

Douglas Schdes - Project proposal

*Random acts of maintenance*

The six-week residency with Chambre Blanche and Rad'art in the village of San Romano, Italy, would provide a unique opportunity to continue and expand my exploration and experimentation into the ubiquitous nature of maintenance and art – the everyday ongoing encounter with objects, their environments and the manner in which they are cared for or not.

During the residency I propose to work in connection with the local community by performing random acts of maintenance in and around the village. I would like to begin the residency by walking the village, picking up garbage, removing weeds from the side of the road, sweeping up loose gravel, arranging natural debris from the countryside placing them into stacks and piles. I see this time as my introduction to the community and would shortly thereafter plan to engage with some of the villagers responsible for the garbage collection to find out where the garbage is dumped and to create maps that identify the link between the dump and the village.

The acts, maps and interactions reflect the common everyday relationship we all negotiate with spaces that are essential to our ordering of the world. These spaces require attention to maintain the desired aesthetic, some receiving more than others. The choice to respond depends on the values we attach to any given space. Thus the act of maintenance is an artistic practice because of the consideration for form, composition and colour, created or performed to illicit a desired emotional response. For example, sweeping the street is an artistic act that must be performed daily to maintain a desired aesthetic – one that reflects a space in which someone has directed their energy to demonstrate to others that this space is cared for. The act of maintenance can be motivated by a desire to enhance, compliment or dominate the natural state. Regardless of intention, the space is transformed for all to see. But change is the only constant and so as soon as one has achieved the desired imposed order, entropic forces impose their energies to change the space too. Thus the ongoing demand for acts of maintenance.

The interactions will be documented as a visual essay posted on a dedicated website.