cuttings has been used to humanise the noisy and upsetting zone next to this site, a site so highly valued by collective memory.

The last question being asked is to know if the contemporary street is dead, or if it is simply prevented from existing? Some indicators speak in favour of the second hypothesis; signs reveal a sometimes silent resistance. Men, women and children sell in the street the first daffodils and the lilies of the valley. New characters have appeared, away from the traffic, on the «paving stones» and in the neo-esplanades; jugglers who throw their balls up, silently, machine-like. Certain beggars are kneeling in the middle of the sidewalk, motionless and mute as if sentenced to death, and the flow of pedestrians closes behind them

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1 According to her declaration in the newspaper *Libération* of February 5th, 1997. Parc de Bagatelle is part of Bois de Boulogne.

2 Work by Jean-Pierre Hardouin, expert of osier stakes in Neuil, Indre-et-Loire. [Until 2001 37190 Cheillé. See J.-P. Hardouin, *Là où le saule devient osier*. In: *Tissage, corderie, vannerie. Approches archéologiques, ethnologiques, technologiques*, p. 275-282. Association pour la promotion et la diffusion des connaissances archéologiques, Juan-les-Pins.]

like the water of a torrent after having passed a stone. A new variety of pedestrians is born, an agile nimble one, consisting of young men driving skateboards and passing the cars with elegance. The younger ones do slalom and jumps with much ability, greatly admired, on the Trocadéro Esplanade. Children play with a ball below the bandstands, and the merry-go-rounds turn and delight the little children.

And what shall we think of this new way of going to a café, gossiping outdoors with a glass in the hand or on a car bonnet? The street harbours love less frequently than in earlier times since love has become a less clandestine issue. By contrast, one consumes without shame, food and beverage, upright, walking, outside the terraces designed for this or around small tables packed on narrow sidewalks, too close to the cars' exhausts. Here sleep also, during the midsummery heat wave, those who have no longer a residence. But the most interesting phenomenon is probably the "demonstration", ever increasing in size as well as in frequency. A specialty of Paris, such demonstrations,—*la manif*—has conquered the other cities, a trespassing par excellence, which diverts the traffic, invades space outside the prescribed times, in the smoke and scent of grilled meat, bringing back the fairs of past times, multiplying the puns and slogans, the masquerades and banners. Participating in a demonstration means expressing collectively an opinion or a request, but no matter what the serious aspects of the moment or the identity of the group are, the delight in doing so and the incidental re-conquest of the street that accompanies the claims is obvious. Once it has ebbed away the spectacle is superseded by the ballet of the dumper trucks which hasten to collect the garbage. The "manif" stands for everything in collective representation; it substitutes for the parades, the processions, the carnivals and cortèges, the marriages, the mournings. When men become weary of the virtual image and of their dialogues on the keyboard they still can—as long as the cities remain circumscribed—go in the streets in order to feel alive by listening to the beats of their pulse.

Announcement

## Les sentiers de l'ethnologie urbaine avec Colette Pétonnet. Séminaire d'hommage

October 3-4, 2013, Laboratoire de Géologie, salle de conférences (2e étage et demie), Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, 43 rue Buffon, Paris, France (75005). Programme flyer (pdf) at <http://calenda.org/259327?file=1>

With presentations and interventions by (alphabetically) Philippe Bonnin, Françoise Dubost, Claudia Fonseca, Cédric Frétygné, Michelangelo Giampaoli, Agnès Jeanjean, Marie-Pierre Julien, Liliane Kuczynski, Bernadette Lizet, Claudia Turra Magni, Anne Monjaret, Olga Muro, Sylvie Nail, Thierry Paquot, Michelle Perrot, Martine Ségalen, Gilles Teissonnières, Daniel Terrolle, Patrick Williams, and Françoise Zonabend.