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The Art of Leaping

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Reviews (I)

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Grafts of Creativity.

Bòlit, Art Contemporary Centre. Girona (www.bolit.cat), has run research programs, provided support for creative work and artistic production, organised activities and offered exhibition and educational programmes since 2008. The centre's areas of activity seek to interact with the context, stimulating the participation of a diverse set of people, emphasizing the importance of process and reflection. The art centre creates situations that break with stereotypes in urging the search for new solutions, stimulating research, experimentation and creativity. This is the foundation of two of the centre's most emblematic projects: the artist residencies, where the artists interact with the city as a creative laboratory; and *Bòlit mentor*, which places artists inside of schools, as if they were grafts of creativity.

The *Bòlit mentor* project was created in 2012 with the goal of strengthening interaction between contemporary creation and society. The idea is to invite artists into secondary schools to carry out a unique educational project as a workshop during the first semester of the school year. It is important for the project developed in each school to be agreed upon with the school's direction and teachers. The consequences of the experience and the artistic results obtained are later seen in an exhibition that is materialized during the second semester of the school year in the spaces of the art centre itself.

The program offers students the opportunity to live through the entire process of creating a work of art over a six-month period, from start to finish, culminating with its public presentation. This allows students to learn first-hand what contemporary art practices are, contributing to the creation,

production and concretion of research into an exhibition project for a public space.

The last edition of the *Bòlit mentor* project was curated by the artist Àlex Nogué, Professor of Fine Arts at the University of Barcelona. The unique character of his proposal was to focus on the profile of the artist-professor, who both teaches and is simultaneously able to develop a personal art project. The key idea was that artist-teachers would present themselves in the name of their schools, so that from the very start the schools themselves would be involved.

The curator accompanied and encouraged their role in the schools and was responsible for the activities and final exhibition. Entitled *The Art of Leaping*, it made reference to what the artist Louise Bourgeois called the emotion that drives creative activity, which in itself could be a goal. The artists selected through an open call to carry out the role of resident artist-teacher each prepared a project specifically designed for the school in question. With her students, Ester Baulida developed a creative project based on revising the relationship between an individual and his or her environment. Josep Masdevall worked on action art as an expressive language and together with the students carried out performance practices. Identity, one of the key issues in adolescence, was the subject chosen by Servand Solanilla in experimenting with students using DMT (Dance Movement Therapy) techniques, so as to observe the non-verbal communication going on in a group of secondary students. Finally, Conxa Moreno used video to analyze the importance of the way of seeing, in a moment when the image is preeminent in daily life.

According to the curator Àlex Nogué, the experience gives the students the possibility of looking at contemporary art with interest and respect, while sending out a small warning signal to those teaching art who have given in to the system.

The artist heading up the edition of the project, culminating in 2016, is Jordi Mitjà. He will no doubt give a new tone to *Bòlit Mentor*, in consonance with his own curatorial criteria and the personality of the new artists selected to participate: Azahara Cerezo, Joana Llauredó, Anna Mitjà and Enric Farrés. Once again the focus will be on the students, who will find themselves immersed in a learning process grounded on research and experimentation.



Figure 1. *The Art of Leaping*, Bòlit, Centre d'Art Contemporani. Girona (CCBY)



Figure 2. Performance by Josep Masdevall's students (*Bòlit mentor*), World Art Day 2015, Carme Sais, Girona (CC BY)



Figure 3. Guided tours for *The Art of Leaping* exhibition by Ester Baulida's students (*Bòlit mentor*), Carme Sais, Girona (CC BY)