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COLLABORATIVE ART PRACTICES AND THEIR DYNAMICS. INTRODUCTION

ABSTRACT

In this introduction, the author presents the diverse theoretical, methodological and conceptual contributions (articles, reports, photo-essays and videos) contained in the volume. The contributions treat key topics in the debates on collaborative art practices and their dynamics, presenting significant collective activities and case studies in the art world, ranging from public and socially engaged art to the movements of artists choosing to deepen their relationships to the communities they effect.

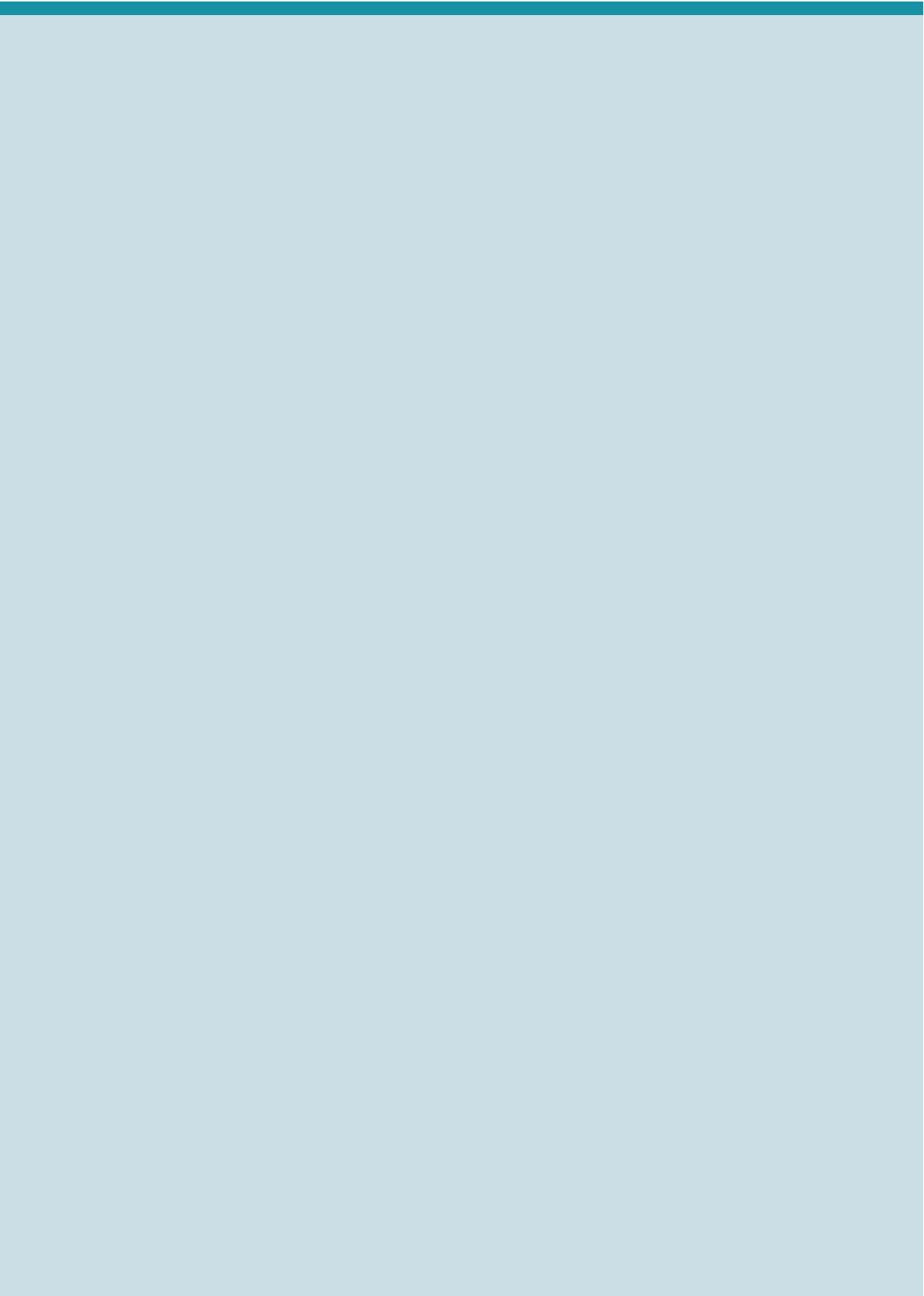
KEYWORDS

Art, Politics, Participation, Place-specificity

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INTRODUCTION

Giving a form to interpersonal relations is a recurring concern in 20th century art. It is actually a generalized, albeit diversified tendency, which originates from a unique view of contemporary thought towards participation and exchange. According to context and historical period, the interactive practices of art have responded to different needs and ends, redefining the roles of artist and the public, feeding the debate on themes of common interest, reconsidering and giving added value to significant or negligible places, invoking the re-elaboration of important historical events and commemorating special anniversaries.

This publication is intended as a meeting place for scholars, artists, curators, culture professionals, and institutional representatives, and deals with the theme of the relationship between art and participation in the European context. Contributions include interpretative models, critical reflections, and real experiments in which art is presented as a tool of alternative production of contents relative to the public sphere.

The text is deliberately fragmented, with perspectives on the aesthetic, political, social, and ethnographic aspects that expand upon, nevertheless, a question coherently based on transversal notions such as cohabitation, sharing, accessibility, representation, pluralism, identity. The works presented were created in surroundings rather distant from each other – from France to Croatia, from Spain to Poland, from Finland to Italy – and are greatly varied in their planning, languages and methods. Nevertheless, they have the perspective of social implications in common, proposing first hand to involve the spectators and acting in proximity with the space and time experienced, to give shape to real functions of intervention.

A concept of artistry put into effect through action and mobilization comes to light in all of the contributions. As Pascal Gielen and Thijs Lijster emphasize, they come about through the development of transversal abilities which are not only imaginative and creative, but methodological, organizational, and communicative, as well, and are aimed at changing an interest or an emotional state into a recognizable and recognized perspective. This process outlines a theoretic model – which the authors call ‘civic chain’ – for the analysis of the strategies of politicization and rationalization of cultural organizations that are oriented towards social relations and politically conscious community events and programs. From the moment in which working with people entails an experi-

ence to be shared, the legitimacy and effectiveness of the participating artistic practices can be measured in relation to the quality of the sensations involved, which determines their value and persuasive potential. From this perspective, relationality is, above all, a political act of mobilization, in addition to – as the French critic Nicolas Bourriaud pointed out – an implicit nature of performance in the context of reception and a ‘form’ of artistic event (Bourriaud 1998).

The contribution of Pascal Gielen and Thijs Lijster is related to that of Roger Sansi, who takes up a subject developed by Néstor García Canclini (2014) regarding the so-called ‘post-autonomy’ of art, in order to reflect on the ethnographic field work among the political activists of certain artistic cooperatives in Barcelona. ‘Post-autonomous’ art, according to García Canclini, abandoned an autarkic, differentiated stance in order to establish itself in everyday contexts, taking shape as a subject of dissolution of disciplinary and epistemological boundaries.¹ Adopting a critical perspective founded on participation, art experiments and contends with the spheres of communication, politics, and anthropology, engaging in subjects that interest and involve the political audience and leads the meaning of the relation from the aesthetic domain to that of direct commitment to the pursuit of shared objectives. Proceeding from these considerations, Sansi provides proof of his research, wondering if one cannot imagine, outside the academic circle, a ‘post-autonomous anthropology’ capable of actively responding to the ‘imperative to participate’ and of adopting a position of a political implication in public contexts.

If inclusive methodologies often have the ambition to transform art into an instrument of responsible governance and workshop of social innovation, one still must know how to distinguish between projects on the basis of methodology, the ‘necessity’ of the intervention regarding the people involved, the distinction of the relationships formed, the definition of the symbolic resources and the capability of restitution to those who took part in the process.² An interesting example is the one described by Emanuele Meschini, who retraces the fundamental events in the history of the Nuovo Corviale in Rome, an enormous housing project inhabited by thousands of people. He describes the work carried out by two cultural associations that from 2015 have occupied a part of the complex, organizing art workshops and employment training courses, with the objective of finding a sensible correspondence between community and

¹ The same theme was dealt with, among others, by Schneider & Wright 2006, Groys 2010, Schneider & Wright 2010, Detheridge 2012 and Schneider & Wright 2013.

² In regards to such key issues, see the studies by Crehan 2011, Kester 2011, Scardi 2011, Thompson 2012 and Bishop 2012.

settlement. Questioning the forms of legitimacy of the socially engaged art, Meschini distinguishes between associative and participatory practices, demonstrating that in the context of the Nuovo Corviale random participation has materialized through the years into projects and significant moments of definition in the sense of belonging, through activation of an informal economical micro-system and the recovery of downgraded communal areas which have been transformed into places which serve as a reference point and allow explicit connections between people.

Artists who are interested in endowing their research with the theme of social responsibility develop different strategies of inter-subjectivity, subordinating the value of their works to empathy and encounter. Presenting some of his most recent works, closely connected with the landscape and history of the sparsely populated regions of the far north of Europe, the Finnish scholar, curator, and artist Timo Jokela discusses the theoretical and methodological suppositions of *place*-specificity, a collaborative paradigm that redesigns site-specificity as discursive artistic mediation between an environmental context and a social and political one, basing itself on the shared characteristics of the experiential mapping of places.³ In the case of the communities involved in Jokela's work, the relative isolation of the inhabitants, the vast areas of woodland, the almost constant presence of snow and ice take on stable identifying significance, to which the residents attribute different sensory traits and values of familiarity, from aesthetic to memorial, from economic to ecological. The existential and stratified data concerned are based on the people's knowledge, storytelling, memories and nostalgia, which Jokela collects and translates in collaborative artistic actions in which the participants take on a fundamental and not simply decorative role.

Weronika Plińska's contribution concentrates on two projects carried out by the artist and activist Daniel Rycharski in his home town, Kurówko, situated in a rural area of central Poland. The first project consists of a series of murals depicting outlines of imaginative animals which the artist painted, with the help of the residents, on the walls of houses, outhouses, barns, public buildings and abandoned edifices, in order to transmit the rich heritage of tales about monstrous creatures handed down, mostly by word of mouth. The second project, carried out in 2015, is the *Monument to a Peasant*, an installation which reflects upon the conditions and identity of agricultural workers in the Polish countryside.

³ Much has been written about the 'sense of places'. I particularly refer to Feld & Basso 1996, Ashworth & Graham 2005 and Convery et alii 2014, who discuss this theme from an artistic, anthropological, historical, and landscape point of view.

Adopting the interpretative perspective put forth by Alfred Gell (1998), Plińska discusses the question of agency in Daniel Rycharski's works, which seem to intervene effectively on reality, generating a community recognizable in images and narrations which are negotiated with the artist intended as primary agent that, in this specific case, gives up occupying an exclusive space.

An important issue regards the role taken on by the 'social' artist, who sometimes speaks in name of the community in order to consolidate his own role or to initiate undertakings permeated with paternalistic or superficial reformism. In addition, there is the problem of what we mean by 'community', a term recurring in the conceptualization of artistic and cultural programs oriented towards participation. As Miwon Kwon notes, in the passage from site-specificity to *community*-specificity, the concept of 'community' preserves a problematic ambiguity in public art today since it is often an unstable and mythic unit, sometimes temporary and always invented, which is used as an effective argumentative device and ideal scenario in which to lead a basically political struggle (Kwon 2002: 6-7). Recognizing these aspects is fundamental in correctly interpreting the social repercussion that is caused in the relationship between artists, the public, and the community: even commitment may become a convention and there is always a risk of exploitation (Scardi 2011: 24 sgg.).

Public commission is mentioned, in particular, in the text by Daria Carmi, who reports some encounters experienced with the intention of renewing the sense of everyday places, in which the curator's role was fundamental in guaranteeing participation. In one of the projects carried out by the author, entitled *Par coii bsogna semnà. Chi semina raccoglie*, some young Italian artists were asked to portray the area and inhabitants of Frassineto Po, a village in the province of Alessandria, by coming up with ideas to expand the awareness of its historical, geographical, and social environment. The prolonged residence in the village of many of them allowed them to execute projects which involved the inhabitants in the reinterpretation of the places and elements of local tradition. Another project was carried out in Casale Monferrato, also in the province of Alessandria, with the aim to artistically recreate the history of the city, tied to the Eternit factory complex and the campaign against asbestos. The work led to the formation of the *Vivaio Eternot*, a monument-garden which is currently entrusted to the care of students and city associations.

In such situations, obviously not only the artist's role but also that of his mutated work abandon their own 'centripetal' nature to endeavor in different contexts and complement each other through the intervention of those willing to interact with such art (Subrizi 2012: 235). This aspect particularly regards the work of Leone Contini, artist and anthropologist, who presented *The Bank of the migrating germplasm* at the Cittadellarte Fondazione Pistoletto of Biella in 2016 in an exhibition curated by Cecilia Guida and Juan Sandoval. The bank consists of an 'archive in progress' of seeds circulating in Italy and originating from various far-away places, which has been created through the years through the study and cooperation among specific local communities who cultivate these seeds, usually importing them informally. The seeds are planted and the produce is used in the preparation of traditional dishes. In Pettinengo in Piedmont, in occasion of the exhibition, Contini worked with asylum seekers in a shelter, creating a vegetable garden in which seeds brought by the refugees themselves could be planted. In this way, the artist negotiates his own engagement as witness ⁴ with the objective of reflecting and making others think about the culturally decisive production processes belonging to a place in a certain context – such as that regarding international migration – where food plays a strong identity and relational role, made up of procedures and recipes which reproduce themselves in different but compatible contexts, resulting in interesting syncretic phenomena.

Once again on the theme of food and a perspective of meeting between ethnographic research and participatory art, Matteo Guidi presents his photo-essay *Cooking in Maximum Security*, a project created in the context of two penitentiaries, one Italian and the other Spanish. Guidi chooses to turn a non-stereotypical eye on these environments, pausing on a fundamental aspect of everyday life, that of meal preparation, to communicate the orderly intimacy of the cells, spaces of survival and contexts of impermanence – and, at the same time, long-term – with camping stoves, a few dented pans, plastic cutlery, jars and packaged foods. Its residents are strong presences, capable of getting organized, agents of a guise of normality created like an intensely creative patchwork in which objects and staples take on elastic edges, favoring forms of adaptation which give life to tools, recipes and innovative methods. In this way, a piece of sanded wood is transformed into a knife to slice and chop, a simple seat or container for clothing is turned into a space brought to the right temperature in order to bake bread or a cake,

⁴ On the concept of artist as 'facilitator' I refer to Pozzi 2014, who presents a series of relational artistic acts, interpreting them with the perspective of giving as a philosophical and anthropological category. See Sansi 2015 on the same subject.

a coffee pot is used as a pestle for preparing pesto, fermented apple juice becomes a slightly alcoholic drink. By documenting these aspects, Guidi's photographs show how, in giving new meanings to things and in the personalization of detention spaces as places – though precarious – of autonomy, inmates can regulate their own existential and relational environment with resistance 'strategies' (de Certeau 2001) that guarantee the psychological containment of distress and the endurance of relationships with oneself and the world.

Nico Angiuli's photographic narrative lingers on some phases of the making of the film which he directed, based on the conditions of farm hands working in the tomato fields in Tre Titoli, a district of Cerignola, in the province of Foggia. The film, carried out through workshops which included the participation of volunteers, professionals, and local associations, involved several young foreign workers and the sons of the farmers who fought for their rights at the beginning of the 20th century along with the trade unionist Giuseppe Di Vittorio. Establishing a conceptual connection between these two historical and cultural worlds, the film brings to light the similarities in the conditions and aspirations of farm laborers of today and yesterday, acting out historic events through the narration of amateur actors, carriers of their own significant biography, who discuss their own role with the director. In this way, the scenic context attempts to produce a balance between contemporaneity and memory, giving back, in a theatrical form, a shared reflection on the systematic and persistent violation of human rights which supports the economic apparatus of exploitation of the low-cost work force.

Finally, Giulio Squillacciotti reports his experience of an extensive period of research on Roman musical subcultures, introducing us to the density of an interstitial and conflicting experience which between the 80's and 90's led to the founding of a movement tied to American Hardcore and Punk aesthetics and style. The study, which led to the filming of the documentary *RMHC 1989-1999 Hardcore a Roma* (2014), was based upon testimonials, audio and visual supporting material, and photographs. The collections in the photo-essay presented in this edition are part of the private archives belonging to those who, having personally lived these experiences, actively contributed to the production of the documentary by donating their own history and recollections.

As evident, in the various contemporary reconfigurations of site-specificity and community conceptualiza-

tions, art becomes, like culture for Stuart Hall (2006), mainly political and politicized, a discursive instrument through which strategic and sometimes ideologically divergent positions are expressed to reset relationships to the advantage of individuals and collectivities.

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ART AND CIVIL ACTION. CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE EUROPEAN CIVIL DOMAIN

ABSTRACT

In this article, the place of new cultural organizations in the civil domain is analysed. The authors describe a theoretical model that they call the 'civil chain', describing the different phases in which civil organizations develop themselves. The civil chain delivers analytic insights into the origin of typical problems of contemporary civil actions and movements, such as the sustainability of civil organizations and the globalization of the public sphere. Using this theoretical model in two case-studies (Les Têtes de l'Art in Marseille and Culture 2 Commons in Zagreb), they demonstrate how cultural practices and artistic tools play an increasingly important role in civil practices, which are becoming more and more hybrid.

KEYWORDS

Civil Action, Public Sphere, Cultural Organizations, Europe, Cultural Politics

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INTRODUCTION

In modern Europe, cultural organizations such as museums, theatres and opera houses have played a decisive role in the constitutive process of a civil society. Most of these institutions constructed a cultural hierarchy in the context of a nation state through familiar processes of socialization and canonization. Quite a few of the publicly funded institutions, for example in the relatively young states across Central and Eastern Europe and the EU Neighbourhood still exemplify this traditional role of culture in the construction of (new) national identities.

Over the past thirty years, however, several developments have begun to side-line or even discredit the traditional role of these established art institutions. On the one hand, democratization processes in the field of culture questioned this top-down 'civilizing' process in which the elite promotes its own 'high' culture as the only good culture, wherein the masses should be initiated and educated. On the other hand, globalization – the combined process of a diversification of culture through migration and the homogenization and internationalization of culture through mass consumption – puts pressure on what has been traditionally considered to be part of the established cultural canon of a nation state. These historical evolutions cause a crisis in the legitimization of the classic role of public art institutions.

Over almost the same past thirty years, however, everywhere in Europe and its neighbourhood new civic initiatives in the arts and independently operating cultural organizations have emerged. Today, public and private arts funding bodies all over Europe witness the emergence of organizations and activity profiles that reach even beyond this 'classic' distinctions between public/commercial/independent. Cultural organizations increasingly do not follow the non-profit/public-funded/commercial producer logic anymore but increasingly seem to deliver a hybrid mix of voluntary or self-funded initiatives, subsidized art projects and (community) services that can even blend in with offering commercial productions in a variety of activity fields. Many of these new cultural initiatives differ in at least two ways from the former type of established art institutions: 1) they no longer refer to a national culture or artistic canon, and 2) they mostly lack hierarchical or rigid organizational structures. Considering the first difference: cultural organizations have evolved from producing artistic content (visual arts, theatre, new media, literature, et cetera) to offering cultural/creative projects as a new type of social initiative that serve the wider public

good (e.g. community development projects, new social/cultural venues, youth work and well-being of specific groups, cultural education, et cetera). Others have started to develop cultural strategies for activist civil society agendas or advocacy goals that tackle much larger policy issues beyond the arts as such (e.g. citizen participation, urban development, public space, environmental issues, democratization, social inclusion, EU affairs, et cetera). The working strategies of cultural organizations increasingly seem to be aimed at realizing project-like actions or providing creative services that address global challenges or tackle community issues (or both in combination). They seem to extend towards new creative working areas where they explore 'glocally' relevant themes that often lead them to actions far outside of the immediate arts and culture sector environments (De Cauter et alii 2010, De Bruyne & Gielen 2011, Gielen 2015b).

Considering the second difference – the lack of hierarchical organizational structures – we can observe how across the cultural sector management practices and working structures seem to become much more fluid than the structured organizational models and strategic hierarchies that characterize most of the traditional arts institutions. Long-term strategic plans seem to be increasingly replaced by a shared creation of general organizational value frameworks. These provide an overall strategic orientation point for the organization while ideally creating room for individual pilot initiatives and experimentation. Many new cultural initiatives today remain rather small and informal. They build temporary alliances with other like-minded initiatives in order to pursue shared strategic goals or to share knowledge, resources, and ideas for tackling similar cultural questions and artistic working fields. The cultural field is increasingly characterized by rhizome-like network structures.

All these individual characteristics of these new civic initiatives have strategic and structural consequences. 1) Most of these organizations work on a local level, and engage themselves in the first place with a local or regional civil society. At the same time, we see them developing large pan-European and international networks with like-minded peers to exchange information and knowledge. 2) Most of the initiatives seem to have a temporary, less sustainable character and operate in a tactical rather than a strategic mode. Public arts funding mechanisms, but international philanthropy as well, have hardly yet recognized such trends towards strategic hybridization and structural liquefaction.

In this article we investigate what new civil practices and strategic roles cultural organizations have adopted for operating at the intersection of creative production and for pursuing wider goals of relevance in their working environment and societies, based on a pilot research commissioned by the European Cultural Foundation (ECF) into two projects funded by them: *Les Têtes de l'Art* in Marseille and *Culture 2 Commons* in Zagreb. How do these cultural organizations define their own civil role? What new structural setups do they form? Could their practices and organizational models provide valuable insights on the civil role of the arts? And, last but not least, (how) do they give shape to a transnational, in this case European, civil space beyond the traditional national territory?

To answer these questions, we will first (section 2) take a brief look at our basic concepts, most notably 'civil society' and 'civil action', as well as elaborate on our understanding of culture. Here we will also discuss the methodology of our empirical research. Next (section 3) we will introduce our conceptual model, which we have named the 'civil chain', in order to capture the logic of civil action and how it is organized. This model will then be used to analyse the case studies in Marseille (section 4) and Zagreb (section 5): how do these organizations intertwine cultural practices and civil actions? How do they understand their own civil role? Finally (section 6), we return to the question of the place of cultural organizations in the European civil domain, and what we might learn from them.

THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

Cohen and Arato define civil society as "a sphere of social interaction between economy and state, composed above all of the intimate sphere (especially the family), the sphere of associations (especially voluntary associations), social movements, and forms of public communication" (1992, ix). A crucial part of civil society is the 'public sphere' (analysed most famously by Habermas, 1989), the realm where citizens can freely discuss and exchange ideas and opinions concerning the true, the good, and the beautiful, thus laying the foundation for democratic decision-making. We might formulate the difference as follows: civil society is the organized whole of values and interests in a given society, as expressed in collective institutions and organizations; the public sphere is the public communication of and negotiation about ideas, arguments, opinions, expressions, and emotions concerning

these values and how society is organized. Civil *action*, then, describes how individuals translate their particular interests and emotions into matters of public concern.

A notable problem, which we will return to later, is that the traditional conceptual framings of civil society and public sphere from Hegel up until Habermas were focused mainly on the national level. This framing is up for discussion now that social, political, and cultural issues increasingly go beyond the scope of the nation state (Walzer 1995, Koopmans & Statham 2010, Fraser et alii 2014). Globalization forces us to re-evaluate the notions of civil society and civil action, and raises questions concerning the possibility of a transnational (and for the present project in particular: pan-European) public sphere, which would be crucial for democratic deliberation on an international level. Although this issue does not play a central part in this article, we will come back to it in our concluding section.

Since we are talking about *cultural* organizations here we should also elaborate on our understanding of the term ‘culture’. As we did in previous research (Gielen & Lijster 2015), we build on the work of Belgian sociologist Rudi Laermans, who defined culture in a broad anthropological sense as “a socially shared reservoir or repertoire of signs” (2002). Culture is, then, first of all about the semiotic process of signs, assigning meaning (signification) and being able to do so. To Laermans’ definition we add that culture is not only about a formal semiotic play but also about signification in the sense of giving ‘meaning’ to life. The use of signs to give meaning to oneself and one’s environment is very much an affect-charged process. Stated rather solemnly: culture always also concerns questions about the meaning of life and just as much about the meaning of one’s family, friends, colleagues, city, region or nation. From this extended definition, we were able to argue that culture is in fact the basis or foundation of all societies. All human practices depend on assigning meaning, after all. How we trade, but also how we make laws or define rights and civil rights has everything to do with how we assign meaning. Likewise, everything about how we see an abstract space like Europe, is the result of processes of assigning meaning and ‘sense’.

To observe organizations from a cultural point of view also means paying particular attention to these processes of assigning meaning. This process of meaning giving is of course laden with power relations and ideological structures (Hall 1986, Williams 1995).

We assume that cultural organizations in particular play a crucial role in these processes, as they have all the means at their disposal to 'signify' civil interests. They can even play their part in the battle to define what is civil and what is not. In line with our definition of culture, we will not limit ourselves to a semantic analysis: it is precisely the affects that are expressed in morality, values, and ethics that are of interest to us.

Finally, the definition of culture mentioned above demonstrates that we do not reduce culture to art or Culture with a capital C. That does not alter the fact that we will pay attention to the functioning of art and aesthetic design in adopting a civil role. This is because we suspect that artistic expression has a particular quality of expressing feelings that are at the roots of civil action. As a specific form of assigning meaning, art may therefore play a vital part in the conversion from a negative emotion to the positive energy needed for civil action. Besides, artistic forms of expression provide the chance for alternative forms of rationalization, communication, and organization. After all, as the cliché has it, art expresses exactly that of which one cannot speak. This popular notion aside, we know only too well how easily images and music can reach out to a wide audience and bring masses into action. Perhaps more than words (and most certainly more than scientific articles) they have the mobilizing potential to make an idea catch on, to make people engage in civil action. But art can be more than just a mobilizing force. It is first and foremost imagination and as we know, quite a few artists have used that capacity of the imagination for much more than expressing their most private fantasies. Quite often they also create a possibly different world, for example by showing that social interaction can take place in a completely different way than was thought of before. Or they make it heard, seen, and felt how a dominant political regime would work out if we would radically think through certain positive or negative aspects of it. Works of art often do create both utopia and dystopia. As audiences, we understand only too well that we are in a world of fiction, but it is precisely this transference to an imaginary world that provides us with the possibility to look at the non-fictional world or simply everyday reality from a completely different perspective. We may expect that this fresh but sometimes strange perspective will at times feed political and civil ambitions, although this remains a hypothesis for now.

In order to analyse the way cultural organizations become part of and/or intervene in civil society, we devel-

oped a model we have called the ‘civil chain’, describing the different phases of civil organizations’ development. This model will be discussed in the next section. The civil chain delivers analytic insights into the origin of typical problems of contemporary civil actions and movements, such as the sustainability of civil organizations and the globalization of the public sphere. We used this model as a guide for the empirical research into our cases. However, we did not want to start off from a predefined – and all too rigid – definition of what a ‘civil role’ should be. On the contrary, we also wanted to look at how these cultural organizations themselves define their civil mission. Our model functioned as a lens through which to ‘observe’ these organizations, while the empirical research (existing of in-depth interviews with key actors and document analysis) provided opportunities to ‘refine’ or qualify the characteristics of civil roles. We call this approach in our own terms ‘performative research’; we take as our starting point the interaction or dialectic between theoretical concepts and empirical findings, ‘testing’, as it were, the performance of our concepts in practice. The empirical part of the research was conducted between November 2015 and February 2016, by means of a questionnaire (based on the model of the ‘civil chain’) that functioned as guide for in-depth interviews with key actors, as well as an analysis of relevant documents provided by the organizations themselves.¹

THE CIVIL CHAIN AND THE ORIGIN OF CIVIL ACTION

According to Manuel Castells (2015) civil action is born from emotion. Although such actions always imply the hopeful expectation that something in society can be improved, this first emotion is often of a negative nature, fed by fear, discomfort or at least irritation. The reasons for this can be manifold. An individual may feel threatened by beggars or by drug dealers hanging around in the neighbourhood. But they can also feel ill at ease because there are too many policemen, soldiers or security cameras in the streets. Employees may feel intimidated by their boss or colleagues and may also experience stress because of too much work. Others may be utterly frustrated because their printer is malfunctioning again. In short, feelings of annoyance, irritations, frustration or injustice can have many causes. And, as may be evident from this broad range of examples, certainly not every negative emotional experience leads to civil action. People who experience stress at work can speak to their em-

¹ The field studies were mostly conducted by Maité Juan and Philippe Eynaud in Marseille, and by Philipp Dietachmair in Marseille and Zagreb. We ourselves visited both places only once, mostly to gather some information and do the introductions, as well as to size up the situation in terms of local functioning and context.

ployer or trade union, or can seek professional help or therapy to learn how to cope better with stress.

Discomfort can be channeled in many ways. Those who choose therapy or decide to hire a lawyer opt for a private and individual solution to their problem. Such an initial step undoubtedly requires courage. Discussing our sometimes highly personal and therefore subjective perceptions always assumes the will and courage to communicate. Once that obstacle is overcome we are still not dealing with a civil action yet. Indeed, communication with our therapist or lawyer has little to do with citizenship or public spirit. In order to 'enter' civil society we need to specifically address a collective and generate public support. The initial emotion must be recognized as a shared emotion, as a shared fear, frustration or irritation. Civil action is only possible if we take our personal discomfort out of the private sphere, when we 'de-privatize' the subject matter. However, such a step towards civil space requires an important skill: the ability of (self-) rationalization. *Rationalization* is required to articulate an initial intuition or basic emotion. It is the cognitive competence of analysing one's own feelings and perhaps point out possible causes. Rationalization, and especially self-rationalization, therefore precedes communication, although the causes of certain emotions might be further clarified in dialogue with others.

And finally, after the processes of rationalization, communication and de-privatization, the skill of *organization* is required in order to set the civil action in motion and, if necessary, keep it going in the long run. For instance, one must organize oneself in order to write an opinion piece, but also encourage others to do the same. Protesting in the streets or rolling up our sleeves to clean the neighbourhood requires at least a modicum of (self-) organization. What is important here is that those processes of self-rationalization and self-organization can diminish the initial emotion that initiated them in the first place. For instance, having to find one's way in a maze of legal rules, being obliged to study political procedures, or having to follow the long and winding road through bureaucratic institutions in order to arrive at the right form of (self-)organization can make one lose the energy to go on. Both processes therefore require to literally rationalize the initial emotion, to distance oneself from it and in a sense 'bureaucratize' it (all forms of organization presuppose setting up a minimum number of rules and procedures and sticking to them). In themselves such processes are not dramatic and even necessary to initiate civil ac-

tion. However, this points to the fact that the basic emotion as mentioned determines the 'drive' or the energy of the civil undertaking. Or, in an analogy by Castells: it is an initial fear converted into anger that defines the engine of civil action. It is the steam that powers civil organization or an initiative with a civil mission. This also means that civil action gets its basic energy from very direct, mundane and mostly local human experience. The chances of success and continuance of every civil initiative therefore depend on finding the right balance between rationalizing and organizing on the one hand, and keeping up the energy that is obtained from a basic emotion on the other. This balance is all the more urgent the more cultural organizations 'scale up' their activities, for instance from a local to a regional or from the national to the transnational level. Each step up the ladder demands more rationalization and organization, and thereby one risks seeing the initial drive and emotion evaporate, as well as losing track of the local problems that started it all.

From the above we may conclude that a cultural organization that adopts a civil role situates itself at the end of a chain of successive, distinctive operations, and that such an organization will continuously have to take into account all the previous stages in the chain in order not to alienate itself from its own source of energy. Analytically, this succession of processes – which we call the *civil chain* – looks like this: (1) emotion – (2) (self-)rationalization – (3) communication – (4) de-privatization (or going public) and, finally, (5) (self-)organization.

As stated above, a cultural organization that adopts a civil role finds itself at the end of this chain. It is indeed an *organization*. It only plays a civil role because it de-privatizes or makes public a specific social issue. It can only do so through communication, which it not only needs to publicize its civil mission but also to extend the organization itself, for which communication through its founders, members and other involved parties is necessary. This communication assumes an ability to articulate and thereby rationalize a basic feeling. At the same time, however, it is important to maintain that initial emotion. Necessary processes of rationalization and organization can after all take away the drive and energy from the organization. Precisely for the sake of this 'higher' European goal the three applicable strategies tend to detach an organization from its local issues and therefore also from its unique source of dynamics.

Before looking at empirical reality, let us take one last theoretical look at this proposed civil chain, if only to

further sharpen our look at cultural organizations later on. Looking at the chain analytically, we can see that the civil ambition can only be fulfilled through three transitions. The first one takes place at the emotional level. An initially negative feeling (of discomfort, injustice, etc.) must be converted into a sense of positive energy, of simple enthusiasm to 'get cracking' or at least of not resigning oneself to the situation. Castells gives the example of fear that must be 'positively' converted into outrage and hope (2015, 247-248). By 'positively' we mean that outrage and hope lead to action. However negative the results of bursts of outrage may be, they always indicate an accumulation of energy. Through outrage, the paralyzing effect of fear changes from passive to active. Feelings of discomfort, irritation, insecurity, injustice and the like often result in defeatism or resignation. Especially when people feel they are alone in their efforts, they tend to resign themselves to the situation. Only when a sometimes hard to pinpoint 'spark' turns negative energy into positive energy does civil action become an option. It is from this same emotional transition that a civil organization gets its energy.

A second necessary transition is to be found on the level of communication, as only through communication can a transformation from the individual to the collective level take place. We can, for example, test whether we really feel what we feel by consulting a therapist, in the sense that we can check whether such a professional recognizes our feelings as also occurring in others, or is familiar with them from scientific literature. It is only in that confirmation that an individual problem can become a collective one, in the sense that others share our supposedly individual feeling. In the same sense city dwellers can have a chat with their neighbours about street litter. This is also communication in which a basic experience is shared and tested. Only if a neighbour confirms that: 'Yes, you're right, there is a lot of litter here these days', the feeling of discomfort is collectivized and the possibility of civil action emerges. Organizations that adopt a civil role often originate in such shared sentiments. So, without collectivization there is no civil action and no organization. Both examples of collectivization also illustrate, however, that de-individualization in itself is not enough to speak of civil action.

To do so, requires yet another transition, from the private to the public sphere. As indicated earlier, feelings and issues can be shared and therefore collectivized in both the private and the public sphere. For example,

as long as the employee suffering from stress only discusses the problem with a therapist or only collectivizes it in a self-help group, we cannot speak of a civil action. Only when this worker, perhaps together with the therapist, articulates the initial feeling or syndrome in social terms does it acquire civil value. This means that, say, stress is no longer only explained as a mental condition but is recognized as a structural problem too. Stress is then not only about the irritated nerves of individual employees or about the annoying personality of their boss, but also about, for instance, high work pressure, increasingly precarious working conditions such as flexible and mobile project labour, and the decrease in long-term employment contracts and job security. In other words, in the transition from the private to the public sphere a personal issue (being a stress-sensitive person) is not only translated into a collective problem (a stressful environment, stressful working conditions), but the cause of the problem or feeling of discomfort is also located in broader social phenomena. This is why the transformation from the private to the public sphere implies the *politicization* of the initial feeling. If 'the political' stands for openly shaping our living together, this translation is an appeal to the political to articulate and address the issue. Note: we deliberately speak of 'the political' and not 'politics', as the latter may suggest that the politicization of an emotion would only mean addressing politicians or authorities, while 'the political' is much broader. To paraphrase the French philosopher Jacques Rancière: the political is defined by taking part in living together and in actions that (may) rearrange the relations within a society. The political therefore does not simply coincide with a fixed position within political institutions (parliament, government or political party), but is all about questioning and moving such positions (Rancière 2015, 35-52).

This notion has a bearing on our study object, since it means that any civil action or any civil role adopted by a cultural organization is potentially political in nature. And perhaps here also lies the rarely made distinction between the public sphere as understood by Habermas, and the civil domain. Whereas the former is a space for expressing opinions or views, the latter goes one step further. An opinion piece in a newspaper or a debate among intellectuals remains, after all, too easily confined to the discursive domain of verbal dispute and rhetorical musings. In the civil domain this 'non-commitment' vanishes. There, opinions are linked to political demands and administrative responsibility and will at least stir up or

irritate the political, for example by referring to civil and other rights and obligations related to an expressed opinion. Besides, in the civil domain those responsible can be addressed. Who, for example, should enforce these rights and who should fulfil these obligations? The very moment that answers to these questions are demanded, civil action occurs or transforms the public sphere into a full-fledged civil domain. We may suspect therefore that the cultural organizations with a civil role studied here are specifically intermediating between the public sphere and the civil domain. In that case they also contribute to the process of politicization.

THE ART OF MIRRORING

Les Têtes de l'Art, established in 1996 in Marseille by three actors, in the first place wanted to have a legal structure for their professional concerns. Although Sam Khebizi and his two colleagues Laurent and Lavigne were quite successful as a comic trio, they soon found the theatre scene too confined and self-absorbed. With Les Têtes de l'Art they wanted to build a bridge between the artistic and the social world, or, as they put it, to make the connection with 'the real world'. The latter is regarded as more diverse and therefore more challenging than the traditional art world and its audiences.

When our field researcher Philipp Dietachmair probed a question about an 'initial irritation' or 'emotion' in an in-depth interview with the current director of Les Têtes de l'Art, Khebizi, the latter did vaguely refer to a 'shock' that he experienced as a young resident of Marseille, when he found out that there were still *bidonvilles* (slums) in the city. Perhaps this is just an indicator that informs the social sensibility and fuels Khebizi's and Les Têtes de l'Art's drive. This almost natural link between an individual sensibility like Khebizi's and the organization seems a relevant element. Castells also notes that the basic emotion and drive for civil action often reside with individuals, and that organizations are frequently the result of initiatives by one or a handful charismatic persons (2015, 12-13). More or less durable forms of organization stand on the shoulders of a single individual, which immediately also reveals the potential weakness of such initiatives, as quite a few of them are totally dependent on the person who started them. This figure also embodies a definite but sometimes hard to determine drive.

Khebizi is definitely aware of this 'fragility'. Several times during the interview he states, for example, that Les Têtes should be a structure that could also continue

without him. It is one of the reasons why, after ten years in place, the board of Les Têtes was reshuffled. Khebizi's wife and close friends were replaced by an assembly of artists, which not only makes the organization more professional, but also means that Khebizi must give account of his functioning within a more critical framework. At the same time, we see how the organization rationalizes an initially mostly intuitive way of operating by putting it into words and by formulating a vision in 2008. Khebizi even took a course in management and no longer calls himself, as he did in the beginning, an 'artist' or 'artistic director' but 'managing director'. This also illustrates a tendency towards rationalization, and especially, professionalization. From then on, the people of Les Têtes work more according to plans and more tasks are being delegated within the organization.

Returning to our 'civil chain', we see, on one hand a confirmation of the logic and chronology we have outlined. An admittedly vague basic emotion and personal drive are gradually framed by a solid and professional organizational structure. On the other hand, an important qualification of this chain, which is a result of these first empirical observations, is that the organization itself is also transformed and becomes more rational. The stages or phases in the chain that we described do not seem to 'hook up' in reality, but rather 'slide' into each other in an almost organic sequence. This observation means that from here on, we will no longer speak of a civil chain but of a *civil sequence*. The various stages remain recognizable, nevertheless. For instance, in the case of Les Têtes de l'Art we can discern clearly defined periods of rationalization during which not only initial intuition and intuitive acts are taking shape in an articulated view, but the organization itself also becomes more rational. In addition, from the interview with Khebizi we can deduce that this process of rationalization is not only initiated in part but most certainly also enhanced by that other element in the civil sequence, communication. The head of Les Têtes de l'Art specifically stated that the municipal authorities of Marseille approached him in 2003. They were interested in his activities and even had ideas for specific 'assignments' for Les Têtes. At the time, however, Khebizi felt slightly 'embarrassed' as he could not precisely explain to them what the organization was actually doing. After all, neither vision nor methods had been written down or rationalized yet. It was this very invitation to communicate that more or less forced the artistic leader to further specify certain self-rationalizations – such as "bringing

art closer to social reality” – and make them more explicit. In that sense, communication enhances the rationalization process.

Although all these endeavours support better communication with governments and potential partners and also make both the approach and the methods of the organization itself more effective, it is not these rationalization processes that sustain the drive within the organization. The initial emotion as well as the personal drive remains relatively vague, even after this process of rationalization. And perhaps making explicit these words, concepts and methods is not what catches on with people (both within and outside Les Têtes de l'Art) and keeps the drive and energy in the organization. But then, what does?

Answering the question as to how they keep the fire burning, Khebizi talks about wanting to work *with* people and thus bridge the gap between art and society. It is precisely this simple act of making art together with others or ‘doing things’ that plays an important part. Drive is not so much communicated in words, and energy rarely comes from a well-articulated view. Rather, they emerge from the activities that are organized, the artistic interventions that are staged and the actions that are undertaken. Just like the transference of emotions can take place subconsciously and non-verbally through mirror neurons, drive and energy are primarily communicated through the actions themselves. It is therefore not surprising that at some point in the interview Khebizi speaks of ‘mirroring’ when he mentions other actors and organizations that imitate or partly take over the methods of Les Têtes. Seeing others act makes us act as well, actions generate actions and energy generates energy. In this we also see the power of culture-specific artistic interventions. They generate a ‘mimetic effect’, which spurs others into action. Artistic interventions and performances in public space, or an educational project with children often indirectly and in an especially positive manner point out the social issues within a group, neighbourhood or square. Cultural civil actions not only bring to light what is not visible, but also make manifest how the surroundings, a space or a neighbourhood may be experienced differently.

In this respect, artistic activities differ from other civil actions such as protests, opinion pieces, or petitions. Whereas such civil actions are generally limited to social criticism, the artistic civil action has an extra element: an alternative experience. For a little while the artists provide an often quite modest, but possibly different world, which in most cases generates positive energy. Les Têtes

de l'Art illustrated this quite literally with their initiatives named Place à l'Art, a sort of 'fair' where people in the neighbourhood can engage together in all sorts of creative and artistic activities, producing very positive social dynamics in places where previously drug dealers and other petty criminals created an unsafe social environment. The outrage over an unsafe environment is immediately 'compensated' for with a positive alternative. Or, referring again to the transformations in our civil sequence: at the emotional level, especially artistic interventions provide opportunities for converting negative feelings or irritations into a positive experience and energy. Conversely, for some it might be precisely this alternative experience that makes them understand that their living conditions or precarious social environment are far from ideal. Crucial in this is that it is 'through' the artistic process or the work of art itself that participants are given an experience of alternative possibilities. Our other field researcher Maité Juan provides the following example of Bel Horizon (a degraded building in the centre of Marseille). After the request of an inhabitant of the high-rise flat, the participatory television of Les Têtes de l'Art organized a collective work of several months in 2013-2014. A group of adults and children from the tower block worked together on a script and collectively produced a fictional video about a problematic situation that affected all inhabitants. The fiction involved children and adults of the tower block as actors. It told the funny story of an investigation carried out by the inhabitants to find out who threw waste out of the windows of the building. The artistic vector allowed for alternative representations to the negative image attached to the place and encouraged the meeting of inhabitants in the tower. After this fiction, a second project, in 2015, consisted in realizing five short films about the wishes of inhabitants about the rehabilitation of the tower.

The Bel Horizon case is just one of many actions by Les Têtes de l'Art that demonstrate how an artistic experience works within civil action. As noted earlier, (negative) criticism of a certain situation goes hand in hand with theatrical action that generates a rather positive experience of an alternative situation. This positive experience in turn evokes new criticism and civil action.

Or, as we said: the artistic activity of Les Têtes is what is keeping the energy alive. If such a positive experience does no longer or not yet exist in the social reality, this actually provides a cultural organization with an interesting tool to create this circumstance all the same, especial-

ly in a fictional setting. A play or film creates a distance from the world we actually live in and thereby precisely generates the context for an alternative world. It is this experience that can make participants reflect on their real social reality. For them art generates – in the words of the sociologist Niklas Luhmann (1997) – a ‘second order observation’: from the artistic, imaginary or fictional ‘second order’ experience they can better observe how they live and experience their own everyday ‘first order’ reality. In the cases of Place à l’Art and Bel Horizon we see how this experience then encourages people to intervene in real life or at least long for and demand a different reality.

From our modest observations of Les Têtes de l’Art’s activities we also learn something interesting about the difference between civil actions and artistic civil actions. In the first place, artistic processes provide the possibility to transform an initially negative emotion or an irritation into a positive (aesthetic) experience. In the second place, the artistic aspect especially provides a chance to experience something that is lacking in reality within a different context, albeit an imaginary one. This experience of a fictive ‘reality’ *may* – and indeed this is only a potential – bring people to start questioning the reality they are living every day. Finally, whereas many civil actions (such as protests or petitions) derive their energy but also their legitimacy and efficacy from representativeness, cultural actions do so from their theatrical character or, literally, their ‘performance’. A rally or a petition is as convincing as the number of people showing up or signing: the greater the number, the more convincing. In other words, public support in quantitative terms determines the value of the civil action to a high degree. But in cultural civil action there is at least one other element. In those actions the experience itself of, for example, working together in preparing and presenting a performance, production or music recital, co-determines the efficacy of the civil endeavour. Here it is the quality of the experience rather than the quantity in terms of the number of participants that determines the civil potential. What we are trying to say is, with cultural civil action it is precisely this unique sensation – sometimes experienced by a very small group – that charges them with energy and makes it convincing. It is this singular experience that makes the civil engine run and keeps it running.

It is for good reason that the sociologist Luc Boltanski and the economist Laurent Thévenot (1991) have described *representation* or representativeness as a crucial

quality of what they call the 'civic world'. A union leader can only be effective if he is able to convince the members (sometimes by opening the strike fund); a politician only derives his mandate from his electorate; and special interest groups can only look after their interests if indeed there is a *group* behind them. What we have discussed above is that cultural civil action introduces a new element into this classic civil value regime of quantitative representation. The persuasive power of an artistic intervention or cultural manifestation does not depend on the size of the group involved or the wider consensus on a criticism or new idea. It can just as well base itself on precisely the unique, idiosyncratic, even most deviating and 'crazy' sensation. In other words, civil power and power of persuasion are thus based on the quality of a singular experience.

Our initial observations of the civil activities at Les Têtes de l'Art teach us something about the specific role of the arts. As we said, deploying art 1) makes it possible to transform a negative emotion into positive energy, 2) has a mirroring or 'mimetic' effect and keeps the energy alive, 3) offers the chance to look at lived reality in a different way and perhaps criticize it, and 4) increases the possibility of bringing a unique, deviating or uncompromising idea or view of society into the civil arena. How persuasive such an alternative proposition is depends not so much on the number of people who already support it, but rather on the quality or persuasiveness of the experience of the execution of this idea (albeit fictional). We could therefore say that the requirement of representativeness does not fully apply to artistic civil actions. Not having to speak in the name of a group, or the members of a union or political party, does mean that one can address 'non-affiliated' groups or members of society. Cultural civil actions therefore also have the potential to reach out to very diverse segments of the population and professional groups throughout society. How that exactly works will be discussed further in the Zagreb case.

TRANSVERSAL ACTION

The first surprise we got when starting our investigation into our Zagreb case, Culture 2 Commons, was that it did not exist. Or rather, not in the form of a 'traditional' organizational structure: Culture 2 Commons is in fact a provisional hub or cluster, founded tactically in order to make optimum use of several funding programmes (amongst which ECF) and consisting of three previously existing organizations, namely the national Clubture net-

work, Operation City Zagreb and Right to the City Zagreb. It operates within a network configuration that addresses issues or initiates actions, thus channelling temporarily accumulated energy. Or, as Teodor Celakosi, one of the key figures of this scene, describes it in an interview with Dietachmair: “It is like an ecological system and it is not coordinated as by one subject, but as a kind of swarm of intelligent knowledge.”

As with Les Têtes de l’Art, we observed some distance between theory and empirical reality in Zagreb. Although the basic emotion from our ‘civil sequence’ is much easier to point out here than in Marseille, we can however not pinpoint one specific ‘irritation’ in Culture 2 Commons and the scene around it. What does stand out is one very concrete problem: space for independent culture. A shortage of physical space and accommodation for cultural activities and the lack of visibility of the artistic and cultural expressions that the independent scene represents in the mainstream media, initially formed the core of the civil struggle and generated the basic energy for civil action. The founding of alternative media such as magazines and the occupation of empty factories to give place and face to their alternative culture occur more or less simultaneously. In Zagreb, this tactical fight rapidly expands to domains outside the cultural sector that oppose the privatization of public spaces. Such actions range from protests against the construction of a shopping mall on a formerly public square to resistance against the privatization of the highway network in Croatia.

The activities of Culture 2 Commons thus are spreading out on at least two levels: 1) geographically, the civil actions are soon disseminated across the whole of Croatia, for example via the national network of cultural organizations within the independent scene, and 2) at the social level, we see a widening of the artistic and cultural sector into, for example, trade unions and ecological pressure groups. In other words, the cultural scene joins a broader social movement that connects transversally to many different segments of the population and spheres in life. One example of this is *Pravo na Grad* (Right to the City), which was established as a collaboration between civil society organizations working in the field of culture and youth, and was later formalized as an NGO. All activities of Right to the City are implemented in collaboration with *Green Action – Friends of the Earth Croatia*, one of the most relevant Croatian environmental NGOs. This social broadening is crucial in increasing the power and charging the energy of civil actions. In this respect too,

well-known civil activities of traditional representation-politics in which, for instance, trade unions and their members play a central part are forsaken in favour of actions that no longer rely on quantity alone but look for the quality of the singular dissonant voice.

This brings us to an important note: the transversal nature of contemporary civil action should be considered as an expression of the broader socio-economic shifts from welfare state to neoliberalism and from Fordism to post-Fordism in the workplace (see also Gielen 2015a), that have the effect that both social problems and struggles are and can no longer be limited to the sphere of labour or, in classic Marxist terms, be reduced to class relationships. Nowadays, working conditions affect all aspects of life – or become ‘biopolitical’, to use the phrase by Michel Foucault (1997) – with the increasing flexibility of working hours (the line between work and leisure or private time is less and less strictly drawn) and the increased immateriality of work. It seems therefore almost obvious that civil actions that run transversally through various spheres in life fit better within this macro-sociological evolution. Neoliberalism affects the whole of our personalities, and it therefore seems evident that civil actions too are aimed at this totality of the world with its various life spheres (home, ecology, economy, education, politics, et cetera). Any contemporary civil critique or action will therefore be most productive when it engages in this ‘total life sphere’, i.e. when it becomes ‘cultural’.

The independent scene engages in a struggle for its own culture. That is, a struggle in which artists claim space to signify themselves within a society. We have already stressed that this is the very essence of culture: assigning meaning and sense to our own existence within a certain society. Civil action therefore not only joins a political or economic struggle but is also always a cultural undertaking to represent or ‘signify’ oneself, one’s own lifestyle and values within a certain society. Like art, civil action is a way of breaking open and expanding this container of meanings called ‘culture’.

To what extent do the rationalization, communication and, finally, organization of the basic emotions in Zagreb, and Croatia as a whole, follow the civil sequence? That we can learn from one of the organizations there, namely Multimedijalni Institut (MI2) and its Net.culture club MaMa. The founders of this organization play a defining role in inspiring, driving and coordinating the whole scene. Since its establishment in 2000, this organization

has been weaving together interests of diverse cultural fields, such as 1) critically inflected digital arts, film, music and open access, 2) digital commons, 3) philosophy and theory, 4) cultural networking, advocacy and grassroots organizing, and 5) protection of public domain and struggles for spatial justice.



FIGURE 1: A PIC OF
ZAGREB - OPEN CITY
CONFERENCE / OCT 2016.

Locally, MI2 is mostly identified with the social and cultural centre MaMa in Zagreb, where it organizes cutting-edge cultural, educational and technology programmes, hosts a local hacker community and provides an open venue for other cultural initiatives. But it is also a co-organizer of a Human Rights Festival, electronic music events, publishing activities and the Croatian distributor of Creative Commons licenses. It is immediately clear how these cultural organizations operate. To put it simply, we could say that in Zagreb and elsewhere in Croatia they are in fact turning an open access on-line system into an off-line model. In any case, new media and digital network culture are among the most important sources of inspiration for 'real-life' analogue organization. Not only does the virtual world work as a mirror for developing organizational models in the 'real' world, it also provides inspiration for civil actions such as 'hacking' tactics and communication via open access. For example, MaMa was the direct inspiration for founding the Clulture Network of similar-minded local 'clubs' in 2002. Clulture Network brings together over fifty independent cultural organizations that are active in various contemporary cultural and artistic disciplines all across Croatia. It functions as a collaborative exchange platform through which organizations directly collaborate, based on principles of mutual decision-making and inclusiveness.

FIGURE 2: EXHIBITION ON INDEPENDENT CULTURAL SPACES IN VUKOVAR AT THE OCCASION OF 9TH CLUBTURE FORUM IN VUKOVAR / OCT 2016.



The use of powerful visual as well as theatrical means not only makes their actions more visible in the media, but the inventive and sometimes playful character of their actions also makes them contagious and generates positive energy. Their techniques convert initially negative emotions or irritations into action while simultaneously preventing them from being stigmatized as ‘sourpusses’ or doom mongers. Applying creative methods demonstrates a remarkable optimism, or at least inventiveness and the readiness to approach social and cultural problems in a different manner. For example, submitting a petition with 54,000 signatures as a pile of paper or digitally, has quite a different effect than when you hang those 54,000 postcards physically in the public space, as the activists of Pravo na Grad did. And a protest against plans of the Ministry of Construction comes across stronger when you actually cordon off the ministry’s building with yellow crime scene tape than by writing a traditional opinion piece. The same goes for a theatrical performance in which activists dressed as tourists arrived at Kulmer Castle – with media attention – to claim their hotel rooms. Kulmer Castle is registered as a public hotel but has for many years now been used as a private residence by the Todoric family, one of the richest families in Croatia. The castle is built in a green area, where facilities for private housing are not allowed. Underlining its official public purpose as a tourist location, Right to the City – arriving by tourist coach – demanded access to the non-existent hotel rooms in the building. The original imagination and theatricality of such actions not only pays out in media coverage, but their innovative and playful character also has a contagious effect with other social movements, NGOs and civil action groups.



FIGURE 3: PROTEST OF NEIGHBOURHOOD AND CITIZENS IN PARK SAVICA AGAINST DEVELOPMENT OF HUGE CHURCH IN THE PARK (ONLY GREEN AREA IN THIS PART) / SEPT 2016.

In other words, we see once again the already mentioned ‘mimetic’ or ‘mirror’ effect of forms of artistic expression. In any case, the use of such artistic means and involvement of the media was replicated nationally in very diverse places in Croatia. And although, as in Marseille, Europe is not foremost in everyone’s mind in Zagreb, perhaps here we have an important medium for arriving at a more international support base. Like the Guy Fawkes masks seen all over the world, likewise original forms of expression and performances may at least work as ‘carriers’ in shaping a wider civil playing field. In order to do this, the cultural sector must indeed demonstrate the will “to break down its own walls”, as Croatian cultural activists mentioned on the spot. This means in the first place that the cultural sector realizes and acknowledges that its own problems are also the problems of others. The issues of a shrinking public space, “enclosure of the commons”, precarious working conditions, but also of a diminishing autonomy or chance of self-regulation, is after all not exclusive to the world of artists and cultural organizations. Today, it is a problem shared by education, health care, the legal system, the press and parliamentary democracy. In short, constituting a pan-European civil domain not only demands an international but also a transversal and a ‘trans-sectoral’ approach. That is perhaps one of the most important lessons that we can draw from Marseille and Zagreb so far.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: TOWARDS A PAN-EUROPEAN PUBLIC SPHERE?

We have discussed how cultural organizations contribute to the civil domain and to civil action. To a large extent, our case studies followed the logic of the 'civil chain' we laid out in section 3, although the cases also led us to adapt or specify the model in some aspects. The cultural organizations we studied channel and translate emotions, resulting in interventions and activities in public spaces. The most important lessons from our cases were, in the first place, that the added value of culture in these organizations exists in the 'mirroring' effect of their actions, which communicate the 'spark' that once inspired their initiative. In other words: the emotion that we situated at the beginning of the 'civil chain' is also its result, intended or otherwise. It was clear that the cases we chose were very much aware of their position and role within civil society, not only at a practical and strategic level but often also at a theoretical level. In the second place, we learned that these cultural organizations are increasingly part of wider social movements. It is remarkable that when asked about the initial 'emotion', 'irritation' or 'frustration' that started the 'civil sequence' for them, both the initiators of Les Têtes de l'Art and of Culture 2 Commons also referred to the obstacles to their artistic practice: for example, an excess of bureaucracy or the lack of a physical space to practise their profession. The comparison with Matryoshka dolls made by one of the interviewees in Zagreb is quite apt: when trying to address a certain issue (for example, the lack of space for cultural activities) you discover other political issues behind it and in order to solve those issues you stumble upon other interests (cultural, political, economic or otherwise), et cetera.

This brings us back, finally, to an issue we already addressed in section 2, namely how a civil domain could function on a transnational (in this case pan-European) level. Could these organizations themselves contribute to a pan-European civil domain? When asked about this possibility the actors involved proved to be sceptical. They often already have their hands full with activating local citizenship, putting local political issues on the agenda and dealing with local authorities, and hardly have time and energy left to worry about such an abstract entity as 'Europe'. Still, in the development of these organizations thus far we already observe, in a relatively short time span, an impressive expansion of their network, at two levels: from internal-artistic to social, and from the lo-

cal to the regional level. We have seen especially in the Zagreb case that an expansion to the rest of the region and collaboration with other regions in the former Yugoslavia are high on the agenda, but Les Têtes de l'Art too strives for a wider network in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur. If we extrapolate this trend it is very well possible that their agendas develop in such a way that, sooner or later, a cultural-political network for Europe becomes more concrete. And in fact, both cases we studied are currently part of the ECF-supported Connected Action for the Commons, which tries to extend such initial encounters among local actors towards exploring the possibility for creating a cultural civil agenda on a European scale. Within these kinds of networks culture organizations soon realize they are often dealing with similar problems, albeit in their own (local) context, and therefore can also learn from each other.

Furthermore, the notion of a pan-European civil domain does not need to be as general or abstract as it is often considered to be. Of course, the contexts of the various European cultural organizations and their local civil domains differ, sometimes even radically so, but nonetheless they can find each other on the theoretical and sometimes ideological level, and inspire each other. One example of this was the Connected Action for the Commons workshop that we took part in ourselves during our visit to Marseille. One thing we noticed, was that a discussion about the fact that residents around the 2015 Place à l'Art location and other neighbourhoods could soon not have plants or flowers in front of their houses anymore (because of a pending city ordinance) seamlessly progressed into a discussion about David Harvey's notion of 'commoning the city' (2012) as the claiming or reclaiming of the urban public space. During this discussion, the participants from distant locations such as Warsaw, Zagreb, Chisinau and Barcelona had no trouble at all in understanding each other. In other words, the sometimes indeed perhaps 'abstract' quality of the notion of a European civil domain and of the ideals that we as European citizens might want to see as the foundation of the European Union, can certainly contribute to articulating protest and to channelling and directing political emotions.

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ANTHROPOLOGY BEYOND ITSELF?

ABSTRACT

Since the late nineties, many artistic collectives in Barcelona and Spain in general have defined their practice in terms of active political intervention, in what some have defined as Artivism. Originally related to the anti-globalisation movement, this active involvement in politics involved the participation and organisation of demonstrations. Some critics of 'artist' practices dismissed them as achieving the opposite effect from what they intended – instead of making these demonstrations more effective, they turned them into 'works of art', 'performances' without effect. One of the things the article discusses is this dismissive understanding of 'performance' as something ineffectual and anti-political. The author argues that this situation has changed substantially in recent years, as these activist movements have become engaged in larger social movements. He addresses this question by looking at the different forms in which these 'performances' have been integrated into political movements, from the 'artmanis' organised within the anti-globalisation movement, to the organization of the 15-M square occupations in 2011, to the more recent 'Escraches', or public acts of accusation to politicians organised by the PAH (Platform of Mortgage Victims).

KEYWORDS

Anthropology of Art, Autonomy, Participation, Barcelona, Barcelona en Comú

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INTRODUCTION

In his recent book, *Art beyond itself*, Néstor García Canclini argues that contemporary art has become 'post-autonomous'. Artistic practice does not result only or preferentially in art objects, but it is inserted in multiple contexts, from the media and urban spaces, to digital networks, the social sciences, and forms of social participation. In these terms, art would be no longer defined by the 'art world' or the 'artistic field'. Its practice is actually questioning the very division of social labour that autonomy implies, and by the same token, the sociology of art and the art history based on this notion, from Bourdieu (1993) and Becker (1984) to Foster (1995) and Bishop (2012).

One could ask if the notion of 'post-autonomy' describes *the facts* of the international art world today: one could argue that the international art world certainly exists today, as an autonomous field of practice. Still 'post-autonomy' points out to a tendency and an aspiration, as García Canclini would call it, a form of 'imminence' (2014: 218) in many different forms of artistic practice in the last few decades. It may be an interesting idea to think with, in terms of the possibilities it opens, rather than as a descriptive term.

In this article, I would like to interrogate the notion of post-autonomy further in two directions. First by pointing to how is artistic practice inserted in politics, in particular in reference to my own research in Barcelona. Second by bringing this notion a bit further in relation to Anthropology. If Art becomes post-autonomous by its insertion in the social sciences, and in particular Anthropology, can we also imagine a post-autonomous Anthropology? That is to say, if art is not just art, but something else, including Anthropology, can the same thing be proposed for Anthropology? Can we imagine an Anthropology that is not just an academic discipline but a form of practice inserted in many other contexts, the media, the city, digital networks, art...?

To imagine a post-autonomous anthropology is to move a step further into an argument that has already been made by many authors, about the collaboration between art, anthropology and other disciplines (Schneider and Wright 2005, Schneider and Wright 2010, Schneider and Wright 2013, Ingold 2013, Sansi 2015, Holmes & Marcus 2008, Holmes & Marcus 2012). In most of this literature, however, this collaboration presupposes a mutual recognition, an exchange between partners. But the post-autonomous moment dissolves these separations,

in which anthropology plunges into unknown territory. Rather than fair collaboration, post-autonomy is the result of processes of participation, in which the participants become part of larger wholes perhaps to the expense of their individuality, their autonomy.

To interrogate the possibility of post-autonomy, I will focus on a specific example, the relation between art, politics and the social sciences in the last few years in Barcelona, Spain. But before that, I will expose García Canclini's argument in more detail.

POST-AUTONOMY

Néstor García Canclini's last book, *Art beyond itself*, argues that Modernist theories of the international artistic art world or the artistic field were based on a number of assumptions that may no longer be tenable. The artistic field, for Bourdieu (1994), would be a result of the process of division of labour in modern societies (like France for example), in which art and cultural production would be given their own space, their autonomy. The art world, for Becker (1982), would be a network of specialists that collaborate with each other – again, a model based on the modern division of labour. The international art world would be a highly specialized, autonomous and elitist network (Thornton 2008) organized as a market working back to back with financial markets, and hence its centers would be based in financial capitals like New York and London. The difference between the model of the 'field' and the 'international art world' is that the field presupposes a national frame (France for example) of public institutions that make the genesis of this field possible, while the international art world works as a global market. And yet both models, public national field of art and the international commercial art world, are based on the assumption that artistic practice in modern societies is highly specialized and differentiated, and autonomous from other forms of social practice, not just from other professions, but also from politics, religion and economy as different fields or worlds of practice. Hence the purpose of a social science of art would be to describe the autonomy of these worlds or fields, and their internal structure.

García Canclini is proposing that this modernist model may not correspond to the situation of contemporary art and culture in the twenty-first century. For García Canclini, contemporary art is becoming post-autonomous: "art practices based on *objects* have increasingly been displaced in favor of practices based on *contexts*,

to the point that works are now being *inserted in the media, urban spaces, digital networks, and forms of social participation where aesthetic differences seem to dissolve*" (2014: xviii). And that is partially a consequence of the fact that contemporary society is no longer based on the strong narratives of modernity, in which the division of social labor between fields made sense. For García Canclini, contemporary society doesn't have a story line, a project, a vision of the future either in political and religious terms. In this situation, art appears as a possibility, not as an alternative politics or religion, but simply as a space that can provide with metaphors to address what García Canclini calls 'imminence' – a sense of what is coming into being. This is not a mystical state, but "the experience of perceiving in the existing reality other possible ways of being that make dissent, not escape, a necessity" (García Canclini 2014: 168). This formulation brings García Canclini close to Rancière's notion of the politics of aesthetics as proposing new distributions of the sensible, and he certainly does make reference to Rancière, but García Canclini does not want to reduce or circumscribe artistic practice to politics, as an already established narrative. For him what is interesting is precisely the 'post-autonomous' condition of art, and its insertion in different circuits outside of art as an institution, like in the media, urban spaces, the social sciences, and in processes of social participation.

Still, there are a number of questions that are left opened in this argument. To start with, do we really live in a society without a story line, or is this just the effect of a hegemonic story that becomes invisible – the story of uncertainty and crisis we live in? Why does art have this power of addressing imminence? And what are the consequences of this imminence? Why can't art result in new narratives, in new politics? Secondly, at a more critical level, this post-autonomy of art can be seen, in rather negative terms, simply as the subsumption of contemporary art in the society of the spectacle, where art becomes just one more commodity for mass consumption. This maybe a rather simplistic argument, but also one that has to be addressed and explained if we want to discuss where is art if it loses its autonomous condition. This connects with a third point: in more ethnographic terms, the examples used by García Canclini are very successful artists (like Santiago Sierra or Gabriel Orozco), very well placed in the international art world, that in spite of any theories of post-autonomy, still exists and is growing. As a matter of fact, the international commercial art world has never

been as powerful as today, and the pressure for artists to professionalize (or in other terms, to abide by its power) have never been stronger. This international art world coexists, in ambiguous and complex ways, with always growing peripheral, perhaps post-autonomous practices and spaces, we could call them 'third spaces', that do not necessarily respond either to market or public sector logics. And yet it would be important not to reduce these 'third spaces' to a 'third sector', as in the 'NGO-ization' of art practice. Fourth, and last, it would be necessary to think also about what are the consequences of this post-autonomization for the social sciences, and in particular Anthropology, which is one of the social fields in which art has been inserted, according to García Canclini.

To conclude this section, I would say that to understand this post-autonomous moment we have to consider at least four possible spheres of 'insertion', which at the same time are also loosing their autonomy: politics, mass cultural production, the so called 'third sector', and the social sciences.

ART AND POLITICS IN BARCELONA

I will try to address this issue by focusing on a specific case, the city of Barcelona. I was born here, and I have been living and doing research in the city for the last few years. I have been doing fieldwork on the events I will report, but I have been a part of social and cultural movements in the city for years. Some of the people I mention in this paper are not just my informants, but my colleagues, and friends. I myself could be, in this case, an example of a 'post-autonomous' anthropology.

At the turn of the century, some art collectives in Barcelona were looking for alternatives to the commercial art sector and/or public art institutions, working in collaboration with activist movements, applying different forms of visual and media production to specific political struggles. A very explicit example is the collective Enmedio, which means literally 'in between' formed by visual artists, film makers, photographers, graphic designers... who in their own terms, decided to "abandon their field of work" ("abandonar nuestra area habitual de trabajo"), to contribute with their skills to build tools for social protest. The tools they used were directly or indirectly inspired by situationism: the production of situations and interventions, performances, forms of public detournement, etc. (www.enmedio.info).

Two of the key political issues in Spain at the turn of the century were the enduring unemployment and

the precarisation of labour, as well as the housing crisis. In spite of the economic growth of Spain at the turn of the century, most of the jobs for young people in Spain were precarious and poorly paid, and the access to housing was becoming increasingly difficult. From the early 2000, the price of housing had been rising exponentially in Spain, creating a housing bubble that would eventually explode in 2008. But before the crash, a social movement emerged to ask for the right to decent housing ('vivienda digna'). An assembly in Barcelona, under the name *V de Vivienda* (V for Housing) organised a number of actions during 2006. Besides demonstrations, they organised all kinds of situations, like a Pyjama party at IKEA (www.youtube.com/watch?v=kO-fre2w6YI), and provoked disruption in several public events, with a character called Supervivienda, who dressed like a superhero. Enmedio were actively involved in the organisation of these actions, even if it wasn't just or manily them: this was the collective action of an assembly, formed by social activists from many different backgrounds. Actually some of them were anthropologists. The Ikea occupation was the idea of the anthropologists rather than the artists, if these distinctions did make any sense. All these situations and events were not framed as works of art with an author, but as political acts organised by an assembly, constituted by people from different backgrounds.

All these events could appear like a rather colorful if irrelevant form of political protest, if it wasn't for the market crash that finally happened in the following years. After 2008, the banking system collapsed in Spain like in many other countries, and with it the mortgage crisis reached unprecedented levels. Spanish laws are particularly harsh on mortgages: the law determines that if a person borrows money to buy a home, they can only be freed of the debt when it is repaid. Even in the case of death, the debt is not canceled. Many people were evicted and they still had to pay their mortgage. In that context, the number of the people affected by the housing crisis grew exponentially. As a result, the social movement for dignified housing became much larger, and what were relatively small movements, like *V de Vivienda*, became the *Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca* (Platform for People Affected by Mortgages), a much larger and cross-cutting social movement, which was not just a bunch of activists, artists and anthropologists, but people of all social backgrounds and nationalities, amongst them many immigrants.

But still, the strategy of the PAH was based on Direct Action. Through a number of public campaigns, like

STOP deshaucios (STOP evictions), the PAH was able to make the media turn their attention to the housing situation as a national emergency in 2011. The tactics of the PAH were to organize a micro-mobilization at the site where an eviction was taking place, to create a public outrage that would eventually stop the eviction, or in front of the banking institutions that ordered the evictions. Another technique used by the PAH, the *escrache*, was very polemical but it also gave them a lot of exposure in the media. The *escrache* is a type of demonstration in which a group of activists go to the homes or workplaces of those whom they want to condemn and publicly humiliate them, in order to influence the media, and governments into a certain course of action. In 2013 the PAH organized a petition for dignified housing, asking the Parliament of Spain to officially change the mortgage law, collecting 1,500,000 signatures. The initiative was discussed in Parliament, but it didn't pass. However, as a result of that initiative, the figure of one of the leaders of the PAH, Ada Colau, became extremely popular. Ada Colau was a former student of philosophy, actress, squatter, and full-time activist since the early 2000. She was dressing up as Supervivienda. She exemplifies the trajectory of a generation that started to get politicized in the nineties in the anti-war and anti-globalization movements, then moved to more local, immediate struggles, like precarious housing and labour. Since 2006, she worked with the NGO Observatori DESC, a social rights watch organization. It is interesting to note the change of image of Colau in her trajectory – from her performative impersonation of Supervivienda, to her image as representative of the PAH, a serious and righteous public speaker.

What was once a radical, small, situationist movement had become a movement of masses with a strong public approval. Part of its success was a result of a very effective use of the media. Art collectives like Enmedio actively collaborated in the media strategy of the PAH, from the demonstrations, helping build what Enmedio calls Visual Objects like in *Photographic actions*, *We are not numbers*, or through the graphic campaign *Si se puede, pero no quieren* in 2013 (Yes it can be done, but they don't want to). The campaign consisted in the massive reproduction of the message "Yes it can be done", in a green circle, and "but they don't want to", in a red circle. This campaign summarized in two sentences the political contestation to what had been the hegemonic political discourse in Spain after (and before the crisis): the

notion that there was only one way out of the economic crisis, through the austerity enforced by the conservative Spanish government and ordered by the troika, and that it wasn't possible to change the mortgage laws.



FIGURE 1:
SI SE PUEDE, PERO NO
QUIEREN (ENMEDIO, 2013).

The success of the PAH and these campaigns eventually had larger political consequences. In 2014 a wave of new political formations and coalitions emerged, partially drawing on the new social movements of which the PAH was the leading example. One political party, *Podemos*, clearly connected with the *leitmotiv* of the PAH campaign (although arguably, also with the Obama campaign: “Yes We can”. But that is a different story), extending it to political power itself: the core message was, and still is, yes, it is possible, we can win the elections. The leaders of these new parties come from different backgrounds. They are young political scientists, sociologists and anthropologists, artists and cultural producers, NGO workers, many of them with precarious jobs. They are not, in other terms, the usual politicians. One of the main and most successful accusations that these new formations level against the traditional political formations is that they are a ‘caste’: an endogamic network of power relations, not based on merit but on corruption, and which doesn’t represent the interest of the people of Spain but their own. As opposed to this accusation, the traditional political parties accuse the new political formations of precisely the opposite: of not being professional enough, but amateurs. In opposition to the ‘caste’ accusation, they have been described as the ‘chusma’, the rabble.

One of the new leaders that has emerged in this wave of political transformation has been Ada Colau, who presented her candidacy to the city council of Barcelona leading the coalition Barcelona en Comú, Barcelona in Common.

The people who formed this coalition were in their majority not professional politicians. In spite of that, they won the local elections in May 2015. A similar coalition, *Ahora Madrid* (Now Madrid) won the elections in the capital of Spain. This was unprecedented, challenging the hegemony of the traditional parties, and also of the traditional media (newspapers and television) associated with them. During the campaign and after the criticisms to these new political formations were fierce, and focused often, in the unconventional backgrounds of the new politicians. Ada Colau's past was pointed at as scandalous: how could a former squatter become a mayor? Pictures of her as an activist, disguised as a superhero or as a fairy, were publicly mocked by adversarial media, as a proof of her lack of seriousness and professionalism. Several other members of her team were pointed at, in particular her communications secretary, Agueda Bañón, a visual artist who participated of what was called the 'postporno' activist movement, a feminist movement that produced queer media. Pictures of her pissing in the middle of an avenue caused a big uproar in the mainstream media. Little was said of her expertise precisely in the production of alternative digital media, starting with her engagement with the anti-globalization network Indymedia since its foundation.

The success of this 'new politics' is interesting at several levels. At one level, the criticism of the caste of old politicians can be read in moral terms, as a discourse against corruption that proposes the necessity of a new politics lead by young 'normal people' (*gente corriente*) from the grassroots that are still in touch with the people (*el pueblo*). At a more deeply sociological level, however, what is interesting about this new politics is how it is reshuffling the division of labour, and the division of power, established in Spain since the death of General Franco. To explain it in very quick and simplistic terms, one could say that the division of labour was based upon a clear separation of politics, which was partially professionalized, from other fields of intellectual labour, like the academic field, and the field of art. At the end of the dictatorship, a young generation of activists had to decide if they became professional politicians or worked in other fields – like the social sciences, art, the media or the third sector. Some of these fields became also professionalized, and they became the ecological reserves of radical leftist thought, while the mainstream of politics and the media moved steadily towards neo-liberalism. At the same time, however, the relation between economic

power, political power and media became increasingly promiscuous. The accusations of the new politics against the 'caste' do not only impinge upon corruption but also on the revolving doors (*puertas giratorias*) between politics and corporate economic and media power: in other terms, the clear fact that the 'autonomy' of social fields is not respected in the promiscuous relations of economic power, media corporations and politics.

On the other hand, the leaders of this new politics are a younger generation, that once believed in the division of social labor in a modern democratic society, and tried to become professionalized in one of these fields – like art or academia, just to realize that these fields were closed to newcomers, because of the precarisation of labor conditions. The situation in politics was similar: the caste is, by definition, a gerontocratic system, in which new people and ideas are far from welcome, and the reproduction of the elite is based on very close personal or even familial ties. In these terms, the political involvement of a younger generation made them progressively aware that the social division of labor, the 'autonomy' of art and science from politics, didn't make sense. And that they themselves *could* become political leaders, they could take over the institutions. Something that only ten years ago, they would never have thought of. But now we have new political organizations full of artists, activists, and social scientists. If they will become 'professionalized' again, is something that we still have to see. But the surprising speed with which they have managed to upset a whole system of power, in spite of a manifest lack of resources, at least is interesting to look at, as a case study.

In these terms, 'post-autonomy', at least from the point of view of Barcelona, and Spain in general, can have a different meaning from what García Canclini implied. Post-autonomy in this case means the questioning of an institutionalized division of social and intellectual labor that separated clearly between politics, art, social movements and the social sciences.

PARTICIPATION

What is the role of Anthropology in this process? In my experience, anthropologists in Barcelona have been involved in this new politics since its very beginning. Not only were many anthropologists participating in many of the actions and movements I have described, but they often see their work as anthropologists as militant research, strictly related to this political practice. Many of these anthropologists were and are working on urban is-

sues, gentrification, immigration, the housing crisis, etc. In many ways the anthropologist, the artist, the activist, were very difficult to distinguish, precisely because their forms of work were participative and based on an assembly. Hence the 'authorship' of the actions as I mentioned, their status as art, or as anthropology, is quite irrelevant.

It could be argued, and it has been argued, that participation can turn against itself: it can become a policy, imposed from the top down, as a form of political expediency, a tyranny. In the wider sphere of social policy, development and management, participatory processes have become a common buzzword of neo-liberal governmentality. The agents of this tyranny are often NGOs. The critique towards 'participation' policies follows the foucauldian argument, by which the well-meaning projects of empowerment and participation are in fact institutional devices of discipline and control, instrumental to the construction of neoliberal subjectivities. In the field of cultural production, several critical voices have been raised against the 'nightmare of participation' (Miessen 2011, Bishop 2012), following similar arguments. Participatory art practices are often accused of building up devices of social control, and the art practices themselves, of reducing politics to a sort of applied 'social service', in the sense, again, that NGOs are used to provide social services and hide political problems. But we have seen in the case of Barcelona is precisely the opposite: people coming from NGOs, the arts, and the social sciences, using participation not to neutralize politics, but precisely to organize a new politics.

CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, I want to start by making clear that this post-autonomous moment, as I have defined it in the case of Barcelona, is just a hint, or a possibility, of what it could be, a flash of 'imminence' in García Canclini's terms. The reality, the sociological facts of most art, of most politics, of most anthropology even, around the world, is not post-autonomous. It seems to be the opposite: there is a growing pressure to professionalize, to specialize, be competitive, to succeed in ones' own professional field. And yet I would argue that this is not really a form of autonomy, since this growing pressure takes one particular form in all fields: neoliberal management. This may be called also a post-autonomous world, the "new spirit of capitalism" (Boltanski & Chiapello 2006). This other post-autonomous, neo-capitalist world is also a political project, an utopia (or a dystopia for most of its

victims). What may change is that not so long ago, neo-liberal management appeared as the only game in town. Perhaps, and I am saying it with a lot of caution, this is not the case any more.

I have argued that one possible key to understand this new post-autonomous moment, is the use of participation, as a form of work in establishing new movements and relations between art, politics and the social sciences. The relation between art and anthropology is not just a dialogue, an exchange or a give and take, where anthropology can provide, say ethnographic methods in exchange of visual methods, or ethics in exchange of creativity. This relation is not a trade or a barter, what 'participation' implies is more than an equivalent value, but getting involved with, becoming part of, for example, a political practice. Participatory exchange is not a commodity but a gift (Sansi 2015). The 'imperative to participate', which transforms art and anthropology, makes them be something more, and something else, than what they were before: it 'extends' them (Mauss 1990, Strathern 1990) it distributes their personhood to something larger. Some authors have talked about 'parasites' and 'para-ethnographies' (Holmes and Marcus 2008, 2012), here I have talked directly about political movements.

We could understand it better perhaps in relation to Callon's arguments on new forms of politics. Callon called a new form of 'technical democracy' (Callon, Lascoumes & Barthe 2011) constituted by 'hybrid forums' in which politics, science, art and all forms of knowledge are brought together (participate from each other) to address situations of uncertainty. This new form of democracy would be opposed to the conventional 'representative democracy' of the past, based on the separation of spheres (politics on the one hand, science on the other), and the 'representation' between them (citizens represented by politicians, laymen by scientists). The examples used by Callon are not just the world wide web, but also other matters of concern, like nuclear waste, AIDS, or climate change. These hybrid forums would overcome the 'double delegation' of citizens to politicians and to experts that characterizes our current model of representative (or delegative) democracy, by proposing to bring together all the actors concerned in these matters, people *affected* and participating in this process. The PAH, in fact, is a collective of people *affected* by mortgages. It is an excellent example of a collective where the distinction between citizens and experts, people and politicians is cancelled.

However, being based on the gift, as anthropologists know well, participation is not necessarily egalitarian, free, and improvised. It can become hierarchical, obligatory, and ritualised (Sansi 2015). New hierarchies, and forms of expertise and delegation can be produced by these processes. But what can still be argued, is that the imperative to participate opens a space of possibility (maybe that is what García Canclini means by ‘imminence’), it generates new situations that, extending the range of its practice and placing it in a larger context, may provoke an interesting rethinking of some of the basic tenets of Anthropology, precisely, as an ‘autonomous’ discipline, as a form of expertise. The ‘post-autonomous’ (García Canclini, 2014) moment in Art and Anthropology, by compelling to participate, being part of larger experiments in ‘technical democracy’ can force us to question in larger terms, what does our work as anthropologists consist of.

EPILOGUE: THE DEMISE OF EXPERTS

Most of this article was written in reference to political events in Barcelona up to 2016. One of the points I am making, with a lot of caution, is that perhaps there are other games in town, different from neoliberal management. I have argued how in the context of the economic crisis, new political actors emerged in places like Spain. These actors are questioning the hegemony, the political system, the rules of engagement, the division of labor. They have bypassed the division between politicians, experts and lay people, generating experiments in democracy that eventually have been successful.

The world events of 2016 have given an uncanny twist to this tentative proposal. In the last few months we have lived through political processes that seem to have some things in common with what I just described: the rejection of the ‘elites’, established institutions, and expertise, have been key elements in the so-called ‘Brexit’ referendum of separation of the UK from the EU, and the election of the Republican presidential candidate in the US elections of 2016. Political commentators from the former establishment and the mainstream media in Spain were quickly drawing parallelisms between these political events and the ‘new politics’ in Spain. For them, all these movements were ‘populist’. One rarely finds definitions of ‘populism’ in these media statements, but basically it has been argued that they reject the ‘elites’ and ‘experts’ and argue the need for the ‘people’ to take over the corrupt institutions that oppress them. The label ‘populist’

is misleading, since it is bringing together radically different political movements – from fascism on the right to socialism on the left. For good or bad these are the movements that are defining the current political moment internationally, and the critics of populism seem to offer no alternative but to return to the certainties of a model where the social division of labour was well defined, a model that may be finally collapsing. The very fact that we are talking about fascism as an actual, immediate danger in the US and the EU really is an unforeseen event, that few people would have considered a year ago. A form of imminence, to go back to García Canclini, if probably not the kind of imminence he or I would be hoping for. In any case, in this situation, it is becoming even more obvious that for Anthropology, there is no alternative but to take sides, to abandon its gilded autonomy, and plunge into new political experiments.

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EMANUELE RINALDO MESCHINI

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IL SOCIALE DELL'ARTE SOCIALE. IL BISOGNO DI UNA MENTALITÀ

ABSTRACT

The paper aims to analyze the relationship between the theory of Socially Engaged Art and its practice in different contexts. Starting from the different theories developed, especially in the early 2000, with a particular focus on Grant Kester and Claire Bishop, the text aims to analyze a specific case. The case study is the experience from the associations PIACCA/Laborintus who took/squat two former abandoned spaces in the public housing neighborhood of Corviale in the outskirt of Rome. Corviale is well-known as the longest single residential building in Europe. This association bring together artists and people from the building in order to create a space for participation and sharing.

KEYWORDS

Socially Engaged Art, Corviale, Laborintus, Creative Industries, Activism

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PREMESSA

A partire dagli anni novanta la critica e l'operatività artistica internazionale sono state informate da una nuova modalità che ha fatto del sociale il centro della sua attenzione e il fulcro per l'attivazione di una serie di processi di responsabilizzazione della comunità che, a differenza dello spettatore, è diventata parte attiva delle operazioni stesse. Il fine ultimo di queste operazioni, iniziate parallelamente tra Stati Uniti e nord Europa, è stato quello di portare un cambiamento concreto, attivando una serie di dinamiche a lungo termine all'interno delle quali l'artista ha assunto il ruolo di iniziatore di processi anziché quello di autore di un'opera. Questa modalità artistica è stata diversamente definita: *new genre public art, socially engaged art, social practice, community-based*.

La *Socially Engaged Art* – definizione che, rispetto alle altre, ha avuto più seguito – rappresenta oggi molto più di una serie di pratiche promosse dai singoli artisti per il sociale. La SEA (acronimo usato per *Socially Engaged Art*) ha ormai, infatti, un suo percorso scandito da una fase storica, una 'mediana' e una contemporanea. Nel corso di questi ultimi vent'anni, grazie al lavoro di artisti, curatori e operatori culturali *at large*, la critica della SEA, nel senso di struttura etico-estetica, ha preso forma. Ad oggi la SEA può essere definita come un vero e proprio movimento artistico, in quanto è posizionata all'interno di una narrazione di tipo storico-artistico. In particolare, i punti di contatto con le avanguardie, storiche e neo, sono stati ravvisati nella performatività inclusiva tipica, ad esempio, del teatro futurista o del cabaret dadaista (Bishop 2012), nel collegamento ad un'idea di rappresentazione di stato come il costruttivismo russo (Raven 1993) oppure nella riappropriazione/contestazione urbana situazionista (Kester 2004). A partire dagli anni duemila, poi, la SEA si è andata sempre più definendo in una sorta di teologia negativa o logica oppositoria che alla vecchia domanda 'questa è arte?', ha sostituito l'interrogativo 'quando è arte?'.

Potremmo dunque dire che c'è una SEA degli anni novanta e una degli anni duemila. Una prima fase in cui si è operato e sperimentato, e una seconda fase contraddistinta dal consolidamento di un determinato set di regole estetiche/etiche-critiche, di un determinato obiettivo e di specifiche fonti di finanziamento.¹ Oggi possiamo dire di essere entrati nella fase 'matura' di questo movimento.

Quello che intendo delineare attraverso questo testo è se ci sia stata o meno una traduzione della SEA nell'operatività italiana e capire come un intervento che si compie

¹ Per una problematizzazione delle ricerche attuali sulla SEA si veda Sholette 2015: 96-96: "In just a few short years the emerging field of social practice has gained a considerable following thanks to the way it successfully links an ever-expanding definition of visual art to a broad array of disciplines and procedures [...]. Not just another cultural field or artistic genre, social practice is evolving into a comprehensive sphere of life encompassing over a half dozen academic programs, concentrations, or minors at the graduate and undergraduate levels already dedicated to turning out engaged artists, and still more programs in the pipeline". In particolare, sempre nello stesso saggio, si veda il tema della financialization e della storicizzazione. In particolare, sempre nello stesso saggio, si vedano i temi della financialization e della storicizzazione.

oggi, realizzato da artisti con finalità sociali, possa essere più o meno valutato nell'ottica della SEA. Si tratta di indagare il concetto di legittimazione del sociale nell'arte e, viceversa, dell'arte nel sociale attraverso le sue metodologie e pratiche.

L'intervento in questione, attraverso il quale problematizzerò il concetto stesso di sociale nel momento del suo confronto con la sfera artistica, riguarda la rigenerazione di un'area all'interno del complesso abitativo Nuovo Corviale nel quartiere Corviale a Roma. Nel 2007, alla chiusura del mercato rionale, un folto numero di artisti decise di occuparne gli spazi non solo come forma di protesta, ma anche come dimostrazione d'impegno nei confronti del quartiere, per una sua rivitalizzazione attraverso l'arte. A partire da quel momento gli artisti, molti dei quali sono poi entrati a far parte dell'associazione Laborintus, hanno dato vita ad una serie di laboratori di stampa, fotografia, incisione, pittura e scultura, con l'obiettivo di realizzare un'accademia d'arte popolare. La particolare posizione dei diversi laboratori, disposti in maniera circolare intorno ad una piccola piazza, portò ben presto alla creazione di una micro-comunità interna al quartiere stesso. Inoltre, alla fine del 2014, un'azione spontanea e interna al quartiere ha portato all'occupazione dei locali del cosiddetto spazio H, monolitica costruzione di cemento pensata come luogo di ritrovo e posta proprio di fronte al mercato. Nello spazio H, grazie all'associazione PIACCA, è stato aperto un laboratorio di artigianato artistico e una impresa multiservizi. Una piccola ma significativa parte del quartiere da quel momento ha iniziato a vivere una sua vita parallela, creandosi uno spazio di recupero dove il ruolo dell'artista è stato soprattutto quello di suggeritore di un mondo diverso, di una diversa concezione tanto dei luoghi quanto della loro socialità.

METODOLOGIA. OSSERVAZIONE

PARTECIPANTE - CRITICA PARTECIPANTE

Il rapporto con le associazioni Laborintus e PIACCA nasce dall'invito da parte di Alessandro Fornaci (Laborintus) a realizzare una mostra negli spazi esterni dell'associazione sul tema del rapporto del quartiere con il suo passato di sperimentazione artistica (anni settanta). Questo in vista soprattutto di un processo di riqualificazione in grado di legittimare l'occupazione di PIACCA nei confronti del Comune di Roma e dell'ATER (Azienda Territoriale per l'Edilizia Residenziale del Comune di Roma). Si tratta di un approccio/metodologia che, se nel campo delle scienze sociali ha una sua storia e definizione, nel

campo della critica artistica è rappresentato dal passaggio da un mo(n)do curatoriale basato sul 'curated by' ad uno ibrido legato al concetto di 'taking care'. Il punto di partenza è dunque quello di una critica/teoria artistica contaminata tanto dall'etnografia quanto dall'azione politica dal basso. Una metodologia dove l'estetica si confronta con/nel suo riscontro sociale. La teoria e la sua *effectiveness* sono, infatti, posti sullo stesso piano, in linea con le teorie del filosofo americano John Dewey che descrivono l'opera d'arte come operazione esperienziale condivisa.

Il periodo di ricerca/condivisione partecipata con le associazioni Laborinuts e PIACCA si è sviluppato a partire dal maggio 2016 per arrivare, nel marzo del 2017, alla realizzazione di un documentario (*A House is Not a Home* – E. R. Meschini, F. Bianco) che è presentato nella sezione video di questo numero monografico di *Visual Ethnography*. In questo periodo ho preso parte alle attività laboratoriali dell'associazione, nonché alle varie operazioni di manutenzione e costruzione. Durante il mese di novembre ho realizzato una serie di incontri con alcuni ragazzi del quartiere di età compresa tra i 13 e i 21 anni al fine di capire se, oltre alle attività artistiche di stampa, fotografia disegno e video proposte da Laborintus, avessero idee e visioni specifiche per l'utilizzo di quegli spazi.

La ricerca, ancora in fase di sviluppo, è stata accompagnata da un questionario sugli interessi e la quotidianità dei ragazzi. Nel periodo in esame, entrambe le associazioni sono cresciute notevolmente in termini di riconoscimento all'interno del quartiere, che tra l'altro, in virtù delle sue particolarità architettoniche, è servito come 'palestra' per diversi interventi artistici, come quello realizzato dal collettivo romano Stalker nel 2004. Il lavoro principale delle due associazioni si è incentrato dunque sulla costruzione di un rapporto di fiducia con il quartiere all'interno delle sue pratiche quotidiane. Questo è stato l'aspetto che ho avuto la fortuna di seguire da vicino.

LA SEA NEL CONTESTO ITALIANO

Quando si parla di SEA in Italia ci si trova di fronte ad una certa 'ambiguità' nell'inquadrarne limiti e campo d'azione. Questo, in parte, è dovuto ad una mancanza di traduzione dei testi, non solo in senso letterale, bensì critico, nonché alla difficoltà nel creare una rete sistematica di scambi.

Testi di autori quali Grant Kester (2004) o Miwon Kwon (2002) hanno avuto pochissima diffusione in Italia e solo nel 2015 nella traduzione di Cecilia Guida è apparso il testo di Claire Bishop *Artificial Hells* che, pur

nella sua problematicità, è risultato vitale per il dibattito sull'arte partecipata. In Italia, tra coloro che si occupano della materia o tra gli artisti che la praticano, si tende a rifiutare per la maggior parte la definizione di 'arte socialmente impegnata'. Tale definizione viene concepita in un contesto più ampio, in cui il sociale nell'arte acquista anche un valore storico in relazione alla tradizione politica dell'arte italiana negli anni settanta.

Inoltre, la SEA, così come è stata teorizzata, è composta da molteplici sfaccettature, attitudini e discipline. È più facile, infatti, arrivare al suo corpus estetico/etico leggendo di urbanistica o pedagogia piuttosto che di critica artistica. Un testo, ad esempio, di Luigi Bobbio, professore di analisi delle politiche pubbliche all'Università di Torino, dal titolo *La partecipazione imperfetta* (2016), che descrive i processi partecipativi all'intero del dibattito pubblico per la costruzione di infrastrutture di carattere pubblico, riesce ad entrare nel merito del concetto di partecipazione attiva e processo co-partecipato, anima di molti progetti SEA, parlando della costruzione di un nuovo tratto autostradale a Bologna. Del resto, se in un futuro prossimo la SEA inizierà a sviluppare anche in Italia una sua linea critica questo lo si dovrà, a mio avviso, proprio alla progettazione urbana e al ruolo obbligatorio che il dibattito pubblico per le opere di carattere nazionale inizierà a ricoprire a partire dalla sua normativizzazione.²

In estrema sintesi, si potrebbe dire che la SEA, non avendo ancora trovato un suo contesto di istituzionalizzazione, fatica a imporsi come campo autonomo e ha necessità di vincolarsi ad altri sistemi disciplinari e d'intervento

Nella critica italiana, del resto, un movimento come quello della SEA viene concepito/letto in maniera più 'frazionata', dal momento che si tende a separare, per esempio, le tematiche dell'arte pubblica da quelle politiche, quelle partecipative da quelle della rigenerazione urbana. Un esempio è l'operazione *Mapping San Siro* nel quartiere San Siro a Milano. Mapping è un progetto di ricerca-azione nato nel 2013 e avviato dal Dipartimento di Architettura e Studi urbani del Politecnico di Milano coordinato da Francesca Cognetti, con il supporto di Liliana Padovani (IUAV Venezia). Il progetto trova la sua sede nel quartiere milanese di San Siro e si pone come obbiettivo quello di creare una rete sociale, altrimenti frammentata, tra le persone e le esigenze del quartiere stesso. Analizzato nelle sue metodologie e nelle sue pratiche, il progetto rappresenta un ottimo esempio di cosa

² Il 'nuovo' ruolo del dibattito pubblico è stato delineato dall'articolo 22 "Trasparenza nella partecipazione dei portatori di interessi e dibattito pubblico" all'interno del Nuovo Codice Appalti (D.Lgs. n.50/2016) in particolare all'articolo 3 "L'amministrazione aggiudicatrice o l'ente aggiudicatore proponente l'opera soggetta a dibattito pubblico indice e cura lo svolgimento della procedura esclusivamente sulla base delle modalità individuate dal decreto di cui al comma 2."

significhi *Social Engagement*. Il substrato critico/teorico, però, è da individuarsi maggiormente in altre discipline come, per l'appunto, l'urbanistica e l'architettura anziché nel discorso sull'attuale stato dell'arte contemporanea.

L'arte, anche qui con le varie difficoltà 'nominali' del caso, viene concepita essenzialmente in modo 'strumentale' e come momento processuale. Rappresenta una delle possibilità di avvicinamento, ma non è di certo il punto di partenza né quello di arrivo. Da un punto di vista artistico, potremmo dire che all'interno di questo processo manchi una sorta di intenzionalità, ovvero una dichiarazione d'intenti iniziale in grado di segnare/creare il limite tra intervento artistico nel sociale e intervento sociale *tout court*. L'intenzionalità artistica, quasi un *Kunstwollen* alla Alois Reigl, è risultata essere molto importante per definire in passato diversi progetti SEA.

Sempre in ambito milanese ma più vicina ad una pratica SEA, proprio in virtù di una sua istituzionalizzazione, è l'operazione Isola Art Center. Il progetto è stato presentato in diversi contesti museali, come ad esempio la mostra *The Independent* (26 giugno – 12 ottobre 2014) presso il museo MAXXI di Roma. In questo caso il ripensamento del quartiere Isola è stato condotto di pari passo a modalità artistiche codificate e riconosciute all'interno del sistema di produzione dell'arte contemporanea.

In ambito italiano, poi, il tema della tradizione storica porta con sé l'importanza del contesto territoriale. Infatti, la rilevanza del contesto sociopolitico e culturale locale è fondamentale. Capire come e perché la SEA si sia sviluppata in un determinato ambito territoriale significa condurre, innanzitutto, un'analisi sociopolitica in grado di mettere in evidenza il concetto stesso di sociale insieme alle sue interpretazioni in relazione al territorio. Sebbene la SEA a livello di pratiche artistiche abbia ormai dettato una sorta di prontuario d'uso appiattendolo, per certi aspetti, alcuni approcci in una sorta di maniera ripetibile all'infinito, non può dirsi lo stesso per quello che riguarda il contesto in cui opera; in quanto proprio il contesto può modificarne gli aspetti principali nonché i risultati.³ La SEA in qualità di movimento artistico può estendere il suo controllo solo su ciò che conosce, ovvero la tecnica, anche se essa si manifesta nella partecipazione e nel dialogo. Al contrario non può fare altrettanto sulla componente viva sulla/nella quale opera, vale a dire la comunità che è tutt'altra cosa dal pubblico d'arte.

³ In merito al nuovo vocabolario di pratiche e termini aperto dalla SEA si veda Wright 2013. Questo testo è stato pubblicato in occasione della mostra *Museum of Arte Útil* tenutasi al Van Abbemuseum di Eindhoven (7 dicembre 2013 – 30 marzo 2014). La mostra ideata dall'artista cubana Tania Bruguera e dal curatore Charles Esche ha messo in evidenza i vari approcci e le varie tematiche all'interno della SEA cercando di offrire una modalità alternativa ai modelli espositivi, trasformando lo spazio museale in una piattaforma di ricerca aperta.

CORVIALE E L'ARTE

All'interno del dibattito su arte e intervento sociale, affrontare il tema Corviale significa capire e collocare questa relazione in Italia a partire dagli anni settanta fino ai giorni nostri, ovvero dalle utopie politiche alla *Socially Engaged Art* fino all'operatività ibrida.

Corviale è un quartiere della zona sud-ovest di Roma. Il Nuovo Corviale, invece, è un palazzo/complesso di edilizia popolare costruito interamente in cemento armato nel quale vivono circa ottomila persone. Realizzato da un'equipe di venti architetti guidata da Mario Fiorentino a partire dagli anni settanta e concluso ad inizio anni ottanta, il complesso si sviluppa in orizzontale attraverso una struttura lineare continua della lunghezza di un chilometro circa (958 metri) e comprensiva di 6 lotti (5 nel palazzo e uno posto in maniera trasversale e staccato dal palazzo stesso). La costruzione del Nuovo Corviale commissionata dall'Istituto Autonomo Case Popolari doveva essere una struttura fuori scala in grado di uscire dai soliti schemi-dormitorio proposti fino a quegli anni dallo IACP. Il palazzo sarebbe stato poi completato da servizi e spazi comuni che lo avrebbero reso indipendente e autogestibile ma per una serie di disguidi tecnico-burocratici non vennero mai realizzati.

Nella letteratura architettonica il Nuovo Corviale ha subito fortune alterne. Un aspetto sul quale però lo stesso Fiorentino ha sempre mantenuto la medesima linea di pensiero è stato quello relativo ai servizi o, meglio, alla consapevolezza che uno spazio come il Nuovo Corviale avrebbe creato un nuovo modo di approcciarsi ad essi. Fiorentino pensava ad un abitante autonomo anche nel senso di un cittadino slegato dalla totale dipendenza verso aspetti di gestione esterna/pubblica. Il cittadino del Nuovo Corviale avrebbe dovuto sfruttare quegli spazi per creare relazioni e costruire ciò di cui aveva bisogno, in particolare per l'erogazione dei servizi stessi (Moschini 1985). Riuscire a creare relazioni attraverso queste logiche non è, tuttavia, qualcosa di progettabile aprioristicamente e se a questo si unisce il fatto che i servizi non vennero alla fine mai realizzati e che, inoltre, poco dopo l'assegnazione delle prime case molti appartamenti vennero occupati, si può ben comprendere a quali problematiche si poteva andare incontro.

IL PRIMO INTERVENTO

Nel corso degli anni, il Nuovo Corviale è diventato semplicemente Corviale diventando quasi una figura retorica, una sineddoche dove la parte indica il tutto.

Il primo tentativo di dialogo artistico con il ‘monolite’ del Corviale risale al 1976. In quell’anno, il critico romano Enrico Crispolti ricopriva il ruolo di curatore del Padiglione Italia alla Biennale di Venezia. Il Padiglione, dal titolo Ambiente come sociale, si prefiggeva di indagare e declinare l’operatività italiana attraverso vari approcci e gradi di relazione con l’ambiente sociale ed era diviso in cinque sezioni: Ipotesi e realtà di una presenza urbana conflittuale, Riappropriazione urbana individuale, Partecipazione spontanea (diviso in Azione poetica e Azione politica), Partecipazione in rapporto con o attraverso l’ente locale, Ipotesi di rapporto sociale attraverso l’ente statale. Proprio in quest’ultima sezione venne presentato il progetto Corviale. Il contesto nel quale si sviluppò la proposta rappresentava un nuovo spazio per gli artisti e lo stesso Crispolti ridefinì il suo ruolo di critico-compagno-di-strada nell’attuazione di un processo co-creativo partecipato in cui il momento della dimensione teorica trovava continuità nella sua messa in pratica, o per meglio dire, nella sua messa in realtà.⁴

Il Padiglione Italia rappresentava, per certi aspetti, il culmine di una ricerca italiana pionieristica iniziata con una serie di operazioni come quelle ancora troppo performative di Campo Urbano a cura di Luciano Caramel (Como, 1969), in seguito ‘perfezionate’ da Crispolti stesso attraverso esempi quali Volterra ‘73, Napoli Situazione ‘75, Operazione Roma Eterna (1976). Queste esperienze culmineranno nel 1977 nel libro *Arti visive e partecipazione sociale* che ritengo comprenda/prefiguri il corpus dell’operatività italiana nel sociale.

Le opere presentate furono quelle degli scultori Teodosio Magnoni, Ninì Santoro, Nicola Carrino, Giuseppe Uncini, Carlo Lorenzetti e Stefano Fiorentino. In particolare Carrino presentò un progetto sulla facciata del palazzo intesa come elemento modulabile, mentre Lorenzetti, Magnoni, Uncini e Santoro analizzarono il rapporto con l’aspetto monumentale/scultoreo del palazzo e Fiorentino si occupò dell’immagine comunicazionale.

Se si pensa agli allora coevi esperimenti europei come, ad esempio, quelli di Stephen Willats nella progettazione sociale di un quartiere nell’area di West London, si può evincere come il concetto di luogo sia legato essenzialmente al concetto di comunità e, dunque, inteso come qualcosa di organizzato da/per gli abitanti (Willats 2010). Del resto, come cantava Dionne Warwick nel 1964, *A House is not a Home*, come a dire che il luogo fisico non crea l’abitare. Nelle azioni di Willats molto è incentrato su una sorta di pratica etnografica, anche attraverso l’uso di

⁴ La figura del critico-compagno-di-strada viene usata da Crispolti nel 1975 in occasione della mostra *...e/interventi* di Pino Cittadini, Angelo Caligaris, Mario Teleri, Luciano Martinis, Antonio Gatto, tenutasi a Roma presso la Galleria Sirio: “Non sostenitore, non presentatore, non mallevadore, non imbonitore, il ‘critico’ può essere in quest’incontro soltanto in certo modo in quanto ‘compagno di strada’, partecipante insomma anch’egli, in modo appunto praticamente paritetico, al dibattito (nel quale potrà forse assumere, se richiesto, il ruolo di moderatore).” (Crispolti 1977: 109).

strumenti come il questionario e il dialogo/intervista con la comunità.

Proprio in questo si può notare, a livello di pratiche, la mancanza di un approccio sistematico multidisciplinare alla questione sociale, sebbene gli artisti italiani del periodo mostrino un maggior impegno politico. D'altro canto, come dimostrato dalle varie sezioni del Padiglione Italia, il rapporto con il sociale è articolato e multiforme, ma per via della sua progettazione a-priori, il sociale di Corviale risulta essere strutturale, ovvero estremamente legato alla fisicità monumentale della struttura.

IL SECONDO INTERVENTO

A partire dagli anni duemila si sviluppò un nuovo pensiero critico intorno a Corviale che nel corso degli anni aveva visto crescere la sua fama di utopia fallita e quartiere degradato. L'idea del recupero arginò fin da subito quella, seppur solo accennata, dell'abbattimento. Corviale venne pertanto investito di un nuovo interesse creando una sorta di ammirazione da archeologia industriale 'viva'.

In questa cornice, nel 2004, a distanza di quasi trent'anni dall'esperienza della Biennale, il collettivo romano Stalker realizzò il progetto *Immaginare Corviale*. Il centro dell'intervento fu l'identità della popolazione Corviale e, dunque, il tema del sociale in un'ottica maggiormente relazionale. Insieme al Comune di Roma e alla Fondazione Olivetti, il gruppo avviò una serie di progetti per cambiare l'idea stereotipata del quartiere e capire le sue necessità.⁵

Il 2004, nell'ottica della SEA, è anche l'anno in cui viene realizzata la mostra *The Interventionist* a cura di Nato Thompson (Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art MASS MoCA). La mostra rappresentò un primo momento di definizione, ma anche di addomesticamento della SEA attraverso l'esposizione e la conseguente riduzione del concetto di *interventionism* in chiave museale. Agli inizi degli anni duemila cominciò a meglio definirsi anche la critica della SEA grazie agli interventi, tra gli altri, di studiosi e curatori come Grant Kester, Claire Bishop, Maria Lind e Charles Esche.

Gli interventi condotti tra il 2004 e il 2005 dagli Stalker furono di diversa natura e cercarono innanzitutto di porsi dalla parte dell'"inquilino", offrendo una prospettiva più che mai interdisciplinare. In quest'ottica si inserisce l'ideazione di una televisione di quartiere, *Corviale Network*, per raccontare la realtà del luogo e farla raccontare ai suoi abitanti. Una televisione locale basata

⁵ Per approfondire l'intervento nelle sue singoli azioni si veda Gennari Santori e Pietromarchi 2006. L'intervento degli Stalker fu organizzato e realizzato attraverso la pratica dell'Osservatorio Nomade (O/N) una rete fondata nel 2001 che riunisce diverse professionalità e specificità e che opera nel principio della co-azione/co-progettazione tra osservatore e territorio.

sugli stilemi del periodo, con programmi di cucina e d'intrattenimento. In particolare, venne ripreso il format del noto *C'è Posta per Te* e il postino venne impersonato da un abitante del palazzo.⁶ Queste operazioni, pur avendo una valenza di opere in sé, servirono per instaurare un dialogo attraverso un differente punto di vista. Altro intervento, forse più marcatamente artistico, è stato *Storie Comuni*, ideato da Cesare Pietroiusti e organizzato attraverso una serie di incontri tra gli abitanti e gli artisti che nel corso degli anni hanno lavorato o sono stati ispirati da Corviale. Da un punto di vista di *effectiveness* sociale, attraverso il collettivo Ellalab si è arrivati al censimento e alla progettazione partecipata del cosiddetto quarto piano occupato. Nei progetti di Fiorentino il quarto piano doveva essere adibito a spazi commerciali e comuni ma venne ben presto occupato e trasformato in appartamenti.

Se l'intervento degli anni settanta si era dato come una costruzione a-priori, il progetto degli Stalker si pose come lavoro e riconfigurazione della conseguenza, ovvero, come processo di riscrittura dell'identità attraverso il dialogo e la partecipazione della comunità.

Nonostante l'ottima strutturazione del progetto e la sua temporanea, ma fondamentale incidenza sulle logiche del palazzo, la divisione artista-pubblico/comunità rimase ancora marcata nel senso, seppur più elevato rispetto alle usuali logiche artistiche, di un produttore e di un pubblico che non risulta reale co-produttore. Tuttavia, nonostante un buon impatto iniziale, il lavoro si interruppe dopo il primo anno.

LABORINTUS-PIACCA

L'intervento realizzato dall'associazione PIACCA (Polo Internazionale per le Arti e Mestieri Creativi – Corviale Arvalia) e dall'associazione artistica Laborintus ha inizio sul finire del 2014, quando alcuni membri dei due gruppi occuparono un importante spazio all'interno del complesso abitativo liberandolo dall'incuria e iniziando, così, un'attività di laboratori artistici e di avviamento al lavoro per i ragazzi del quartiere.

All'interno del complesso rapporto tra arte e contributo sociale, questo intervento rappresenta una terza fase in cui le distinzioni tra i ruoli tendono ad assottigliarsi, dal momento che gli iniziatori di questo processo non sono solo artisti, ma anche, e soprattutto, abitanti. Nella cronistoria del rapporto arte-Corviale, infatti, questo momento segna un passaggio verso la dimensione dell'immedesimazione che, in un certo senso, tende a superare la logica dell'artista etnografo, sviluppatasi tra gli anni novanta e

⁶ "Corviale Network è andata in onda su RomaUno, emittente locale di notizie che trasmette anche sul satellite, in otto puntate settimanali di quindici minuti, spesso replicate. Lo spazio nel palinsesto di RomaUno, ha fatto sì che Corviale Network non fosse, come molte altre televisioni di quartiere, limitata a un territorio circoscritto, piuttosto l'ha trasformata in uno strumento efficace e diretto di 'riscatto' dell'immagine del quartiere." (Gennari Santori e Pietromarchi 2006: 147).

gli anni duemila, incentrata sulla pratica dell'osservazione partecipante all'interno di una comunità 'culturalmente altra'. Questa pratica tende a superare anche l'estetica relazionale, così come teorizzata da Nicolas Bourriaud (1998): una teoria che vede l'artista intento a ricostruire le dinamiche della socializzazione all'interno di un contesto neutro come quello di una galleria o di un museo.

IMMAGINE 1: QUARTIERE
CORVIALE (ROMA),
SPAZIO PIACCA.
FOTOGRAFIA DI
EMANUELE R. MESCHINI,
2016.

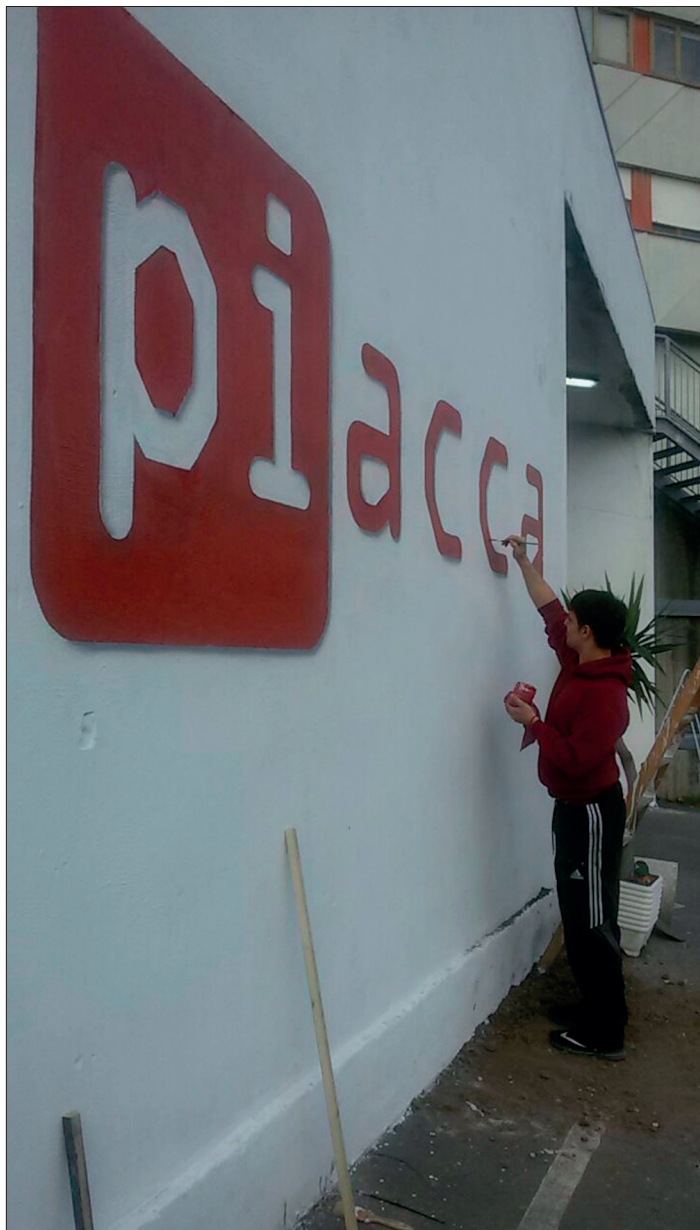




IMMAGINE 2: QUARTIERE
CORVIALE (ROMA),
LAVORI DI
RISTRUTTURAZIONE.
FOTOGRAFIA DI
EMANUELE R. MESCHINI,
2016.

L'immedesimazione, potremmo dire, rappresenta un progetto di vita; la specificità, invece, è una fase, un momento. Proprio la specificità, l'essere-a-riguardo-di una determinata situazione/cosa è stato un elemento centrale nel discorso sulla SEA come passaggio da intervento *site specific* a *community-based* e, quindi, da una dimensione di intervento legata ad una determinata situazione/luogo ad una in cui l'azione è rivolta e pensata per una determinata comunità. L'essere-specifico richiede, nella maggior parte dei casi, la necessità di un rendersi-specifico; ovvero di uno specializzarsi su un qualcosa/qualcuno demarcando così già una linea tra un noi e un loro. Proprio per questo motivo Hal Foster, nel suo *Il Ritorno del Reale*, si interrogava sulla figura dell'artista come etnografo, dal momento che proprio la pratica artistica iniziava ad essere calata in un nuovo contesto sociale d'indagine e intervento (Foster 2006). Il processo di immedesimazione implica, invece, una presenza simultanea e soprattutto una condivisione completa tra soggetto e contesto. Per certi aspetti, ed in questo ravvedo la maggior differenza con una pratica di tipo SEA, l'immedesimazione non attiva tanto il concetto di partecipazione quanto quello di aggregazione. L'aggregazione rappresenta la partecipazione nuda, ovvero una partecipazione non organizzata, senza bisogno dell'intervento esterno di un qualcuno imparziale; terzietà più che imparzialità, capace di guidare ed informare un determinato processo. L'aggregazione è ciò in cui opera l'immedesimazione e rappresenta la necessità di unione, di agire-insieme, senza la quale la partecipazione non potrà mai darsi.

L'immedesimazione, inoltre, conduce ad una fase critica in cui ci si interroga sul ruolo del Sociale all'interno dell'arte sociale stessa. Ovvero, quando il bisogno di un intervento artistico è necessario e, per l'appunto, interno e quando, invece, è esterno e costruito. La domanda diventa, così, "che cosa (ci) unisce?" anziché "dove si può arrivare e cosa si può ottenere con questa unione?". È un momento grezzo, ma segna, in questa sua essenza, un passo indietro, ovvero la necessità di una costruzione interna; non ne veicola i modi, ma ne rivela l'esigenza.

Quanto realizzato dal gruppo Laborintus insieme a PIACCA risiede proprio nel campo dell'aggregazione e conseguentemente fa emergere la questione della legittimazione artistica dell'intera operazione ovvero: quando il sociale di un intervento condotto da artisti passa da una dimensione aurorale e nuda ad un contesto SEA. Questo perché l'operazione che si sta sviluppando a Corviale ha molto in comune con operazioni artistiche di tipo SEA, alcune delle quali ormai fanno parte della letteratura, come il progetto *Row Houses* di Rick Lowe, i recuperi urbani condotti dall'artista statunitense Theaster Gates e l'esperienza di Granby Four Street a Liverpool, che ha permesso al collettivo Assemble di vincere nel 2015 il Turner Prize, uno dei più importanti riconoscimenti artistici, proprio in virtù del lavoro di co-progettazione e recupero condotto insieme ai residenti del quartiere. Quello che accomuna questi interventi è la guida: ognuna di queste operazioni è stata guidata dall'esterno, anche se nel caso di Liverpool la consapevolezza degli abitanti è stata fondamentale e i suoi intenti sono stati ben dichiarati attraverso un processo partecipativo informato. Questa differenza sembra necessaria per realizzare una tipologia d'intervento efficace e soprattutto riconosciuto in ambito artistico. L'artista come iniziatore di processi, *leitmotiv* della SEA, del resto, indica colui che dà forma ad un processo non in senso autoriale, ma comunque in una posizione di definizione.

Questo scarto tra aggregazione e partecipazione mette ancora di più in risalto la distanza tra un contesto in cui, a livello artistico, le pratiche SEA sono riconosciute, così come i processi partecipativi, ed uno, invece, in cui queste azioni e queste modalità sono assenti o si stanno solo preparando. E dunque, chi legittima un intervento SEA, l'artista che lo promuove o l'esigenza che ne sta alla base?

A Corviale si lavora nella 'nudità aggregante'. Prima dell'esperienza di PIACCA e Laborintus, il collettivo di artisti *I Diagonali* aveva avviato un primo laboratorio di incisione negli spazi adiacenti al mercato coperto.

Alla chiusura del mercato (2007) un gruppo di artisti decise di occuparlo simbolicamente allestendovi una mostra temporanea. A seguito di questa prima denuncia artistica territoriale gli artisti si insediarono negli spazi adiacenti al mercato composti da una serie di locali porticati articolati attorno ad una piccola piazza. Questi spazi si trovano all'intersezione del VI lotto, ovvero, quella serie di appartamenti disposti in maniera longitudinale rispetto al chilometro. Questo lotto di abitazioni termina proprio nella piazza e lì vi si apre con un'imponente struttura composta da due torri di cemento con al centro una grande vetrata che, vista in lontananza, forma la lettera H. Da qui il nome catastale di Trancia H. Questo spazio, originariamente pensato come luogo d'incontro per le attività comuni, è stato occupato nel 2014 e da quel momento è iniziata l'attività congiunta di PIACCA e Laborintus. L'occupazione raggruppa le diverse anime di quella area/ parte di quartiere ed è stata portata avanti non solo dagli artisti, ma anche da un gruppo di residenti tra cui Massimiliano Lustri. Lustri, conosciuto come *Er Tapparella* o il *Robin Hood di Testaccio*, deve questi suoi soprannomi alla sua attività di 'occupatore seriale'. Lustri, infatti, in passato occupava le case, autodenunciandosi nell'intento di aiutare chi si trovava in una condizione di necessità.⁷

⁷ Per una storia d'Er Tapparella si veda Arrighi 2009.

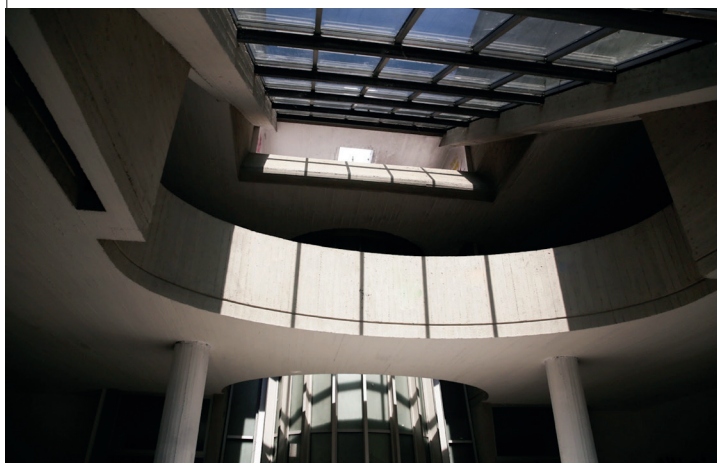
IMMAGINE 3: SPAZIO H, CORVIALE (ROMA).
FOTOGRAFIA DI YULIYA GALYCHEVA.



IMMAGINE 4: SPAZIO H,
CORVIALE (ROMA).
FOTOGRAFIA DI YULIYA
GALYCHEVA.

⁸ “Italia 1 lancia un nuovo programma-verità. Da giovedì 14 luglio arriva infatti in prima serata *Secret Millionaire* con due puntate. La trasmissione racconta la straordinaria avventura di due imprenditori di successo che decidono di abbandonare temporaneamente il lusso e gli agi della loro vita quotidiana, per intraprendere un ‘viaggio interiore’ trasferendosi in una zona periferica e degradata della città. I milionari infiltrati vivranno per dieci giorni sotto copertura, lontano da casa con pochissimi soldi in tasca, trovandosi ad affrontare i lavori più umili e rapportandosi con classi sociali economicamente disagiate e discriminate. Dovranno imparare a cavarsela da soli senza i lussi e le comodità a cui sono abituati. Nessuno saprà che le loro aziende fatturano milioni di euro.

Il lavoro di recupero dello spazio H è stato notato anche dai media. La trasmissione televisiva *Secret Millionaire*⁸ ha deciso di girarvi un episodio. Un milionario in incognito si è calato nella realtà di Corviale entrando in stretto contatto con Fornaci e Lustri nel periodo che corrispondeva all’inizio dell’occupazione degli spazi menzionati. Il protagonista della puntata, rimasto affascinato dal lavoro svolto e soprattutto dalle motivazioni di riscatto di chi vi lavorava, decise di fare una donazione a PIACCA. Proprio grazie a questa prima disponibilità economica ‘istituzionale’ è stato possibile completare le opere di pulizia nell’edificio H. Da quel momento, l’attenzione mediatica nei confronti del progetto è andata crescendo. Dopo essere stato intervistato per un reportage sul degrado della periferia,⁹ Lustri è diventato protagonista, con Fornaci, del film di Stefano Casertano *Gente di amore e rabbia* (2016), girato interamente a Corviale e incentrato sul rapporto di complementarità dei due sullo sfondo delle prime attività di PIACCA.



Attorno alla piccola piazza, ribattezza nell’estate del 2016 “Piazza delle Arti”, oltre al laboratorio d’incisione già occupato dal 2007 e guidato dall’artista e maestro incisore Alessandro Fornaci, sono stati aperti un laboratorio di sartoria e diversi studi d’artista. Nell’edificio dove ha sede PIACCA è stato allestito al piano terra un laboratorio di restauro del mobile che, nelle intenzioni di Lustri, rappresenta non solo un mestiere da insegnare ai ragazzi del quartiere, ma anche un processo riabilitativo come quello da lui stesso intrapreso in carcere. Il piano superiore è stato adibito a spazio polifunzionale nel quale sono stati organizzati diversi incontri, dai laboratori curati dall’attore Elio Germano, a quelli con i politici locali per le elezioni comunali del 2016. Inoltre, al momento, si

sta lavorando all'apertura di un centro estetico. Il piano terra funge anche da punto d'incontro e ritrovo; spesso si proiettano film, partite di calcio e si festeggiano compleanni.



L'edificio si articola poi in un ulteriore piano in cui si aprono due vasche-terrazze. PIACCA funziona anche come piccola cooperativa multiservizi, occupandosi tanto di traslochi quanto di riparazioni meccaniche. Attorno allo spazio si è venuta dunque a creare una sorta di economia informale, un microsistema di sussistenza concepito in base alla struttura architettonica del palazzo stesso. Una sorta di realizzazione degli auspici di Fiorentino in merito all'inquilino realmente autonomo in grado di sfruttare le potenzialità di un contesto abitativo difficile solo nel momento in cui viene rapportato/costretto ad uno schema di tipo assistenzialistico, verticistico e di controllo. Non si tratta di una 'semplice' questione economica, ma anche e soprattutto della riappropriazione del luogo. Lustri infatti, grazie al suo carisma, riesce a 'coordinare' la vita di diverse persone, soprattutto di coloro che si trovano a scontare le cosiddette 'pene alternative', inserendole all'interno di un diverso mondo del lavoro, totalmente auto-costruito intorno a loro e al loro ambiente.

L'operazione di PIACCA/Laborintus è dunque innanzitutto un'operazione di aggregazione intorno all'idea del riprendersi e prendersi cura di uno spazio di vita. Attorno al monolite della Trancia H si sono radunati diversi abitanti che hanno riportato alla luce l'edificio, pulendolo e liberandolo dai rifiuti e dalla sporcizia. Quello spazio, compresi la piazzetta e i portici su cui si affacciano quelli che oggi sono i vari laboratori e studi, nel corso del tempo era diventato un'area degradata.

IMMAGINE 5: PIACCA, GIORNATA DELLA CULTURA ROMANA (22 LUGLIO 2015), CORVIALE (ROMA). FOTOGRAFIA DI YULIYA GALYCHEVA - LAURA PERES.

Ma soprattutto dovranno portare a termine la loro missione: trovare persone meritevoli, altruiste e piene di valori che non hanno speranze di realizzare i loro sogni. Solo alla fine del viaggio potranno rivelare la loro vera identità e aiutarli, con donazioni in denaro o regali inaspettati a far sì che i loro progetti e desideri diventino realtà." (www.tgcom24.mediaset.it/televisione/-secret-millionaire-il-viaggio-verita-di-due-milionari-che-vanno-a-vivere-nel-degrado_3019036-201602a.shtml).

⁹ Il mostro del Corviale, servizio di Giovanni Marinetti trasmesso dal programma In Onda (La 7) nella puntata del 19 agosto 2016, www.la7.it/in-onda/video/il-mostro-del-corviale-22-08-2016-191759.

Nel novembre del 2016, su iniziativa degli artisti di Laborintus, sono state organizzate delle giornate di pulizia della piazza, verniciatura delle colonne e delle saracinesche, riallestimento dei diversi locali e realizzazione dei loghi delle due associazioni. Il tutto con l'aiuto fondamentale degli abitanti del quartiere. Quella zona, che pure serviva da collegamento tra due lotti, in precedenza veniva in gran parte evitata dai residenti a causa della sua scarsissima illuminazione, dovuta anche alla mancanza di attività commerciali, vetrine, e locali. Anche gli spazi verdi che sorgevano intorno allo spazio H erano in uno stato di profonda incuria.

Attorno a questo momento di partecipazione ruota anche una nuova ridefinizione della proprietà, per usare un termine che ormai sembra appartenere ad un passato lontano, in quanto dal 2015 PIACCA ha avviato una richiesta di riconoscimento formale nei confronti del Comune di Roma e dell'ATER (Azienda Territoriale per l'Edilizia Residenziale del Comune di Roma) al fine di vedersi assegnare di diritto gli spazi. Lo stato di occupazione, infatti, non rappresenta una finalità, bensì solo un mezzo per poter prendere ciò che sembrava inspiegabilmente abbandonato. Le prospettive di entrambe le associazioni, infatti, sono quelle di arrivare ad una dimensione giuridicamente riconosciuta proprio per potersi pensare/concepire come progetto a lungo termine. I tempi burocratici sembrano, come sempre, non coincidere con quelli della vita e questo, in realtà, rappresenta un aspetto importante che molti artisti 'sociali' hanno affrontato nelle loro pratiche. Ovvero trovare la cosiddetta 'scappatoia legale' nella quale potersi inserire, lavorando dentro la legge per sbloccare situazioni apparentemente impossibili. Si può ricordare, a questo proposito, l'opera dell'artista cubana Tania Bruguera, che ha fatto del *legal loophole* un criterio di definizione della sua *Arte Util*, nonché il collettivo austriaco WochenKlausur, che nel 1995 riuscì a 'trasformare' un gruppo di richiedenti asilo in artisti, bypassando l'allora legge austriaca in merito alla questione residenza-lavoro per persone immigrate. In un contesto, però, dove una certa teoria artistica fatica ad emergere questo potenziale trasformativo è difficile da cogliere e il ruolo dell'artista, seppur spinto da un intento sociale, rimane privo di ogni tipo di supporto operativo.

La consapevolezza SEA ha avuto il merito di aver trasformato l'aggregazione in partecipazione, l'autogestione in imprenditorialità e questo, paradossalmente, è diventato il suo tallone d'Achille. Allo stesso, però, tempo ha aperto una forza di contrattazione culturale diversa e

capace molte volte di andare ad inserirsi in mancanze amministrative e burocratiche. Nel momento in cui questa tipologia di critica/consapevolezza viene a mancare, viene meno anche la possibilità di intervento concreto da parte di artisti all'interno della sfera quotidiana. In assenza di questo determinato contesto operativo, l'intervento di Corviale non può dunque che lavorare nella/sull'aggregazione dandosi come punto di partenza per la creazione di una figura di base essenziale affinché si sviluppi una mentalità SEA. Ovvero, l'operazione di Corviale può prefigurarsi, ed in parte già lo sta facendo, come la nascita di una *Local Artist Community*, quindi come spinta e promozione di un'esigenza artistica che si esprime a partire dal quotidiano, come comunità di persone che guardano all'arte come a una modalità per risolvere determinate problematiche e che può diventare il motore per la realizzazione di interventi artistici, nonché la vera e propria 'iniziatrice'.

L'operazione di Corviale sarà ancora più importante nel momento in cui riuscirà a creare una mentalità da *Socially Engaged Art*. Questo significherebbe la piena gestione del concetto, oggi più che mai *hot topic* istituzionale, della riqualificazione delle periferie. Diventare un punto di riferimento per il quartiere, mantenendo sempre un occhio ben aperto allo sviluppo degli ultimi discorsi sulle arti visive contemporanee, comporterebbe innanzitutto potersi liberare dal bisogno di aiuto esterno uscendo, così, da una dimensione di 'caso studio' perenne. Si tratterebbe, in fin dei conti, di una questione di legittimazione che, non arrivando da un contesto estraneo/esterno come quello dell'arte, si sosterebbe attraverso una verifica nel/dal quartiere, presentandosi come modello nei confronti del mondo dell'arte stesso.

La periferia, affrontata da un punto di vista meramente urbanistico, sembra essere diventata oggi un nuovo *fieldwork* etnografico. Sarebbe sbagliato pensare ad una sua 'rigenerazione' esclusivamente attraverso fattori esterni. La parola stessa rigenerazione, del resto, indica l'atto di un ristabilirsi diretto/autonomo di una condizione primaria. Nel caso di Corviale, la condizione ottimale di partenza non è mai esistita e dunque non si può applicare un'idea di recupero bensì quella di uno di sviluppo interno. Tale sviluppo non può prescindere né dai suoi luoghi né dalle sue persone.

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CULTURE SENSITIVE PARTICIPATORY ART AS VISUAL ETHNOGRAPHY IN THE NORTH

ABSTRACT

The article discusses how community-based environmental art has used to help Northern and Arctic peoples to communicate their own visual and eco-social environmental culture by analyzing it from the inside. Artistic activity draws its content from the northern places, while combining traditional, non-artistic working methods and Sami indigenous practices with dialogical and relational contemporary art. Often the processes are parallel and overlapping with the methods of visual ethnography.

The article presents the premises, processes, and execution of two artistic projects: Kirkkokuusikko memorial (2009) in Lapland, Finland as an example of an artist personal effort, and selected examples of the result of long term collaboratively and multi-disciplinary winter art development (2003-2016) in Northern Scandinavia and Russia. These projects shed light on the interaction between the environmental art practises, visual ethnography and decolonizing effect of community based participatory approaches in the North.

KEYWORDS

Northern Places, Cultural Identities, Participatory Art, Environmental Art

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INTRODUCTION

The environment of the North and Arctic is changing rapidly and cumulative impacts effect the social life, wellbeing and culture of people living in the region. According to a study conducted by the Nordic Council of Ministers (2011) there are certain megatrends going on in the Arctic and the North. Global warming is happening faster in the Arctic than in any other place on earth with profound consequences for local communities. Another important driver is globalization, which is connected with neoliberalist exploitation of natural resources like oil, gas, minerals, forests and ecosystem services by tourism. The consequences will have significant implications for Arctic cultures. There is estimated 4 million people living in the Arctic, including more than 40 indigenous groups and languages. Indigenous people are 10 % of the whole population in the Arctic (AHDR 2007). Globalization leads the process where communities are transformed from rural characteristics in terms of economy, culture and lifestyle, to one which can be characterized as urban. It leads to concentration of the population in larger places. It entails a complex set of processes, not only regarding where people live, but also who they are, and how they live in terms of culture, economic well-being, political organization, communication and the distribution of power, demographic structure and social and cultural relations (Nordic Council of Ministers 2011).

Simultaneously, the youth in the north are sent to have their education in the south or in bigger cities. Arctic young people themselves expect to move from their place of origin to educate themselves and hold a position in the labour market. The educational options determine the settlement choices as the smaller communities lack opportunities for young people to fulfill their dreams (Karlsdóttir & Junsberg 2015). This has led, in many small towns and villages, to an erosion of social structures and has created a series of recognized problems, including ageing of the population, youth unemployment and the disintegration of cultural activities as well as psychosocial problems often related to the loss of cultural identity and weak communication.

Neoliberalism and the post-colonial circumstances in the north highlight objectives for sustainable development. These objectives incorporate current issues such as the survival of Northern and Arctic cultures combined with their inhabitants' self-determination concerning their own culture while securing a social stability for all the communities. Finding solutions to these challenges

requires cultural-sensitive approaches, multi-sensory perception, regional expertise, co-research and communality. The questions are tightly connected to cultural identities, which in turn are often constructed through art and visual culture. By developing methods of participatory, cultural-sensitive and decolonizing community-based environmental art at the Faculty of Art and Design in the University of Lapland, activities that renew and strengthen cultures are formed. This movement is in accord with sustainable development. This has happened in collaboration with university's partner institutions in the North and the Arctic (see ASAD 2017, Uarctic 2017, Jokela & Coutts 2014, Jokela & Coutts 2015).

DECOLONIZATION AND PARTICIPATORY ART IN THE NORTH

The blending of indigenous cultures and other lifestyles is rather common in the whole circumpolar area. This multinational and multicultural composition creates elusive sociocultural challenges that are sometimes even politicized in the neo-colonial settings of the north and the Arctic. In recent years, there has been a rising interest on rewriting the forgotten and overlooked cultural history of the region (Lähteenmäki & Pihlaja 2005, Tuominen 2011). Attention has been paid to the role of arts as representation of the North (see Grane 2001, Marsching & Polli 2011). Kuokkanen (2007) discusses the need, significance and objectives of an 'indigenous paradigm' which is a way of decolonizing the indigenous values and cultural practices by 're-centring' the research focus on their own concerns and worldviews. One of the main objectives of such a paradigm includes criticism towards the Western Eurocentric way of thinking. Smith (1999) challenges the traditional Western ways of knowing and researching, and calls for the 'decolonization' of methodologies of indigenous research. Smith's (1999) vision of decolonization is a long-term process, which includes dismantling the power of administrative, cultural, linguistic and psychological colonialism. In addition, the scholars of northern cultures have stressed the need of decolonization among the other multi-ethnic communities, like Lähteenmäki (2005) in mixed Sami-Finnish societies in Central Lapland, Finland, and Corbett (2007) in Nova Scotia coastal fishery communities, in Canada. Many scholars have called on the indigenous knowledge system as a basis of indigenous research in the fields of culture, art and design (Guttorm 2014). According to Aamold (2014), several artists in the Scandinavian North

utilise their multi-ethnic background and environmental knowledge as a basis of their art. Thus, he argues that a mix of indigenous and critical methodologies is required in the research of contemporary art in the North.

These paradigm changes have led to re-evaluating how art is taught in academies and universities and realized in the North, and highlighted the aims of a culturally sensitive approach (Manifold et alii 2015) and the objectives of UNESCO for ecological, social, cultural and economic sustainable development (ASAD 2017). These objectives incorporate current issues such as the survival of regional cultures combined with the inhabitants' self-determination of their own culture while securing the social and economic stability for all communities. In north-related participatory art the question is not only about safeguarding the cultural heritage, but rethinking the nature of art.

CONTEMPORARY ART AS A DIALOGUE IN ART-BASED ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS

In his writings on relational art, Bourriaud (2002) sees artistic practice as a process that always entails making connections between people. Contemporary art is marked by contextual, process-based, and dialogical activity instead of technical skills limited to the control of tools and methods of expression. Individual work has been supplemented by communality and engagement. Particularly in community and environmental art, the emphasis is on the situational aspects of art, its links to people's everyday activities, events and places (see Kester 2004, Lacy 1995, Lippard, 1997). Communality means a new method of examining and understanding people's connections, spontaneous networks and common pursuits as a counterforce against extreme individuality and consumption. Communality offers a new perspective from which to examine the connection of contemporary art, indigenous art and craft and decolonization in the North.

When adopting the models of relational contemporary art, community-based environmental art has moved away from the prevailing opinion that art activities convey the same worldwide western cultural values and that the ways to implement art are the same everywhere. Bringing the operating modes of socially active contemporary art into northern contexts and merging them with the aims of sustainability development, culturally sensitive approaches and questions of decolonization, also requires renewal of teaching art in universities. It also aims to develop an artistic research method towards a more participatory direction instead of artistic individuality and merging

methods of art and visual ethnography (see Pink 2001). At the University of Lapland Faculty of Art and Design, this was pursued by a developing method of Art Based Action Research (ABER) by the research group Northern Art, Community, Environment Research (NACER) led by professors Timo Jokela and Mirja Hiltunen (see NACER 2017). The group fosters participatory and engaging collaboration between the various actors of the university's northern network. In the research group's activities, the initial socio-cultural and visual mapping of places and situations using methods of visual ethnography support applying contemporary art into northern multicultural environments in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Russia, often amongst indigenous peoples (Hiltunen 2009, Hiltunen 2010, Jokela *et alii* 2015a, Jokela *et alii* 2015b).

CASE ONE: KIRKKOKUUSIKKO MEMORIAL, ART AND LOCAL IDENTITY

As an example of community-based public art in the North I present the premises, processes, and execution of a public art work named *The Story of Kirkkokuusikko*. The work of art was meant to be a memorial to the first church of the region that is said to have existed, in the early 1600s, on a forest high in the hinterland of Kittilä in Lapland in Finland. The church was built in the centre of the fishing and hunting area of Kittilä Forest Sami village. The process sheds light on the interaction between the design of community-based art and methods of visual ethnography to invest the configurations of place, environment, material and social situations (see Pink 2012).

The memorial was connected to stories of the past, but the process itself was highly relative to the present day for the local villagers whose Forest Sami cultural background was forgotten and overlooked. Professor of Cultural History Marja Tuominen (2005) emphasizes northern people's right and obligation to "constantly squeeze from the past those whose dreams were not realized, who fell over the edge of history, whose story was left untold." Local elder Pekka Niva challenged village society to build a memorial and himself remembered its story.

I remember at the end of the 30's, or maybe it was the summer of 1940, when I was with my grandfather, my mother's father that is, and my aunts Mallu and Eevi, picking cloudberryes. I remember the duckboards, and my old grandfather saying that this was Kirkkokuusikko (name of the place). Kirkkokuusikko was the core of the story for that

generation; they told it as though it was all true, and they believed it completely. They didn't mention the exact place of the church, though, just that it had been there.

On one hand, the monument can be considered an attempt to strengthen one's identity, and on the other hand a local symbol of belonging to a place, a time, and a community. Having received the commission to help build the memorial, I had to decide if I would follow the story of Lutheran Christianity of the Forest Sami people. I could not be sure whether the tradition was true; the story lacked the time in which the church was supposed to have been built. Many people doubted the whole story. The only thing certain was that local people were happy to tell tales about the existence of the church. The story seems to have been exactly the kind of important factor in regional identity and culture, which, for example, Lacy (1995) and Lippard (1997) demand as starting points for place-specific and community art. Significance of story-telling and traditional knowledge is emphasized in the discussion on method of indigenous art, like Sami applied art, *duodji* (Porsanger & Guttrom 2011). A story that has taken on the nature of a myth can be seen as simultaneously preserving and creating regional culture.

Tuominen (2005) continues:

each story told of the past is a reconstruction, which can never be identical to its target, or fully recapture its authentic meanings... Every historical study is an interpretation, which is restricted by and imbued with the conditions imposed by our current understanding. But finally a historical study is just one of the many forums in which history is interpreted and images of the past conveyed. The arts, many sciences, and journalism all participate in this.

I started working on the design for the memorial by searching the literary and archival sources for evidence of the veracity of the *Kirkkokuusikko* story and discussing with local elders. I wanted to understand the core of the story and to find its meaning for our own era and local villagers. I tried to explain and justify, what or who is remembered by this monument and what kind of visual expression that remembrance should receive in order to resonate with the past, but at the same time to preserve the aspect characteristic of art which creates new current and future meanings. I used method of ethnography to

collect data and evidence for the work of art. I understood the cultural heritage as a performative process which is valued, built, and constantly renewed, in this case by means of art. Although the Kirkkokuusikko monument was to be located in a relatively inaccessible spot in the middle of a forest, I realized that I was creating public art for a Northern location where the participation of the locals was a central role.

WHOSE STORY SHOULD BE TOLD?

The documents showed that a church was truly built in Kittilä. It was erected, on the orders of the Swedish king's "policy for Lapland and the Arctic Ocean", sometime between 1607 and 1611. The church remained standing at least until 1620, after which it was evidently destroyed. The sources, therefore, indicated that the local story of a church was based on a historical event and they clarified its date. However, I did not want to design a monument only to the "Northern policy" of the Swedish king. I wanted to know who the users of this church, established on the lands of Kittilä Forest Sami village, were and I tried to extract their story from the documents as subject matter for the monument. I found it very important because many of the villagers pointed out that their ancestors were part of the overlooked Forest Sami community. Familiansation with the historical documents through meetings and lessons during research with the villagers helped increase understanding of their past and could be seen as part of the decolonizing process.

The Sami village (*siida*) differs from our modern concept of a village. It was more of a management system for natural resources and social relations, and a network of families and households, which had their own usufruct areas. The Sami village, with its almost completely self-sufficient economy, needed a large land area. The village required a sufficient area for deer hunting, beaver streams, fishing grounds, and goose swamps to make a life based on a varied economy and yearly migrations possible. Households lived on the usufruct of the Sami village, in accordance with the yearly hunting cycle, having perhaps two or three dwelling places on their land, though everyone got together in the winter village (Enbuske 2003, Lehtola 1997b).

At that time, at the beginning of the 16th century, the first Finnish settlers had already joined the Forest Sami in the Kittilä area. The presumed purpose of the church was also to strengthen settlement in the area, even though it was not yet authorized within the borders of Lapland.

Together with the tax collector and the authorities, the Church created a foothold for the gradual alteration of the Forest Sami way of life. It is noteworthy, however, that just as the Forest Sami embraced the settlers' way of life so the settlers assimilated the ways of life of the Forest Sami. The lifestyle and culture of the Forest Sami did not die away completely, even though their language was lost, to live on only in place names and in terms related to fishing, hunting, and reindeer herding. The eco-social environmental culture of villages is still partly based on this history and differs in many ways from common Finnish culture because of its mixed Forest Sami and Finnish roots.

I wanted to bring the voices of Kittilä's Forest Sami into my work. At the same time, I noticed that the background survey for the monument had taken me into the ethnic, cultural, and political questions present in the ongoing Sami debate connected to Sami identities, rights and privileges in Finland (Lehtola 2012, Valkonen 2009). However, I did not want to raise the *Kirkkokuusikko* artwork directly into the core of Sami debate. Rather, I wanted to bring my work to a level that would resonate with the world view and lifestyle of the Forest Sami when the church came to their land and offered a forum to the villagers of today in order to better understand their own background and environmental culture.

THE MEETING OF TWO ERAS

Life in the Forest Sami winter village was a time for being together and strengthening the community. The shamanistic world view gave birth to a narrative tradition that was typical of the native peoples of the northern hemisphere, but also contained local ingredients. These stories recorded the local memories of the world of the Forest Sami, their social system, and the arrival of Finnish settlers and Christianity in the region. At the centre of the stories are the shaman (*noidje*) who defended their communities against other Sami villages or intruders. It is likely that the shaman functioned as "village elders" and leaders of their communities. The roots of the story tradition lie in the mythical past, but the story element that links it to the Kittilä area appeared at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. One storyline rises above the rest. The construction of the church coincides with the presumed lifetime of Päiviö, the leading figure of the Kittilä Forest Sami village. Many stories related to Päiviö have been recorded in the area (Andersson 1914). Päiviö converted to Christianity, perhaps against his will,

and at the same time lost his abilities as a shaman.

The stories about Päiviö crystallize the encounter between two eras and two perceptions of the world. The Sami people were perhaps opposed to the construction of churches, but Päiviö appears to have adopted the new culture and to have considered it a better defence for his village community. Päiviö became a distributor of the new culture, even though he mourned his lost powers. As a preserved spell says:

*In my youth a shaman
Without a hanging cross
Without a priestly ribbon
I knew the spells full well
And sang the Lappish charms
(Andersson 1914, 122)*

The core of the story of Kirkkokuusikko lies in this meeting of two eras, two different world views, and two different social systems (a centralized state and the self-governing community of the Forest Sami). The subject matter of the memorial, therefore, is not just the church as a building, but the background of larger ideas, meanings, values, and consequences – the end of one era and the beginning of another in Lapland. I simplified the content of the work so that it would relate to both the coming of the king's church, and the beginning of the gradual disappearance of Päiviö's Sami village. This is now understood as a key story of the historical birth of villages today in the area.

FINDING THE VISUAL REFERENCES

Although I emphasized the importance of subject matter in the monument, it should also have a materialisation and form that resonates with the content. I wanted to get a visual idea of what the church may have been like. Of course, examples are available of the size and style of churches of the period. When only a few families lived in Kittilä Sami village at the time, the church was really just a modest sermon room. In terms of style and construction, it would hardly have differed greatly from other buildings in the area, although to the inhabitants of the Lapp village it no doubt seemed grand and representative of power. Several sources provide references to Forest Sami village buildings which differ from well-known nomadic tents. Since the seasonal cycle brought life repeatedly close to the same suitable bodies of water, dwellings developed into timber-founded structures.



FIGURE 1 - MAPPING THE VISUAL REFERENCES FOR COMMUNITY-BASED ART USING MUSEUMS ARCHIVES, PLACE-SPECIFIC INVESTIGATIONS, NARRATIVES AND SKETCHING. PHOTOS TIMO JOKELA.

Historical sources for the year 1740 provide a description of Forest Sami living in rectangular houses with 4-6 layers of logs (Joona 2006). Illustrations of log buildings, such as fire shelters, nili platforms, storehouses, ground shelters, etc. have been preserved from Russia and Swedish Lapland, where the lifestyle of the Forest Sami survived longer and could be documented and examined. I assume that the technical solutions and shapes of buildings may well be inferred from these sources.

In addition to buildings, I also looked for other objects that could serve as visual starting points for the monument. Few objects have survived from that period, but especially the later objects in the Sami Museum of Swedish Lapland supply hints about visual idiom.

Images of materials are also available. In the 1660's, Schefferus recorded illustrations of objects and shaman drums of the area. The drumskins preserved not only an understanding of the cosmological nature of the world typical of the period, but also its sources of livelihood. A drum sent to Stockholm by Tuderus, a fiercely evangelical Christian priest, contains references to the arrival of Christianity and its churches, and possibly even a picture of Kirkkokuusikko church. Some visual material on the meeting of the shamanistic world and Christianity in Lapland can be found in the Tanhua 'shaman tomb' dated to 1595-1635: wrought iron crosses, bears' teeth, and other charms are in perfect harmony, telling of the meeting of two cultures and eras.

A survey of the visual material provided a wealth of detail for the design of the work, but the form remained open. I was determined that the material for the work would be massive wood, the original material of the church. I would treat the surface of the work with agents resistant to fire and mould, and I would give it a dark patina, to refer to the past. I would include details that would refer to the Christian faith, but also to the conditions for life in the area, such as deer, fish, and the grain brought by settlers. All these choices were based on the visual data I collected and discussion with locals who took part in the construction and carving the details using their own handicraft skill in woodworking.

CREATING THE FORM OF THE MONUMENT

I decided on the structure and form of the monument when I saw, in the Saltdal Museum in Norway, a guard's house on sledge runners, designed to protect cattle from wild animals. I also investigated Sami traditional storehouse on runners as well as wooden construction of Siberian shaman graves. Since the location of the church is uncertain, I decided to build the monument on sledge runners. The monument therefore continues to search for its place and perhaps also its meaning. It can be moved should new studies be conducted. The formal language and building method for a monument on columns, mounted on sledge runners, refers concretely to the construction of a Sami storehouse (nili), to a dwelling, and even to the first buildings of the settlers, but also to the church. I wished, however, that the monument would not point anywhere, but would rather be closed and quiet, though at the same time suggestive. Its nature must be at one with the silent secrecy in the stories told of the area, but it must also provide enough information for people

to discover what it refers to. It is therefore closed, but it can be opened.

The shape of a relics cabinet, inherited from the Middle Ages, with its opening pictured doors, offered an iconostasic solution that would present the double meaning of the monument at once to the viewer. I decided to build the work in such a way that the opening of the double doors would lead on one side to the church and the story of the king, and on the other side to Päiviö and the Sami village of Kittilä.



FIGURE 2 - WORKING WITH COMMUNITY TO BUILD UP A MEMORIAL "THE STORY OF KIRKKOKUUSIKKO". PHOTOS TIMO JOKELA AND MIRJA HILTUNEN.

CELEBRATION OF THE MEMORIAL - PARTICIPATION AND DECOLONIZATION

I planned the implementation of the work so that I was able to build it with the help of locals, first in my studio, then dismantle it, transport the parts to the site, and re-erect it at Kirkkokuusikko. The site was located in the middle of a swamp, several kilometers from the nearest road, so that transport alone required the assistance of local reindeer herders. I planned the transport, assembly, and opening of the work as a performative and communal event where about one hundred local people participated in the Kirkkokuusikko forest. After the bishop blessed the monument, I told the large audience about its background and dual meaning.

I hoped that the Kirkkokuusikko artwork would generate debate about what and who is remembered or forgotten, what is worth remembering, and who can remember the history of Lapland. According to Professor of Cultural History Tuominen (2010) northern cultural history is needed to dissolve the mental and social structures that

for centuries have defined the periphery and the center, the object and the subject, what is worth remembering and what deserves only oblivion. Personally, I think community-based environmental art faces similar tasks and opportunities, as methods of decolonization call by Smith (1999) and Kuokkanen (2007).

In the Kirkkokuusikko memorial, I tried to combine contemporary artistic thinking and methods of visual ethnography with traditional construction techniques, the local story tradition and cultural historical study. I brought forward local content and meanings that are easily forgotten in the geographical and mental triangle of the nearby Suurikuusikko European biggest gold mine, the Porsche winter testing track, and the growing Levi skiing-resort. At the same time, I brought forward the heritage of the Forest Sami, already half-forgotten in the Kittilä region, which in turn affects the current and politicized debate on Sami identity and rights in the area.

CASE TWO: WINTER ART

The second example of combination of community based work in Northern environment and visual ethnography discusses how snow, ice and winter have been used in Northern village communities in an educational contest. Examples are based on collaboration with Art and Design higher education institutions in Northern Scandinavia and Russia coordinated by the Faculty of Art and Design at the University of Lapland, Finland. In the beginning of the millennium I introduced the concept of winter art to describe changes in artistic features and phenomena related to winter aesthetics and culture. "One manifestation of this change is the brisk increase in winter festivals, winter theaters, snow and ice sculpting events and snow architecture. At their best, these phenomena can be called winter art" (Jokela 2003, 7).

Northern forms of culture and cultural identities have emerged and grown in close relationship with nature and harsh winter conditions. Snow covers the landscape in northern Scandinavia eight months a year, and the snowy landscape still has an important role to play in the cultural and economic life and wellbeing in the rapidly changing North and Arctic. The need for a sustainable and culturally sensitive relationship to winter was identified in multidisciplinary collaboration with the university's northern network. Many teachers and researchers have stated that for example Sami young people learn best by doing practical work in natural surroundings outside the school building (Keskitalo, 2010).

In northern cultures that are skilled in making use of nature's resources, people typically work continuously surrounded by nature. At the same time, they develop a way to observe and understand the yearly cycle of nature. In winter, the different states or phases of water, such as snow, frost and ice, create a distinct character for the environment and for the people moving about and working in it; northern cultures have adapted to this. Dozens of different terms are used to describe the different states of snow and ice, most of which are multisensory and illustrate the relationship of activity to winter. This is precisely the tacit everyday knowledge of the North that is unique to the world and has also been the basis for developing winter art.

Nature and winter define more than just the material framework of life. Old northern religions, beliefs, traditions and relationships with the environment have characteristics that distinguish them from the traditions of western and southern Europe. The undercurrent of the rich mythology of the northern peoples has been a shamanistic perception of the world. For example, the storytelling heritage of Finnish Lapland has been enriched by a rich mixture of Sami and Finnish culture, in which winter plays a key role.

Education's winter art and community-based approach was initiated by examining the pressures for change within art education stemming from the practices of relational contemporary art. The purpose of selecting community-based environmental art as a method of winter art was to make it easier to deal with regional and local phenomena in addition to tradition. Even today, art in the wintery landscape challenges us to ponder who we are, where we belong, and what our place is in the cycle of the world. Indeed, winter-related activities highlight the identities of the participating individuals and communities.

There are several successful art projects and action research cases done in the course of the years (Hiltunen 2009, Jokela 2007a, Jokela 2007b, Jokela et alii 2015a). One successful example is *ArctiChildren: Cross-border Training Program for Promoting Psychosocial Wellbeing through School Education in the Barents Region*, led by the University of Lapland (2006-2008). In this project, I was responsible for developing winter art activities that support Sami cultural identity and wellbeing in schools using methods of visual ethnography and art-based action research (see Jokela 2008b; Jokela et alii 2015b).

The project took place in multiethnic villages in Jokmok, Sweden, Sevettijärvi, Finland and Lovozero, Rus-

sia – precisely in places where Sami culture meets other nationalities, mixed and merged together in many ways. In the ArctiChildren project, community-specific winter art served as tools to encourage schools, teachers, pupils, parents and villagers to get involved in community-based modes of operation.

The art students, teachers, art educators, artists, researchers school pupils and villagers who work on the project deal with a shared theme related to winter using place-based processes of art and education to encourage intentional and situational learning (Jokela & Hiltunen, 2014). Instead of focusing on subjective experience, reflecting is done on communal experience and phenomenological, cultural, aesthetic and ecological linkages between the community, the environment and winter. The presence of varied interest groups, including indigenous voices and local elders enables dialectic interaction and polyphony during the activities. Such winter art projects start with a sociocultural and visual analysis of the place and community, using methods of visual ethnography and techniques of visual art (Jokela et alii 2006).

WINTER ART AS A METHOD OF CULTURALLY SENSITIVE EDUCATION AND DECOLONIZATION

A key question was the preserving of cultural diversity and the intrinsic nature of the visual arts in the North. For example, the traditional Sami culture does not recognize arts as such, or even have art as a concept on its own as western culture has. Visual art, however, has a long tradition in the form of crafts, and many see handicrafts as the embodiment of Sami art and studies on traditional handicrafts as adequate art education. However, by introducing the methods of contemporary arts, Sami artists have now broken the long period of having their culture depicted mainly by outsiders. Contemporary art has empowered artists to communicate their own lifeworld from within their culture. Lehtola (1997a, 23), Professor in Sami Studies, sees art “as a representation, which not only describes the existing identity, but also continuously builds and generates it”.

For the improvement of winter art in a culturally sensitive way, dialogue between contemporary art and Sami indigenous practices is crucial. Thus the development projects were arranged with art education and Sami Craftwork (*duodji*) education at the Sami University College in Kautokeino, Norway. At the joint workshops, ways of working were created in such a way that contemporary art and traditional forms and principles of Sami

craftworks conjoined and became integrated. The aim of the education project was to develop working practices of contemporary art that respected the starting points and values of the Sami culture in a sustainable way but offered an open space for multiethnic dialogue.



FIGURE 3 - WINTER ART AS COMMUNITY-BASED ART. WORKING WITH SAMI HERITAGE IN VILLAGES OF KAUTOKEINO, NORWAY AND IN JOKKMOKK, SWEDEN. PHOTOS TIMO JOKELA.

Taking place in schoolyards and village centers, at its best, winter art activity helps to look at space from a new perspective, as a space for experiencing the annual cycle of northern nature. It transforms into a center of information and action, a showcase for the school's principles of learning and its community spirit, a meeting place for the school, parents and the whole village community as a forum for symbols that build up cultural identity and democracy. The basis for the winter art activities is the empowering impact of art on communities combined with the promotion of psychosocial wellbeing in a way that respects the northern cultural identity and works for decolonization. The cooperation with the Sami and other multiethnic communities also clarified the relationship between contemporary art, cultural identity and wellbeing. Working outdoors has proven successful, and the methods used can be seen to be in harmony with nature and the environmental relationship of the northern communities (see Hiltunen 2009, Jokela 2008a).

One objective in winter art has been to develop approaches that look for the strengths of inhabitants through community activities and support the preservation and construction of identity. The relationship of northern communities to their own wintry environment has played a key role in this.

Therefore winter art is a natural and convenient way of working in projects with social-oriented goals including the aims of decolonization.

FIGURE 4: WINTER ART COLLABORATION FOR EASTERN FESTIVALS WITH VILLAGERS AND SCHOOL PUPILS IN MULTIETHNIC VILLAGE OF LOVOZERO IN NORTH-WEST RUSSIA. LOVOZERO IN A SMELTING POT OF SAMI, KOMI, NENETS AND RUSSIAN CULTURES WITH A LONG TRADITION ON REINDEER HERDING. PHOTOS TIMO JOKELA.



CONCLUSION

The aim of this article has been to introduce the background and ideology of the community-based environmental art as decolonization in the North. Current social changes in the North and the Arctic are tightly connected to cultural identities, which in turn are often constructed through art and visual culture. In these two examples, I have used methods which aim to renew and strengthen cultures in harmony with the notion of sustainable development. Examples demonstrate the interaction between artistic activities and research orientation. Creating art does not exclude research, and *vice versa*. Use of the methods of art-based action research and visual ethnography has supported the application of contemporary art into northern multicultural environments, often amongst their indigenous peoples. Visual mapping and analyzing the appearance, livelihoods, traditions and stories of villages, has helped to create art activities that activate people and entire villages. These community-based environmental art projects have also been char-

acterized by bringing together people of different ages and generations, and understanding, conveying and renewing the significance of the history and livelihoods of places through art. This kind of art can be understood as construction of the world, in these cases of the changing North. This kind of art activity is not something that can be taken out of its context, nor classified or formulated, but it is dialogic and ready to recognize the changes. Visual ethnography methods were used to develop the content of the art and art-based action research to foster participation of locals. This combination worked as decolonization process.

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ANIMATING LOCAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH ARTISTIC PRACTICES IN POLAND: THE CASE OF DANIEL RYCHARSKI'S 'TOTEMIC' ANIMAL MURALS AND 'MONUMENT TO A PEASANT'

ABSTRACT

This article is devoted to contemporary art and local communities. The author introduces the case of Daniel Rycharski's relational art projects, focusing on his 'totemic' animal murals (2012) and Pomnik Chłopa (Monument to a Peasant, 2015). Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in the Rycharski's home village Kurówko near Sierpc in 2014-2015 (Central Poland) and in the cities of Cracow and Warsaw where his work was presented in 2015-2016, the article explores how Rycharski's artworks generate a nexus of social relationships.

KEYWORDS

Rural Communities, Contemporary Art, Poland, Ethnography, Monuments

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INTRODUCTION

This essay is devoted to ethnographic examination of how contemporary, relational art practices can animate, enliven, or inspire the so-called local communities (Bourriaud 2012). Firstly, I will focus on the example of the 'totemic', animal murals created in a collaborative manner by Polish artist, Daniel Rycharski, in his home village (Łagodzka 2011). Secondly, I will describe his collaboratively made public 'gift-sculpture' (Sansi 2014) called *Monument to a Peasant*. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Kurówko near Sierpc, central Poland, where the artist works and comes from, as well as fieldwork conducted in Cracow and Warsaw where his works were presented,¹ I will examine the artworks'ability' to generate a nexus of social relationships in their vicinity. Moreover, inspired by the argument of Alfred Gell, I will argue that the notion of 'local community' can be approached as an ephemeral collective of human and non-human agents gathered in the vicinity of an art object (Gell 1998).



According to Alfred Gell, artworks should be always examined in a wider context of social relationships (Gell 1998). However, Gell does not insist on treating art as a form of communication of locally shared and distributed meanings. According to the author there must not necessarily be a clear 'message' behind the art object. Neither does the visual side of the object necessarily have to be its 'language'. Studying art objects is, after all, not a matter of treating them as signs. For Gell, art is, most of all, the 'doing' which can be both human and non-human.

The definition of art introduced by Alfred Gell does not reduce its phenomenon to aesthetic preference, nor

FIGURE 1: STANISŁAW ADAMSKI NEXT TO THE MURAL DEPICTING A SHADOW OF THE 'FISH-PIG'. PHOTO DANIEL RYCHARSKI, COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR.

¹ The documentation of Rycharski's murals was presented for the first time in 2012 in Galeria Sztuki Wozownia in Toru (curator: Dorota Łagodzka). In 2014 it was presented again as a part of the exhibition *As You Can See: Polish Art Today* curated by Sebastian Cichocki and Łukasz Ronduda in the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw. *Monument to a Peasant* was originally created for the Art Boom Grolsch Festival in Cracow in 2015 and it was also presented in the Warsaw Museum of Modern Art as part of two exhibitions: *Making Use: Life in Postartistic Times* curated by Sebastian Cichocki and Kuba Szreder and *Bread and Roses: Artists and The Class Divide* curated by Łukasz Ronduda and Natalia Sielewicz (2016). In 2016 the artwork was also presented in Lublin, East Poland during the Open City Festival curated by Stach Szabłowski.

does it suggest that what we know as the art object is any form of expression legitimized by the art world. The anthropology of art is, as he puts it, the theoretical study of “social relations in the vicinity of objects mediating social agency” (Gell 1998: 7). Objects are active and so they should be treated as persons. It means that each of them is not only a tool of self-expression or a source of aesthetic pleasure, but has a real effect on people’s lives; it has an agency. As stated by Gell, the agency is intentional and causes change in the vicinity of the actor. An art object is therefore “an embodied thought”.

It is also worthwhile to recall Gell’s metaphor of art works as ‘traps’. For Gell, as said before, there is no aesthetic or institutional criterion according to which one may assess what should be considered an art object. The only reason for that will be treating art as a function of the power of classification. Therefore, as he argues, the reason for considering something as an art form will rather be its intentionality, and the degree to which it reflects on the complex, sensitive, very often intimate and crucial relationships between the person, the object and the world they live in. According to Gell, a good metaphor of an art work is a trap, because “The trap is therefore both a model of its creator, the hunter, and a model of its victim, the prey animal. But more than this, the trap embodies a scenario, which is the dramatic nexus that binds these two protagonists together, and which aligns them in time and space” (Gell 1998: 27).

DANIEL RYCHARSKI’S ‘TOTEMIC’ ANIMAL MURALS

Daniel Rycharski was born in 1986 in Sierpc and he is a visual artist and activist who works in rural areas of Central Poland. Between the years 2005-2009 he studied graphic art at the Faculty of Arts, Pedagogical University of Cracow. After graduating from the university, the artist became a lecturer by the Department of Multimedia. In 2013 Rycharski received his PhD from the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow and since 2017 he is an assistant professor at the Szczecin Art Academy. From the very beginning he was interested in facilitating projects that involve participation of different ‘local communities’ gathered in the vicinity of his collaboratively made ‘art objects’. After graduating from the Pedagogical University, Rycharski moved back to his home village where he started creating ‘art-like’ situations that would engage local participants.

For instance, he build a ‘chapel’ called *The Roadside Shrine Gallery* (2012) where he organized petite exhibi-

tions of works produced by different Polish contemporary artists in order to make fine art more accessible.² He made the *Multimedia Wild Boar and Bird Repellent* (2011) which was inspired by both – the artist's interest in video art and the local farmers' need to keep their fields secured from wild animals. In 2014 Rycharski made an interesting work inspired by the history of rural Poland: he created the *Gate Constructed to Celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Abolition of Serfdom* which, until nowadays, is being exposed in the village of Kurówko. His interest in Polish peasants' history later evolved into creating a *Monument to a Peasant* (2015) accompanied by a para-institution also associated with the topic called the *Museum of Alternative Social Histories*.³

The village of Kurówko, where Daniel Rycharski comes from, is located in the rural, borderland area between two regions of central Poland: Masovia and Kujawy. In the past, the site was subjected to multiple archeological excavations. According to Daniel Rycharski, in his home village, for many years farmers would tell fascinating stories about spotting some mysterious, 'prehistoric' animals: "There was one story that still fascinates me: there used to be an animal that lived twenty years ago in the Smużewskie swamp, near Kurówko, which howled for nearly two years! Every day at the same time! Different scientists would come to investigate its kind, but no one could. And the howl was terrifying! That inspired me" (Dauksza 2016). When in 2009, after graduating from the Faculty of Arts at the Pedagogical University in Cracow, Rycharski moved back to the village as a part of his PhD project at the Cracow Academy of Fine Art, he started painting murals which depicted shadows of the mysterious animals approaching the households (Łagodzka 2011, Sural 2017).

What is interesting is that the animals did not represent particular species. They were neither domestic nor wild. The 'rabbit-fox' (picture no. 4), 'fish-pig' (picture no. 1), 'giraffe-stallion' (picture no. 3), 'goose-cat' soon appeared on the walls of barns, sheds and houses which all belonged to the members of the village community.

The murals of the mysterious, hybrid animals established a new set of relationships: Rycharski started from cooperating with his grandfather (picture no. 1), but soon other members of the community also joined the project, as they wished to receive their own paintings. For instance, the leader of the local government, *soltys* Adam Pesta, also received a mural depicting a shadow of an 'elk-kangaroo' (picture no. 2).

² In 2012 Rycharski received an award presented by journalists from the Polish Radio Three called Kulturysta Roku for making contemporary art more accessible to the inhabitants of the rural areas of Poland.

³ It is important to mention, however, that Rycharski did not only collaborate with the inhabitants of his home village. One of the most important 'communities' that he is involved with since 2016 is the community of Polish queer Christians represented by individuals as well as by the activist group called the Faith and the Rainbow (Polish: Wiara i Tęcza). Inspired by his collaboration with the Faith and the Rainbow Rycharski created several works on topic of queerness in provincial Poland, such as *There is No Solidarity Without Justice* (2016), *Project Plaque* (2016) and *The Cross* (2017).



FIGURE 2: ADAM PESTA WITH AN 'ELK-KANGAROO'. PHOTO DANIEL RYCHARSKI, COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR.

The artist also used public walls of the semi-neglected, abandoned and ruined houses, which belonged to those members of the village community who were no longer present (picture no. 3). It remains crucial to point out that, in the past, some of those buildings belonged to the persons who, just like the mysterious, hybrid animals, were treated as odd and subjected to gossiping and storytelling practices (for example, as I heard in the village, some of them were described as 'queer', another one was said to be 'dissolute'). When considering the murals as 'totems' I would like to refer to the so called 'totemic question' which was an important issue for late 19th and the early 20th century anthropologists. According to Durkheim, and as it was later referred by Radcliffe-Brown, the question of totemic representation is, most of all, the question of identification with a particular, social group or family (Durkheim 1995, Radcliffe-Brown 1952). For Radcliffe-Brown totemism is, in general, a specific kind of relation between man, animals, plants and objects (Radcliffe-Brown 1952). It can take very different forms, as there are many totemic systems. The animal can be classified as either eatable, or uneatable. But what remains essential is that the specification of this kind is never the same as the one put forward by another group. The attitude to totemic animal, associated with a particular group, is always distinctive, and, according to Radcliffe-Brown, it makes each group individual.

Lévi-Strauss's idea of totemism is different from the ones that were put forward by his predecessors, although it is worthwhile to notice that it owes them a lot of inspiration (Lévi-Strauss 2010). According to Lévi-Strauss, the question of totemism is not an issue of human relation with the natural world – for Lévi-Strauss, the idea of 'nature' itself has been socially constructed. Therefore, there is no ontological connection between a totem and a group/clan – it is arbitral. Totemic animals or objects do not exist in the way that could be seen as fully comparable or similar to the way of being specific to human.



Totemism is nothing else but an example of classification (Lévi-Strauss 1995: 89). There is neither an ontological, nor empirical connection between the 'significant' and 'signified'. It is the difference that creates a system. Differences, or, in other words, the pairs of binary oppositions – the pairs of opposite and distinctive features – are at the core of systemic approach. By this we mean that, firstly, there are no animals which resemble each other (because they all share animal behavior), then ancestors which resemble each other (because they all share ancestral behavior), and lastly an overall resemblance between the two groups; but on one hand there are animals which differ from each other (in that they belong to different species, each of which has its own physical appearance and mode of life), and on the other there are men – among whom ancestors form a particular case – who

FIGURE 3-4: GIRAFFE-STALLION' AND 'RABBIT-FOX'. PHOTOS WERONIKA PLIŇSKA.

also differ from each other (in that they are distributed among different segments of society, each occupying a particular position in the social structure). The resemblance presupposed by so called totemic representations is “between these two systems of differences” (Lévi-Strauss 2010: 77).

The animals painted by Rycharski in his home village do not represent particular species. Instead, they are monstrous and could even cause fear diminished by the fact that the artist depicts only their shadows (see: Kowalski 2010). However, by choosing to depict only the shadows, Rycharski questions the issue of animals’ visibility. Just like the stories told by the artist’s grandfather and other members of the community, he therefore suggests that the animals appear only after breaking the distance between the storyteller and his/her listener.

In one of his interviews, the artist stated that hybrid animals painted on the walls of his home village represent disappearing distinctions between contemporary rural and urban communities in Poland: “On one hand it was a metaphor of an urban-peasant. Despite the fact that I come from the village and lived all my childhood there, during the years of my university studies I moved to the city and then back to the village, so I feel like I am a hybrid myself. I have features of someone who belongs to the village and someone who belongs to the city. On the other hand, the Kurówko is an urban-rural hybrid itself. It is difficult to talk about traditional ‘rusticity’ anymore. The community adapted many patterns of ‘urban’ behavior and the village became a melting pot” (Dauksza 2016).

It is important to underline, however, that even if the artist claimed that he wished to void the strict distinctions, his art practice, nevertheless, highlighted some of them, for instance those between the members of the village community. What remains crucial is that his work mediated the enmeshed nexus of relationships built on similarities and differences. As he stated in a conversation with me: “Whenever I come to Kurówko and spend more than three-four days there, my taste changes completely! For example, when my grandmother shows me what she bought, a tablecloth or something, and asks the opinion, I say that I like it without analyzing this”.

I saw the murals in 2014 for the first time, when I was invited to Kurówko for a trip organized by the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw. The trip was a part of the artist’s participatory art project called *The field game* curated by Szymon Maliborski which was organized not only to

show the murals in their original context. In cooperation with the local contributors, Rycharski prepared a set of *field games*, such as: “fertilising the field with manure” or “gathering edible weeds” to entertain “visitors from Warsaw”. Among those who participated in the project were mainly his contemporaries: young, urban professionals working for the leading art and cultural institutions in Warsaw. However, as I discovered quite soon, taking part in the competition made many of the participants recall the times which they spent in rural Poland when they were children. As I realized, many of those who answered the call for participation either grew up in the villages, or had an experience of visiting their grandparents who were farmers. It seemed to me therefore that the main topic of *The field games* was kin-based social relationship, as the aim of the project was to bring together those who Rycharski imagined as the ‘descendants’ of Polish peasants and their forgotten ‘ancestors’. It is also important to stress that since the majority of participants were employees of cultural institutions, his project also aimed at renegotiation of the conditions under which contemporary ‘new folk art’ can be created.

In 2017, Daniel Rycharski was awarded with the prestigious Polityka Passport in the visual arts category for his collaboratively made artwork called the *Monument to a Peasant* (2015). This work was prepared, once again, in cooperation with Szymon Maliborski from the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw. However, this time, the artist cooperated not only with his family members and neighbors from Kurówko, as well as with Warsaw professionals such as myself,⁴ but also with a local, outsider artist Stanisław Garbarczuk. Rycharski also consulted farmer activists who organized a protest camp in front of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister in Warsaw against the former government of the Civic Platform (2015). Since I was personally involved in the process, I will, once again, examine the public sculpture’s ‘ability’ to generate a nexus of social relationships in its vicinity.

THE MONUMENT TO A PEASANT

Monument to a Peasant was inspired by the sixteenth century graphics of Albrecht Dürer who designed a project of an anti-monument intended to commemorate the failure of the peasant uprising led by Thomas Müntzer. What inspired Daniel Rycharski was the certainty that, in the recent years, many Polish authors underlined the fact that ordinary Poles would identify themselves with noblemen, while the majority of society has peasant roots.

⁴ As a PhD student writing about Rycharski, I became a project consultant together with anthropologist Tomasz Rakowski. My PhD thesis based on the findings stemming from this and similar research projects was defended in 2017 at the Institute of Polish Culture, University of Warsaw.

When looking at the history of the Commonwealth it is important to realize that in Poland all noblemen were treated as equals. However, despite the fact that in popular culture the period of Polish history between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is often called the epoch of the 'noblemen democracy', it would be hard to pretend that the Polish state was, at that time, in fact democratic in modern terms (Leder 2014, Sowa 2011, Kuligowski 2016). The reason is because, unlike the noblemen, starting from the sixteenth century, Polish peasants were forced to provide unpaid labor (the so-called serfdom) to the landowners. What is more, because of the extensive harvesting methods used by the landowners, over time, peasants were subjected not to emancipation, but to the further limitation of their personal freedom. According to anthropologist Waldemar Kuligowski, "As a result, a landowner become both owner and a judge of peasants who lived on his land" (Kuligowski 2016: 113). Moreover, the noblemen (and clergy of the noble descent) believed that their genetic origin was different from serfs, which made them superior to the peasants, due to the popular ethno-genetic belief that noblemen were descendants of the Sarmatians, while peasants were said to come from the Dacians or the Gepids (Kuligowski 2016: 116). According to Kuligowski, "even in a Bible-based version of this conviction, the predecessor of the nobility was Japheth, while the predecessor of the peasants was Noah's son Ham, who had been cursed by his father (actually also a farmer) and degraded, together with his descendants, to the level of slaves, *servi servorum*" (Kuligowski 2016: *ibidem*).

Over the centuries, Polish nobility and peasants were therefore perceived as two different ethnic groups with a completely different set of freedoms and obligations. According to many scholars, this is also why the history of peasants' long-term economic exploitation still affects Polish social structure. For instance, anthropologist Ewa Klekot stressed the fact that the serfdom transformed into a long-term dependency. That is why, according to the author, it is not only the position of someone who used to dominate over the other that nowadays requires critique and compensation, but also the position of someone who was subjected to the long-term subordination. From this perspective, the issue of identification with the ruling class history is not 'innocent' – it is a matter of the 'self-orientalization' (Klekot 2014).

However, anthropologist Roch Sulima interestingly pointed out the that gesture of bringing back the issue

of the “peasants’ historical harm” into discussion is not new; what is new is that nowadays the conversation engages not only the narrow circle of urban intellectuals, but also those who currently live in the villages and their descendants (Kot 2013). Following the argument made by Sulima, I would like to argue that in his art practices Daniel Rycharski intends, at the same time, to connect and confront the generation of his urban contemporaries with their ‘forgotten’ serf ‘kin’ or ‘ancestors’. As recounted by Daniel Rycharski: “In the past peasants were perceived as animals, they did not have a right to vote, they could not express themselves through artistic means. Nobody communicated with them this way, because they were not perceived as full members of society. Following the argument of Andrzej Leder, we work in favor of them – we give a voice to those who were voiceless” (Plińska 2015). When explaining why he decided to create the *Monument to a Peasant* in his home village and then to present his work in Cracow and Warsaw, Rycharski stated: “Before my intention was to create a sense of community in Kurówko (...). This time I decided to do just the opposite – to piss off, to provoke people (...) because this time I am going to tell them right in the face who they are and where they come from. And then, they will realize that they don’t know where they are from. And since they don’t know (...) they also have no future because they don’t know where they go.”

In my opinion, *Monument to a Peasant* belongs to the group of artworks which in his book *Art, anthropology and the gift* Roger Sansi described as the ‘gift-sculptures’ (Sansi 2014). As I see it, while working on the monument, Rycharski facilitated the process of gift-exchange. Firstly, he gave away his own privilege by resigning from the position of the only author. Secondly, the participants of his project responded with their own ‘counter-gifts’ such as their personal engagement in the process of making of the *Monument*. The participants also made ‘offerings’; some of the objects found in their farms and households later became parts of the artistic installation.

As a result, the *Monument* emerged as community artwork that is as a materialization of the enmeshed nexus of relationships between different collaborators.

The *Monument to a Peasant* was made as an assemblage of objects. On the top of the composition, the artist placed a hyperrealist figure of the Pensive Christ sitting on an empty milk can. The sculpture was made out of epoxy resin by Rycharski, together with contemporary sculptors Dorota Hadrian and Łukasz Surowiec.

The face of the figure was ‘borrowed’ from the local ‘prototype’, the leader of Kurówko, Adam Pesta, depicted in his own, private garments and cap. The empty milk can used to belong to Pesta, who can no longer sell his own product as it is too difficult for him, as a petty farmer, to meet the EU requirements.

To construct the frame of the *Monument*, Rycharski decided to use a mechanical device which he found in the workshop of the local outsider artist and constructor Stanisław Garbaczuk in the nearby village of Gorzewo. The unused lift replaced the original column designed by Dürer. Thanks to the lift, it was possible for the viewers to go up and down and they could give the figure a close look, or even touch it. Moreover, the lift is an electric device that requires cooperation of two or three people to start the engine, so the *Monument* also became a sort of device itself. The lower part of its construction consisted of another machine used by farmers – the ‘column’ was placed on a muck spreader. Rycharski decided to use the muck spreader after consulting his project at the Farmers’ Protest Camp in Warsaw. The peasant activists wanted the *Monument* to make a pilgrimage throughout the country, as if the artwork were a holy icon. The activists who spoke with me, Rycharski, and curator Maliborski in Warsaw, said that the *Monument* should travel from one village to another so that every farmer could “express his own sorrows”. According to the activists, contemporary “peasants’ harm” means something different to everybody.

The activists, most generally, protested against introducing the new law that would enable landowners to buy property everywhere in the EU without protecting the rights of the local, individual farmers. However, some of them said that the “peasants’ harm” of today is also the fact that elderly farmers have very little contact with young people (including their own family members) and that many of them remain unmarried.

As I mentioned before, the *Monument* emerged as an assemblage of objects decorated with a chain that Adam Pesta used to use when he still had a cow, and with pitchforks, the “weapon of the weak” of the most popular kind. Rycharski also added a contemporary serf emblem: the artist used a painting made by Stanisław Garbaczuk entitled: “He used to fly despite the bondage”. The painting resembles a Polish national emblem, although the eagle depicted by Garbaczuk, unlike the national one, is lacking feathers and is chained. Nevertheless, the coloristic

painting also brings to mind the costume of the mythical firebird designed by Léon Bakst for Serge Diaghilev's the Ballet Russes. According to anthropologists Ryszard and Joanna Tomiccy who investigated a variety of Slavic cosmologies, the flying, mythical creature associated with fire and lightning was called *Žmij* in this part of the world. The divine creature was responsible for bringing wealth, fertility and harvest, as well as for protecting households (see: Tomiccy 1975: 39–40).



What is important is that the creature, which was often depicted as a rooster or as an eagle with a snake tail, was also known for fighting dragons, by which the bird repeated the cosmological act of creation (Tomiccy 1975: 40).

The official exposition of *Monument to a Peasant* took place in Kurówko in September 2015. When I arrived there, what I saw, at first, was the excited crowd of people wearing elegant clothes: voluntary fire fighters in their gala uniforms, the borough leader (*wójt*) of Gozdowo, local leader of Kurówko and many others. In addition, members of Rycharski's own family and other citizens of Kurówko were also there. The artist's grandfather, Stanisław Adamski, was busy protecting the bonfire and barbecue. His mother, Ewa Maciejewska offered plenty of cups of tea and coffee. His father, Marek Rycharski, helped support the lift. At the beginning of the ceremony, Rycharski and Maliborski offered each participant a small, triangular, national flag, which was used in

FIGURE 5: CEREMONY OF THE MONUMENT TO A PEASANT EXPOSITION IN KURÓWKO IN SEPTEMBER 2015. PHOTO DANIEL RYCHARSKI, COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR.

the region as a decorative motif during the pilgrimage of the holy icon from Częstochowa, which happened to visit Kurówko for the first time in forty years right before the exposition of the *Monument*. The first opening speeches were made by the curator and by the borough leader. Adam Pesta also spoke with emotion expressing his pride about the fact of being honored with a monument. People from Kurówko recognized the resemblance immediately – they talked about the figure as if the *Monument* itself was their friend, neighbor or relative.



FIGURE 6: MONUMENT TO A PEASANT IN FRONT OF THE MUNICIPAL OFFICE IN GOZDOWO. PHOTO FILIP CHROBAK, COURTESY OF DANIEL RYCHARSKI.

Right after the opening speeches, Rycharski offered everyone a souvenir photograph. Later on, everybody was welcome to use the lift and go up to see the figure. When I saw the sculpture from a very close distance, I realized that the effect that it casts upon the viewer is somehow powerful as I also wished to touch it. I felt as if the sculpture was also depicting my ancestor, or, at least, a rarely visited kin, who I happened to forget about. After the opening ceremony in Kurówko, the *Monument* also visited other, surrounding villages, thanks to the assistance of voluntary fire-fighters. For me, probably the most important event was the moment in which it was ‘parked’ by the Municipal Office in Gozdowo. The office workers, immediately stopped their work and together with the borough leader posed for a photograph taken by the artist in front of the *Monument*. At that festive moment, I realized

that the majority of workers were women.

They came out of the building smartly dressed and smiling, yet led by a man. This was for the first time that I realized that the same hyperrealist sculpture which triggers emotion can also make me feel uncomfortable with its presence. For example, when a male team of reporters from the regional channel of the national TV station came to Kurówko on the next day, one of them, a tall man, shook my hand to say hello without even looking my way. The reporter probably ignored me since he expected that the topic of his conversation with Rycharski and the artist's collaborators will be stereotypically associated with 'masculinity': history, politics, society... Nevertheless, what was also interesting, was that the same reporter insisted that the figure of the peasant Pensive Christ placed on the top of the construction was watching him 'from above', as if it were expressing some kind of superiority.

Later on, when the reporter and the leader of Kurówko, the curator, and the artist all climbed to the top of the *Monument*, I realized that the construction does, indeed, represent a certain hierarchical order and therefore it gives an opportunity to reverse it. What is interesting is that the artwork was also interpreted this way by local farmers. According to them, when standing in front of the Municipal Office in Gozdowo, the artwork raised the social status of an ordinary peasant above that of the borough leader. Hence, I would assert that the art object made by Rycharski became a "monument of transition" of some sort.

Following the argument made by an art historian, Krzysztof Pijarski (2015), with respect to the Polish context, there is a vital need for renewing the definition of what the monument is. As stated by the author: "Hence the idea of the 'monument'. The scare quotes around the word do not denote our inability to tell what a monument is, but rather the tentative or performative nature of our monuments; they were not designed and built as such, but were discovered and then inscribed as monuments of transition. This act of inscription has very much to do with artistic practice, with the tradition or paradigm of the readymade." (Pijarski 2015). In Cracow, *Monument to a Peasant* was exhibited in front of the National Museum during the Grolsch ArtBoom Festival in 2015.

There, as I observed it, many people would pass, looking a little surprised, as if this kind of object should not stand in their way. It was usually the elderly, smartly dressed couples that stopped by the artwork. After a short while they already knew: "This is a peasant! They show

it on television”, “Why the village leader, anyway?”, “I heard on the radio that he is real!”. One of the viewers stated with consideration: “A Monument to the Peasant...? I do not really know why. Perhaps if it were standing somewhere on the outskirts...?”. Hence, according to this interviewee, the monumental building of the Cracow National Gallery did not seem to be a ‘proper’ surrounding to place *Monument to a Peasant*.

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OFF-TOPIC ARTICLES

ANTONELLO RICCI

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RENATO BOCCASSINO, BIRTH AND DEATH AMONG THE ACIOLI: ETHNOGRAPHY ON DISPLAY

ABSTRACT

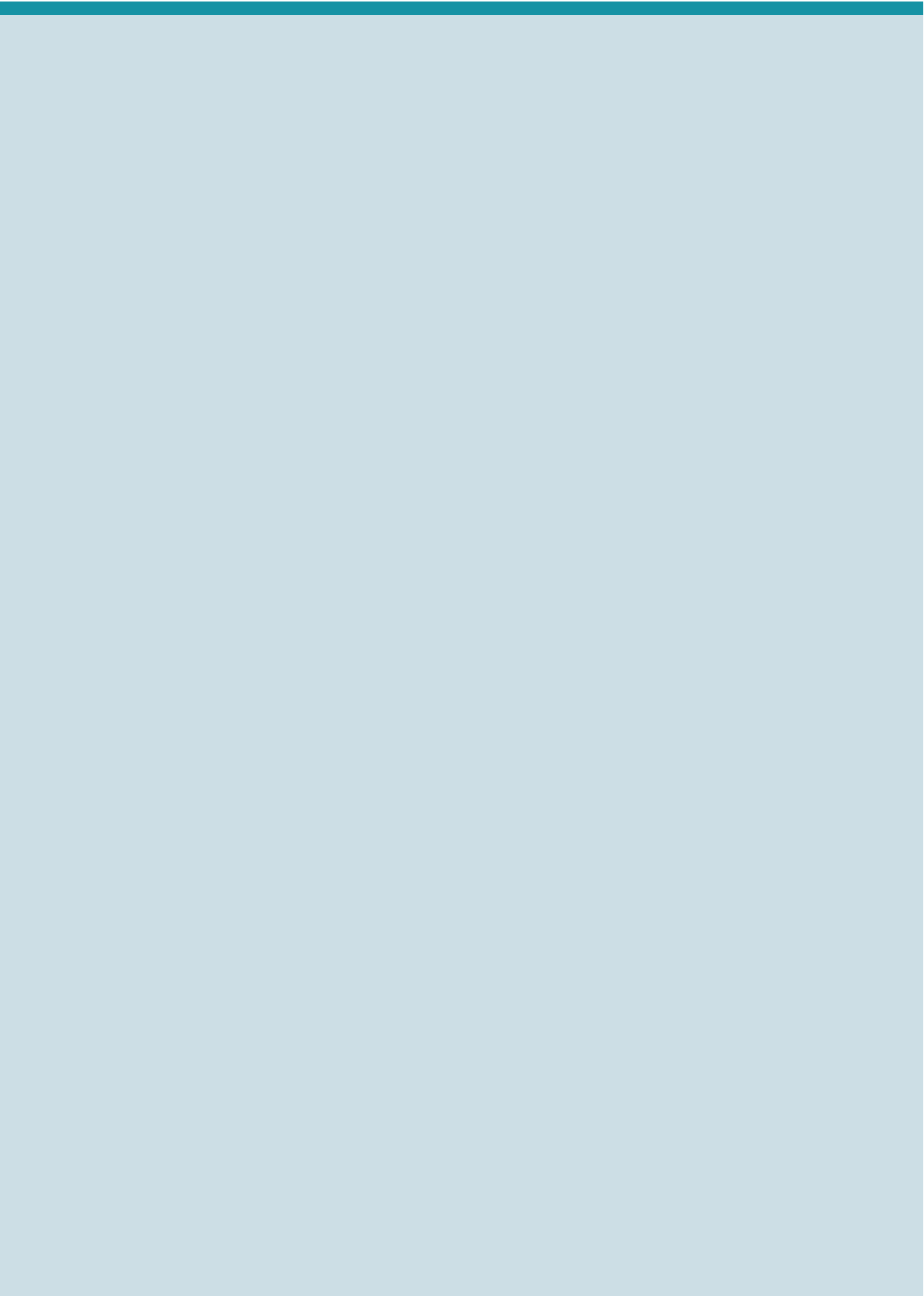
This paper presents a series of reflections which have come to light through the preparation and the setting up of an exhibition made up of a selection of photographs taken by Renato Boccassino in Uganda in 1933-34. The Italian ethnologist produced extensive ethnographic documentation about the Acholi people including, in addition to the photographs, notebooks, diaries of his fieldwork, postcards and some sound recordings. The perspective was to bring out the fieldwork methodology and the ethnographic approach of Renato Boccassino.

KEYWORDS

Acholi, Exhibition, Ethnography, Photography, Uganda, Boccassino

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INTRODUCTION

The presentation of the 2015 edition of the journal “Voci – Annuario di scienze umane”, which took place at the Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione (ICCD) in Roma on 18 October 2016¹, offered the occasion to organize an exhibition with a selection of the ethnographic photographs taken by Renato Boccassino (1904-1976) in the north of Uganda, of the Acioli, a nilotic people speaking a language in the *Luo* family, during a year of intense field work in 1933 and 1934. The corpus of archived material of which the photographs are part, was donated by the daughter of the ethnologist, Maria Boccassino, to the ICCD² on two separate dates, in 2006 (M.A.F.O.S Comunicazioni 2006) and in 2015 (Ricci 2015: 231). The materials were first described by Elena Musumeci and Laura Petrone (Musumeci and Petrone 2015).

This collection records a period of nearly fifty years from 1927 to 1975 including handwritten and typed material, printed works and manuscripts, along with a large iconographic component made up of negative photographs and prints, postcards, drawings, maps and more. The most extensive and richest part dates to the years 1932-35 during Boccassino’s preparation for and the carrying out of his field work in Uganda.

A first review of Boccassino’s photographic corpus was made for the publication of 53 images in the “Camera oscura” section of “Voci” (Ricci 2015: 227-249 and 241-299); the theme of that selection concerns ceremonial practices and objects inherent in the birth and death of the Acioli, with a special focus on the “births” of twins.

The high level of technical quality of the images becomes apparent when examining only the negatives – mostly 9x12 film sheets – and some prints on paper. Taking in consideration the improvisational nature of the shots, the “setting” and limits of the field, Boccassino’s achievement is truly surprising especially under the difficult conditions Uganda presented in the 1930s and the idea to organize an exhibition naturally emerges immediately after first visual contact. As preliminary work on the archive corpus progressed, this first impulse was reaffirmed and extended to the many other types of material present, all of high documentary interest and of a certain scientific, historical and cultural quality: the need to realize an exhibition to reveal Renato Boccassino’s ethnographic approach in Uganda became clear. Every piece of paper, every image, every binder, every notebook, every folder, etc., is a dense and layered recipient of information on Boccassino’s research, on his course of study, on

¹ The presentation, the photographic exhibition (October 18 – November 18, 2016) and the publication in this paper of the Boccassino’s photographs were made possible thanks to the availability of the director of ICCD architect Laura Moro to whom I owe my most appreciated thanks. Also Fabio Dei, Giovanni Fiorentino and Cecilia Pennacini attended the presentation and to whom I most warmly thank. All the photos mentioned in this article are in the photo-essay.

² The volumes were donated to the Library of the Dipartimento di Storia, Cultura, Religioni (Department of History, Culture, and Religion) of the Sapienza University of Rome.

his contacts and his networks of intricate relationships, and on the dynamics of his way of accurately and precisely working in every minute detail. Some examples can clarify what is intended. On the backs of most of the folders, usually cardboard, were pre-inventory, notes and lists that refer to its content; on the back of each photograph are the alpha-numeric sequence that identifies the negative (Ricci 2015: 233), the captions and any other notes; the various field note records are individually classified and each refers to the others forming a network of links between the documents: for example, a dense notebook full of land records served to compile the log of photographic negatives (Ricci 2015: 232-233). A large field notebook was first drawn up in 1933-34 using only half pages and at a later date, in the 1960s, the other half page was used by Boccassino when reviewing his research activity. There are nine additional notebooks of handwritten transcripts of oral documents: chants, tales and interviews. These materials are transcribed by alternating lines of the acioli language with literal translations, word-by-word mostly in English, but also in Italian, on each page according to a recurring procedure in the ethnological field (Pavanello 2010: 164- 167, 177-178). They are written reports of sound recordings made on wax cylinders by Boccassino and unfortunately almost all of them have been lost. A file in the Historical Archive of the Istituto Centrale per i Beni Sonori e Audiovisivi (ICBSA)) contains a letter pertaining to the agreement between Boccassino, the Discoteca di Stato and the Phonogramm-Archiv in Berlin – with the then responsible Marius Schneider – and other organizations regarding the sound recordings made on wax cylinders with the Edison phonograph (Ricci 2015: 229-231).

Renato Boccassino's work materials are not limited only to those present at ICCD. The exploration of the collection has revealed a complex geographical and institutional "pluri-localization" in which his scientific and professional studies have taken place. He visited the main ethnographic museums in Europe – Berlin, Cologne, Hamburg, Leipzig, Dresden, Stuttgart, Amsterdam, Brussels, London, Oxford, Cambridge, Prague, Florence – collecting materials; he was the director and supervisor of the prehistoric ethnographic museum "Luigi Pigo-rini" in Rome, where the acioli objects he had collected in Uganda can be found along with the materials related to their exhibition in the previous museum of the Collegio Romano; he collaborated intensively with the Istituto De Propaganda Fide on a project on Catholic ethnology

for the Vatican which was directed by the German scholar father, Wilhelm Schmidt; he held several university teaching assignments.

All of his various relationships have given rise to epistolary exchanges, some of which have already been published: with Ernesto de Martino (Pompeo 1996), with Raffaele Pettazzoni (Dore 2013), with Marius Schneider (Ricci 2015). In a letter sent to Pettazzoni from Uganda on July 3, 1933, Boccassino makes significant references to the use of the camera as an ethnographic research tool and also to cinema and sound recordings (Dore 2013: 182); each testify to the awareness of the methodological multimedia setting which he had acquired following study stays in France, with Mauss, and in England with Seligman and Malinowski (Ricci 2015: 228-229) and which he considered indispensable for the realization of sound ethnographic practice.

SOME NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

Why put on an exhibition of ethnographic photographs? After all they are exclusively designed for the purpose of research and study and not for aesthetics or purposes of expression. This seemingly rhetorical question actually refers to cultural and scientific motivations; its answer can not ignore the communicative intent of such an exhibition and, above all, must take into account the motives behind a photographic shot which determined its existence.

I asked Francesco Faeta, as well as other colleagues³, in the aftermath to give me some impressions on this experience, and to put forth some considerations on the value of the exhibition in its context and how it conditions the very meaning of the images on show. Faeta answered:

For the author of images, [...] to be in the space of a gallery means to accept, consciously or unconsciously, a very marked *shifting* of meaning, a transliteration of meanings, the scope of which can not be foreseen beforehand. The gallery is seen as a venue for the elaboration of the communicative and relational diversity of photography with respect to the book or the screen, which are equally public forms of fruition, but certainly conceived of with a shorter “aura of spectacle”, by a different fruition regime, by a psycho-perceptual condition of completely another order (written communication of 21/4/17).

³Luigi M. Lombardi Satriani, Mariano Pavanello, Cecilia Pennacini, Pino Schirripa, Alberto Sobrero. Their testimonies are partially reported in Ricci (in print) and all the interventions are available online in their entirety on the ICCD internet site: www.iccd.beniculturali.it/index.php?it/505/relazioni-articoli-ed-estratti/relazioniarticoliestratti_553f3b128018b/61.

Our first consideration concerns the author of the images, Boccassino, who, in this case was not the creator of the exhibition, nor did he imagine the photographs would be for exhibition purposes, intending them to be documentary support for his ethnographic research. We will return later to this aspect. That Boccassino's photographs were made as documentary sources (Faeta 2015: 29-34) is made clear by the use the author put them to.

A second aspect concerns the subjects represented in the photographs. In the exhibition there is only one perspective. This being because the photographs were taken by one single author, and because they were limited to a specific aspect of the spiritual life of a people. Not taking into account all the possible components, the exhibition focuses on funeral ideology, not on the Acioli people.

At the basis of the realization of the exhibition there are, as mentioned above, some elements which include scientific study and the didactic intent of gathering and spreading the cognitive knowledge hidden within the documentary corpus; but, above all, it is a first attempt to expose the ethnographic research methods developed by Boccassino. Although there are strong quantitative limits which will be addressed later, the exhibition, according to the impressions expressed by Mariano Pavanello:

essentially offers a testament to an extremely accurate ethnography. This is what struck me, because in fact this is an aspect of Boccassino's intellectual and scientific biography, which is very little known [...].

And there was also a *damnatio memoriae* to some extent, probably because of this very orthodox orientation, from the point of view of what was the official Catholic position, towards ethnographic research, strongly linked to the missionary (interview of 27/2/17).

The scientific value that can today be attributed to the work of Renato Boccassino lies precisely in the corpus of materials present at the ICCD and resides in the skills he had in the field. He produced ethnographic documentation of high scientific value which, through his own archiving and arrangements, has become a corpus of documentary sources of dense historical and ethnographic value. Giving her impression of the exhibition Cecilia Pennacini says:

Boccassino's photographs are quite a useful documentation of Ugandan society in the 1930s. Not

much of this kind of documentation exists on Uganda. There are visual repositories on colonial Uganda but I have never seen a coherent ethnographic corpus like this produced by a professional anthropologist (interview of 26/2/17).

After observing the photographs, reading the field notebooks, listening to the rare audio fragments, and also listening to the moving but at the same time not over-indulging testimony of his daughter Maria Boccassino, a rethinking of Boccassino's best-known writings resulted in the perception of two distinct orientations, of two different and separate ideologies present simultaneously in the same person, one with which he conducted field research and the other when he presented the results (Alliegro 2011; Leone 1980 e 1985; Pompeo 1995).

To re-propose the work of Renato Boccassino is to re-position, at least from ethnographic perspective, the presence of this ethnologist in the history of Italian anthropological studies.

His photographs constitute, the best means for such a relocation. The technical expertise with which they have been made and the resulting aesthetic and compositional qualities that have already been mentioned should be sufficient to understand the methodological precision with which the photographic tool was used in the field to build a careful ethnographic study attending to the smallest detail⁴. The opportunity to see the details in the images and to analyze them, attracted the attention and aroused the curiosity of the students of anthropological degree courses who visited the exhibition (see photos n. 21-22). The abundant use of the photographic sequence, even many shots, despite the technical and productive limits inherent in those years, is one of the outstanding features in the methodological awareness with which Boccassino produced the photographs:

For a long time I would like to have had a small movie camera to collect the ceremonies in full. [...] It is useless to list all the advantage that having the most important ceremonies on a film would have had so that they could be reproduced at any time (Dore 2013: 182).

Photography, despite its ambiguous and contradictory infidelity to nature tells very much and very little of the subjects it depicts, reproducing morphological aspects of reality which offer "something on which to base every form of interpretation" (Faeta 2015: 39); this is true as much for

⁴ "Photography - writes Francesco Faeta (1996: 33) - has an extraordinary power of fixing detail: it helps the eye to distinguish what is the best path to knowing." See also Wright (1994: 123) for Malinowski's photographic work.

the photographer who snaps the shot, as for the scholar who later studies it. On the surface of the photograph, many elements of a dialogue between the photographer and the subjects represented therein are interspersed and contextualized. The context in which the photograph was produced is as relevant as the ideologies of the author as those of the subjects: a “document of second level”/ “documento di secondo livello” (Lombardi Satriani 1997: 135,). Photographs, then, are at the same time source and document. They constitute the attestation of a presence, both of the phenomenal reality represented in them, and of the perspective that guided the photographer of the shot. They represent a formidable object of study as well as an important support for the study, always able to provide a complex set of data and information.

As has already been pointed out, Boccassino’s collection was organized by Boccassino himself in archival form. The nature of this documentation on the one hand and the source of the photographic corpus on the other greatly enhances the complex network of referrals which exist among the elements of the collection. As far as possible, an attempt to present this in the exhibition layout was attempted, as will be discussed later.

Boccassino’s observations and study of the photographic materials also reveals a complex set of temporal relationships, both didactic as well as anagraphic in the date and, sometimes, in the time of the shot; his is seen especially in those most closely associated with the chronological distance between the time of the shot and the observation of the photograph which vary from a widening stratification of time in the image, to “a compression of Time” (Barthes 1980: 96, “una compressione del Tempo”). By showing such particular detail Renato Boccassino’s photographs in the archive offer the scholar a historiographic location of the images but, at the same time for the today’s observer, the photographs fall within a complicated temporal pattern. They are placed technologically and historically at a precise historical point in the first half of the twentieth century, but as has been already emphasized, (Ricci: 2015: 234), the camera used by Boccassino was already technologically “anachronistic” when he used it. A good many of the published photographs have been used by the author more than thirty years after their original creation for a full range of scientific projects (Boccassino, 1960, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1966, 1973) and with an “allochronic” extreme margin (Fabian 2000) due to their ethnographic use in the texts accompanying the images.

Some of photographs show the coexistence of chronologically contradictory aspects of life (a surprising car sometimes found among the village huts, “urban” clothes worn by some of the people visible in the research setting etc.), made even more so since they are not contextualized in the archaizing and unhistorical setting of the Italian ethnologist which follows the British ethnographic monograph model of the early decades of the twentieth century.

For the reasons so far exemplified here Renato Boccassino’s photographs are able to offer a “thick description” (Faeta 2015: 35-41) which helps us to understand as much the Acioli people whom he studied in the 1930s, as the ethnographer himself.

Through the choices made for the installation of the exhibition, it was possible to start a process of re-thinking of Boccassino’s ethnographic research and a reformulation of the a new and the real “archaic” temporality of the images which are a suggestive testimony of a distant past and still present in the spectacular 70x100 magnifications (photos n. 1-6). In fact, the six photographs at the beginning of the exhibition had the task of putting the visitors in touch with the Acioli world of those years with impressive force by their ability to bring out the most minute details in the images, without, if it can be said so, the use of “allochronistic tricks”.

Reflecting on the exhibition Alberto Sobrero writes:

They will not be technically perfect images but it’s just their imperfection, the residue of imperfection, which will reveal the story of what produced them, the depth of the research. It is, in fact, to take the work not as a document of the past, but as a product between past and present, in distant times which speak and correct each other. (written communication of 22/9/17).

Rendering the six images an even more poignant testimony were the listening of recordings made by Boccassino, and luckily found in the ICBSA, which were added to the exhibition. As has already been reported (Ricci 2015: 229-231) Boccassino recorded 85 wax cylinders and, to these, correspond notebooks with transcripts of songs and other oral documents. Following some unfortunate events, the recorded material suffered serious damage and seemed to be apparently lost. Recently a digitization of the cylinders which was kept at ICBSA was discovered of three documents, generally inventoried as “African

⁵ A special warm thanks to Mrs. Jackline Apio, and Mrs. Joy Muwanse together.

⁶ The three cylinders and the related result of their audio file reversals are inventoried as follows: 199956, collocation 1Y 14, duration about 3'32" (it is the one with the recording recognized as a funeral dirge); 199971, placement 1Y 28, duration about 3'17"; 199989, placement 1Y 76, duration about 1'40". Of the last two, however, the language context has been acknowledged as belonging to Acioli. I thank Luciano D'Aleo, Head of ICBSA's conservation, restoration and conservation area for his availability and information provided.

⁷ The collection is still in the process of being inventoried and therefore the possibility of choices was limited to the materials which had been already inventoried.

songs". A staff member at the Uganda Embassy in Rome⁵ was able to verify that the three cylinders contain song recordings in that language and by comparing the words acknowledged by the native interlocutor with the lyrics of the songs transcribed by Boccassino, one of the recorded texts could be safely identified as a funeral song for the death of a young woman⁶.

During the presentation of the 2015 edition of the journal "Voci" which preceded the inauguration of the exhibition the three recordings were listened to for the first time. The reactions of the audience in the room where the six great photographs were also displayed was noteworthy. Firstly was that of Maria Boccassino, who was very surprised and excited about the discovery. All were in agreement in recognizing the strong sense of identity and approach to context due to perception combined with the sounds heard in the hall and the pictures seen on the walls. The two perceptual modes enhanced each other through multi-sensory perception. In fact, the joint experience of viewing photographs and listening to sound recordings gives the user a cognitive and emotional overload that goes beyond the mere sum of the two individual experiences (Ricci 2007). The continuation of the visit benefited from this spectacular opening as a gateway leading to fully apprehending the many aspects of the ethnographic work which had been carried out more than eighty years before.

AN ETHNOGRAPHY ON DISPLAY: NOTES ON THE INSTALLATION

It is particularly important to note that the layout and archival arrangement with which the

exhibition was designed and realized were based on preliminary studies and analysis⁷. They must be taken as a starting point for the necessary work to be done which would enable a better understanding of, an until now, unknown part of the history of anthropological studies in Italy. For the exhibition a selection of twenty photographs were chosen from among the fifty-three images published in "Voci". The project, as already, has been mentioned foresaw the creation of six 70x100 cm. magnifications printed on Forex panels with rear support brackets to distance them from the wall giving them the effect of being projected. Fourteen additional magnifications of 30x40 cm. were mounted on *passe-partout* and framed. The size and dimensions of the reproductions were chosen to optimize their ability to render even the tiniest detail more readable.

From a philological point of view, probably the choice to digitize and enlarge photographic images which had been made with an apparatus and with film from more than eighty years ago⁸ to such measurements, may seem controversial; in our case, however, the choice was tied to scientific and didactic intentions which orientated the exhibition's setting and which in this situation generated positive feedback.

The very high-definition digitization process performed in the ICCD's photographic laboratory produced surprising results and enhanced the selected images above all expectations. Therefore, it was considered possible to propose an exhibition which would highlight in such a spectacular way, the technical quality and scientific precision evidenced in the resulting documentary of Renato Boccassino's photographs.

When deciding how to extrapolate the images to be enlarged to 70x100, the photographs in the corpus were individuated based on their aesthetic quality and type of subject and those which could best become single images, or even sometimes part of groups or sequences, without losing their documentary effect or distorting their ethnographic value were chosen.

If I like a picture, if it disturbs me, I'll linger over it. What do I do all the time that it is in front of me? I look at it, scrutinize it, as if wanting to know more about the thing or person it portrays (Barthes, 1980: 99)⁹.

From these words by Roland Barthes the opening section of the six giant photographs were imagined at the beginning of the exhibition: the iconographic "baggage" which would offer the viewer a significant impact, an aesthetic and emotional charge which would arouse in him this same underlying desire. At the same time, by the astonishing effect, the six great photographs could effectively deliver the density of ethnographic content and the detailed quality of their identification.

The rest of the visit is laid out as an in-depth study of the themes pertinent to ethnography and a review of the methods of collecting and organizing field research data. The 30x40 photographs were grouped in two series: the first of six images concerning the birth of twins (photos n. 7-12); the second of eight images look at ritual behaviour surrounding death (photos n. 13-20).

The given information covered an introductory presentation panel of the author and his work and smaller

⁸ A portable Ica reflex 755 camera, from approximately 1915, with Carl Zeiss Tessar fixed lens 4.5/150 mm.

⁹ English translation from the Italian edition: "Se una foto mi piace, se mi turba, io v'indugio sopra. Che cosa faccio per tutto il tempo che me ne sto davanti a lei? La guardo, la scruto, come se volessi saperne di più sulla cosa o sulla persona che essa ritrae".

descriptive panels for each image or set of images (see the captions of the photos). The choice to provide ample information, rather than synthetic captions was agreed upon by the ICCD¹⁰ workgroup in order to offer, as fully as possible, the ethnographic data contextualized for each image.

The relationship between written text, particularly the captions of ethnographic photographs, and the images themselves have been repeatedly referred to as significant elements of the importance the researcher attributed to the iconographic aspect of his ethnography, both in the context of the printed publication, and in exhibition. The multivalent nature of the photographic image has given rise to very different forms of relationship between written texts and photographic texts: for example in the works by Malinowski (Young, 1998; Ricci, 2004; Marano, 2007) by Gregory Bateson alone (Marcus, 1988: 302-303, Ricci, 2006, Marano, 2007), and with Margaret Mead (Bateson, Mead, 1942, Sullivan, 1999, Ricci, 2006, Marano, 2007) and by Ernesto de Martino (Faeta, 1999). Photographic exhibition space represents a further context within which writing and photography find a place of encounter and alliance. The captions of an exhibition, when not only brief notes on the images, should be a fruitful place of “inter-textuality” in which the different levels of documentation to which the photographs can be traced communicate. They should be kept in the heuristic context in which the author has placed them. “From the point of view of one who is engaged in a representation, the recognition of the inter-textuality becomes an indispensable moment for the consistency and richness of the representation” (Marano, 2007: 57).

Besides the archival photographic data, the original captions written by Renato Boccassino on the back of the archived prints were also added on descriptive panels; in some cases these are present in some of his articles (Boccassino, 1960, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1966, 1973). Many of which quotations have already been cited above. The writings from 1960 to 1966, all titled *Contributo allo studio dell'ergologia delle popolazioni nilotiche e nilo-camitiche*, (Contribution to the Study of the Ergology of Nilotic and Nilo-Camite Populations) are devoted to aspects of the material culture and lifestyle not only of the Acioli but also of other peoples of the same area. They include photographs taken in the field by Boccassino, as well as a lot of his other iconographic material which has been collected in museums all over Europe.

¹⁰ All work for the exhibition was accomplished with a team of workers from the Valuation Service of the Gabinetto Fotografico Nazionale in the ICCD coordinated by Maria Rosaria Palombi. The group included: Fabio Ascenzi, Massimo Cutrupi, Antonio Di Carlo, Gloria Tammeo and Stefano Valentini. Elena Berardi, who is the person in charge of the Service, offered her assistance for the use of photographic collections and catalogues always making access to the Boccassino Collection possible.

These include: weapons of war and hunting practices, architecture and constructional technologies, food preparation and household utensils, weaved plant fibers, agricultural implements for collection and transport as well as various tools (digging sticks, portable stools, etc.), ceramics, carvings and woodcarving tools, clothing and ornaments, instruments for music and dance, games, pipes, masks and funeral statues. Their reading assumes, in the intentions of the author, a dense and complex use of photographs and other iconographic materials, along with an ethnographic description for the images with “attachments”. The written text is, in fact, an explanatory medium, sometimes with limited autonomy, with respect to the iconographic text. Captions, often weighty and full of minute details, are completely subordinate to the images.

The 1973 essay titled *Il culto dei defunti praticato dagli Acioli dell'Uganda*, (The Cult of the Deceased among the Acioli of Uganda), was particularly useful for its theme which was closely related to that of the exhibition and for the presence of the wide range of its images. The essay is about one of the aspects of which Boccassino must have given a lot of attention. It also appears differently from his previous works because it concerns exclusively the Acioli and their funeral rituals¹¹, described with close attention to the personal behaviours of individual people.

As can be deduced from observation of the images and from what he writes, Boccassino directs his attention not merely to record data in a didactic and generalizing way but the elements of the rite are observed and analyzed also in the individual perspective. The singular person is portrayed as a unique individual, through the family roles, the social status and the specific ceremonial functions within which each of them is seen. While remaining anchored to the objective descriptive form of British monographs, the ethnographic narrative comes closer to its human subjects, and their individuality. Their exposure in the ethnographic record shows Boccassino's significant moments of reflexivity and his presence in the scenes of his research. The description of the funeral customs at the death of a child, taken with his camera, provides an example of the particular wealth of emotional involvement which permeates his written text:

I refer to this as I observed in Pajule in November 1933.

A child is suffering from severe head and neck pain; the parents believe that someone has poisoned him and the mother takes him to the medi-

¹¹ Particular attention to the religious aspects and the funeral practices of Acioli is already evident in the letters which were sent to Raffele Pettazzoni preceding the trip to Uganda: “I will devote particular attention to the important aspect of religion. In the end, I would like to develop a personal idea of the Supreme Being, to see its relationships with death, with the cult of the dead which is so strong among the nilotics” (Dore 2013: 181).

cine man (*ajwaka*), so that he can extract the poison; the medicine man examines the child and replies that the child has not been poisoned, but has a serious illness and prescribes that they bring him home. [...] The child dies before the mother returns to the village. They buried him by custom, outside the mother's hut, near the door. [...] The women of the family, gathered with the mother in her hut, weeping with true feeling and sincerity. A touching moment strikes me when the old grandmother, almost blind, crawling along drags herself to the tomb slowly and sits next to it to stay near to her grandchild saying the child should continue to be loved. I approach and look at her and I will never forget her and how much affection and pain there was in that grandmother's heart (Boccassino, 1973: 54).

The burial of a child who was cared for by a blind grandmother in all affairs. Boccassino must have followed the two with particular attention, as evidenced by the caption on another pair of photographs: "A grandchild who leads his almost blind grandmother to the water closet" (Boccassino, 1973: 19).

At the same time the geographical and territorial references also restore the cultural specificity of the different locations visited, highlighting the differences and similarities. Boccassino highlights his self-perception as a field researcher, as well as his role as a person who has inter-relations with other people. Motivational considerations concerning his position as personal guest in the dynamics of the social relations of the different villages which he has studied are frequent. An example is his inclusion in the sharing of the parts of a sacrificed ox at a funeral banquet, which he labels among the forms of the ritual with religious implications:

The ox is shared as follows: a) the ox owner receives the head, thigh, back leg, heart, and lungs; b) those who skin the ox, receive part of the internal organs; c) the boy who watches the livestock every day receives a thigh; d) the person who buries the deceased, the neck; e) legs and thighs are boiled for the banquet and offered to the people who have come to the funeral; a piece over the thigh (the ham) is served to the sisters of the deceased, also present at the lament; f) even those who led the ox in the village receive a piece of meat. As they divide the flesh according to custom, the leader of the ceremony, an elderly man

named Lolingamoy, also offers me, a guest of the village, a gift and says aloud: "Give a piece of meat to this white man; you see that Lubanga assists us, sending us this white man to help us!" They give me a piece of thigh and apologize for not giving me a bigger one because there are many people who attend the funeral banquet. I thank them and offer a gift of cigarettes in return which everyone accepts with pleasure. Lolingamoy's spontaneous act is in line with the Acioli's treatment of guests. [...] But Lolingamoy's gift is presented as a sudden and spontaneous expression of gratitude to Lubanga (Boccassino, 1973: 45, 50-51).

Boccassino's photographs reflect his organization of thought and communicate that thought also in the written documents, which together provide a complex representation of his ethnographic approach. With good educational and communicative results, the exhibition points faithfully to the skills and positive ways of working of this Italian ethnologist. Recalling once again the chronological distance of about forty years from the time of his work in the field to the writing of the article, a re-formulation of memory, based on a summary of those memories with the help of his field notebooks and, probably in larger measure of the photographs, comes to mind¹². Scrolling through the large half-page field notebook mentioned earlier, and checking the connections already referred to confirms the meticulous working method of its author. In fact, on these, in the two halves where the pages are divided, both contextual and contemporary references appear from the time of the work in Uganda, references from different types of documents, including photographs, as well as annotations and keys from the rereading of the same documents forty years later.

The closing section of the exhibition was devoted to the display of other documents and objects that make up the Boccassino Collection. They were chosen to exemplify and express, as completely as possible, the intricate nature of the various "media" in the collection, using dialogue in an inter-textual exhibition strategy among its various components. In two large horizontal display cases were placed the notebooks, drawings, prints, as well as two wooden storage boxes in which Boccassino kept a collection of postcards and negatives, along with a case containing the film frames and some colored filters. Separately a camera was set up upon a tripod, as if it were ready for use, although, as it is easy to deduce from the photographs, Boccassino photographed freely.

¹² As it would have happened, for example, for Malinowski (1935: 461; Wright 1994) or de Martino (Faeta, 1999).

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NOT FORGETTING WHO I AM, AND WHERE I AM GOING: INDIGENOUS AMAZONIANS NEGOTIATE IDENTITY THROUGH PARTICIPATORY PHOTOGRAPHY.

ABSTRACT

Using participatory photography, we explore ways in which indigenous, Amazonian Peruvians define and negotiate their multiple identities (as native people, Peruvians, and global citizens) with a focus on those who leave their communities to seek education in the city. We show how they maintain a foot in each world without forgetting where they are, who they are, or how to navigate obstacles to reach their goals. At times they adopted a national message of Peruvian identity, but always held firm to their identity as indigenous people who functioned as brokers between their native communities and the wider world.

KEYWORDS

Participatory Photography, Peru, Amazonian Peruvians, Peruvian Identity, Indigenous People

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INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to be an indigenous, Amazonian Peruvian today? How do indigenous Amazonians define and negotiate their multiple identities – as native people, as Peruvians, and as global citizens? These were the guiding questions behind a project that used participatory photography as a means through which to explore the self-defined identity of a group of educated indigenous Peruvians who straddle several cultural milieux.

In the international popular imaginary, Peruvian indigenous people are often associated with Andean culture, dominated by the iconic images of Macchu Picchu and other Inca sites, where proud people gloriously defended their territories against fierce Spanish Conquistadors. Yet recent census figures record 332,975 indigenous people in Peru's Amazon region, with a significant proportion belonging to the Awajún (Aguaruna) and Wampís (Huambisa) ethnic groups (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática 2008).¹ All are culturally distinct from those of Andean heritage, being categorized in the Jivaroan linguistic family (Pozzi-Escot 1998). They have a unique place in the classical anthropological literature, as well as in popular perception, in which their warrior tradition and culture have been exoticized, with particular emphasis on head-shrinking practices and use of hallucinogens (Harner 1972). Such representations have created particular challenges of identity in the contemporary world, in addition to the issues that affect other indigenous groups, primarily globalization and the invasion of their territories by modern world interests.

As Clifford (2013) writes, one of the major consequences of post-colonialism and globalization has been the struggle for rights of self-definition, as indigenous people “reach back selectively to deeply rooted, adaptive traditions: creating new pathways in a complex modernity (Clifford 2013:7).” This study contributes to an understanding of how Peruvian Amazonians articulate this struggle for what it means to be indigenous today, expressed through creation of images intended to represent the various forms of identity they negotiate daily. As defined by Woodward (1997), “Identity gives us an idea of who we are and of how we relate to others and to the world in which we live. Identity marks the ways in which we are the same as others who share that position, and the ways in which we are different from those who do not” (Woodward 1997:1-2). For indigenous Amazonians, these questions of “who we are” in particular cultural circumstances, become especially pressing when they leave

¹ Aguaruna and Huambisa are the Spanish names used by mestizos (i.e., Peruvians of mixed descent) to identify the Awajún and Wampís, respectively. Our Wampís and Awajún participants agree that their cultures are similar and their languages are mutually intelligible. Many agree that the Ecuadorean Shuar and the Peruvian Wampís are exactly the same group of people, separated only by national territorial borderlines. For this reason, some participants call themselves Shuar rather than Wampís. Census figures refer to the 2007 census (published in 2008); recent 2017 figures have not yet been published.

their more homogeneous natal communities and move into an urban context where national and international values may compete with the local Amazonian traditions they left behind.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

In order to interpret the specific findings from the photography project, some context is needed. This research took place against a backdrop of heightened tension between Amazonian indigenous people and the Peruvian government, sparked by government actions and policies that involved their ancestral territories – and by extension, competing definitions of indigenous identity and rights. Some governmental decrees were intended to dismantle the distinctive communal property regime of indigenous communities in order to make these lands appealing for global private investment like logging, mining, and oil. (Renique 2009). This tension peaked in 2008, when two presidential decrees sent to Congress led to angry rallies and road blockades organized by the Peruvian pan-Amazonian indigenous organization – *Asociación Interétnica de Desarrollo de La Selva Peruana*, or AIDSEP (Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Rainforest). In particular, indigenous people objected to Law 1090, *La Ley Forestal* or the Forestal Law (El Comercio 2009a:A6), which was perceived as turning over the Amazon and its wood to private corporations for commercial exploitation (El Comercio 2009b:A2). On June 5, 2009, indigenous demonstrators blocked a road called *la Curva del Diablo* (Devil's Bend) in the Amazonian town of Bagua. Police opened fire on Awajún/Wampís armed with machetes and spears, and 35 people died, including 24 mestizo police officers and 10 indigenous people (El Comercio 2009c:A2). One police officer disappeared (El Comercio 2010:A10) (El Comercio 2010:A10) (El Comercio 2010:A10); a year later, a cell-phone photo appeared in newspapers across Perú, showing a mob of young indigenous protesters with spears in their hands parading the bloodied police officer, while defiantly performing victory gestures for the camera (El Comercio 2010:A10). Extensive media coverage of Devil's Bend, both at the time and when the photo surfaced, confirmed public perceptions of indigenous savagery, while obscuring the larger question of indigenous rights. The Peruvian President at the time, Alan Garcia Perez, suggested the Awajún and Wampís were “not even first-class citizens,” and that they “do not have the right to say, do not come to our land, to

28 million Peruvians,” (The Real Avatar 2011) remarks that were seen as particularly provocative.

Meanwhile, even as the protests and deaths were happening, new government actions and policies were underway that were designed to create a more inclusive Peruvian identity. The year 2008 saw the publication of the *Diseño Curricular Nacional de Educación Básica Regular* (National Curriculum Design for Basic Regular Education), specifying 11 objectives through to 2021. These included the growth of a personal, social, and cultural identity for a democratic, intercultural, and ethical society in Perú; the mastering of Castilian Spanish to promote communication among all Peruvians; the preservation and promotion of native languages; the knowledge of English as an international language in the framework of globalization; and the mastering of information technologies to promote autonomous learning (Ministerio de Educacion 2008:21-30). These policies led quickly to the expansion of communication technologies throughout the country, one of which aimed to provide almost 4,000 isolated communities with telecommunications infrastructure and services (Luna 2010:A12). Within this set of policies, we see the tensions that were articulated by participants in our project – the explicit goal of creating national identity, with expansion of opportunities to all, while also affirming the value of indigenous culture, raising questions about how comfortably these goals can be accommodated. This period was thus one of rapid change that was inevitably affecting the values, ideologies, and culture of indigenous people – most particularly the young urban Amazonians and other older, college-educated leaders who had left the village to participate in an increasingly global environment as university students or professionals, while maintaining an acute awareness of the Devil’s Bend confrontation (sometimes known as the Bagua Massacre) and the larger issues it symbolized.

ESTABLISHING THE ETHNOGRAPHER’S EYE

In this study, we used participant-generated photography as a way to work alongside indigenous Amazonian Peruvians as they explored their sense of themselves as simultaneously indigenous, Peruvian, and global citizens. Our research participants were either preparing to study at the *Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos* (San Marcos Major National University), were already studying there, had graduated from the university and were pursuing a graduate degree (in San Marcos or elsewhere), while two were older leaders with college education.

The decision to use visual methods grew from Villamar's experience as a teacher of English, as well as his earlier research in the Amazon. Furthermore, his own identity also played into the motivations for this research -- born and raised in the city of Lima, he considers himself an Amazonian mestizo, and maintains traditions passed down through his father, such as drinking *ayahuasca* to heal and cleanse the body (Dobkin de Rios 1970). And thus a note on reflexivity is in order. As Sarah Pink notes, "reflexivity should be integrated into processes of fieldwork ... in ways that do not simply explain the researcher's approach but reveal the very processes by which the positioning of researcher and informant were constituted ..." (2003:187). As an English teacher in 2010-11, Villamar came to know his students both in the classroom and in the district where many of them lived. Many were interested in learning English in order to apply to scholarship programs in the United States or Europe. The classes were approved by AIDSEP, which often functioned as the first contact point for many Amazonians who came to Lima. People in this situation live in a complex world in which they are in close contact with nature and tradition, and also with modern global languages and technologies. They speak two or three languages, as part of ancient neighboring traditions and also a modern nation-state. They plant yucca in their gardens and grow up eating what they harvest and the game their parents obtain from their ecosystems, but later on in life -- even in their Amazonian communities -- spend sweaty afternoons chatting online in a hot, non-air-conditioned Internet café for S/1.00 (\$0.40) an hour.

A few years earlier, Villamar had conducted research in indigenous Amazonian communities (Villamar 1997). Two observations, experienced during these two phases of his life, became landmarks on a path toward the use of participatory visual methods, guiding the way to establishing a particular "ethnographer's eye" (Grimshaw 2001). First, in an uncomfortable encounter with local elders of an Awajún village, he was initially denied access during his early attempts to do fieldwork. After presenting his plans, he was rejected with an emphatic explanation by the elders of the community: "you anthropologists come and go, watch us like animals in a zoo, make money out of it, and we never see any changes in our communities" (Villamar 1997:79). He learned that, notwithstanding his personal sense of Amazonian identity, he was seen as just another exploitive outsider. As it turned out, the elders reconsidered their decision once Villamar used his

camera to take pictures of village families at their request, and then returned them as gifts. He began to think about the power of photos as ways to connect with people. A second insight came later, when teaching English in the city, he noticed how oral proficiency in the language improved during assessment when students were encouraged to describe people and places in photos they had taken. In both these contexts, the relationship shifted from a reliance on textual methods of “data” collection by an “inquisitor,” to a more natural dialogue between equals. Indeed, as Gubrium and Harper (2013) note, “participatory visual and digital methods are unusually effective in opening up the research process to collaboration” (Gubrium and Harper 2013:43). In particular, Villamar noted in these conversations the complexity of life for the indigenous, mostly male young people who had left the village to obtain higher education and learn English, while also planning (and being expected) to return to their homes and provide leadership. This also connected with his observations in the earlier work in the Amazon, where at annual meetings of Awajún and Wampis *Apus* (Chiefs), he had noticed how when discussions centered on incursions into ancestral territories by the mestizo or multinational corporations, younger and college-educated *Apus* were the most emphatic guardians of their ancestral land. For some time, there had been heated debates in indigenous areas about such incursions, college-bound people, were often seen as key resources to be nurtured in the struggle against outside interference, being put into the position of becoming cultural brokers and intermediaries. This sense of “being in two worlds” was reflected in the photo-inspired discussions in English classes, and this laid the groundwork for a more formal research project employing visual approaches to explore this issue.

In developing the parameters of the study, we found the concept of “adaptive agency” useful. As Kottak and Kozaitis (2012) describe this, people use such agency “reinterpret and tailor global cultural influences to maximize meaningful ways of life at the local level” (Kottak and Kozaitis 2012:299). An example of such adaptive agency would be the use of computer technology and the Internet by indigenous villagers to create official community documents and send them to government agencies. Some research exists on adaptive agency among the Andean Aymara in Lima (Suxo Yapuchura 2007; Suxo Yapuchura 2008), and there is important work by de la Cadena (2000) and Garcia (2005), on the role of educated and technologically-literate Quechua as local leaders.

Little research has been done on comparable issues faced by Amazonians, and almost none on those faced by members of the Jivaroan linguistic family. Most relevant in both theoretical framework and methodology is the work of Morelli (2017) with Matsés² children still living in ancestral villages. Her research, in which she used participant-driven photography, offers some useful parallels, especially in relation to generational differences in identity resulting from major social changes. Morelli shows how Matsés children “are not merely caught up in these ongoing changes but are actively responding to, engaging with, and negotiating them, and in doing so shaping the possibilities of a future that remains undefined” (Morelli 2017:138). In her work, Morelli, who explores the lives of children still living in ancestral villages, points to the value of visual approaches in exploring questions of changing indigenous identity.

WHY PHOTOGRAPHY?

Participatory photography stresses the “active role of participants in the generation and interpretation of photos and understands it as a research method that hands over the cameras to people—individuals or groups—for the purpose of eliciting information to inform a research project and stimulate self-reflection and interactions with others” (Gotschi, et al. 2009:293). This approach is, of course, part of a broader rejection in anthropology of the notion that “ethnography can or should be objective or scientific or that the ethnography represents expert knowledge that clearly distinguishes the author from those depicted” (Harper 2012:51). In visual anthropology in particular, it is a reaction to the appropriation of images of “exotic” people, with little or no regard for the rights or interests of those people, as reflected in Awa-jún responses to Villamar’s first foray into the field. The Amazon region has long been a focus for critiques of the visual appropriation of indigenous culture; the famous Yanomami films of Napoleon Chagnon and Timothy Asch have been blamed for perpetuating stereotypes of hallucinogenic-loving, wife-beating, blood-thirsty indigenous Amazonians. There could be no better illustration of the eroded trust between Amazonians and anthropologists than the initial scene of a well-known documentary by Jose Padilha “Secrets of the Tribe” (2010), showing a Yanomami elder shouting at the camera in anger, “Look, here they are taking my picture again. Rather than taking my picture again you should be ignorant of us. But here you are taking my picture again. I say this because

² The Matsés, or Mayoruna, are indigenous to the Peruvian and Brazilian Amazon; their language belongs to the Panoan language family.

you Nabäs are always such liars. I don't like to believe anything you say because you always lie" (Padilha, et al. 2010).

Thus for good reason, the Awajún/Wampís have historically been suspicious of photography. Jivaroan people's story of contact with outsiders dates back to the first attempts made by the Inca, and then the Conquistadors to subdue them (Harner 1972; Regan 1993). Later Catholic and Protestant missionaries' more successful incursions into their territory (Larson and Davis 1981), and the current wave of official and NGO incursions of today (Garcia 2005), have produced negative reaction toward visitors who come, equipped with cameras and notepads, to ask questions about their lives and customs. This project, then, emerged from a conscious rejection of the academic observer's "gaze" (Trouillot 2003:104), aiming to take a more reciprocal stance, in which the creativity of the participants would drive the research with participants themselves able to have "greater reflection and thoughtful ways to communicate their own meanings and understanding" (Holgate, et al. 2012:314). Most important in the utilization of participatory photography was the fact that it allowed for a change in the power dynamics during the research process. The power differentials were decreased and participants were able to actually teach the researcher (Holgate, et al. 2012; Lorenz and Kolb 2009) about their lives. Participant photography seeks to break down understandable suspicion by providing people with a way to frame the research themselves, both creating and interpreting their images. As Wilder notes, "The act of taking a photograph is an opening for communication; the camera becomes a channel for the exchange, an excuse for two people to enter a dialogue" (Wilder 2009:35). Indeed, such participatory photo methods are often not primarily about the content of images, but about that communication, and the insights it brings. In describing the power of "photo elicitation" methods, Douglas Harper argues that this approach breaks the conventional frame of the interview, and produces different information; "when two or more people discuss the meaning of photographs they try to figure out something together" (Harper 2002:23).

Much has been written about participatory photo methods, which have been used in anthropology since the early work of John and Malcolm Collier, although in recent years the focus has often been on Photovoice, a specific variety of the approach, developed by Wang and colleagues. Our research was not truly a Photovoice project,

since it was not aimed primarily at “changing policy,” and it did not employ framing topics generated entirely by participants (Wang 1999:188). Nonetheless, the framing questions were not “top-down,” in that they had actually emerged from the deep level of familiarity gained by Villamar in his previous work with indigenous people, as he realized how central the issues of multiple identity were in their lives. And although the explicitly Freirian goal of consciousness-raising in order to effect change was not primary, one important goal was to make participants aware of the potential this approach could have to affect their lives (Wang, et al. 2004). For instance, issues generated during the interviews could provide arguments to make to educational policymakers aware of the need to be more responsive to local concerns, or the experience could encourage participants to find ways to present their own insights in other forums (which some subsequently did, as we shall see).

Thus this work, although inspired by Photovoice, is guided more by anthropological and sociological approaches such as those used by Clark-Ibanez (2004), or Oliffe and Bottorff (2007), who researched the experiences of urban children and men living with prostate cancer, respectively. For each of these authors, as for Harper and Wilder, photos create the opening for a conversation, allowing participants to act “as curators, with a share in the representation of their own lives” (Wilder 2009:35). As Oliffe and Bottorff (2007), note, “the data collected, as well as the subsequent analysis, were grounded in what participants chose to share rather than being based entirely on responses to predetermined interview questions” (Oliffe and Bottorff 2007:853). Such approaches may be especially useful when working with indigenous people, as Castleden and her colleagues (2008) note. They argue that participants might not always be fluent in the dominant language and culture, and may feel more comfortable with oral and visual forms of communication, even if participants are quite acculturated.

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Thus the research began, not with definitive hypotheses of what might emerge, but rather with an open-ended curiosity about how participants might represent and then interpret their own senses of identity. With the assistance of a former AIDSEP indigenous employee and three key indigenous consultants, and drawing from the first author’s existing network, 20 participants (16 male and four female) were selected from about 40 students

and leaders in Lima,³ using a snowball sampling approach. Although the initial intent was to confine the study to current students, we included some older, college-educated individuals who were essentially already in the roles to which students were aspiring, since they expressed a wish to participate. Thus the ages of participants ranged from 18 to 50.

In the first stage of the study, participants met the researcher in groups, when the nature of the research was explained. Those willing to participate signed consent documents and agreed to spend a week taking photos, before meeting with the researcher for an individual photo-elicitation interview. They were modestly compensated with payment amounting to about \$35.00, plus bus fare and snacks as needed. Seven Vivitar Vivicam 5.1 and 7.1 MP digital cameras were used, for their low cost and availability, and because they facilitate the downloading and quick management of photos and images. To make the process manageable, the participants were placed in three groups, two of seven and one of six. During an initial session with each group, technical instructions on the use of the cameras were given, along with a discussion of issues of power and ethics (Castleden, et al. 2008), and a list of three broad framing topics was distributed. The topics (originally stated in Spanish) were: (1) Please, take pictures that capture, illustrate, or represent what it means to you to be Awajún/Wampís; (2) Please, take pictures that capture, illustrate, or represent what it means to you to be Peruvian, and (3) Please, take pictures that capture, illustrate, or represent local (Awajún/Wampís or mestizo) and outside (national or international) influences that you had growing up in your community and your school, and those you have now living in Lima (or any other urban area).

The groups worked sequentially; when the first group returned the cameras after a week and began the interpretive process, the next group received the cameras. During the interviews that followed the photography exercise, flexibility was maintained; participants interpreted these frames in many ways and were allowed to guide the conversations, and more themes inevitably emerged. Interpretation of the images followed a protocol based on Photovoice approaches, starting with selection, in which the participants choose those that best matched their concerns, followed by contextualization, in which participants discuss the images, and codifying, in which themes are identified (Freire 2003). The three stages take place in a participatory manner, aiming to engage participants

³ The gender imbalance accurately reflects the fact that young men are much more likely to come to Lima for further education.

in conversations. All interviews were digitally recorded (audio) to ensure accuracy. As facilitator, the first author tried to maintain input at a minimum, to allow participants to produce knowledge that was significant to them with little direction, other than the initial framing topics. Villamar is a native Spanish speaker, and the interviews were all conducted in that language; all participants knew enough Spanish to be able to pursue a technical certificate or university degree in Lima. As John Collier wrote long ago when defining photo-based research, “no type of fieldwork requires better rapport” (Collier 1967:51); Villamar had known some of the Awajun participants for years, which was important in establishing rapport with all of those included.

Participants were asked to select five photos for each of the three framing topics. At the end of the research period, we collected 240 photographs without captions and 105 photographs with captions for a total of 345 photographs. All photos were taken by participants, who had signed informed consent documents; anyone else shown in the photos also signed release documents. Two photos used here were actually images taken of existing photos owned by participants, which included children; in these cases, faces are blurred to protect anonymity.

As part of the interpretive process, we used PhotoScape, an open-source software program with simple features that were useful (PhotoScape N.d.). It allowed participants to bring up a photo from a folder containing their images, group them up by topic and discuss them. During the final stage of the interview, participants were asked to choose five of their images and write captions, using the Photoscape program. The interviews took from 90 minutes to two hours. All the participants knew how to use computers, regularly using email and messenger apps to communicate with family and friends in the Amazon. The technical quality of the photos varies considerably; some are out of focus, poorly framed, or otherwise lacking. However, it was clear that participants chose them for their meaning, rather than for aesthetics.

Initially, we had planned to conduct focus groups, in which participants would come up with themes based on the visual text they produced – an approach that is more in tune with established participatory visual methodologies (Wang, et al. 2004; Wang, et al. 1996). However, Awajun consultants urged against this because of the political turmoil caused by the Bagua Massacre incident, suggesting that the incident was so polarizing that it would inevitably come up, and would create ten-

sion and animosity between those with different political views, The individual sessions, using Photoscape, were used instead, and were found to be effective.

NEGOTIATING INDIGENOUS IDENTITY

One of the strengths of photo-based research is also one of its challenges – the data in the form of images is so rich that choosing representative photos is difficult. After careful consultation, we agreed that the images presented here, together with the conversations around them, are among the most effective in speaking to the issues of negotiated identity. In some cases, we present several images together in the form of a collage, underlining the point that common themes emerged in the photos chosen by participants. While the participants were guided by the framing questions, they also shared a sense of independence and control over the conversations (Holgate, et al. 2012), sometimes addressing many topics in both photography and conversation, which enriched the interviews. It became apparent that the three levels of identity suggested in the questions – indigenous, national, and global, were not viewed as distinct by participants, but rather as constantly intertwining and related, and thus we do not treat them as distinctly separate themes in this analysis. For instance, several participants spoke to the issue of their identity as Peruvians, while also being Awa-jún. Juan Pablo, 19, took a picture of a poster on his wall, showing a map of Perú, filled in with the colors and symbols of the national flag (FIGURE 1).



FIGURE 1: JUAN PABLO'S IMAGE OF A POSTER OF THE PERUVIAN FLAG: "WE SHOULDN'T USE ANOTHER FLAG."

He commented that it “represents our flag, our country. We, as Peruvians ...shouldn’t use another flag. It ...represents our national symbol.”⁴ Juan Pablo was very aware of the national glorification of the ancient Inca and Andean past, mentioning the importance of encouraging tourists to come to Macchu Piccu; he also photographed a postcard of the iconic site. Essentially, he accepted the importance of symbols that represented national identity, even if they did not represent his own indigeneity. This did not mean he rejected his indigenous identity; he knew his father was a mestizo from Lima, but he always described himself as an Awajún who did not speak much Spanish, but wanted to learn and be able to study at the university. He said he dreamed of walking in his graduation wearing a traditional headdress and apron, to be respected and admired by his people.

FIGURE 2. TOMÁS’S MORE CRITICAL VIEW OF PERUVIAN MULTICULTURAL IDENTITY: “A SINGLE TEXTBOOK FOR EVERYBODY... MEANING THAT AN INDIGENOUS STUDENT KNOWS MORE ABOUT A POLAR BEAR THAN ABOUT HIS LOCAL GALLITO DE ROCA.”



Tomás, 24, an Awajún law student, presented a different and perhaps more critical notion of national identity. He took a photo of an image showing many children dressed in traditional Peruvian costumes from different regions of the country (FIGURE 2). He remarked,

As I say here, we only utilize this for touristic objectives, to make money... politics. For instance...let’s talk about law... it’s pluriethnic... diversity and all that. The question is... under that framework, what is the educational policy for the indigenous peoples? Are there textbooks for the indigenous peoples? There aren’t. Now, the constitution in some way includes that under the principle of universality, right?...A single textbook for everybody...meaning that an indigenous student knows more about a polar bear than about his local *gallito de roca* (local bird)...makes me uncomfortable...annoys me...

Tomás points clearly here to the dilemma of maintaining indigeneity in a nation trying to create a national, if pluralistic identity – simultaneously trying to value lo-

⁴ All interview comments and participant-generated captions were translated from the Spanish by the first author; all names are pseudonyms.

cal knowledge and literacy as well as creating common national and global literacy. The multi-faceted nature of identity was illustrated through the pictures participants took of themselves as Awajún or Wampís individuals, and the value they placed on their cultural artifacts and activities, as they try to practice their culture in a hostile mestizo world.

The traditional *corona* (headdress), is an especially important symbol, and many participants took photos of it, either as an artifact or as worn (FIGURE 3).



In the first photo in this collage [1], Socorro, 25, a linguist, explained the image of her family member who posed for the picture as “an Awajún student who identifies himself with his culture by dressing in typical attire, and showing that [they] can be intellectuals like any other person from any other culture without forgetting [their] language or culture.” Patricio, 51, a well-respected *apu* (chief) leader, and former psychology major, explained the picture he took of himself [2]: “the utilization of some cultural elements like the headdress and other things, makes people understand the genuine expression of the practices of the Wampís.” Perhaps related to his age and seniority, Patricio was especially emphatic about the need to consciously practice key elements of his culture, “Including... customs, language, songs, typical... Expressing the feelings and emotions as they are... writing or dancing or singing... utilizing typical attires.” Patricio clearly believes indigenous people need to *do* in order to exist. His narrative, like that of many participants, is one of awareness and action, of combining literacies of the mestizo with those of the Awajún and Wampís. Juan Pablo, 19, took a picture of a computer screen after he looked up images of Awajún warriors; as noted above, he had mentioned his dream of graduating dressed as an Awajún.

His picture [3] has a caption: “It is important because

FIGURE 3. COLLAGE OF IMAGES THROUGH WHICH STUDY PARTICIPANTS USED TRADITIONAL SYMBOLS TO DISCUSS INDIGENOUS IDENTITY.

FIGURE 4. FRANCISCO'S PHOTOGRAPH OF BOWLS USED TO DRINK MASATO. HIS CAPTION READS: "WE CANNOT FORGET WHAT WE WERE TAUGHT, AND WE CONTINUE TRANSMITTING KNOWLEDGE FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION SO THAT GLOBALIZATION CAN ONLY EXIST FOR US TO COMPLEMENT WHAT WE KNOW, AND NOT TO FORGET OUR CULTURE."



it represents what it is to be an Awajún, and this could be used in an official meeting, performing activities as an Awajún."

In our study, participants consistently pointed to specific cultural symbols as representative of a fluid Awajún or Wampís identity. Artifacts and traditions summon memories of family and ethnic identities (Pahl and Rowsell 2005); participants engage in a "deployment of indigenous symbols" (Conklin and Graham 1995:700-706), when they use their photos of *coronas* and other items to represent their indigenous lives. Notably, the participants consistently used the verb *practice* (Spanish, *practicar*) when commenting on cultural activities; they believe symbols must be used in order to remain vital. Francisco, 28, a law and political science student, expressed this in the picture he took of *masato* (manioc beer) bowls that he had at home (FIGURE 4). His photo shows only one bowl of certain Awajún origin (at left). The others are of different, but Amazonian origin; his intent was to show the importance he places on *masato* drinking as a practice, and the variety of different bowls (representing different Amazonian groups) available to carry on that tradition.

Since the research took place in the city, participants often represented themselves in city clothes, performing their daily tasks; in their conversations they talked about who they are, what they do, and the importance of education, especially in order to help their community in the future, showing how their indigenous identity is never absent. Many photographs are related to study, work, or daily activities in or for the mestizo world. For instance, traveling by bus is something most participants did not enjoy, particularly when they first arrived, as it took time to get used to being squeezed in and out of the minibuses and living with so many people around them. Many participants took pictures of the public transportation services (FIGURE 5).



Photos also captured the images of the newsstands or kiosks they encounter daily. Conversations on these pointed to their strong desire to be informed of what is going on in the nation, coupled with their lack of money to buy the paper; they stand by the newsstand, reading the news before taking the bus (FIGURE 6.)

Conversations about daily activities also delved into participants' distrustful relationships with the *apách[i]* or mestizo -- the customs they acquire from them, the way they feel accepted while working as professionals or educated people in the current job market, or rejected when they are not treated with honesty and respect, or have no jobs. Many expressed the need to be very careful during daily interaction, including during their conversation with their mestizo interviewer (the first author), even while acknowledging the trust that had been established. Law student Francisco epitomizes the tensions; he maintains a good relationship with some mestizo and foreign

FIGURE 5. FRANCISCO (TOP LEFT) IN HIS DAILY COMMUTE TO THE UNIVERSITY. HORTENCIA'S PHOTOGRAPH OF HER DAILY BUS TO WORK (TOP RIGHT), AND SALVADOR'S IMAGES CAPTURING THE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE VIEWS OF THE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM (BOTTOM LEFT & RIGHT).

individuals, but believes trust is only possible when the mestizo help members of the indigenous communities, not when they ask for things in return or land privileges for exploitation. One unavoidable topic was the 2009 Bagua incident, seen as resulting from government plans to give away indigenous land to multinational corporations. Few photos were taken that directly referenced Bagua (unless taken of news articles or computer screens), but all the participants mentioned it and the unfortunate comments of the President, and it was clear that accounts of indigenous/mestizo interaction were colored by the post-Bagua environment.

COMMUNAL VALUES

Some Amazonian migrants gain a great sense of accomplishment when they acquire jobs in organizations or government agencies that deal with their region's issues. (FIGURE 7). They are working and making money to contribute to their families, and they also are able to go back to their own communities to do training sessions or assessments, as these are among their main responsibilities. Clearly this offers a sense of belonging to both the Peruvian nation and their own communities. Locally, feelings of respect and admiration come if benefits are felt by community members. Pilar, 26, and Benedicto, 38, showed photos of themselves arriving in their villages to do training sessions; Pilar, at the time the picture was taken, worked for a faith-based research-oriented organization, and Benedicto works for a branch of the government. Again, the Bagua massacre was often referenced as a catalyst in their desire to give back. Participants all emphasized values of collaboration and looking for the common good, which they learned from their families and communities. At the same time they understood that they had to accomplish individualistic goals in their education in order to help; the knowledge they gained (or

FIGURE 6. PHOTOGRAPHS OF NEWSSTANDS USED BY PARTICIPANTS TO READ THE NEWS WITHOUT BUYING THE PAPER IN LIMA TAKEN BY ANDRÉS (LEFT), JUAN ANTONIO (MIDDLE), AND SALVADOR (RIGHT).



plan to gain), is a Western instrument to be utilized for community benefits. Toribio, 23, preparing to apply to the university, dreams about finishing his studies to be able to contribute back home in Santa Maria de Nieva. Even though he has been away for a while and does not remember much of the language, he says, “no, it doesn’t matter...I always think of myself as an Awajún...in a few years, maybe I finish my studies and I can work ...for my people.” Leonidas Rogerio, 24, a linguistics graduate student, took a photo of a picture he had from back home, explaining his communal values in his caption (FIGURE 8). While emphasizing the communal, Leonidas Rogerio also characterized himself as a Peruvian, who actively adapts and accepts what the mestizo world has to offer. Thus he took a picture of himself, to represent himself as an Awajún, but also the importance of mestizo tools (i.e., his glasses), without which he could not do anything due to his near-sightedness (FIGURE 9).



FIGURE 7. PHOTOGRAPHS OF PILAR ON A PEQUE PEQUE (LEFT), AND BENEDICTO HOLDING A MAP (RIGHT) IN THEIR NATIVE COMMUNITIES OF THE MARAÑON.



FIGURE 8. LEONIDAS ROGERIO'S PICTURE OF A PHOTO HE ALREADY HAD, ILLUSTRATING THE COMMUNAL NATURE OF LOCAL LIFE: "BUILDING A HOUSE. IT SHOWS THE AWAJÚN'S UNITY IN POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ASPECTS."



FIGURE 9. LEONIDAS ROGERIO'S PHOTOGRAPH OF HIMSELF: "IT REPRESENTS THE YOUNG AWAJÚN STUDENT, BUT IN THE CITY, WHO ACQUIRES CITY ARTIFACTS, AND THAT MEANS THAT THE MESTIZO GIVES SOLUTIONS TO THE AWAJÚN PROBLEMS."

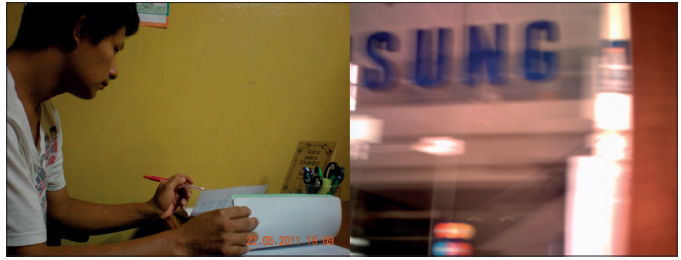


FIGURE 10. MANUEL OCTAVIO'S PHOTOGRAPH (LEFT) OF HIMSELF: "STUDYING TO IMPROVE OUR LIVES AND HELP OUT." JOSÉ PHOTOGRAPHED AN ELECTRONICS STORE IN LIMA (RIGHT): "DO PROFITABLE ACTIVITIES THAT BENEFIT OUR PEOPLE. ENTREPRENEURS PREFER TO INVEST LITTLE AND MAKE EXCESSIVE PROFITS, CARING LITTLE FOR HOW MUCH HARM THEY CAUSE."

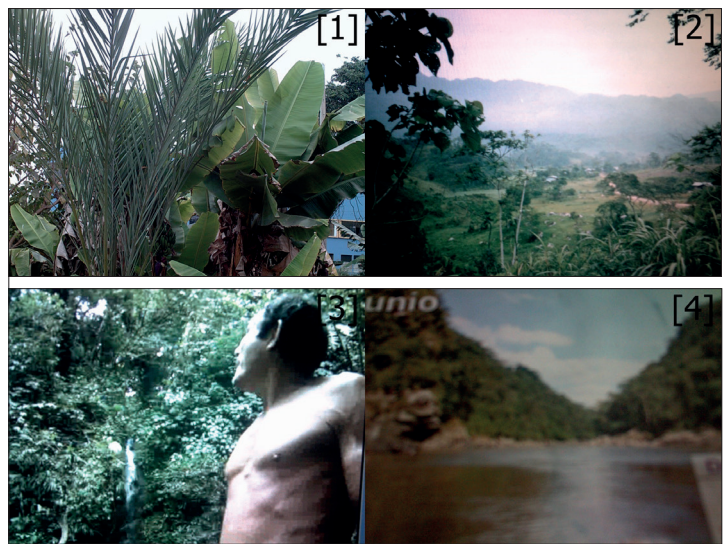
Several others took photos that also address the need to carefully and selectively adopt new practices that in turn may be used to improve lives back home. Electronic engineering major Manuel Octavio, 22, for example, wanted to finish his studies, then go back and support community projects where he could apply his skills (FIGURE 10, left) while business major José references his knowledge of the competitive corporate world, stating the need to care collaboratively instead of just thinking about money (FIGURE 10, right). Others, like Benedicto, 38, an environmental engineer with a Master's degree, are already applying their knowledge in the local communities. Benedicto's photo (FIGURE 11) shows a trip in which he and other professionals were training local people to combine traditional collaborative organizational practices with mestizo methodologies and strategies. Salvador, 28, a graduate student in political science, argues that Awajún and Wampís have much to contribute not only to their own people, but to the nation as a whole, referencing the injustice of the president's remarks about them:

...Years ago, when we had the Cenepa conflict with Ecuador...it was the people of the area over there who went to...to defend, right?... Those things many people forget...and they use adjectives, those about being a second class citizen, right?

Ignacio, 28, talked about Alan Garcia's comments in the context of how other countries might believe the president, and conclude that the Awajún and Wampís are ignorant of the modern world:

Why do they say..."your country is...poor, right? And in your...eh...rainforest, they are illiterate... The president who does not worry about it...isn't he embarrassed...because other countries might think about us that way, and when they ask him...? "You know that you do not support your rainforest, but why? ... He probably responds, "No, because I am of first level..."

FIGURE 12. PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY PARTICIPANTS TO EXPRESS THE IMPORTANCE THE RAINFOREST HAS FOR THEM.



know how to use it, right? All of them...they come, take, and after that what happens? ...polluting rivers...the land...the plants...

Domínico also took a picture (FIGURE 13) of a niece and her Amazonian pet parrot, symbolizing the importance of nature, not only as a resource, but as a source of spiritual happiness. Domínico shared the view of most participants, arguing that incursions by strangers are the main cause of degradation of the natural environment. Unlike some others, Manuel Octavio, 22, a computer technician and electronic engineering major, thought about solutions to environmental problems:

Basically, the rainforest, nature...there is too much pollution in the world that affects our Amazon rainforest...and consequently our planet, right? And we must do something about it...and we, the Shuar who live there...because they are already practically destroying it all ... the logging ... and agriculture, cattle ranching and different things, right? ...We must protect our rainforest and... in my family, we're going to buy land ...in our village, right? Take care of a large area, right? In order to protect it...

Like Manuel Octavio, many study participants continue to value nature in their daily lives in Lima, taking photos of city scenarios including water or trees, using them to describe their distant, beloved Amazonian rainforest (FIGURE 14), and explaining how human life depends on water, plants, and nature. As Brown (1985) notes, the

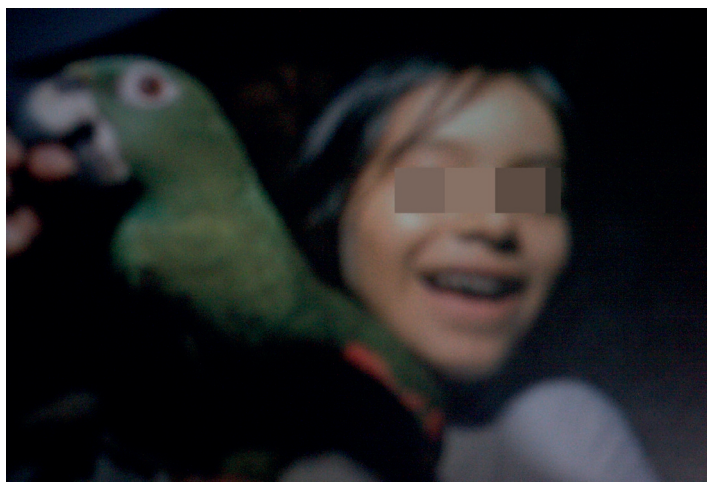


FIGURE 13. DOMÍNICO'S PHOTOGRAPH OF HIS NIECE HOLDING HER PET PARROT: "LIVING WITH OUR NATURE MAKES US FEEL GOOD."

Awajún consider their gardens, forests and water sources not only as productive resources, but also as "a spiritually charged realm that possesses dangers to the unwary or imprudent" (Brown 1985:97). Gardens are symbolic spaces where most of the participants were raised. Chaotic life in Lima, and lack of care with parks, plants, or a river, is opposed to their belief system, and upsets them.

GLOBAL IDENTITIES

Even these "natural" spaces, where the participants' families still live, such as the communities of the Marañón, Cenepa, and Santiago rivers, are increasingly influenced by globalization, and this theme was often illustrated in their visual and linguistic narratives. Participants maintained a strong link between language and culture, but also allowed room to open up additional spaces of dialogue by acquiring new linguistic skills, as long as their local languages and customs were left untouched. They acknowledged the discrimination that exists in Perú against anyone speaking languages other than Castilian Spanish. Salvador's opinion was typical:

In Lima is...you have to speak Spanish...very well... and if you do it badly...it is a synonym of...mockery, right? So, I could not take a picture of something like that because I cannot capture it, but it is an issue that...that happens here a lot. Or the fact that...that you come from somewhere else, right? They tell you...you are from an indigenous Amazonian tribe...or Andean...hey, you study? ...They first get shocked, but later as if it were a symbol of...of mockery, right? ... We have to change that.



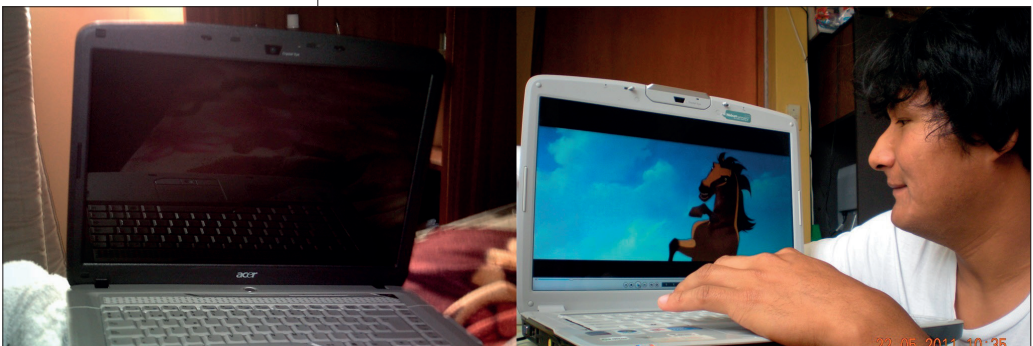
FIGURE 14. JUAN PABLO CAPTIONED HIS PICTURE OF TREES IN A LIMA PARK (LEFT): “JUST THE SAME, THE LANDSCAPE IS IMPORTANT, AND IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO TAKE CARE OF IT.” DOMÍNICO (RIGHT) TOOK A PICTURE OF A MAN WATERING PLANTS IN LIMA TO DEFINE WORK, FRAMING IT IN RELATION TO NATURE (GARDENING): “WORK IS BASIC, WE DEPEND ON IT.”

Kottak and Kozaitis (2012) concept of adaptive agency is helpful in showing how these indigenous participants tailor global tools and influences to make them fit and have significance at the local level. Just as they embrace useful technology, they understand the need to learn Spanish in order to study or work in Lima, while English or another language will be needed to apply to scholarships abroad or communicate with international institutions that could help local Amazonian communities. Thus Salvador speaks about the uses of other languages, when talking about a photograph he would have liked to take, but could not:

An... indigenous... leader maybe... who... knows how to speak English too, right? Not necessarily perfectly...but those who know how to speak it, right? And who somehow have been able to express ...the needs of their people...with other people, right?

In terms of global technologies, many photos represented computers, cell phones, and the Internet. Socorro, 25, took the picture of her laptop, and her caption (FIGURE 15, left) reads, “Now, we the Awajún should know how to use these devices in order to utilize them in favor of our communities.”

FIGURE 15. SOCORRO'S PHOTOGRAPH OF HER LAPTOP (LEFT), AND JUAN ANTONIO'S IMAGE OF HIMSELF WITH HIS NETBOOK (RIGHT) SUMMARIZE MANY PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS ABOUT APPLYING MODERN TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF INDIGENOUS AMAZONIANS.



Juan Antonio, 30, an anthropology student, wrote: “Access to information, communication and education,” and he shows a small netbook playing the movie *Spirit* (FIGURE 15, right). Others made similar comments, noting that resources available in the city are now also accessible in the Amazon. In the Marañon, the digital creativity common in more urban areas is steadily growing, as young people create music blogs, post YouTube videos of their *cumbia* bands performing, and make video clips to share.

Juan Antonio, 30, verbally and visually articulated the message about his agency in being educated, communicating globally, yet maintaining his traditional identity, by taking a picture of himself holding a paper where he wrote “I am Shuar” in Spanish, English and Shuar (FIGURE 16).



FIGURE 16. JUAN ANTONIO'S PHOTOGRAPH EXPRESSING HIS MULTIPLE IDENTITIES: "SOY SHUAR, I AM SHUAR, SHUAR KAKARAM."

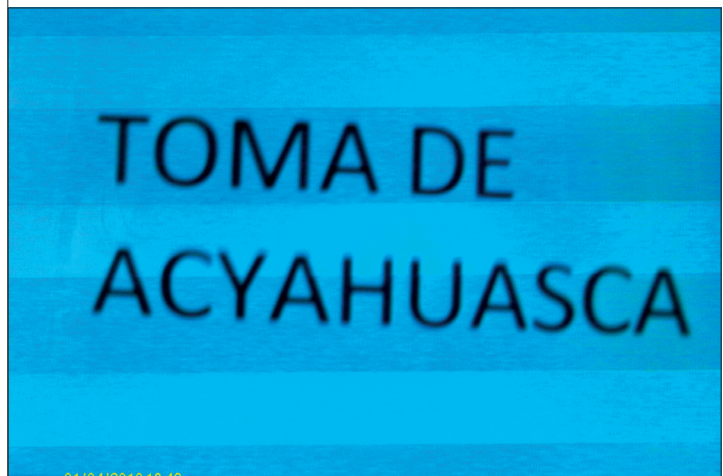
AYAHUASCA VISIONS

The complexity of indigenous identity in the contemporary world is perhaps best captured in discussions of participants' relationship with traditional hallucinogens. The Awajún and Wampís manipulate and communicate with souls both through naturally occurring dreams when they sleep, and in “visions” induced by hallucinogenic plants (Brown 1985:57). Many species are known, including *Toé*, *Tobacco*, and *Datém* or *ayahuasca* (Brown 1985:58), a Quechua generic name that means Vine of the Dead (Dobkin de Rios 1970). The vine is boiled and the broth or tea-like substance is drunk, either to obtain the spirit *Ajútap*, which speaks to those who drink

it and will protect them through life, or to see an image of the dreamer's future. In either case, there is a practicality in this practice, involving affecting or manipulating the world of humans through the spirits and visions obtained, with a goal of experiencing the Good Living or *Pegkeg Pujut*. *Ayahuasca* is also drunk by mestizos in the Amazon, as noted previously, and its use has been referenced in Perú to exoticize the Amazonian rainforest as a tourist site. An Awajún friend of the first author (not a research participant), noted, "*Ayahuasca* for us is not meant to be taken lightly. We can take it but only once or twice in our lives. It is the shamans who are trained to take it all the time." All our participants had opinions about *ayahuasca* as part of the practices that should be followed in order to truly be Awajún or Wampís.

Participant discussions of *ayahuasca* were distinctive in that it was not possible to represent this visually. In most of the other themes, a common thread was the intertwining of indigenous and national identities, represented through a non-indigenous technology – photography. Discussion of *ayahuasca* centered on its indigenous uniqueness, and thus the inappropriateness of attempting to represent it with non-indigenous technology. For instance Martín, 18, told a story about the waterfalls back home, and a *múun* (respected elder) who leads young people there (including Martín) to drink *ayahuasca*. This *múun* did not want them to let outsiders or the mestizo take pictures because he was afraid they would come and take all the ingredients of the broth and the natural resources surrounding the waterfalls. He said, "he distrusts ... that the flavor and all of it will be plagiarized, taken out and the whole world will come, he talks like that about it; it is forbidden to take photographs."

FIGURE 17. LEONIDAS ROGERIO CREATED THIS IMAGE DURING THE ELICITATION INTERVIEW, ILLUSTRATING WHAT IT IS TO BE AN AWAJÚN. "TOMA DE ACYAHUASCA; DRINKING AYAHUASCA." (AYAHUASCA IS MISSPELLED)



In keeping with this, participants talked about *ayahuasca*, but did not try to represent it with images. In the one exception (FIGURE 17), Leonidas Rogerio uses a computer and a global tool (Microsoft Word) to represent the custom, but the image consists only of words.

All the research participants had acquired knowledge about *ayahuasca* during their childhood, and all understood its purposes. They talked about it as an important knowledge that makes them into complete human beings, and which crucially sets them apart from non-indigenous people.

Some explain the experience by contrasting indigenous and Western paradigms, such as law student Tomás, 24:

The indigenous world is the opposite. I mean...the worldview, or whatever you call it, I disagree with that because you say freedom of worship... Because I do not practice the Catholic religion, what are they going to say about me, right? Hey, that he is an atheist, or a pagan, or whatever right? No, no, hey, I have freedom of worship, to me, that waterfall is sacred ... there I drink *Ayahuasca*, there the *Ajútap* spirit comes to me, right? What we call *Pegkeg Pujut* (the Good Living)...All that, you cannot see...and nature is utilized as a game...as fun...

CONCLUSION

Participant photography, coupled with elicitation interviews and participants' self-generated photo captions, proved to be an effective strategy to tease out the complex ways in which indigenous Amazonians negotiate their identity; an entirely verbal interview approach could not have elicited the rich self-reflection that our participants shared. And although follow-up action was not a specific goal of the research, since the study concluded, at least three of the 20 participants have extended their visual creativity by making cultural representations of Awa-jún or Wampís aspects of life on blogs or social media sites. As Underberg and Zorn (2014) note, in discussing the "ubiquity" and 'user-friendliness' of digital technology" today, these kind of outlets are becoming increasingly important for indigenous people, as they utilize iMovie, blogs and wikis. Underberg and Zorn wonder, "How much technology does the public (or, in older anthropological parlance, do informants) need to know to create their own self-representations?" (Underberg and Zorn 2014:7). The answer would seem to be "relatively little." Villamar has collaborated as English translator for articles published in more than two web pages created by

former participants of this study. One of them, is a blog (Cultural Awajun [Awajun Culture] N.d.) where he translates posts/articles to English per request of the bloggers with the bloggers' goal of internationalizing Awajun Culture (please see: culturaawajun.blogspot.pe/p/the-awajun-or-inia-alphabet-according.html). Thus, the ethnographer fulfills the role of collaborator and "cultural expert," extending the collaboration begun in the participatory photo study (Underberg and Zorn 2014:7). Our work shows how the participants, as actual or potential cultural brokers, maintain a foot in each of their worlds without forgetting where they are, who they are, or how to navigate obstacles to reach their goals. At times they adopted a national message, and at times they rejected it, but they always felt Peruvian and never contested their nationality, even as they objected to the linear trajectory of Peruvian history that ignored anything other than the Andean past. Juan Antonio, an anthropology student, articulated the complexity of indigenous Peruvian identity:

To be Peruvian, is important for me because it has to do with the idea of a nation ... framed in our historical context that involves South American realities, right? ... When I talk about my being a Shuar, what if I am not represented? Furthermore, they don't even respect me ... Consequently, we have a social conflict in defining what a nation is, and what I try to capture in these photographs is exactly what I would call the profound Perú, right? A Perú where we observe not only the cosmetic make-up that we can show as tourist attractions or representative culinary dishes to the outside world, but instead what they do not show abroad, which is that face we have - the face of Peruvians who have little to no opportunities ...

And so participants hold tight to their indigenous identity as a defining core of who they are. While acknowledging the need to adapt and develop new forms of literacy, they consistently articulate a sense of pride and agency in being Amazonian indigenous. They believe they know things no other Peruvians know about the ecosystem – the place they come from. This place – the physical location of their traditional practices and culture -- becomes a key point of reference, internalized as a source of life for the entire world, a source of rich biodiversity, and a source of knowledge that only they, as indigenous people – as *originarios* of the planet – share and act on day by day.

And they take seriously their role as cultural brokers, whose goal is to help their people survive in a changing world. In that sense, they represent Gramsci's notion of the "organic intellectual," who contests the cultural hegemony of dominant groups by persuading through discourse (Gramsci, et al. 1971:9-10). Their photographs tried to give us a picture of indigenous identities that contest the "noble savage" stereotypes, or the image of the jungle warrior who shrinks heads. Indigenousness, while being celebrated for its beauty and richness of customs and traditions, is not to be archived in a museum of *tsantsa* (shrunk heads) and *coronas*, but should be reimagined as a different but equal narrative that is as valuable as singing the national anthem or eating the national dish. The views expressed through the participants' photos mesh well with Rubenstein's (2004) discussion of how Shuar migrants in New York perceive the *tsantsa* displayed at the American Museum of Natural History, representing a core Western narrative that focuses on the shrunk head as a symbol of the "savage" state of indigenous peoples (Rubenstein 2004:16). While some Shuar reject *tsantsa* displays, and demand their repatriation,⁵ others focus more on the historical discontinuity of the displays with the lives of the Shuar today – or in our case, the Wampís (Shuar) and Awajún. The participants in our study are well aware that the shrunk heads or village raids were practiced by the *antiguos Peruanos* (or ancient Peruvians, as some participants called their ancestors, but they wanted to disassociate that history from their lives in the contemporary world. This is not a rejection of tradition at all; our participants valued their traditional past and took pride in speaking their languages and keeping their customs alive. But they also rejected the idea of a past frozen in time, like the narratives of the anthropologist or the display in a museum. The images they captured (and the conversations and written text that accompanied them) showed a fluid interchange of cultural elements from their beloved Amazonia with the globalized languages, tools, and contexts of modern Peru.

Thus our participants strive to survive and achieve the Good Living or *Pegkeg Pujut*, by embracing the little opportunities provided by the wider world, while maintaining their native core values. A photo by Manuel Octavio, an electronic engineering student, creatively captures the complexity of identity for people who live in two worlds. He took a picture of his shadow on the floor as he was walking (FIGURE 18), explaining: "it does not matter where [he goes], [his] tradition and language, are

⁵ Rubenstein (2004) elaborates this point when describing meeting three of his Shuar friends at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, and discussing what should be done with *tsantsa* being displayed in museums around the world. On a related note, Villamar also found an actual *tsantsa* donated by a patron many years ago in the hall of South American Peoples of a museum near the university where he was teaching in the Midwest. He reported this to one of his Awajún activist friends in Peru. She immediately asked for the contact information of the museum so she could discuss the reason the *tsantsa* is still being displayed for the public, emphatically stating, "We need to get that back."

like [his] shadow, [he] can't and will never forget them. They will always go with [him]." His caption read: "No olvidandonos de quien soy, y a donde voy" [Not forgetting who I am, and where I am going]. He hopes to find a scholarship to study abroad once he graduates, before returning to help his people; his words and image express his identity as a Shuar, who also represents the future of the nation and the world.

FIGURE 18. MANUEL OCTAVIO'S PHOTO: "NO OLVIDANDONOS DE QUIEN SOY, Y A DONDE VOY (NOT FORGETTING WHO I AM AND WHERE I AM GOING)."



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REPORTS

DARIA CARMI

COUNCILLORSHIP FOR CULTURE AND TOURISM IN CASALE
MONFERRATO (ALESSANDRIA)

L'ARTE (PUBBLICA) CI RIDARÀ VITA

ABSTRACT

The article focuses on cultural dynamics generated by participatory art processes, which express a political model of social engagement.

Presenting as case studies two interactive projects in Italian areas (Frassineto Po and Casale Monferrato), the author illustrates how participation in public art practice can support civic engagement in local government, with positive results in terms of connectivity, social value, experience of cultural heritage and collective memory.

KEYWORDS

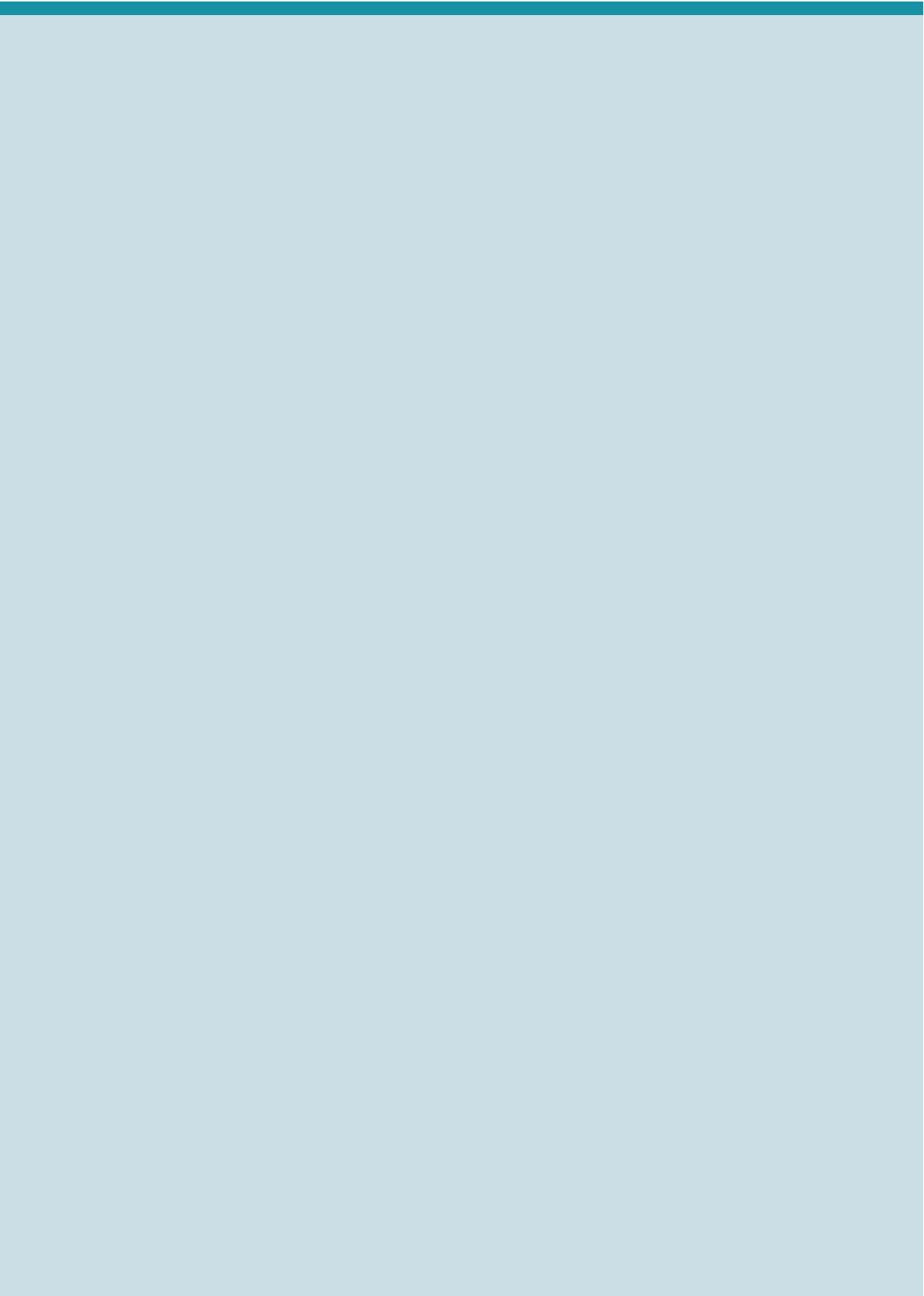
Monument, Public Art, Urban Transformation,
Participation, Monferrato

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INTRODUZIONE

I processi produttivi dell'arte contemporanea sono spesso caratterizzati da dinamiche partecipative che assegnano alle persone il ruolo di decisori sociali, ponendosi come contesti negoziati di innovazione dell'offerta culturale che non di rado si traducono in pratiche politiche di intervento sul territorio e sul patrimonio (Scotini 2016, Mattei 2011).

La nozione di 'partecipazione' è figlia del pensiero politico occidentale (La Cecla 2016). Quando adottata come strumento di governo, la partecipazione si attiva generalmente a partire da due soggetti essenziali, le amministrazioni pubbliche e i privati cittadini, che sottoscrivono un patto di reciprocità: il pubblico delega una parte del suo potere decisionale al cittadino, che viene così orientato alla responsabilizzazione nelle scelte gestionali. In un certo senso, al cittadino è corrisposta l'opportunità-richiesta di collaborare ai processi pubblici e di avere un ruolo attivo nelle dinamiche che interessano e trasformano il territorio in cui vive.

Le variabili che riguardano la modalità di partecipazione sono relative: c'è un limite oltre cui la reciprocità viene a mancare e il patto si scioglie. Questo limite non è definibile a priori, dal momento che il patto di reciprocità si relaziona con un contesto mutevole e sempre situato. Alla base di questo agire politico si trova in ogni caso la volontà e la disponibilità dei cittadini di farsi carico di azioni che li riguardano direttamente. Affinché questo processo produca effettivi miglioramenti nella gestione dei beni collettivi e sulla qualità della vita delle persone, è tuttavia essenziale che la partecipazione si configuri come collaborazione in cui gli interessi dei singoli siano finalizzati alla soddisfazione di bisogni della collettività. È altresì necessario che l'istituzione pubblica investa sulla trasparenza, sulla comunicazione e sul coinvolgimento informato. Senza la reale consapevolezza del cittadino, infatti, la partecipazione non può attuarsi.

Se è vero che ad ogni pensiero politico corrisponde una forma d'arte (Foster et alii 2006), come si traduce il modello della partecipazione nel fare arte oggi? La bibliografia su questi temi è in costruzione, il dibattito è aperto e vivo. Una chiave interpretativa è offerta dalla prospettiva della cosiddetta Arte Pubblica, che dal punto di vista teorico e metodologico intende attuare il pensiero politico della sussidiarietà e della partecipazione, distinguendosi da altre forme di sperimentazione creativa.

CHI SEMINA RACCOGLIE

Il mio contributo di riflessione su questo tema nasce dall'esperienza di due eventi artistici che ho ideato e curato negli ultimi anni e che qui presento come casi studio. Il primo è *Par coiì bsogna semnà. Chi semina raccoglie*, un progetto nato nel 2010 quando il Comune di Frassineto Po, un paese piemontese di circa millecinquecento abitanti, mi invitò a immaginare una proposta artistico-culturale che sapesse valorizzare gli spazi pubblici dell'abitato, molti di grande rilevanza architettonica e patrimoniale e tuttavia sottostimati e poco utilizzati nel presente. Il paese è caratterizzato da una forte tradizione agricola e ha subito nel tempo un processo di impoverimento economico che ha avuto importanti ricadute sociali. Partendo dalla volontà di usare l'arte come mezzo per valorizzare l'identità agricola locale e creare aggregazione, ho iniziato dunque a mappare le attività artigianali e artistiche locali. Nel contempo, mi sono rivolta ad artisti visivi che potevano legarsi al progetto per ragioni anagrafiche, in quanto provenienti da realtà geograficamente o culturalmente vicine, oppure perché già impegnati a lavorare su questi temi. Questi artisti¹ hanno trascorso a Frassineto Po alcuni giorni o settimane, ognuno secondo la propria disponibilità, lavorando in particolare col tessuto sociale. Gli artisti e gli artigiani locali² hanno a loro volta agito come mediatori tra gli abitanti e gli artisti in residenza. Tutti hanno elaborato e realizzato opere, progetti e installazioni, senza imposizione di tecnica, e il paese si è trasformato, per alcune settimane, in un'officina artistica diffusa, con una sezione laboratoriale, una espositiva e un programma di incontri pubblici. Alcune opere – quelle che in questo contesto ci interessano maggiormente – sono state realizzate in maniera partecipata e hanno trovato luogo nello spazio urbano in maniera semi-permanente.

L'esperienza ha fatto maturare nei cittadini il desiderio di lavorare insieme e di partecipare attivamente alla cura dello spazio pubblico. In particolare, è emerso il desiderio di collocare in paese altre opere, costruite collettivamente e sistemate all'aperto, che avessero un valore nuovo e diverso rispetto a ciò che gli abitanti avevano conosciuto fino a quel momento. Il Comune di Frassineto Po ha dimostrato interesse, l'anno seguente, a proseguire con la rassegna artistica, ne ha riconosciuto il valore trasformativo, sia umano che urbanistico, e per la seconda edizione abbiamo costruito un progetto con l'obiettivo di creare un nuovo monumento per il paese.

La seconda edizione (Carmi 2013) è stata quindi in

¹ Nico Angiuli, Béatrice Baillet e Matteo Rubbi, Alessandro Beluardo, Francesco Bertelé e Emanuele Cavallo, Dafne Boggeri, Agenzia Dancing Days (Viaindustriale/ Emanuele De Donno e Luca Pucci), Daria Martini, Luca Percivalle, Diego Perrone, Elena Nerina Reverberi, Simona Rossi e Iacopo Seri.

² Agostino Bagna, Davide Bersano, Francesco Burzotta, Gianni Frasson, Daniele Mantoan, Mauro Marchiò, Donina Mazzocchi, Valentina Meneghesso, Letizio Muzio, Michael Pitzus, Roberto Primo, Angelo Scagliotti, Donatella Vescovi, Bruno Zavattaro.

parte modificata, sia negli obiettivi sia nella struttura, e ha visto protagonisti artisti la cui ricerca era focalizzata su pratiche partecipative o sul concetto di monumento. Andrea Caretto e Raffaella Spagna, Angelo Castucci, RHA ZE (Emanuele Braga e Maddalena Fragnito), Rita Correddu, Paola Monasterolo e Mircea Nicolae sono stati ospiti in residenza a Frassineto Po, tutti contemporaneamente, partecipando a un fitto calendario di esperienze pensate per conoscere i luoghi e avvicinare le persone. A distanza di un mese, gli artisti, singolarmente o in coppia, hanno proposto alla cittadinanza un progetto per il monumento. I progetti sono stati inviati per posta come elaborati grafici o modelli e presentati in forma di mostra. In paese abbiamo attivato un percorso assembleare dedicato e aperto a tutti gli abitanti, perché fossero loro a decidere quale monumento realizzare fra i sei proposti. Il confronto decisionale è avvenuto proprio nella Sala Consigliare del Comune, si è sviluppato in circa tre mesi, è stato impegnativo, conflittuale, ma anche costruttivo. Ha sollevato questioni di carattere tematico, riguardanti ad esempio ciò che dovrebbe essere un monumento oggi e quale funzione pubblica dovrebbe assumere, e più eminentemente pratico, come la collocazione nello spazio e la manutenzione nel tempo. I cittadini si sono confrontati sulle loro opinioni, visioni, paure e desideri, in maniera pubblica. Inizialmente l'assemblea ha cercato di raggiungere un consenso unanime, ma ben presto è stato chiaro che l'unico modo per arrivare a una decisione era la votazione. Si sono dunque formati gruppi di sensibilizzazione cittadina, seppur completamente informali, con l'obiettivo di portare in assemblea il maggior numero possibile di votanti che preferivano lo stesso progetto. Tutte le proposte di monumento hanno ricevuto più preferenze, un nucleo centrale di proposte ha ricevuto quasi lo stesso numero di voti, l'opera maggiormente votata ha avuto una percentuale di scarto considerevole.

È stato scelto il progetto *Kg 5633,9* di Paola Monasterolo, l'opera che, fra quelle proposte, presentava in maniera più evidente le caratteristiche comunemente attribuite a un monumento. Si tratta di un agglomerato di pietre e cemento, materiali di lunga durata e di facile manutenzione, articolati in una forma architettonica che trasforma la struttura urbana del luogo in cui si inserisce. L'opera occupa una superficie di 5 metri quadrati ed è composta da blocchi color sabbia, con varianti che sfumano dal giallo al rosso. Su ogni blocco compaiono due elementi: un numero in cera e una scritta. La scritta è la risposta che ogni abitante ha dato alla domanda sollevata dall'artista

“Quando ti sei sentito vivo?”, mentre il numero corrisponde al peso della persona che ha risposto e sostituisce il riferimento normalmente dato dal nome, consentendo quindi la corrispondenza in anonimato persona-blocco. Gli elementi riconosciuti come maggiormente innovativi sono stati la forma orizzontale, che invita all’interazione, e il contenuto. L’oggetto’ del monumento sono infatti gli abitanti del paese, che incarnano la storia vivente di Frassineto Po. Si tratta, in sostanza, di un monumento all’eccellenza della normalità e della quotidianità, all’importanza di ciascuno e di tutti nel mantenimento della vita sociale del paese.

Questi elementi sono stati oggetto di numerose discussioni e il processo pubblico ha consentito anche a coloro che preferivano un altro monumento fra quelli proposti di comprendere le ragioni dei loro concittadini e sentirsi parte attiva nella decisione. Gli amministratori locali hanno partecipato alle assemblee e votato come tutti gli altri. Trattandosi di un progetto era dunque necessario colmare la distanza fra la proposta di un’opera d’arte partecipata e la sua realizzazione concreta e definitiva. Paola Monasterolo è ritornata quindi sul posto in maniera continuativa per circa un anno, verificando e modificando l’opera sulla base delle istanze degli abitanti fino a quando, finalmente, il monumento è stato costruito in un luogo scelto dall’artista e dalla cittadinanza.

IMMAGINE 1: PAOLA MONASTEROLO IN PIEDI SUL MONUMENTO, 13 SETTEMBRE 2014, FRASSINETO PO. FOTO ILARIA ZENNARO.



Con il benessere del Comune, che oltre a essere il proprietario dello spazio ha pagato le spese d'inserimento urbano e si è preso a carico la manutenzione ordinaria, il monumento è stato collocato in una zona del paese sottoutilizzata, non dedicata a una funzione specifica. La presenza dell'opera ha modificato profondamente la natura del luogo, che oggi viene vissuto quotidianamente, soprattutto dai bambini che saltano giocando di blocco in blocco. Almeno un abitante su tredici ha volontariamente e attivamente preso parte, pur con modalità diverse, al progetto. In particolare, alcuni hanno vissuto una forte e inedita esperienza diretta di governo del territorio. Infatti coloro che hanno partecipato alla selezione del monumento, forse più ancora di quelli che hanno contribuito alla produzione di contenuto dello stesso, hanno sentito di essere responsabilmente coinvolti nella questione, hanno preso una posizione pubblica e vissuto un processo di soggettivazione dell'impegno per la collettività. A distanza di qualche anno, il monumento di Frassineto Po non ha subito alcun atto vandalico, non è comparsa nessuna scritta e non è stato necessario alcun intervento di manutenzione straordinaria. Nei cittadini partecipanti si è sviluppata un'affezione per la storia che questo monumento racconta, una storia sentita come memoria collettiva, scelta e perseguita. Attraverso l'opera è cresciuto quindi il senso di appartenenza alla comunità e al paese.

ARTE PUBBLICA PER IL PARCO ETERNOT

Il secondo caso studio è il progetto Arte Pubblica per il Parco Eternot, nato nel 2015 per il Comune di Casale Monferrato, che ho proposto in quanto Assessore alla Cultura, accogliendo istanze di base che già appartenevano alla città. La sua conformazione nasceva dall'esperienza di Frassineto Po, ma alcuni elementi lo differenziavano fortemente. La necessità urgente era quella di lavorare, attraverso l'arte visiva, sulla storia cittadina in rapporto alla fabbrica Eternit e alla lotta all'amianto (Curino & Mossano 2013), in particolare con l'obiettivo di agire direttamente sulla percezione esterna della città e riscattare la sua immagine pubblica. Il tema da affrontare era delicato e complesso, il luogo era già indicato (l'ex-Eternit) e il processo doveva tenere conto della particolare configurazione abitativa della città, che ospita 35.000 abitanti ed è centro zona per un territorio di circa 78.000 persone. Gli abitanti di Casale e del Monferrato, pur vivendo e avendo vissuto drammi familiari, lutti e momenti di grande fatica e sofferenza, sono ben consapevoli che la città ha avuto un ruolo fondamentale nel contrasto mondiale all'amianto e

rivendicano con orgoglio i risultati conquistati. Infatti la città si è battuta molti anni per la consapevolezza, la giustizia, la ricerca, la bonifica, guadagnandosi nel mondo il ruolo di 'Città della lotta all'amianto'. Così, mentre i mezzi stampa propongono costantemente l'associazione semplicistica e riduttiva 'Casale Monferrato-Eternit', i cittadini rifiutano l'immagine mortifera e rivendicano l'impegno speso a costruire per la città un presente e un futuro migliore sulle basi di una storia vissuta: rispetto per l'ambiente e per i diritti dei lavoratori, etica, sostenibilità, senso di comunità e coesione per il raggiungimento di obiettivi comuni come la bonifica e la giustizia. Nella primavera del 2018, sulla base di queste istanze, Casale Monferrato si è candidata a Capitale Italiana della Cultura 2020 in quanto prima città deamiantizzata d'Italia, arrivando tra le città finaliste.

Il Comune, a inizio 2016, ha aperto perciò un bando, in cui ha invitato gli artisti visivi a 'immergersi nel contesto', con lo scopo di progettare un'opera di Arte Pubblica dedicata alla Città di Casale Monferrato in relazione alla vicenda Eternit da collocare all'interno del Parco Eternit, giardino pensile in cui è stata convertita l'area un tempo occupata dalla fabbrica Eternit, nel quartiere Ronzone. Gli artisti, anche in questo caso, sono stati invitati a conoscere la città, la sua storia e i suoi abitanti e, solo successivamente, a proporre un progetto per un monumento; questo è stato inaugurato proprio in occasione dell'apertura ufficiale del parco, il 10 settembre 2016, cioè circa nove mesi dopo l'apertura del bando. Il bando era finalizzato ad attivare cinque residenze, si poteva partecipare come singoli o gruppi ed erano ammessi artisti che usavano qualsiasi tecnica, purché maggiorenti. Durante la residenza vitto e alloggio erano a carico del Comune. Al termine del soggiorno casalese, gli artisti hanno avuto un mese di tempo per presentare un progetto e per questo hanno ricevuto un compenso di 1000 euro. Il bando ha avuto, in seconda battuta, l'obiettivo di realizzare uno fra i cinque monumenti per una spesa di 12.000 euro, che poteva essere aumentata grazie a co-finanziamenti di soggetti privati. L'Amministrazione si riservava anche la possibilità di non procedere nella produzione di alcun monumento, nel caso in cui nessuna proposta fosse stata ritenuta adatta.

Hanno risposto al bando circa novanta artisti da tutta Europa. Per decidere quali artisti fossero più preparati ad affrontare il tema, accompagnare i cittadini nelle diverse fasi del progetto e individuare quale monumento fra quelli proposti fosse più corrispondente ai desideri

espressi dalla collettività, è stata costituita una commissione di professionisti che operano nel campo dell'Arte Pubblica. I membri della commissione sono stati scelti fra i partecipanti al progetto ARTINRETI, una piattaforma di artisti, critici e curatori nata in Piemonte nel 2012 che lavora su processi, linguaggi e metodologie delle arti visive nello spazio sociale.³



IMMAGINE 2: LO STRILLO DE LA STAMPA, 13 MARZO 2016, EDICOLA DI PIAZZA CASTELLO, CASALE MONFERRATO. FOTO DARIA CARMÌ.

Sono stati ammessi alla residenza otto artisti, di cui alcuni come collettivo artistico: Gea Casolaro, Luca Vitone, Fabrizio Bellomo con Nico Angiuli, il collettivo Fare Ala e Luigi Coppola.

La residenza è durata dall'11 al 20 marzo 2016. Durante la residenza gli artisti hanno incontrato moltissime storie, situazioni, persone. Il Comune e l'Afeva (Associazione Familiari e Vittime dell'Amianto) hanno agito da mediatori offrendo contatti, testimonianze, documenti, approfondimenti culturali e giuridici. Il 19 marzo la commissione ha

³ Artinreti è una rete aperta con cui collaboro con continuità. Include attualmente: a.titolo, Cittadellarte Fondazione Pistoletto, Progetto Diogene, KaninchenHaus, PAV-Parco Arte Vivente, Zerotremilacento, Viaindustriae, Matteo Balduzzi (curatore), Maurizio Cilli (architetto e artista), Rebecca De Marchi (curatrice), Matteo Ferraresi (artista), Giulia Marra (ricercatrice, architetto), Giangavino Pazzola (ricercatore).

promosso una riflessione pubblica dedicata agli abitanti di Casale Monferrato, cui hanno assistito anche gli artisti ormai al termine della loro residenza, nella Sala Consigliare del Comune.

Qui è stato utilizzato il Gioco del Loco⁴ per sollevare e rispondere collettivamente a domande riguardanti i contenuti che il monumento per il Parco Eternot avrebbe dovuto veicolare, gli aspetti e gli eventi che la città voleva evidenziare e tramandare, i timori e i desideri delle persone coinvolte. Il Parco Eternot rappresentava già, nell'immaginario e nel desiderio dei cittadini, un luogo di memoria ma anche di affermazione di valori collettivi e di proiezione di prospettive future. Di fatto, il progetto ha intercettato un bisogno reale dei cittadini e la partecipazione al progetto è stata molto ampia.

Per comprendere il processo che ha interessato la città e le ricadute mediatiche del progetto, è interessante fare riferimento al modo in cui la carta stampata ha descritto le diverse fasi del percorso. I giornali si sono fatti veicolo degli appuntamenti e della restituzione della residenza ogni giorno, hanno accolto le opinioni di singoli abitanti e delle associazioni che da anni si occupano della questione amianto o di temi legati all'ambiente, al diritto, alla bonifica, hanno proposto le prospettive di lettura degli artisti sulla vicenda, sollevato un dibattito aperto e pubblico sul tema. Un dibattito che è stato capace di accogliere anche i dubbi e le aspettative della città. In particolare, le aspettative sul contributo che l'arte poteva dare al rinnovamento dell'immagine della città erano altissime, forse perfino sovradimensionate rispetto a ciò che gli artisti stessi pensavano di poter effettivamente restituire. Lo 'strillo' affisso su tutte le edicole della città il 13 marzo 2016, terzo giorno di residenza, recitava "L'arte ci ridarà vita". Simili sono stati anche quelli dei giorni precedenti e successivi: "Oggi a Casale arrivano gli artisti del Parco Eternot", "Casale non è più città dell'amianto", "Eternot il giardino simbolo del riscatto".

A distanza di un mese dal termine della residenza, gli artisti, su richiesta stessa degli abitanti, sono ritornati in città per presentare pubblicamente le cinque proposte di monumento. Ogni proposta conteneva un'idea diversa ed esprimeva un punto di vista specifico sulla vicenda Eternit e sull'identità della città. È stata dunque allestita una mostra dedicata ai progetti presso il Castello del Monferrato e i visitatori sono stati invitati a esprimersi su ciascuna proposta. La preferenza è stata raccolta con una scheda anonima, dove i visitatori potevano indicare non solo quale monumento desideravano e perché, ma anche

⁴ Il Gioco del Loco è un gioco attivatore di dialogo fra 'argomentatori' e 'praticanti' che, attraverso un particolarissimo mazzo di carte, affronta i nodi cardine del fare Arte Pubblica oggi.

quale non volevano che si concretizzasse e perché. La commissione ha raccolto tutto il materiale prodotto e ha sintetizzato la scelta collettiva espressa dai singoli, analizzando i dati non solo in termini quantitativi ma anche e soprattutto in termini qualitativi. Un'opera ha raccolto molte critiche, tre opere avevano valutazioni simili, mentre un'opera in particolare ha accolto il favore della città in termini di sentimento collettivo. Questa stessa opera, a parere della commissione, aveva saputo cogliere perfettamente lo spirito del bando e del progetto Arte Pubblica per il Parco Eternot. Il progetto selezionato, reso pubblico in occasione del convegno cittadino sull'amianto proprio il 28 aprile 2016 e successivamente inaugurato insieme al Parco, è Vivaio Eternot di Gea Casolaro. La targa posta accanto al monumento riporta le parole dell'artista: "Sopra un luogo di morte, costruire un vivaio. Là dove sono state prodotte migliaia di fibre mortali, far nascere piantine che germoglino, crescano, fioriscano: una rappresentazione materializzata della lotta che la città di Casale Monferrato ha realizzato e continuerà a portare avanti negli anni, fino a quando, nel mondo, non ci saranno più morti d'amianto. Nei giardini pubblici accanto alla Stazione, ho scoperto una pianta che non conoscevo: la *Davidia Involucrata*, detta albero dei fantasmi, dei fazzoletti o delle colombe, per via delle caratteristiche foglie bianche che la pianta sviluppa per proteggere la sua infiorescenza. Penso che questo albero rappresenti in modo perfetto la storia della lotta casalese ai danni causati dalla produzione della fibra d'amianto: come in una sequenza animata, ho immaginato il fiore della *Davidia* diventare una colomba e volare via per portare il suo messaggio

IMMAGINE 3: GEA CASOLARO PRESENTA IL MONUMENTO DURANTE LA CERIMONIA DI APERTURA DEL PARCO ETERNOT, 10 APRILE 2016, CASALE MONFERRATO. FOTO DARIA CARMÌ.



di giustizia in tutta Italia, magari anche in tutta Europa. Il progetto vuole così creare un simbolo vivo della lotta all'amianto, che va mantenuta, curata, trasmessa, così come ci si prende cura del vivaio."

Nella targa, accanto al titolo, alla data e all'indicazione dei materiali usati, si possono inoltre rintracciare alcuni elementi informativi sul progetto: "L'installazione ambientale Vivaio Eternot è il primo monumento vivo dedicato alla lotta all'amianto. L'opera nasce nel contesto del progetto Arte Pubblica per il Parco Eternot, processo di valorizzazione degli aspetti simbolici del giardino pensile nato sull'area un tempo occupata dalla fabbrica Eternit. Dopo aver risposto a un bando pubblico e aver vissuto in residenza a Casale Monferrato, l'artista Gea Casolaro ha concepito un monumento in continuo cambiamento che si formalizza nell'installazione di un piccolo vivaio di *Davidia Involucrata* Sonoma all'interno del Parco. Grazie alle cure di studenti e associazioni della città, coadiuvati dall'Afeva, il Vivaio Eternot produrrà in permanenza delle piantine di *Davidia*. Il 28 aprile di ogni anno, Giornata Mondiale delle Vittime di Amianto, le piantine verranno inviate in quei luoghi e a quelle persone in Italia e nel mondo che stanno partecipando sig-

IMMAGINE 4: VIVAIO ETERNOT, MONUMENTO IN FORMA DI GIARDINO CONCEPITO DA GEA CASOLARO. PARCO ETERNOT, CASALE MONFERRATO, 2016. FOTO DARIA CARMÌ



nificativamente alla lotta all'amianto e che saranno individuati dall'Osservatorio Permanente sull'Amianto, nato all'interno del progetto artistico e composto da ricercatori, studenti e associazioni cittadine."

A distanza di circa due anni, le piante sono curate quotidianamente da cittadini volontari, scuole e associazioni, che si sono riconosciuti come appartenenti a una comunità specifica, nata appunto attorno al progetto e che include anche tutti coloro che hanno preso parte, almeno in un'occasione, al processo che ha portato la città ad avere un monumento partecipato. In questi due anni, inoltre, sono state premiate dieci persone che hanno ricevuto la Davidia perché si sono distinte nella lotta all'amianto. Anche in questo caso, la comunità include coloro che avrebbero preferito un altro monumento, così come i membri della commissione e tutti gli artisti che hanno partecipato alla residenza. Una comunità, dunque, che unisce tutti coloro che hanno dato valore al progetto, che lo hanno reso possibile, che vi hanno dedicato impegno, tempo e ne hanno condiviso collettivamente le responsabilità. Vivaio Eternot è, pertanto, un monumento vivo, che necessita di essere annaffiato tutti i giorni, che esisterà fino a quando qualcuno ne sentirà la necessità e condividerà il senso della sua esistenza. Questa è la garanzia che possa continuare a mantenersi significativa nel tempo, limitando il rischio più grande che un monumento possa correre: quello di essere 'muto', invisibile e dimenticato.

OSSERVAZIONI CONCLUSIVE

In entrambe le esperienze sopra citate gli abitanti di un luogo sono stati chiamati a decidere sulle scelte di governo e trasformazione del loro territorio. Sia a Frassineto Po che a Casale Monferrato l'intero processo è stato mosso da immaginazione e desiderio, dove 'partecipazione' non ha significato dare singoli spazi a ognuno, ma collaborare a un unico progetto condiviso. Questo è stato possibile poiché l'istanza di base, il processo generativo del monumento, si è declinato a partire da una volontà forte e condivisa da una collettività ampia.

Quali sono quindi le principali differenze rispetto ai modelli tradizionali? Quale l'elemento di innovazione?

Entrambi questi monumenti sono opere di Arte Pubblica, non perché hanno luogo nello spazio pubblico, ma in quanto sono il risultato di processi partecipati, l'esito visibile di un processo collettivo totalmente o in parte non visibile (Gaglianò 2016). Il cittadino, ancora prima di essere 'pubblico', partecipa al processo produttivo

dell'opera di cui sarà anche il fruitore. Queste pratiche rappresentano la possibilità concreta di assegnare alle persone il ruolo di decisori sociali, con risultati che, attraverso la responsabilità e il sentimento di appartenenza, garantiscono la cura collettiva della 'cosa pubblica'. Dimostrano, così, che sono possibili nuove vie di produzione culturale dove l'Arte Pubblica è agente trasformativo che ha ricadute reali e crea un legame significativo fra cittadini, istituzioni e territori, tramandando un contenuto valoriale che riguarda le persone e i luoghi in cui vivono.

Nelle opere di Arte Pubblica, prima che avvenga la trasformazione visibile, viene innescata quella invisibile. Il cambiamento avviene dentro alle persone e solo dopo, e sulla base di questo, nel paesaggio urbano. Il tempo e l'ascolto dedicato al progetto da parte degli artisti e dei curatori sono i cardini di questi processi. Gli artisti che producono Arte Pubblica vivono un'esperienza con la città, si rendono ricettori dei sentimenti degli abitanti, intercettano la possibile vocazione dei luoghi e creano opere che entrano organicamente nella vita quotidiana di coloro che lì vivono, diventando elementi identitari attorno a cui una comunità specifica si consolida. In questo senso, si può dire che l'opera di Arte Pubblica rinuncia alla dimensione auratica per generare senso di appartenenza. Scende dal suo piedistallo, esce dai musei e dalle gallerie, riempie questa distanza con le relazioni sociali, con le esperienze e le memorie collettive.

La Convenzione quadro del Consiglio d'Europa sul valore dell'eredità culturale per la società (2005), ancora troppo poco assimilata in Italia, amplia in maniera interdisciplinare il concetto di 'eredità culturale' ponendo al centro la persona e i valori umani. Ciò che l'Arte Pubblica e questo documento condividono è che riconoscono al cittadino il diritto a gestire l'eredità culturale, la responsabilità individuale e di comunità nella produzione, nella trasmissione e nella trasformazione del patrimonio. Assumono quindi che gli elementi che compongono l'eredità culturale sono temi di interesse pubblico, questioni fondamentali per la costruzione di un futuro che contribuisca a migliorare la qualità della vita delle persone.

Da questo punto di vista, il processo culturale certamente è un ambito di restituzione, ma è anche forza che agisce sulla realtà collettiva con conseguenze tangibili. La cultura, in quanto luogo di manifestazione, lettura e comprensione del mondo, è ambito privilegiato dove si evidenziano le storie vissute dalla collettività e azione proiettata verso la trasformazione. L'Arte Pubblica è dunque il fenomeno dell'evoluzione del pensiero politico

della partecipazione come la intendiamo e pratichiamo oggi. Il suo significato, in effetti, è determinato da istanze e temi che appartengono alla sfera pubblica e sociale. In questo senso il collocarsi nello spazio collettivo non è che un'esigenza narrativa, un elemento dal valore semantico determinato dal rapporto fra l'intenzione dell'artista, l'essere significante dell'opera e la forma attraverso cui si esprime. Pertanto, è più che mai evidente che gli operatori culturali e gli amministratori che si occupano di Arte Pubblica hanno un ruolo del tutto nuovo nelle politiche di trasformazione di un territorio, di una città, di una comunità: possono agire direttamente nel reale contribuendo a migliorare la relazione con le istituzioni e la qualità della vita, anche futura, di coloro che abitano i territori. Dobbiamo perciò essere consapevoli che è possibile una grammatica dei processi culturali che sia sinonimo del cambiamento politico e sociale che ci investe, sperimentarne potenzialità e limiti e contribuire così, attivamente e in maniera significativa, all'evoluzione del pensiero politico stesso.

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LEONE CONTINI

VISUAL ARTIST AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGIST

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WHAT WILL IT HAPPEN TO EARTH IF SEEDS GO CRAZY? A CONVERSATION ABOUT THE 'BANK OF THE MIGRATING GERMPLASM'

ABSTRACT

*The conversation is mainly investigating conceptual and methodological aspects of the artwork *The Bank of the Migrating Germplasm* (2016) developed by the artist Leone Contini for the second edition of the program *Connective Residency* at Cittadellarte Fondazione Pistoletto (curated by Cecilia Guida and Juan Sandoval). The bank is built on the relations, the stories and the moments of conviviality and dialogue with local actors, including the temporary guests of the asylum seekers centers near Biella. It's a paradoxical device, able to record social interactions in the form of foreign seeds from displaced gardens, created by migrants for migrants, and scattered around Biella and beyond its territory, in many other Italian regions.*

KEYWORDS

Experience, Community, Migration, Participatory Art Practice, Anthropology

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Biella; 2nd Tbilisi Triennial, Georgia; D-o Ark Underground Biennial, Bosnia; Kronika, Bytom, Poland; Delfina Foundation, London; MART, Rovereto; Galleria Civica, Trento; Khoj, New Delhi; Kunstraum, Munich; Villa Romana, Florence; Viafarini and Careof, Milano; Kunstverein, Amsterdam; Tirana Art Lab, Tirana; Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci, Prato. He took part to the following residencies: Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart; Residenza connettiva at Cittadellarte – Fondazione Pistoletto, Biella, Italy; The Politics of Food, I and II edition, at Delfina Foundation, London; Kronika, Bytom, Poland; InContext public art ecology at Khoj, New Delhi.

In 2017 he collaborated with “TRACES - Transmitting contentious cultural heritages with the arts”.

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Germogli di wá wá càì e la mia ombra,
sotto un frizzante sole alpino.
Dunque esisto.

Mr. Hu
Südtirol, 2016

Leone Contini casts a jingle: he happily merged in his work the ethnographic work and the art's languages, by exploring the potential of this generative symbiosis.

His investigation of friction, intercultural conflict and power relations is finalized in a wide range of formalizations: lecture-performances, interventions in public spaces, installations, field-sketches, ethnographic writings and audio/visual narrations.

His playful visions, sometimes imbued by childish recollections, are recurrent in his research: a baobab or a 'cucuzza' seed, a quotation from the Little Prince, dumplings of uncontrolled origins merging together – such as jiaozi, manti, ravioli or khinkali –, a recipe written in Wolof language, a sketch of a vegetable – incomprehensible fragment –, a gift from a bagger in Turin and whatever object is intercepted by his emotional sphere, and at the same time by the grid of his *theoria* – in its original meaning of contemplation and speculation.

His apparently chaotic and compulsive collection, which seems to be guided by the categories of the unexpected and the incongruent, establish in fact a new 'space', where different social fragments lay on a common ground; it's a playful, participatory platform, where to share the everyday existence and engage in dialogues with the Other.

The 'cohabitation' of the ethnographic approach with the aesthetic practices was the main reason why we invited Leone Contini at Cittadellarte Fondazione Pistoletto for the second edition of the program Connective Residency. The artwork which sprouted out of it, entitled *The Bank of Migrating Germplasm* (curated by Cecilia Guida and Juan Sandoval), was built on the relations and the moments of conviviality and dialogue with local actors, including the temporary guests of the asylum seekers centre of Pettinengo; the association Pacefuturo; the farmers of the network Let Eat Bi; the multicultural staff of the restaurant LuogoComune at Cittadellarte, where Contini organized together with Mr. Hu several syncretic banquets, including lecture-performances and the creation of recipes which embodied 'unknown' ingredients, recently arrived on this territory as an outcome of the current migrations.

The Bank of Migrating Germplasm aims to protect the agricultural bio-diversity and to test 'minor' economies.

It is a truly collective space, an archive in-progress of migrating seeds, the ending point of an artistic practice founded on the involvement of specific communities and, at the same time, the starting point of new exchanges with new communities – or 'becoming communities' – which are extending in more and more complex networks.

The bank is a crossroad of stories, meetings and 'survival practices', and investigates the future of our society, by collecting 'germs of possibilities' for a not yet imagined (social) existence.

The interview here below is mainly investigating conceptual and methodological aspects of the research process on the field and its aesthetical codification in an artwork.

A special attention was given to the paradoxical interaction between economy, current migrations and the agro-culinary 'dispositif' chosen by the artist to access a space of dialogue with the Other.

Cecilia Guida: Let's start our conversation about your artwork *The Bank of the Migrating Germplasm* (2016) developed for Cittadellarte's Connective Residency with the initial idea: where did it come from?

Leone Contini: There is a paradoxical economical sector growing in Italy, related with the temporary accommodation for asylum seekers. The complex of this activity generates an injection of EU money in often impoverished territories. Motors of this new economy are the bodies of the migrants, housed and fed till the verdict of the commissions: the integration process starts for the few recognized as refugees, the ones receiving a negative response automatically become 'clandestine'. In a span of time lasting for many months, the bare existence of these men determines a paradoxical situation: while their 'uncertainty' produces a real economy, their 'agency' is nullified by their being kept 'on hold'. The counter-strategies I have arranged in order to (re)build a 'discourse' together with the (so called) Other originate from the archetype-image of a seed, coming from a distant geography, which reactivates its own vital potential in a foreign land. The subsequent constellation of sub-narrations flowing from this original 'seed' marks a subversion of given power relations: the migrant appropriates a plot of land, he sow it (with informally imported seeds), he harvests the fruits

and process them through his own cooking skills and traditions.

It might not be by chance that agricultural activities are flourishing in some of the asylum centres, and that more settled migrants often creates a 'garden of nostalgia', whose minimal form is a simple pot on the balcony with an aromatic plant from 'the motherland'.

The Bank of the Migrating Germplasm, around which I structured my project for Cittadellarte's Connective Residency, is a collection of migrating seeds present on the national territory. The aim of this living archive is to represent/protect/implement the heritage of an asset of 'foreign' biodiversity that is generally perceived in negative terms by the agro-culinary policies (and common sense) – in contrast with the ancient varieties, which are presumed to be 'ours'.

My impatience toward this sort of bio-essentialism entered into a generative phase after a visit to the Bank of the Germplasm in Lucca, where I came across the Gallicano ficus bean, a pillar of the local gastronomy, illegally imported in the hat of a migrant returning from the US at the beginning of the 20th Century. What is the minimum time for a new vegetable to be 'naturalized' (i.e. for its full integration in the agro-culinary heritage of the community)? I started to imagine the near future and the perfume of 'okra flower risotto', pride of the Biellese, possibly protected by a Slow Food stronghold.

C.G.: The artworks on display were the results of the networking and participatory process you built during your residency on the territory with the bank of seeds of 'hybrid' plants representing the dispositif through which the relationships were born and gradually developed. How did the exhibition narrate these meetings, dialogues, links and affections?

L.C.: Partly through the seeds themselves, since none of them was acquired through an economic transaction. Almost all of them had in fact been gathered thanks to gifts and exchanges. But the archive was only the tip of the iceberg, as most of the work was carried out in the fields where Mussa, Rafaquat, Gemma, Yosuf and Marco were taking care, every day, of the plants germinated from those seeds.

It was impossible – and somehow pointless – to represent the everyday life of these farmers in an exhibition, and this is why we decided not to use video documentation, nor pictures of the people I worked with. However

FIGURE 1: FLORENTINE
BANGLA SEEDS. BIELLA
2016. FOTOGRAFIA DI
LEONE CONTINI.



in the installation are presented many tangible traces (drawings, recipes and other texts, seeds and dried crops) of the meetings around which took place the production of a transitional food - from foreign to local.

C.G.: During your Connective Residency at Cittadellarte, you established relationships in particular with the migrants of the shelter for asylum seekers in Pettinengo. In what way is the project Bank of the Migrating Germplasm connected to this community?

L. C.: My main connection with the community is Y.K., a refugee who has created a paradoxical Afghan farmed garden in the sumptuous park of the 19th century villa, site of the shelter. From my point of view, this 'out of context' garden is a place of negotiation of identities. I have in fact entrusted Y.K. with some plants, themselves germinated from 'migrant' seeds given to me

by H.M. and Y.H., my Wenzhounese neighbours in Tuscany, or found while wandering in markets, mini markets and gardens in Turin, Rome, Milan, Florence, Merano and Biella. Once the vital cycle of these plants is completed, part of the seeds will be returned to the bank as ‘naturalized’ seeds – without of course defining the ‘nature’ in question: Afghan-Italian? Biellese? Piedmontese? From the Po Valley? The seeds will definitely belong to this place, and to the people that grew them.

But there is also another centre in Pettinengo, which I’m familiar with. Here I met, in January 2016, a few youths mainly coming from various countries in West Africa. They invited me over for lunch several times: hearty meals of meat and peanut paste, rice and a sort of wheat flour *polenta*. I enjoyed this unpretentious hospitality, but I also realized how conviviality was locked within macro-regional identities: the majority of West Africans rotated the daily meal during the week, alternating Ghanaian, Nigerian and Malian recipes.



FIGURE 2: TURKISH BAMJA IN PETTINENGO. BIELLA 2016. FOTOGRAFIA DI LEONE CONTINI.

These dishes are slightly different but the structure is similar, both in organoleptic and anthropological terms: ingredients, percentage of meat/vegetables/carbohydrates, way of cooking, quantity of food eaten per person, way of sitting around the table and eating etc. I remember that the few Pakistani guests present in the centre were patiently waiting their turn to cook, after the Africans had finished their meal. But when I went back in March the power balance around the kitchen was radically changed: majority of West Africans where moved elsewhere and by then there were almost only Pakistanis. They immediately took control over the cooking-convivial space, and the

FIGURE 3: SKYPE CALL
LAHORE. BIELLA 2016.
FOTOGRAFIA DI LEONE
CONTINI.

¹ Bitter mellon is the 'international' most common denomination for this bitter universal vegetable considered beneficial for the blood in many cultures, from the Indian subcontinent to China.

few Africans left in the centre adapted to the new food-habits. This is how I lost all the work done during three months with the previous community; on the other side, I better understood the harsh existential conditions of these young men, trapped in the kafkaesque nightmare of the asylum procedures. It is really impressive how people are moved around, stored here and there, a series of sudden micro-displacements within a big displacement.

From the Pakistani I learnt how to roast *roti* on a piece of found metal sheet.

They had the privilege of a temporary sedentariness and, in July 2016, their little garden was growing some of 'my' cucurbitaceae, especially a variety called 'kugua' by Chinese in Prato, 'ampalaya' or 'bitter melon'¹ in the Filipino mini market in Biella and, most important, 'karela' in Pettinengo, by the pakistani neo-farmers.

C. G.: I can glimpse in your words the presence of an economic 'concern'... Can you clarify what is just an intuition?

L. C.: The source of my current research consists in a wide spectrum of informal/rural economies, developed within migrant communities in Italy: these hidden econ-



omies live within,² next to, beside, and around the dominant economy.

This liminal rurality usually takes place in the space in between the rural and the urban, within urban/periurban voids or just ‘niches’ of soil, ranging from ‘identity’ activities, such as a balcony-grown *xian gu cai* (the wenzhounese denomination for what Linneo called *brassica rapa chinensis*, known internationally as ‘bokchoy’), to informal enterprises based on monetary incentives.

Pecuniary pay-off and identity utility are interwoven in various ways, in this grey zone.

At the core of my practices is the constant attempt to trigger a shift in the real, and the incongruence between minor and major farming activities in Italy is the ‘space’ where this kind of *poiesis* takes place. I will be clearer: it’s commonly known that in Italy many migrants work in the intensive farming industry such as the tomato plantations. The conjuncture of underpaid labor, Italian organized criminality and racism creates, together with media over-exposure, an essentialist trap where both stereotypes and exploitation are reproduced.

My ‘answer’ to this dystopian impasse is to search for such ‘minor’ economies, which are on the contrary able to create, beside the actual food, original social relations.

Even if they are not considerably affecting the main economic parameters, these farming practices are able to fulfill both the alimentary and the identity needs of several migrant communities, defining an original, intimate-collective space of symbolic and economic becoming.

In the last years I travelled around Italy, collecting ‘episodes’ inherent these counter-economies (see the video *Un popolo di trasmigratori*: vimeo.com/205058082 password: 12345) and connecting them in order to trace a constellation of alternatives, a coherent counter-narration.

C. G: How this economic ‘concern’ is dealing with The Bank of Migrating Germplasm?

L. C.: As I said, a paradoxical spin-off is flourishing in Italy around the so called ‘accoglienza’ of the asylum seekers, a sort of ‘temporary hospitality’ which usually consists in placing these young men in remote locations for several months, until their asylum request is accepted or discarded. In this limbo, the subjectivity of the migrants is suspended, while their bare existence produces many satellite opportunities for social workers, cultural mediators, translators, psychologists and any sort of suppliers (from food to clothes, to wifi etc.).

² Within the intersection of migrations and hidden economies, I especially focus on agricultural, culinary and convivial practices.

I strategically elected the micro-farming activities, often present in these ‘camps’, as the Troy Horse to overall this passive economy. Illegally imported seeds and illegally farmed vegetables are in fact reactivating (metaphorically?) the dormant agency of these men, creating a bridge between their previous existence, often rural, and a new land in which they are still foreigners. This reinvention of a familiar landscape became a pivotal guideline of my research.

In these gardens, the migrants grow vegetables that are not available on the mainstream market, such as – named in different languages: *okra*, *bamja* or *bindi*; *lauki*, *lau*, *dudi*, *slawi* or *kalabasa*; *korla*, *kugua* or *ka-rela* etc. This activity is mainly addressing identity urges. Even if Italy is a country with a thick grey zone of economic possibilities, their condition of marginality makes in fact the selling of these vegetables almost impossible.

Far beyond the edge of documentation/interpretation of the real, my approach is always ‘poietic’ and I often played the role of ‘seeds spreader’, facilitating the exchange of the seeds between different communities (since the varieties are often the same for different communities, under different denominations), and ending up creating the bank as a concrete tool to store and circulate them, on the basis of a barter agreement: the bank is accessible to everyone with the promise that, at the end of the life-circle of the plant, the ‘user’ will return to the bank some of the next generation ‘naturalized’ seeds.

C.G: Can you mention how the local scale, consisting in the asylum seekers, interacted with the wider context?

L.C.: I have a good example which also will explain how the bank works: a consistent part of the seeds present in this living archive is a present from H.F., a Senegalese farmer based near Venice.

H.F. created a Senegalese garden on the land of his Italian father in law. Unlike the precarious gardens of refugees, this little farm is well organized and, despite the fact that he’s using informally imported seeds, he never had problems, being well settled in the local community.

This garden gradually became the space for a botanic-social experiment *de facto*, and the occasion for this Italian-Senegalese farmer to represent his condition in between. He welcomes friends, occasional visitors and school groups. The garden is a sort of open lab, an informal manifesto, how to make habitable a foreign land.

But this garden is more than a political/existential gesture: its over-production is sold to local markets, mainly run by Bengali migrants for a very diverse audience: his *okra* is appreciated, with different names, by West Africans, Sri-Lankans, Pakistani and Bengali people, Arabs (especially Syrians and Egyptians), Pilipinos and Afghani migrants. This 'local' *okra* is now consistently integrating the salary of this farmer. But there is a third layer of meaning, which paradoxically re-scale the private and local dimension of this garden on a wider, public level of interest: this garden grows in fact on the Piave river, which gained the status of a war monument since WW1, when it became the defense line on which the Austro-Hungarians invaders were stopped in late 1917, just few kilometers from Venice. During the fascist time a song was composed about this river: the core-strophe stated that the 'foreign' will never cross the Piave river. 'La Piave' was however turned into 'il Piave', since the gender itself of the river was turned from feminine to masculine, to serve the cause of war/regime propaganda.

This oxymoronic "Piave okra" is somehow able to comment the epochal transition toward a multicultural society, by generatively questioning the pillars of the Italian identity itself, often drenched in mystified narrations.

C. G.: During your residency in Cittadellarte I realized that your whole 'strategy' was based on a sort of geographical binary system: two weeks in Biella and two weeks in Tuscany. Every time you arrived at Cittadellarte your car was literally stuffed with little plants, sprouts, seeds, etc. Majority of this organic material was coming from the farms of your Chinese neighbours. I would like you to focus on the strong ties that connect you and your neighbourhood, which in many occasions you defined a sort of permanent field work. I had the impression that you somehow recreated this displaced landscape also in Cittadellarte. Can you spend few words about your major field?

L. C.: There is a 'no man's land' between the cities of Florence and Prato; here lives one of the biggest Chinese communities in Europe: fragments of a rural landscape, like fossils of a previous era, are scattered around the residual space between factories, residential neighbourhoods and malls. Here a gigantic clothes industry is working day and night: it is the Chinese labour, hidden pillar of the Made in Italy.

For years I searched for crackles in the structure/ dominant narration and, again, the key to twist the dystopia was provided by neo-rural practices:³ since 2009 little Chinese gardens sprouted in the interstitial spaces between the industrial buildings, close to the living working spaces of the migrants. The outcome is a hybrid landscape where residential facilities overlap with manufacturing and rural ones. The gardens, being markers of cultural 'otherness', are embodying a condition of liminality which is the main anthropological feature of this territory.

The majority of local Chinese migrants come from the rural areas of Zhejiang: their agricultural skills were re-activated once their traditional seeds were transplanted in the Tuscan soil. The vegetables are a metaphorical umbilical cord with the motherland but, at the same time, they represent a transformative and generative force: a familiar landscape was re-invented, as a surrealist collage where the *bokchoy* cohabits with cypresses, olive trees and vineyards.

FIGURE 4: LEONE CONTINI, THE BANK OF THE MIGRATING GERMLASM, OPENING PERFORMANCE. CONNECTIVE RESIDENCY AT CITTADELLARTE FONDAZIONE PISTOLETTO. BIELLA 2016. FOTOGRAFIA DI PIERLUIGI DI PIETRO.

³ Since 2011, I have documented the evolution of these unexpected activities. Meantime, I carried a series of interventions in public space including workshops, lectures, food classes, exhibitions, exhibitions, blogging, launching of informal 'restaurants' and walks: www.research-catalogue.net/view/66263/66264



On another level, this unexpected rural activity cracks the vitrified iconography of a region branded as a luxury product by the touristic/food&beverage industry and it is paradoxically reactivating the pre-industrial Tuscan anthropological landscape, once based on self-sufficient agriculture. Eventually the Chinese farms – although often perceived as uncanny by the Italian natives – are revitalizing the Tuscan agriculture, previously impoverished, in terms of bio-diversity, by decades of abandonment of the rural activities.

The locals and the authorities contested this self-subsistence agriculture, since the very beginning. Vegetables

varieties where in fact unknown to them, and the seeds where claimed to be imported illegally. Gardens where constantly destroyed, but constantly re-appeared. Later they developed into little farms. Now farms are bigger. When a farm is confiscated another one is founded. Thousands of Chinese migrants create a constant demand for this type of vegetables.

This economy takes place between the family labour (all farms are family-based), the micro-climate (season, rain, drought, hail, temperature etc.), and the final consumer, always Chinese. This structure, locked within the community, tends to be independent from the wider food-industry. The price of a 30x45 cm basket of *bokchoy* in season can be 2 euro, much less than a similar vegetable imported from kilometers away, for the mainstream market. From farm to fork, almost utopian. Especially because alternative economies usually take place within small groups of people – usually urbanized, food-aware young people, well-educated and well-to-do. But this informal zero-miles-food-industry feeds thousands of people everyday, with cheap, locally grown vegetables, restoring on a large scale an economic system that was extinct, at least in Tuscany, since the 50ies-60ies - and this is more than a metaphoric twist in the representation of the Other.

C. G.: So your economic ‘concern’ and your constant attempt to question the dichotomies such as foreign-domestic somehow hang together in this little, paradoxical microcosm?

L. C.: The success of Chinese agricultural enterprises subverts such dichotomy, since this unexpected economy is something intimately inherent to the ‘place’ that we inhabit all together; at the same time the model of producing food locally, based on medium scale family-farms, points out a radical alternative to the mainstream food industry.

The spreading of Chinese varieties beyond the Chinese community is just a matter of time. Such vegetables are already Tuscan since many years. Many of my projects aim to accelerate the sociological processes.

C. G.: There are already many seed banks around the world. How The Bank of Migrating Germplasm is different?

L. C.: The aim of seeds banks is usually to preserve a botanic biodiversity that comes from a rural past, being in danger of disappearance.

The Bank of Migrating Germplasm aims instead to investigate the future, the making of bio-diversity, as a process in progress.

There is a progressive force in the past, which created the whole variety of edible vegetable products that we have today, this force somehow lays frozen with the 'saved' seeds, in the vaults of seeds banks. What is here defused is the essence itself of agriculture, nested in the early stages of the domestication of wild varieties, manipulated by selection and hybridization, year after year, in order to slowly shape new varieties, suitable to fit specific micro-climates, plus a wider range of anthropological needs. Agriculture has always been progressive, inventive, and the practice to preserve the best seed always aimed to 'reinvest' them the subsequent year. My impression is that this force is more and more monopolized and distorted by the neo-capitalistic economy, while the seed bank tend to merely preserve the heritage of the past, like museums, protecting something precious and rare. In 'my' bank there is nothing objectively valuable, at least in genetic terms. During my residency in Cittadellarte I just realized that migrants were often craving for seeds, usually unknown in Europe, but easily accessible in Tuscany among Chinese farmers.⁴ I ended up becoming a vector to spread these seeds: at the beginning of summer Tuscan-Chinese bottle-gourds, pumpkins and other vegetables sprouted in gardens in Biella, farmed by Pakistani, Afghani and West Africans. Many of these vegetables accomplished a full reproductive circle, generating the seeds for the next year: these 'second generations' embody the paradoxical notion of 'becoming native'. And if they are all kept in a refrigerator is not to preserve them for future generations, but to sprout them the next spring.

The bank doesn't map the migrants' rural activities, it implements them, beyond UE bureaucracy, copyrighted seeds and the current logic of labour, to keep agriculture as a living tool of the human becoming, instead of a museum of fetishes, and to enable the new inhabitants of Italy (the migrants) to play a generative role in shaping our rural, culinary and convivial future traditions.

My utopia is that, out of this neo-farming activities, some original varieties will be *created*. But this will be possible only if farmers will re-plant the seeds from their previous harvest, instead of buying them from standardized lots. That's the only safe way to adapt vegetable varieties to new geo-anthropological sets.

⁴ However, these gardens are controversial and contested, since the seeds are introduced in the UE informally, if not illegally. Not only a bitter metaphor of the migrants' existence in Italy.

C. G.: During the opening of The Bank of Migrating Germplasm in Cittadellarte you also curated a dinner based on several fusion recipes mixing foreign and local ingredients. All the recipes were 'narrated' by Mister Hu. Who is Mister Hu? I had the impression he's a sort of alter ego of yours. Can you confirm this?

L. C.: Well, first of all I'm very suspicious regarding the term 'fusion'. I associate this word with fancy restaurants, where super-chefs play a virtuosic and hedonistic game across luxury, exoticism and organoleptic excitement.

About Mister Hu, he's more real than me! And he is for me a constant source of new ideas. He comes from a former rural village, now part of Whencheng conurbation, not far from Wenzhou. He moved from China to Tuscany with his family when he was six years old. He's speaking Italian with a strong Tuscan accent, plus a regional Chinese dialect. He's both a poet and a gourmet, and all the recipes presented in Cittadellarte are memories of his hybrid childhood, spent between the industrial building where his family was living and working, and the old sangiovese vineyard owned by their neighbour, an old Tuscan peasant, Egidio. He became for Hu a sort of private guide to a foreign world. The Hu family comes from a rural background, as well as Egidio, so their common language was based on earth, plants and seeds. Sometimes I feel like the ghost of this ancient peasant still haunts him, with a bitter and irreverent sarcasm, typical of Tuscan-born people.

C. G.: One of the recipes proposed by Hu was based on a Sicilian squash, which is also Chinese, and you told me that you explicitly asked him to insert such a vegetable in the menu. Can you explain me why? What is the bond between you and this squash?

L. C.: In the narrations of my mother's family the 'cucuzza', a Sicilian elongated courgette, has always been a vegetable with an aura surrounding it. My grandmother, originally from Agrigento, Sicily, moved to Florence in the 60ies. She used to cook cucuzza. When it was served at the table it was always something more than just a sweetish and mild tasty aubergine. For the Sicilian Diaspora, the cucuzza pertains to the realm of nostalgia. In particular, in the Italian-American imagination, the cucuzza assumes almost mythical connotation – the tale of the seeds, passed on over decades from one generation to the next until today, is one of the subjects of family narratives among the descendants of Sicilians who have emigrated to US.

Eating cucuzza in a foreign land is a familiar and convivial ritual, a moment of reconnection within a situation of displacement. The cucuzza is an exclusive link between the emigrated community and an 'intimate-collective'; it is the lost Sicily, fantasised by the Diaspora. Several websites, blogs and Facebook groups are dedicated to the cucuzza. Even the various versions of its name seem to proliferate on the web. Pronunciation variations differ: kah-gootz-ah or goo-gootz. Spelling variations include: cagutsa, cagutza, caguzza, cuccuza, cucutsa, cucutza, cucuzza, cugutsa, cugutza, and cuguzza. The cucuzza, declined into its different sub-regional pronunciations, is a category of the soul and an infallible sign of the presence of Sicilian or other southern Italian migrants, in the new as well as the old world. In fact a strong internal migration affected also Italy, and my family is an example of this inter-Italian displacement. And cucuzza was the comfort food of my displaced Tuscan-Sicilian family for all the 80ies until it disappeared from our table when our supplier, a Sicilian farmer migrated in Firenze, passed away. For many years since then our family tradition was interrupted, until the same squash was finally back in our daily life: but now it was named 蒲瓜(Púguā) being unexpectedly cultivated and traded by Wenzhounese migrants. The Chinese migration, usually perceived as a threat for 'our' identity, was on the contrary able to re-activate a dormant family/regional ritual. The Self was re-activated by the Other, but now was a new Self, hybrid and inclusive.

Two identity narratives – Sicilian and Wenzhounese – are merging in the same vegetable, as the universal need for a comforting reconnection with home.

C. G.: Well, this makes me think about the future of the Bank, since now it represented mainly a symbolic gesture...

L. C.: I would define it as a pioneering gesture instead of a merely symbolic one – even if the border between the two is blurred. I like to imagine the bank evolving into a web platform where to exchange 'displaced' seeds. Every free seed, with a journey behind it, would be welcomed – and every seed is potentially a traveller, or a former traveller, intrinsically.

The platform would implement a smuggling original attitude, like for the illegally imported bean of Lucca that, beside its controversial origins, it's now fully embodied by the local community as something to be proud of. The web-platform makes me able to imagine how a pioneer-

ing gesture could expand and happily grow out of the confined space of the art world.

C.G.: In the exhibition, Baobab seeds became an instrument for a collective symbolic action on the occasion of the opening. A few months before you also planted a Baobab sprout in Biella's high security jail, what was the reason for this gesture? What was the link between the seeds in the exhibition and the plant in the jail?

L. C.: The idea of playing with baobab clearly originated from the compulsive phobias of the 'Little Prince', obsessed with eradicating the seeds of what represents a threat to his solipsistic planet. The Baobab is a beautiful plant that lives for over a thousand years, surviving dry-



FIGURE 5: LEONE CONTINI, THE BANK OF THE MIGRATING GERMLASM, OPENING PERFORMANCE WITH BAOBAB SEEDS. CONNECTIVE RESIDENCY AT CITTADELLARTE FONDAZIONE PISTOLETTO. BIELLA 2016. FOTOGRAFIA DI PIERLUIGI DI PIETRO.

ness by storing up to 120 thousand liters of water, a true promise of future, at least in West African imagery. But not for the little despot of a private empire: for him it represents the end of the established order. There is a strong post-colonial implication in this little grain.

The plant has entered into the jail premises – a place of control and constriction – as a gift of mine and, growing, will ideally destroy the institution, even if over an extremely long period of time. Hopefully the detained will take care of this little living being, and its promise of freedom. This Troy-horse has arrived in Italy as a grain naturally sealed inside a sweet and slightly sour fruit, extremely beneficial, called *bouye* in Wolof language.

This product usually circulates for little price in the so called 'ethnic' mini-markets, a sort of grey-zone of the

food distribution. At the same time the growing industries of super-foods vampirized it, turning *bouye* – with different name, packaging and texture (often powdered) – into an exotic elixir of life and a luxury product.

But the baobab-project grew beyond the jail: what will happen when these seeds will be dispersed in our ecosystem? Will they be able to sprout, root and grow? Will they be aggressive and invasive or will they represent an opportunity? The core of the second branch of this project exactly consisted in playing with such tangle of fears, expectations and hope, leading to a final formalization: Baobab seeds were thrown into a river from the exhibition spaces of Cittadellarte, using a slingshot or just spitting them after having chewed the fruit.

Following a loose chain of connections, and to answer your last question, isn't the xenophobe fear of the Other aiming to turn our mixed society into a narrow, monocultural prison?

In these actions, a gigantic system based on fear and control is challenged by a little grain/plant, projected into the future.

Biella – Prato, February 2017

FIGURE 6: LEONE CONTINI, THE BANK OF THE MIGRATING GERMLASM. CONNECTIVE RESIDENCY AT CITTADELLARTE FONDAZIONE PISTOLETTO. BIELLA 2016. FOTOGRAFIA DI PIERLUIGI DI PIETRO.



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PHOTO-ESSAY

MATTEO GUIDI

IL PROGETTO 'COOKING IN MAXIM SECURITY': FARE RICERCA IN CARCERE ATTRAVERSO UN LABORATORIO DI ARTE VISIVA

ABSTRACT

This photo-essay presents the weaves of a research method applied to total institutions where ethnographic investigations have very difficult access. In the frame of visual art workshops there has been an activation of production processes and collection of field data, these reflect in an active involvement of the participants – some of which have become and taken the role of improvise ethnographers – and in an interaction of the public, who becomes also the beneficiary of the final pieces. Total institutions are constantly transforming the subjects by objectivising them; the processes put in place by the artist and by the participants to the workshop bring out a reconquering of subjectivity through an acknowledgment of the material culture of the place and specifically through gastronomy.

This photo-essay presents the weaves of a research method applied to total institutions where ethnographic investigations have very difficult access. In the frame of visual art workshops there has been an activation of production processes and collection of field data, these reflect in an active involvement of the participants – some of which have become and taken the role of improvise ethnographers – and in an interaction of the public, who becomes

also the beneficiary of the final pieces. Total institutions are constantly transforming the subjects by objectivising them; the processes put in place by the artist and by the participants to the workshop bring out a reconquering of subjectivity through an acknowledgment of the material culture of the place and specifically through gastronomy.

KEYWORDS

Prison, Food, Art, Ethnography, Workshop

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Cooking in Maximum Security (da questo momento CMS) è frutto di una ricerca, ancora in corso, che si muove nell'intersezione tra antropologia culturale e arte visiva sulla pratica del 'fare cucina' nello specifico e anomalo contesto delle celle degli istituti penitenziari. La *Phase 1 [Italy]* del progetto nasce nelle sezioni di massima sicurezza delle carceri italiane, in particolare nella Casa di Reclusione di Spoleto, mentre la *Phase 2 [Spain]* prende forma nella sezione femminile del Centre Penitenziari Brians I, che si trova nelle colline catalane non troppo distanti da Barcellona.

Il progetto CMS ha mosso i suoi primi passi nell'autunno del 2009, quando sono stato invitato a occuparmi di un laboratorio di comunicazione visiva in programma per un gruppo detenuti della sezione ad alta sicurezza di un carcere dell'Italia centrale. Il mio intervento intendeva condurre il gruppo di lavoro verso l'analisi di alcune dinamiche quotidiane di 'vita carceraria'. Lo scopo finale era quello di raccogliere dati per la pubblicazione di un ricettario di cucina e produrre documenti utili a progettare altre forme di restituzione artistica.

Sia nella *Phase 1* che nella *Phase 2* la formula è rimasta la stessa: partire da incontri con i detenuti iscritti al laboratorio per generare domande e dati che potessero sollecitare una riflessione sulla libertà umana e sul valore della scelta attraverso la pratica del fare cucina.

Dall'avvio fino ad oggi, CMS si è arricchito di una serie di attività (mostre, seminari, workshops, opere video) e di collaborazioni (antropologi, artisti, performers, cuochi, nutrizionisti, sound designers) che hanno ampliato il repertorio di informazioni ed esperienze.

Un carcere di massima sicurezza si differenzia dagli altri non solo per alcune caratteristiche dell'impianto architettonico, riconoscibili nelle doppie sbarre alle finestre, nei muri rinforzati in cemento armato e in secondi muri di cinta posti tutto attorno. In questa tipologia di carceri le persone stanziano in prevalenza in celle singole e sono sorvegliate con più frequenza. Per lo staff significa una presenza zelante, con turni di lavoro talvolta estenuanti, mentre la popolazione detenuta paga un'imposta piuttosto alta in termini di controlli 'penetranti' subiti anche in quelli che sembrano essere ambiti irrilevanti della vita quotidiana (Sykes, 1958).

Svolgere ricerca di campo in un centro penitenziario porta con sé delle complicazioni evidenti già nell'azione di ingresso. Sul ricercatore è riversata tutta una serie di attenzioni e controlli che non gli permettono di compiere alcun tipo di osservazione diretta all'interno del rigido

“meccanico rituale della vita giornaliera” (Ricci, Salierno, 1976).

Lo studio delle ricette e degli strumenti d'uso in cucina è diventato dunque indispensabile per la ricerca, perché mi ha permesso di ricostruire frammenti di vita quotidiana in scenari difficili, se non impossibili, da analizzare altrimenti. Lo spazio del laboratorio artistico si è trasformato in una 'zona franca', nella quale ho potuto rilevare una serie di aspetti attraverso interviste libere o semi-strutturate. Non solo, la fiducia riposta nell'artista (ricercatore) invitato a svolgere un laboratorio è certamente superiore a quella posta in un ricercatore che varcasse l'ingresso con un permesso di ricerca autorizzato dal Ministero della Giustizia.

È all'interno di questo spazio del laboratorio che CMS si è mosso e continua a muoversi nelle sue due esperienze di campo in Italia (*Phase 1*) e Spagna (*Phase 2*). L'utilizzo della corrispondenza tradizionale e l'ausilio di volontari e operatori che entrano e escono con frequenza da un carcere sono stati nel caso di CMS metodi fondamentali ad uso della metodologia di ricerca.



Fotografia 1

Il coltello, utensile per eccellenza proibito in carcere. Le sue funzioni – sbucciare, affettare, tritare – trovano un posto preminente nelle primissime fasi di preparazione dei cibi. Come rendere possibile il pieno completamento di queste funzioni, senza utilizzare utensili affilati che possano essere usati in altro modo? Il dipartimento di amministrazione penitenziaria autorizza solamente l'ingresso di coltelli usa e getta in plastica. Tuttavia il coltello in plastica, a differenza di quello in metallo, non consente di compiere tutte le operazioni necessarie alla preparazione del cibo.

La costruzione di un oggetto sufficientemente tagliente diventa perciò una delle principali preoccupazioni di un cuoco recluso. Nelle carceri se ne realizzano diversi, utilizzando materiali duri di sufficiente malleabilità. Un pezzo di legno levigato al suolo è già un primo soddisfacente strumento da taglio. Un altro poco più tagliente e preciso è realizzato con una striscia di formica (laminato plastico di grande durezza) staccata dal rivestimento dell'armadietto o del tavolino e levigata ad arte sul muro. Anche il temperamatite dispone di piccolo oggetto tagliente che può essere estratto e sapientemente adattato a un manico, spesso recuperato da un vecchio spazzolino da denti. Il rasoio da barba, fornito dalla rivendita gestita dall'amministrazione penitenziaria, non dispone di lame sufficientemente dure, ma può in ogni caso soddisfare la necessità di affettare finemente alcune verdure.

La fotografia (1) è stata realizzata durante la performance di una cuoca vegana che nel 2014 ha accettato di realizzare una dimostrazione di cucina utilizzando le ricette e i metodi di costruzione degli utensili da cucina che CMS ha raccolto e documentato.



Fotografia 2

La fotografia (2) è tratta dalla stessa performance descritta nella didascalia dell'immagine precedente.



Fotografia 3

La fotografia (3) è un fermo immagine del video *Cucina in libertà*, realizzato da Massimiliano De Simone con i detenuti della casa circondariale di Pesaro e liberamente ispirato al progetto CMS nell'ambito della collaborazione tra CMS project e COOP Consumatori Pesaro (2016).



Fotografia 4

Dopo il taglio e le altre lavorazioni a freddo, è nel passaggio dal crudo al cotto che interviene un altro elemento che assegna significato al fare cucina in carcere. Nella propria cella, infatti, è consentito avere un fornello a gas da campeggio. Quando la cottura richiede maggiore potenza, si uniscono due fornelli, chiedendone uno in prestito a un compagno di sezione. Quando invece si ha necessità di un calore diffuso e avvolgente, come nei casi in cui si desidera cuocere la massa del pane o il preparato per una crostata, diventa importante la presenza di un forno, che può essere realizzato compiendo modifiche e trasformazioni all'attrezzatura disponibile. Una cella è di per sé una stanza per dormire, seppure le attività che coinvolge sono svariate. L'arredamento di una cella di un carcere di massima sicurezza prevede, oltre a un letto e a un tavolo-scrivania affisso al muro, anche uno sgabello e alcuni armadietti in metallo, anch'essi fissati alle pareti. Questi arredi sono forniti dal Ministero della Giustizia e sono identici in tutte le carceri dello Stato. A dispetto della loro presenza costante e invariabile, queste suppellettili vedono tuttavia trasformare continuamente la loro funzione d'uso: una semplice seduta o un contenitore per i vestiti possono essere ad esempio convertiti in ambienti da portare alla temperatura conveniente per la cottura del pane o di altri cibi. L'immagine (4), invece, presenta un inedito forno per cucinare torte realizzato da due detenuti (cuochi in permesso lavoro in un ristorante esterno al carcere) durante una delle presentazioni del progetto CMS (2013). In alcune carceri, non di massima sicurezza, è permesso l'acquisto di fogli di alluminio per uso domestico.

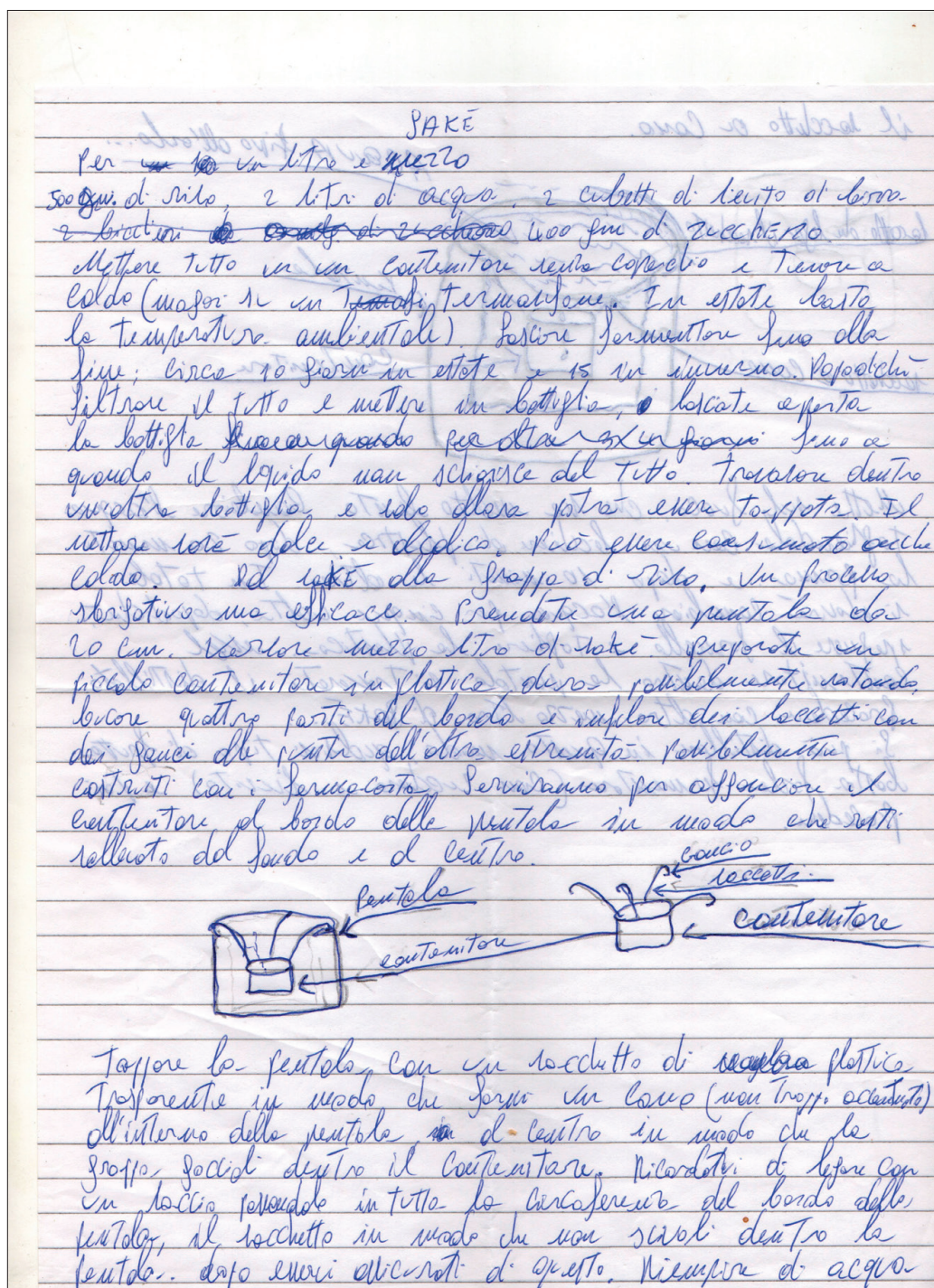


Fotografia 5

Se il principale obiettivo della detenzione è quello di restituire al detenuto la capacità di “vivere in società” (Hayner e Ash, 1940: 577), è tuttavia evidente che la principale caratteristica della reclusione è l’allontanamento del soggetto dal mondo sociale, in particolare dall’ambiente familiare e dai gruppi cui è appartenuto prima della carcerazione. Questo aspetto si amplifica nella reclusione ad alto indice di vigilanza. Per questo motivo, le dinamiche che impegnano i detenuti nella preparazione dei cibi e i rapporti sociali che la animano, a partire dalle aggregazioni – spesso costruite sulla base della provenienza geografica – che si compiono attorno alla tavola imbandita, sono elementi etnografici importanti, che compaiono analizzando i rapporti fra detenzione e consumo del cibo.

Gli storici dell’alimentazione hanno spesso esaminato la caratteristica comunitaria del consumo dei pasti, del convictus, del cum vivere (Montanari 1989, Joannès, 1980, Althoff, 2003). I dati raccolti con le discussioni prodotte durante le ore del laboratorio hanno evidenziato come, anche nei luoghi nei quali si isola e si separa (segregare, da segrex, cioè separato), il cibo diventa occasione per creare momenti condivisi nelle ‘ore di socialità’ che l’istituzione mette a disposizione. E se mangiare soli è segno di ferinità (Montanari 1989), partecipare a un pasto in comune rappresenta, al contrario, un momento per fraternizzare (Joannès 1980).

La fotografia (5) presenta la preparazione di un pesto alla genovese durante la performance collettiva di CMS all’Akademie der Künste der Welt di Colonia (2013).



Fotografia 6

Nella fotografia (6) è visibile la ricetta per la produzione di sakè inviata (a chi scrive) a mezzo posta da un detenuto di un carcere italiano.



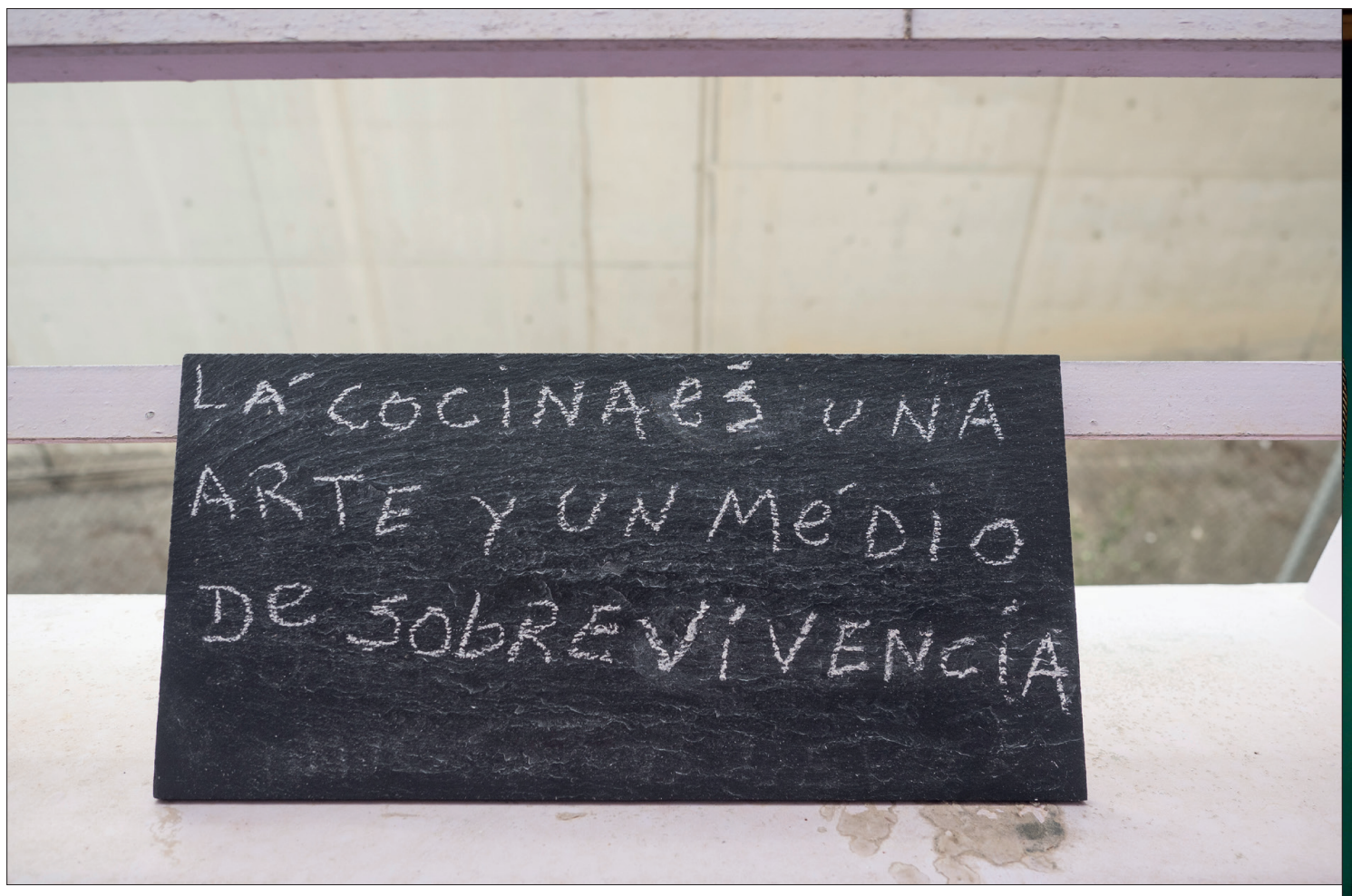
Fotografia 7

Nei momenti collettivi si banchetta principalmente con dolci preparati dalle persone detenute e con bevande acquistate allo spaccio del carcere. Nella stessa ottica della condivisione e della festa rientra il consumo di alcool. L'amministrazione penitenziaria italiana permette l'acquisto di 1/4 di vino al giorno per accompagnare i pasti. Diverso è il caso delle strutture penitenziarie spagnole, dove l'alcool è assolutamente proibito. In entrambi i casi si possono documentare diverse forme di produzione di sostanze alcoliche destinate a celebrare i momenti di festa (Natale, capodanno e compleanni). Nel caso italiano, avendo già a disposizione una sostanza alcolica, con l'uso del fuoco si può procedere alla produzione di distillati. Nel caso spagnolo, si sperimenta attraverso la fermentazione di frutta, cui vengono aggiunte sostanze zuccherine per la produzione di una bevanda a lieve contenuto alcolico comunemente denominata chicha, dall'omonima bevanda prodotta nei paesi latino americani da tempi remoti e per usi rituali. La fotografia (7) rappresenta una performance nella quale si prepara la bevanda chicha ricavandola dalla fermentazione di mele e zucchero nel corso della collaborazione tra CMS e Espai Nyam Nyam di Barcellona (2015).



Fotografia 8 e 9

Nel caso dei fermi-immagine (8-9), tratti da una delle video-ricette realizzate nei laboratori di CMS Phase 2 [Spain], un cheesecake è preparato con un mix di biscotti da colazione tritati, amalgamati con burro (non reperibile all'economato ma nella mensa del centro penitenziario) e ricoperti di yogurt greco, formaggio spalmabile e marmellata.



Fotografia 11

In carcere ogni azione che esce dal ripetitivo programma quotidiano o che nasce da un'iniziativa personale deve dipendere dall'autorizzazione del personale di sorveglianza. Erving Goffman osservava che il soggetto recluso viene a trovarsi in una condizione 'innaturale' per una persona adulta, essendo obbligato a dover chiedere il permesso per compiere qualunque azione, anche quella più quotidiana che fuori dal carcere farebbe senza il consenso di nessuno (Goffman 1968). Molti detenuti, spesso non abituati a cucinare, sono persone che fuori dal penitenziario provvedevano ai bisogni della famiglia, contribuendo economicamente all'acquisto dei prodotti alimentari. Con la reclusione questa relazione si rovescia: il detenuto dipende dal sostegno economico della famiglia che vive fuori dal carcere. È inoltre nutrito con il cibo dispensato dal dipartimento di amministrazione penitenziaria, e questo è uno degli aspetti che potrebbero determinare il persistere di una condizione di passività. Come abbiamo visto, tuttavia, il recluso sceglie gli alimenti che predilige e si adopera in molti diversi modi per prepararli e consumarli nelle modalità e nei tempi che gli sono più congeniali. Se si considera il contesto istituzionale che limita, subordina e regola il ruolo del soggetto e le sue possibilità decisionali, questo aspetto è di particolare rilevanza antropologica, dal momento che la pratica di cucinare comporta un insieme di scelte e risultati contestuali fortemente caratterizzati. La frase della fotografia (11) [La cucina è un'arte e un mezzo di sopravvivenza] è stata scritta durante il workshop di CMS Phase 2 [Spain] (2015) da una delle ragazze detenute partecipanti all'attività. La rilevanza di tale frase acquisisce un ulteriore valore di riflessione se si considera che nelle carceri spagnole, come abbiamo visto, non è possibile cucinare in cella.



Fotografia 12

Il focus su oggetti reinterpretati per cucinare all'interno delle celle di un carcere, come abbiamo visto, è stato anche nella Phase 2 [Spain] l'elemento fondamentale della ricerca e del lavoro svolto durante i workshops nell'istituto penitenziario.

Le detenute delle carceri spagnole - abbiamo scritto - non sono autorizzate a comprare utensili da cucina di base, soprattutto non possono maneggiare fuoco o fornelli elettrici. Ciononostante, sono numerosi gli oggetti, tra quelli reperibili, che vengono utilizzati per trasformare i pochi prodotti confezionati e ritrovare una propria 'normalità' alimentare.

L'opera video-sonora realizzata in questa fase prende spunto da questo, da interpretazioni 'geniali' di oggetti reperibili all'interno del carcere, con i quali realizzare suoni che riportano alla nostra (loro) condizione di persone non detenute. Suoni come rompere un uovo per realizzare una tortillas de patatas, aprire il tappo di una bottiglia di vino, tagliare un cocomero o affettare una fetta di pane sono stati costruiti ad alta definizione utilizzando oggetti 'improbabili' reperiti all'interno del carcere, adottando la tecnica con la quale il cinema riproduce suoni del quotidiano. La fotografia (12) espone la messa in mostra dell'opera audio-video all'interno di un'installazione artistica concepita per lo spazio FoodCultura all'interno del mercato della Boqueria di Barcellona (2016).

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NICO ANGIULI

IL PAESE È DEI PAESANI

ABSTRACT

This photo-essay documents moments of the film made between Cerignola (Foggia, Italy) and the district of Tre Titoli where the research – led by Nico Angiuli – has intertwined the farmers' struggles of the early twentieth century with the contemporary dynamics of exploitation of migrant labor. A hundred years ago in Cerignola, the workers led by Giuseppe Di Vittorio (the iconic Italian secretary of the labor union CGIL) fought against the landowners to claim their rights; Di Vittorio was often busy alongside politicians as Gramsci and De Gasperi, but also at the forefront alongside the Spanish partisans in the anti-fascist resistance.

The film project has as protagonists the 'children' of the southern peasants who fought with him (today landowners) and the new local laborers (Ghanians especially), in order to grasp the transformations of the farmers' class and reflect on the cyclicity of a Story that punctually re-propose new victims and new perpetrators.

KEYWORDS

Peasant memories, Labor union, New citizens, Migrants, Agriculture

NICO ANGIULI

Nico Angiuli is a visual artist and a filmmaker. He has collaborated with Stalker; Via Farini & CareOf; Apulia Film Commission; MiBact; Dena Foundation; Cittadellarte. He worked between Italy, Albania, Greece and Spain, realizing performances and movies as *Ma Vai a Lavorare!* (2008), *Le piastrelle sono intenzioni* (2010), *The Tools' Dance* (presented as three-act play at Fabbrica del Vapore in Milan).

In 2016 he participated at 16th Quadriennale of Rome; in 2015 he participated in several group exhibitions amongst others at 2nd Biennial Kiev; MaRT Rovereto; Fondazione Sandretto Turin; MAAM Museum Rome, NOoSPHERE Arts NYC; 4th Athens Biennial; SPAC Udine; National Theatre Tirana; Bozar Bruxelles. Has been nominated for the Visible Award 2017.
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Fotografia 1

Giuseppe Di Vittorio, figlio di contadini, nasce a Cerignola nel 1892 e rimane orfano di padre molto presto; la sua parabola da sindacalista inizia come segretario della Camera del Lavoro di Minervino Murge e si chiude nel 1957, quando è Presidente Mondiale dei Sindacati Uniti.

Di Vittorio fu sempre il benvenuto nel suo paese natale e dopo la sua morte i festeggiamenti del Primo Maggio divennero, di fatto, una ricorrenza laica in suo onore. Tuttavia, dagli anni sessanta ad oggi, la memoria divittoriana ha subito una mutazione: il leader continua a essere ricordato e celebrato in città e in tutta Italia, ma il senso delle istanze che animarono il suo pensiero sembra perdersi nell'aspetto retorico e commemorativo.



Fotografia 2 e 3

La trasformazione della classe bracciantile europea è un fenomeno evidente, in particolar modo nell'Italia meridionale: oggi sono decine le comunità straniere che vivono e lavorano nei campi agricoli della Puglia e delle terre in cui visse e lottò Giuseppe Di Vittorio. A Cerignola, questo fenomeno assume un tono specifico, perché i migranti sembrano riprodurre la vita dei braccianti italiani di un secolo fa, sollevando le stesse criticità denunciate da Di Vittorio.



Fotografia 4

I braccianti stranieri che hanno partecipato al film vivono a Borgo Tre Titoli, nell'agro di Cerignola, una comunità impiegata nella raccolta dei pomodori e stanzialmente insediata in quest'area da circa venti anni. Il laboratorio filmico è stato possibile grazie al sostegno dell'associazione *Connecting Cultures* Milano e del gruppo curatoriale *Vesselartproject*. Il film è stato in parte finanziato dal premio *Arte Patrimonio Diritti Umani*. Hanno partecipato inoltre l'associazione *Casa Di Vittorio*, l'Assessorato alla Cultura del Comune di Cerignola, la CGIL locale, l'associazione *Ghetto Out Nelson Mandela*, alcuni medici dell'ambulatorio mobile *Articolo 32 di Emergency* e altri volontari e professionisti che si sono avvicinati nel corso del laboratorio. L'obiettivo era quello di recuperare, nelle memorie scritte e orali, le vicende storiche che videro protagonista Di Vittorio a Cerignola, rendendo note alla comunità degli stranieri che oggi vivono e lavorano negli stessi luoghi le azioni di lotta e di emancipazione che un tempo coinvolsero gli italiani. Nel corso degli incontri si è quindi dato spazio alla narrazione di un piccolo gruppo di giovani ghaniani, offrendo loro un'occasione di autorappresentazione inedita, fuori dalle attività economiche, sanitarie e socioassistenziali che spesso definiscono e limitano il rapporto tra locali e stranieri. Sono state inoltre portate alla luce le molte similitudini che intercorrono tra lo sfruttamento dei lavoratori agricoli di cento anni fa e quello dei braccianti di oggi. Così, il racconto di immagini, memorie storiche e testimonianze del presente ha dato forma alle tematiche centrali della drammaturgia filmica poi messa in scena. Progressivamente, infatti, si è giunti a ragionare sulla sovrapposizione di due corpi sociali, quello dei braccianti nati a Cerignola e quello dei lavoratori stranieri, per dare forma a un terzo nuovo corpo narrativo in cui gli eventi storici sono stati riattualizzati dai migranti e la condizione migrante è stata reinterpretata dai braccianti italiani.



Fotografia 5

Seth Owusu Antwi è uno dei protagonisti del film. Abita a Tre Titoli da sei anni e viene dal Ghana. La fotografia lo ritrae mentre legge alcune pagine del libro *La memoria che resta. Vita quotidiana, mito e storia dei braccianti nel Tavoliere di Puglia* di Giovanni Rinaldi e Paola Sobrero (Aramirè, Lecce, 2004).



Fotografia 6 e 7

Tra le tante problematiche emerse nel corso del laboratorio filmico ci sono lo sradicamento vissuto dagli immigrati (doppiamente sradicati dal luogo natio e nel luogo d'arrivo), la necessità di una rappresentanza politica, la scarsa partecipazione alla vita pubblica e sociale.



Fotografia 8

Gerardo Cristiano (bracciante italiano) nel ruolo di un lavoratore ghaniano di Tre Titoli. Il bracciante recita, nel Teatro Mercadante di Cerignola, un poema in dialetto cerignolano: il testo di questo monologo – ripreso dalla tradizione popolare locale – è riadattato per narrare la condizione del bracciante straniero contemporaneo.



Fotografia 9 e 10

Uno degli episodi storici rimessi in scena è ispirato a un'azione che Di Vittorio compì nel 1917: al tempo, ai braccianti era concesso di utilizzare per coprirsi solo un tabarro (una sorta di scialle scuro), mentre i padroni potevano indossare un vero e proprio cappotto. Di Vittorio fece cucire per sé e per alcuni suoi compagni dei cappotti su misura, che indossarono in segno di sfida una domenica a mezzogiorno, passeggiando nel corso principale di Cerignola. Così è stata ripetuta la performance divittoriana: un gruppo di giovani migranti africani di Tre Titoli ha indossato abiti formali per attraversare le strade dell'abitato e mostrarsi in pubblico, uscendo simbolicamente dal retroscena.



Fotografia 11 e 12

Ancora un intervento performativo nello spazio pubblico: l'organizzazione di un comizio in cui il sindacalista di origini camerunensi Jean-René Bilongo ha recitato il testo di un discorso tenuto da Di Vittorio a Genova nel 1953.



Fotografia 13

«Amici e Compagni lavoratori d'Italia! Si ravviva la nostra fede nella conquista di un destino migliore. Il lavoro eleva gli uomini e li affraterna tutti al di sopra di ogni frontiera. È la giornata in cui i lavoratori di tutti i Paesi, di tutte le lingue e di tutte le razze riconfermano il patto della loro solidarietà e ribadiscono il loro impegno storico di marciare uniti sulla via della propria emancipazione sociale, che libererà tutta la società da ogni forma di sfruttamento e di servaggio dell'uomo sull'uomo e permetterà a tutta l'umanità di conquistare livelli superiori di Giustizia, di Pace e di Fratellanza tra tutti i popoli della Terra. Ma siamo ben lontani dalla conquista di un livello di vita soddisfacente. Di questa situazione approfittano alcuni ceti, tra i più privilegiati del nostro Paese, per instaurare nei luoghi di lavoro una disciplina dura e ingiusta allo scopo di dividere e scoraggiare i lavoratori, onde sottoporli a uno sfruttamento sempre più intenso e conseguire maggiori profitti.» (cfr. Giuseppe Di Vittorio)

GIULIO SQUILLACCIOTTI

RMHC. THE SHAPING OF AN ARCHIVE FOR THE 90S ROMAN HARDCORE COMMUNITY

ABSTRACT

The scattered images here gathered document part of an archive of 'finds' from the 80s and 90s Hardcore-Punk music community from Rome, collected during seven years research for the shooting of the feature documentary film RMHC - 1989/1999 Hardcore a Roma.

This photo essay and related introduction unroll the different kinds of approaches used by the artist within the community, in order to establish an ordered list of the events told by the interviewed members of the scene, to determine a cultural knowledge upon material that so far struggled to be considered as worth to be shared, and to shape, through a work of 'translation', a choral film narrative which would stand clear even to a non-community/wider audience.

KEYWORDS

Punk, Hardcore, Rome, Film Documentary,
Participatory Narrative

GIULIO SQUILLACCIOTTI

Giulio Squillacciotti (1982) was born in Rome. Artist, film-maker and researcher, he lives and works in Milan, Italy. He is 2018/2019 Fellow at the Van Eyck Academy in Maastricht, The Netherlands.

His work is mainly oriented on storytelling, cultural apexes and the way traditions re-shape in new contexts. His research merges together fiction and historical facts. Using film, documentary, sound and performance, Squillacciotti produces research-based investigations that revisit history, crafting new stories

from subjective perspectives, storytelling, religion and popular culture.

His work has been exhibited and screened internationally at, among the others, Centre Pompidou, Palais de Tokyo and Gayte Lyrique in Paris (F), Berlin Haus der Kultur der Welt and Neues Museum in Weimar (D), Screen Space in Melbourne (AU), Manifesta 8 in Murcia (E), Le Magasin CNAC in Grenoble (F), AKV of Den Bosch (NL), Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture (TR), Beirut Art Centre in Lebanon (RL), New York Photo Festival, Dumbo Video and the Columbia University in New York City (USA), Art Institute of Boston (USA), OCAT in Shanghai (PRC), PAC, Triennale and ViaFarini in Milan, MACRO, MAXXI and 16th Quadriennale of Rome, Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin, and the Official Competition of the 33rd and 35th Torino Film Festival.

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The images collected in this photo essay portrait some of the materials (pictures, VHS videos, flyers from shows, letters, production notes) collected while I was involved in the shooting of some 60 hours of interviews for the feature documentary film *RMHC - 1989/1999 Hardcore a Roma*, a non-fiction film on the 80s and 90s Hardcore-Punk music community from Rome, shot over a period of seven years, from 2005 to 2012.

The aim that made me walk the first steps into this seven years research, was the idea of producing a film documentary which would have faced a series of issues related to the assumption of how a music and life style tradition, coming from the USA, took place in Rome in the 80s and 90s, overtaking what was the already existing post 70s political extra-parliamentary and Punk scene of the roman squats.

The ambition was to investigate, through a series of interviews, how a foreign phenomenon was first introduced in Rome from the USA and shaped locally through the chances Rome was offering at the time. As, to say, how a definite tradition can be re-invented by a shift of context, both cultural and geographical.

Focus of my research was the domestication of a foreign sub-culture before the days of internet and easy globalisation, when a community was distributing fanzines in lieu of web pages, and exchange records instead of file sharing. Being still active, nowadays, a Punk and Hardcore scene, I wanted to mark an historical difference pointing out the pioneering aspects that first made it possible.

Being myself an artist and film director, not an anthropologist so, I wanted to borrow, though, some of the features of the discipline in order to shape a sort of ethnographic glance at something close, both in time and cultural/geographical proximity. In addition, at the same time of the collection of datas through interviews, I started gathering some of the materials – every here and there mentioned as ‘finds’ in archeological terms – regarding the community and produced by the community. Finds as old VHS videos, pictures, fanzines, records, posters, tapes, silk-screened t-shirts, stood as a visual synthesis of what this sub-culture have been producing over the decade taken in analysis. The interesting aspect of this physical archive research was that more than half of the elements collected have never been shown before the film, as, to say, that the generation involved in the scene never felt the need to share it publicly.

Having myself taken part of that entourage marginally from 1996 to 1999, the main intent of the narrative of the

film, as of the approach to the investigated topics faced during the interviews, was to detach myself from what I already knew, in order not to fall into prejudices of an already served knowledge I thought I could have had. But I had indeed a sort of script to follow, and in order to build a narrative of scattered voices leading to a common and comprehensible film documentary, the very first need I had to face in my research was to find a methodology.

Starting from a group of personal acquaintances that introduced me to other interesting parties, I carried out the reconstruction of a recent past through the unique voices of the people who took on active roles in the creation – and later preservation – of the Hardcore entourage. As someone with a solid knowledge of the topic and certain memories of the aforementioned past, also beyond direct experience, I chronologically delineated the crucial elements on which to build the bulk of my questions, but there I stopped, allowing interviewees to speak freely and, if needed, refute my assumptions.

The initial impulse that set the collection of relevant material in motion came from the present state of Hardcore, which continues to exist in a different form, more accessible to the masses. Given that nowadays society is mostly accustomed to similar phenomena – in terms of both music and aesthetics – the research question arose based on curiosity regarding the ways of experiencing and making the most of this once marginal subculture. Concerning the chronological flow of events, I used the direct knowledge and memories of the documentary's protagonists to reconstruct a timeline of the genre's import from abroad, its localisation by certain bands and, lastly, its constant aesthetic and behavioral evolution until its demise.

As the first of the core research stages, devising the timeline was meant to organise the initial questions for the actors/protagonists and provide a structure in which to integrate the new notions obtained through the interviews and new contacts. These acquired notions constitute the second research stage, while their integration into the original framework helped to construct a story that could be narrated without the need for a script or pre-determined storyline.

The documentary was built while making it, looking at the footage and listening to the interviews, even though this change occurred during the progress of the work. Initially the idea was to direct the interviewees within a narrative established before the editing stage, where the actual discursive cut happens, but this thought imme-

diately disappeared once I acknowledged the anecdotes' potential. Consider it a sort of Copernican revolution of the narration, in which the author is actually a satellite revolving around the main events and not the central point. In the same vein, I eliminated the voiceover in favour of direct storytelling from the protagonists, followed by the necessary embedding of video material documenting the narrated time, the 'finds'.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this collection – devoid of any historiographical intention – was that it was performed through concrete, non-digital means, and not through indirect sources such as TV or the Internet. Not unlike the protagonists' own research of the phenomenon, when it was still largely unknown, my documentation was also based on physically visiting strangers and asking them for objects and memorabilia in order to catalog and archive useful information. In other words, if in the 80s or early 90s a teenager wanted to find out more about this music genre, and all that it entailed, he/she could not simply do so via the usual avenues, but had to physically search for it, follow people and ask them in person for more details. My acquisition of materials for the documentary thus emulated that of the protagonists, as I abandoned the possibilities afforded by contemporary media and embraced a personal journey through anachronistic meetings at record stores, bar outings, phone calls, watching VHS recordings on VCRs, listening to tapes on cassette players, examining photo negatives, playing vinyl records and so on.

The steps outlined above only became apparent as they were unfolding. They became parameters without parameters, like shooting without knowing what to expect, more out of the desire to immerse oneself in the explored environment than to tell its story, eventually witnessing the elements come together in a unified narrative. Then, during editing, technique becomes complementary to the narration constructed by the interviewees and a means for the viewers to enjoy it.

As previously underlined, the initial approach to the interviews came through the protagonists I already knew. With them, I could have informal conversations where I could deconstruct our common knowledge and then create a list of topics that helped delineate the scope of future discussions. It was through these first interviews, conducted at the end of 2005, that I managed to establish the framework for the next batch – namely what, how and whom to ask and, most importantly, from where to generate interest in sharing a dialogic vocabulary. Many of those

interviewed in the second round – people I had not previously met – unsurprisingly showed a certain distrust in the interviewer and skepticism about the need for this type of project. After initial caution, though, the most remarkable realisation about the importance of past and now-abandoned achievements takes place when a third party shows interest in it. An experience becomes a carrier of culture that one is unaware of until requested to narrate it in front of someone. In that moment, the interviewees acknowledge that the interviewer is trying to gather all relevant experiences into a lasting memento, capable of transmitting them to those not in the know.

Here the documentary's priority comes into play, the self-awareness as part of a community whose collective memory has to be preserved through individual recollections. In other words, individual remembrance is key to the social memory of an entire group. The common view held by the documentary's protagonists – instilled by an increased societal acceptance of the elements introduced by their pioneering efforts – functions as a framework for their discourse, now taking the form of a monologue. Research on the protagonists purposefully started between 10 and 20 years since the happenings discussed in the film took place. This was to avoid the risk of a voluntary oblivion of a far, juvenile period. The past, in fact, is hidden and repressed by the needs of present action, since the protagonists are now living very differently from their old, hardcore ways (even though not necessarily estranged from their original spirit). The process of reconstructing the past is obviously gradual, but, given the proximity of events, it is also relatively simple. Albeit distant, this fragmented consciousness starts to reassemble from the precise moment personal recollections of the past are reactivated by the newly acquired awareness of their present relevance. In the bigger picture, these single memories aggregate to form the collective, group memory.

Perhaps the most interesting element, apart from the narration of the distinctive events that marked the development of Hardcore in Rome, is the newfound awareness of the genre's path and the will to remember it through narration itself. Years later, a seemingly juvenile movement is remembered, still in time as a human experience, but whose character still lingers in the lives of its protagonists. This is the current distance from the phenomenon today, after it has received a number of inputs that have levelled its once local characteristic to a homogenous global style.

As contemporary individuals ‘suicided by society’, in spite of their different backgrounds, these people brought forth ideas and ways of doing things that are uncommon and, again, I like to think that my presence there as interviewer, somehow, made possible the constitution of self-awareness in the interviewed upon the cultural value of that past which, for some of them, hasn’t turned their actual present into something glorious.

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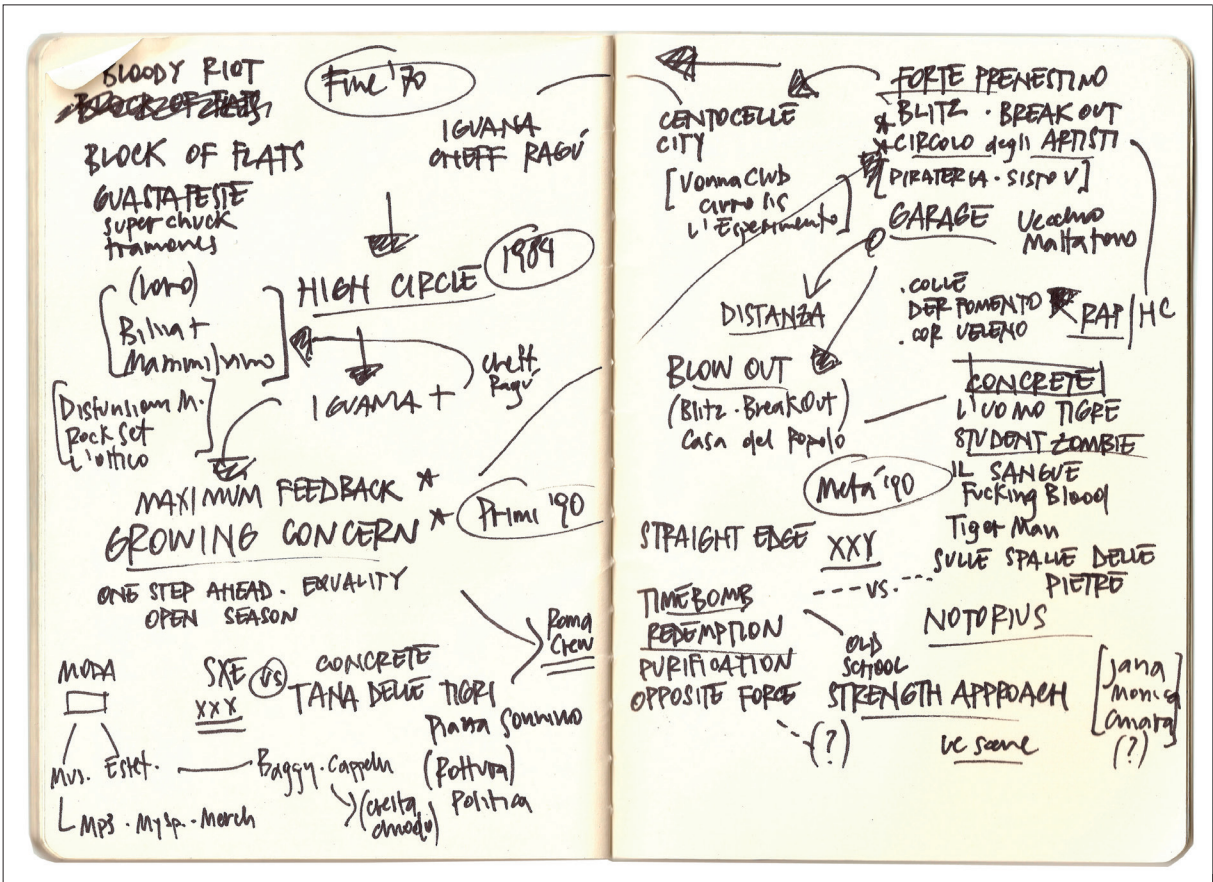
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Fotografia 1

Rome, Uonna Club. 1984. The band High Circle. The very first band from Rome to clearly taking inspiration from the American Hardcore music (and lifestyle) rather than from the British Punk Scene. Features of the band outfits are clearly referable to American Bands of the 80s, something so far unknown and never seen in a Roman squat context. From the archive of Massimiliano Ruggeri and Giampaolo Billia.



Fotografia 2

Rome, 2005. The very first step of the research, before even starting the shooting of the interviews, was to draw a graphical map on how, in my knowledge, the scene presumably developed. Name of bands, years and places are listed in a probable timeline of the events along with names of people which, in my assumptions, should have been able to tell a portion of the story. The topics and the structure of the film, obviously, didn't follow this presumable timeline, but the narrative was rather based on an on-going base through what the interviewed protagonists told and listed as memorable events.



Fotografia 3

Rome, 1988 or 1989. Years later from the High Circle scene, this picture portrays the first bunch of members forming the part of the early Roman Hardcore community, the so-called 'Roma Crew'. The picture was taken at the squat Centro Sociale Break Out, one of the first venues where the Roman Hardcore Community started setting shows on its own, without any support from the already existing Punk Scene. Some 'Xs' are easy to spot painted on a few of the hands photographed, as to testify their commitment to the Straight Edge movement. The Straight Edge movement, born in USA in the 80s, states how punk life can be lived without drugs and alcohol. The Roman way to live it was in response to the local 70s punk political context where drugs were of common use. From the archive of Paolo Petralia.



Fotografia 4

Rome, 1991. A letter from Germany to Inti Carboni (one of the member of the Roman scene) in response to one of the many requests to organise a show out of Rome. In the 80s and 90s, before the internet came to hands of the Roman community, traditional mail correspondence was the only way to organise tours for bands in Europe as worldwide. It was very significant to me as a 'find' to unveil the real commitment needed at the time to stepping out of Rome. From the archive of Inti Carboni.



Fotografia 5 e 6

Somewhere between French and Italian border, 1990/1991. The band Concrete on a European tour. Following the preceding letter, these images stand as a proof on how tours took the road and how daily life on tour was lived. A considerable portion of the film is dedicated – through images and interviews – to the topic of taking the road on self organised tours, way before Booking Agencies appeared in the scene. From the archive of Gregorio Luciani.



Fotografia 7

Rome, Circolo degli Artisti, 1995. Stage diving during an Evidence show. In later years the crowd attending Hardcore shows increased considerably due to the system of promoting shows. Photo by Dario Ruggiero.



Fotografia 8

Rome, 1995. Flyer from a concert at the squat Centro Sociale Break Out. Before a regular use of computers to design street posters, the way to promote Hardcore shows was through the use of copy machines where venues, name of bands and timings were shaped by cutting and pasting letters from papers. From the archive of Simone Molla.



Fotografia 9 e 10

Torino, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, 2010. Half way to the production of the film, I've been invited to take part at the group show 21x21 - 21 Artisti per il XXI Secolo curated by Francesco Bonami. I decided to display all the finds collected at that stage, along with a small portion of the interviews gathered so far, in order to give a tangible perspective of what my research physically was. The idea of scratching through real archives rather than in digital ones, was prevalent as a statement to the kind of research I was conducting. Vinyl records, fanzines, pictures, digitalised VHS, tapes, patches, and t-shirts are displayed as archeological finds from a close past. Photos by Mathieu Vermeer.



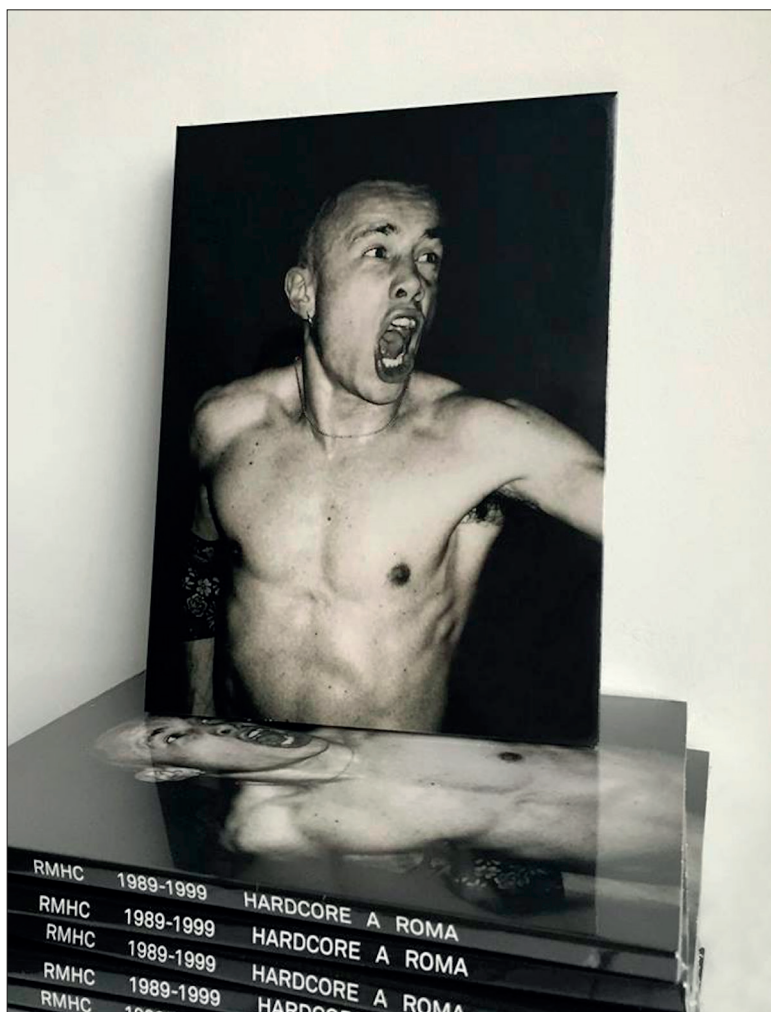
Fotografia 11

Rome, Liceo Mamiani, 1995. The band *Sulle spalle delle Pietre* performing during a high school occupation. The kind of life style and music the Hardcore scene was proposing - the idea that everybody could take part at it with his own, even poor, skills - overflow so much that occupied schools became last minute stages where to perform. Photo by Dario Ruggiero.



Fotografia 12

Rome, 2012. The 'restitution' of the research in the shape of a film. In 2012, seven years after the first interviews were shot, I finally came to an end of the film. I decided to screen it publicly in an anonymous non-scene related neither art related venue in order not to associate the event too much to an already existing context, both from the past as for the present. The audience was of some 500 attendees, the event took two non-planned screenings. Photo by Roberto Albigi.



Fotografia 13

2014. The DVD of Roma Hardcore - 1989/1999 Hardcore a Roma. Two years after the premiere in Rome and a screening tour worldwide, I decided not to post the film online, but to rather follow the DIY (Do It Yourself) convictions and self-pressing a DVD, an object and not a file. In a sort of etymologically valuable statement, I wanted to close the circle of the past by 'doing at home', the same way it has been done so far in the scene, before the internet.



Fotografia 14

Following the metaphor of archeological finds, this last image stands as a proof of how the research in the basements of the people was conducted. This still from a Super 8 film portrait a Growing Concern show in the early 90s. The film was found still closed in a Super 8 camera, un-processed, in a box. It was only later processed and digitalised by myself but never used in the film.

OFF-TOPIC PHOTO-ESSAY

RENATO BOCCASSINO

NORTHERN UGANDA, 1933-1934 edited by Antonello Ricci

ABSTRACT

The photographs presented here have been selected for the exhibition Birth and Death among the Acholi: Renato Boccassino's Photographs, 1933-1934 (October 18 - November 18, 2016) and are accompanied by the original exhibition captions. They are related to Antonello Ricci's article published in this issue. See also (in Italian and with a wider selection) www.academia.edu/31137371/le_fotografie_di_Renato_Boccassino_della_spedizione_tra_gli_acholi_in_uganda_prime_considerazioni_VOCI_2015.

KEYWORDS

Acholi, Exhibition, Ethnography, Photography, Uganda, Boccassino

RENATO BOCCASSINO

(1904-1976) was an Italian Ethnologist who was mainly active in the period between the two world wars and in the first decades after World War II. In those years his figure is related to a radical Catholic point of view in ethnology which was encouraged by the Vatican and was oriented by the German scholar Father Wilhelm Schmidt. From 1933 to 1934 Boccassino made a field research in Uganda among the Acholi people, in the Nile basin, producing many documents such as papers, photos, notebooks, letters. In 2006 these documents were donated to the Istituto centrale per il catalogo e la documentazione (ICCD) of the Ministero dei beni e delle attività culturali e del turismo by his daughter

Maria Boccassino and they constitute the Boccassino fund in the Gabinetto fotografico nazionale Archivio fotografico there.



Fotografia 1

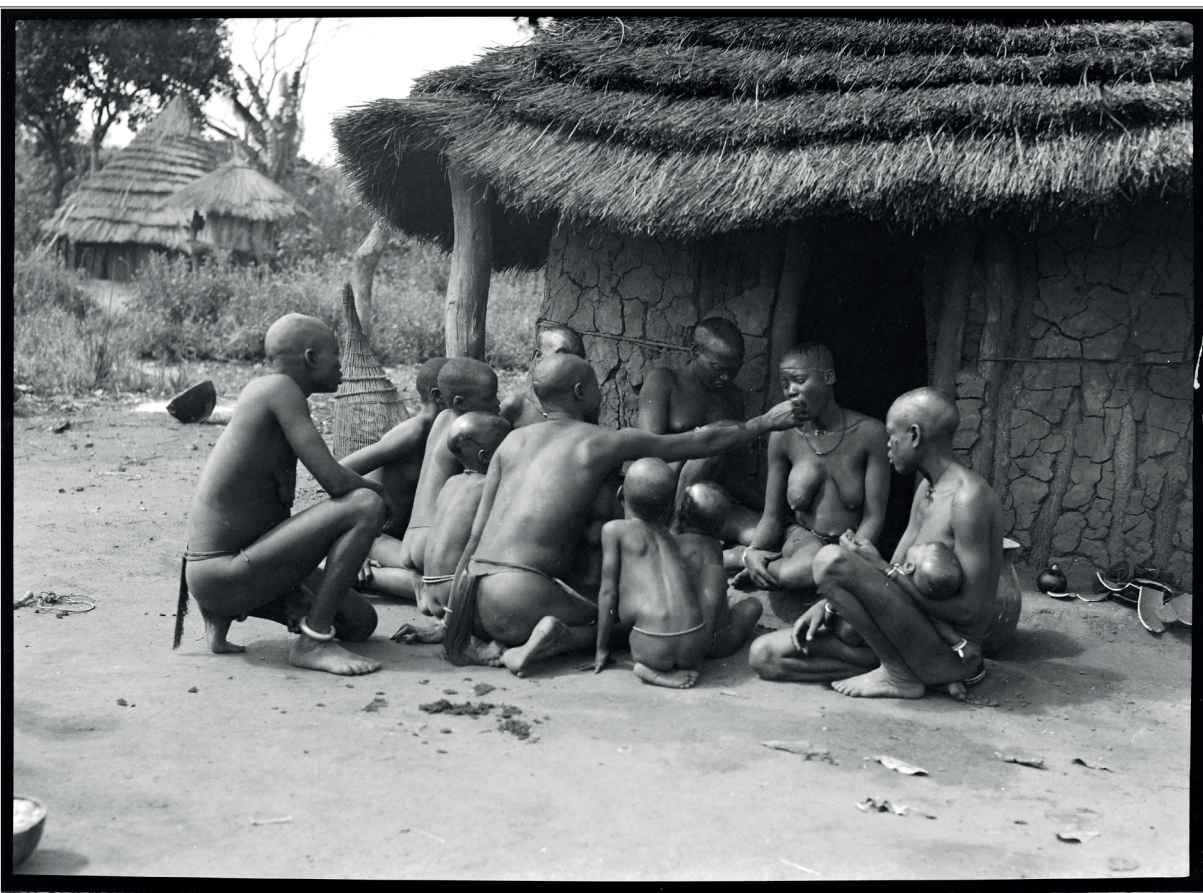
Northern Uganda, 1933-1934. VI B 9 222 - Mourning (a cord on the hips), gelatin silver, cm. 9x12, ICCD GFN Archivio fotografico, Fondo Boccassino (RBN000037). The photograph represents a woman dressed in mourning for the death of her son with a cord of vegetable fiber knotted under her navel. Behind her an eyel - the fence around the tomb - is particularly clear. The fences serve to protect the tomb in the first period of mourning and are maintained for a year. At the end of that period they are dismantled and the earth is smoothed over and spread with cow dung and water.

In this, as in all the other captions, the inventory number present on the negative is shown in *italics*, which can be seen in photo number 7, with the author's handwritten title from the back of the prints.



Fotografia 2

Northern Uganda, 1933-1934. VI B 9 223b – End of mourning (beer is served), gelatin silver, cm. 9x12, ICCD GFN Archivio fotografico, Fondo Boccassino (RBN000039). Renato Boccassino (1973) describes the beer offering ceremony: “[...] On the evening of the third day after the burial, the women ferment the flour in water to prepare the beer that will be consumed ritually on the following day. This ceremony [...] closes the first cycle of funeral rituals that the Acioli call *goro lyel* = the gathering for funeral laments. [...] The beer drinking ceremony [...] begins with the second cycle of rituals that the Acioli call *ketto lyel* or *ketto gango*, expressions that mean: relaxation, end of mourning and cola, that is to say, return to being cheerful again. Those who bury the corpse [...] and the woman who took away the earth remained silent. As they approach the grave, the woman places a bowl containing beer close to the chest of the men inviting them three times to partake but they all refuse. Only after the fourth offer do they drink a sip and then even the woman drinks”.



Fotografia 3

Northern Uganda, 1933-1934. VI B 9 233c - Ritual consumption of food and drink, gelatin silver, cm. 9x12, ICCD GFN Archivio fotografico, Fondo Boccassino (RBN000050).

The ritual consumption of food, carried out according to a precise social code, is related to the blood ties. Boccassino (1973) synthesizes this custom:

"On the very day of burial and in the days of mourning, the relatives of the district arrive in the village to perform funeral lamentation near the tomb of the deceased; before returning home they all attend a common banquet, drink beer, and receive some of the ox killed for the banquet. They also offer meat and corn meal to the soul of the deceased; they also give me a piece of oxen meat, even though I am not a relative, but only a guest".

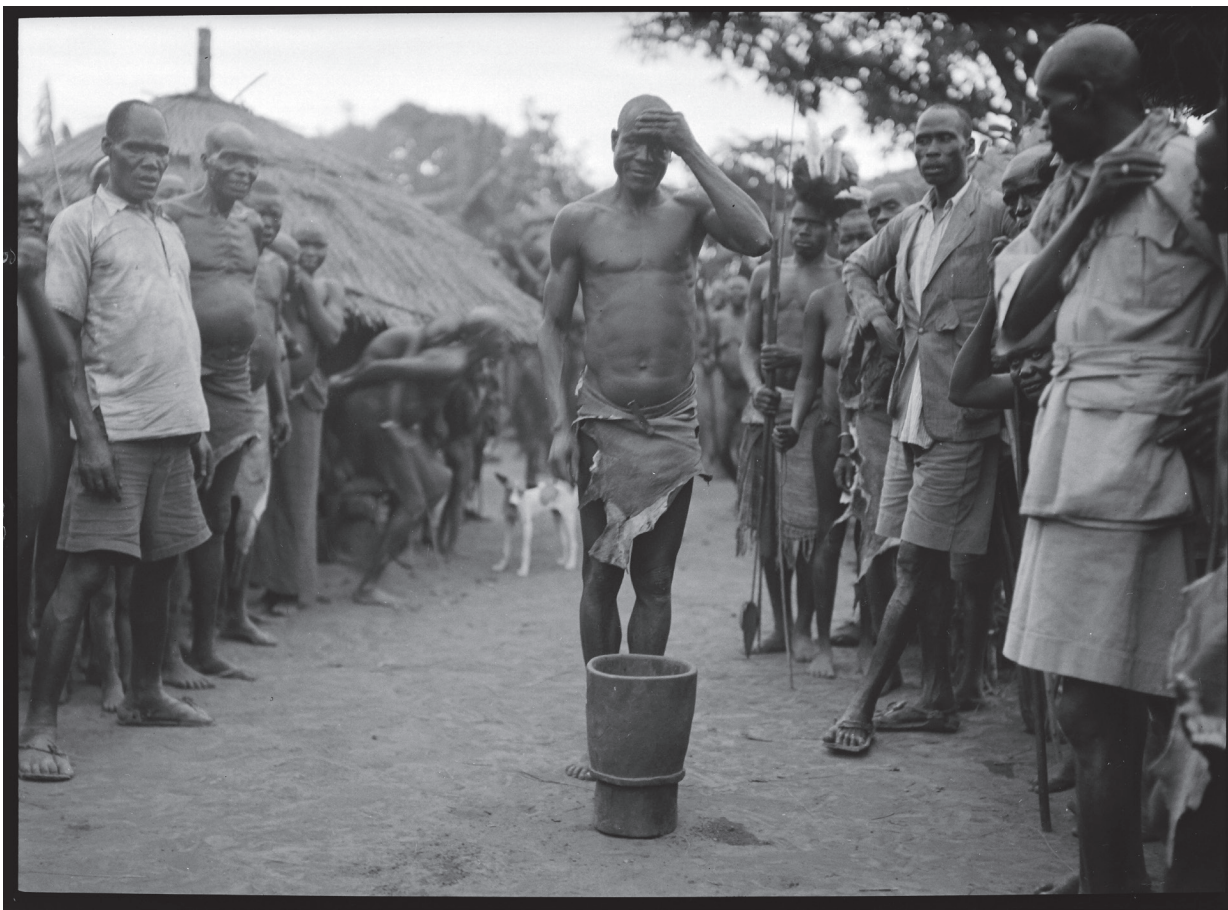
The photograph portrays a moment of funeral banquet as described by Boccassino (1973): "A woman puts a little bit of meat in the mouth of a relative of the deceased, probably his mother, in order that she eat and see the serious mourning he has had".



Fotografia 4 e 5

Northern Uganda, 1933-1934. VI B 9 232a - VI B 9 232b - The Uncction of women and children with red color, gelatin silver, cm. 9x12, ICCD GFN Archivio fotografico, Fondo Boccassino (RBN000046, RBN000047).

The two photographs, as well as the next, are drawn from a long series on the same subject. They depict one of the final moments of the funeral rite: relatives of the deceased sprinkle their body and that of some boys with a red ochre, oily ointment. In photo number 4, on the right of the entrance of the hut, you can notice the remains of a vessel which was broken during the burial.



Fotografia 6

Northern Uganda, 1933-1934. VI B 9 234b - Uncion at the end of the funeral ceremony, gelatin silver, cm. 9x12, ICCD GFN Archivio fotografico, Fondo Boccassino (RBN000052).



Fotografia 7

Northern Uganda, 1933-1934. VI B 3 140a - Twins, gelatin silver, cm. 9x12, ICCD GFN Archivio fotografico, Fondo Boccassino (RBN000001).

The first photograph of the series "Exceptional Births" shows a mother with twins in her lap, leaning on one of the village granary, surrounded by other children. In the margin there is an inventory number written on the surface of the negative in Boccassino's hand.

Mythical aspects, ritual forms, and social behaviors concerning twins are commonly found in ethnographic literature. The birth of twins is not always perceived in the same way: sometimes it is considered a sign of divine grace, other times the opposite is held, in any case the event must be subjected to some form of ritual treatment. Among the Acioli the birth and death of twins gives rise to specific practices, as can be seen in the following series of photographs.



Fotografia 8

Northern Uganda, 1933-1934. VI B 3 140b - Twins (Photo Father Giuseppe Pasquale Crazzolaro), gelatin silver, cm. 9x12, ICCD GFN Archivio fotografico, Fondo Boccassino (RBN000002).

The mother of twins puts her children in Renato Boccassino's lap. This, together with other photographs in the Boccassino Collection, was taken by Father Giuseppe Pasquale Crazzolaro (1884-1976) - a Comboni missionary in Africa, originally from San Cassiano (BZ) - who was in Uganda the same year as Boccassino and shared the camp with him. He studied ethnography and linguistics, working on grammar and dictionaries of various indigenous African languages, including an Acioli/English grammar and vocabulary published in Oxford in 1938. The daughter of the ethnologist, Maria Boccassino, possesses an Acioli/German grammar and dictionary of Father Crazzolaro; among the materials found in the Collection, there is an Achioli/English dictionary of 21 typed pages.



Fotografia 9 e 10

Northern Uganda, 1933-1934. VI B 3 151a - VI B 3 151g - Blessing the women and children in the ceremony, gelatin silver, cm. 9x12, ICCD GFN Archivio fotografico, Fondo Boccassino (RBN000021, RBN000023).

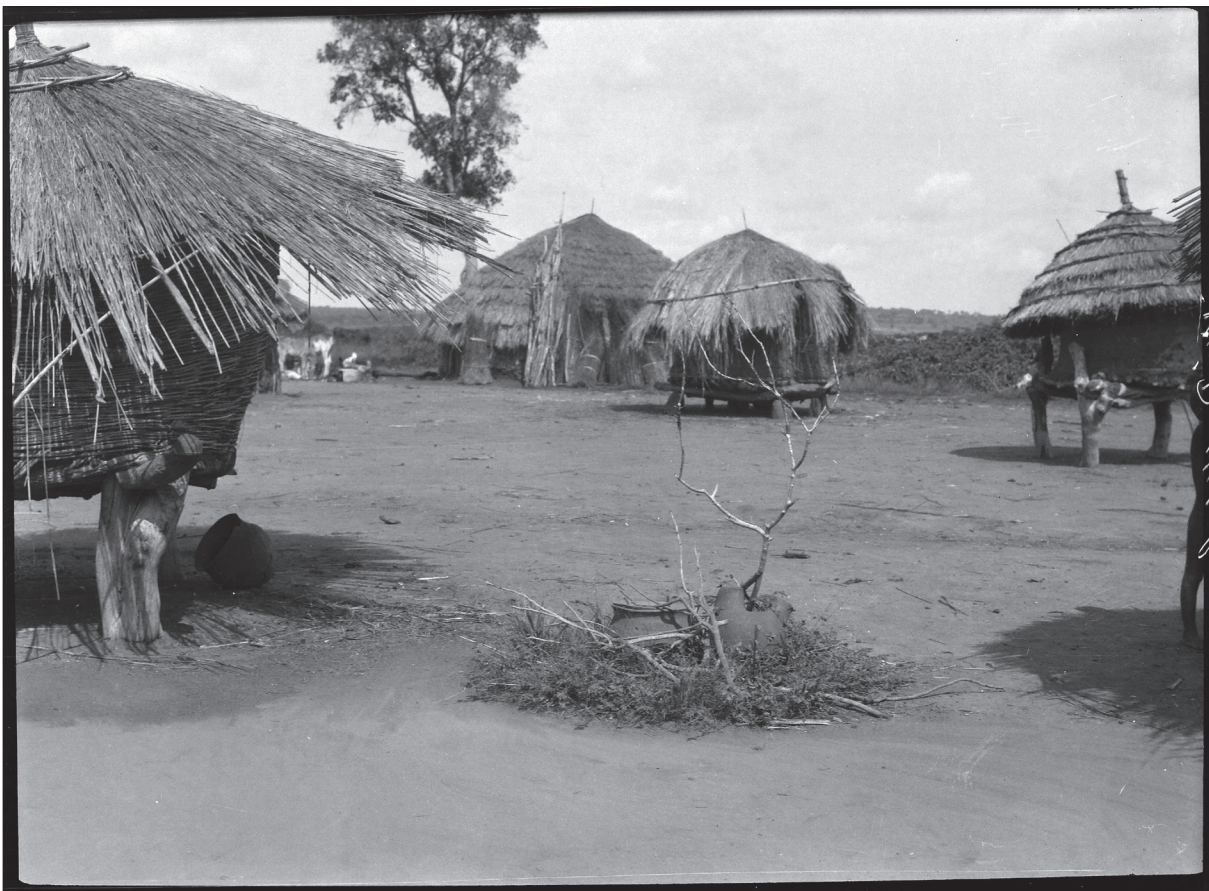
During the ceremony associated with birth, ritual acts of various kinds are performed; the umbilical cord is buried under a mound prepared of plant material similar to that of the funeral; around this altar ritual songs are performed which are different for single births or for twins; ritually sacrificed animals (chickens or sheep) are placed over where the umbilical cord is buried; the intestines of sacrificed sheep are first observed and then roasted; during the ceremony some people are coloured white; at the end, infants and their mothers undergo a form of blessing and take of food which had been prepared during the ceremony.



Fotografia 11

Northern Uganda, 1933-1934. VI B 3 154 - Vessel for the twins, gelatin silver, cm. 9x12, ICCD GFN Archivio fotografico, Fondo Boccassino (RBN000027).

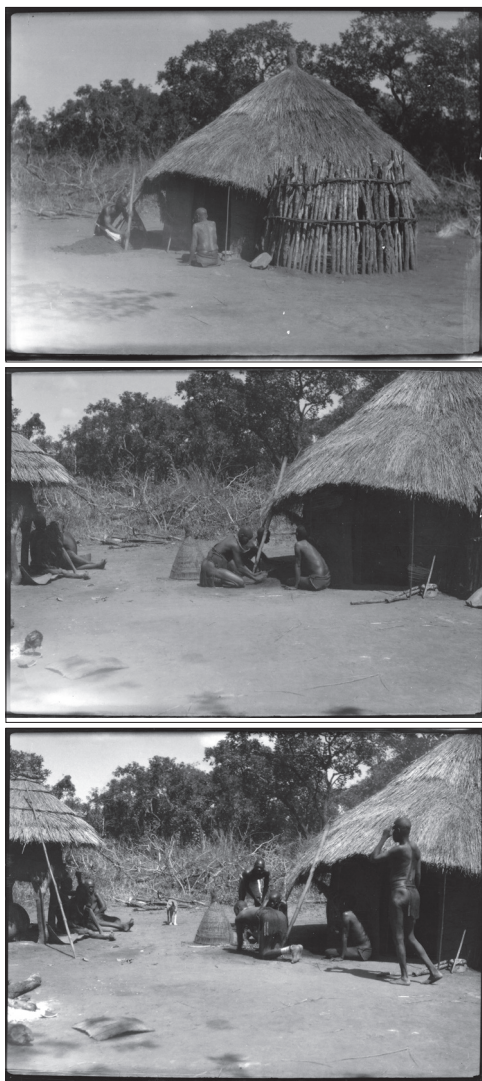
The vessel shown in the photo is used for rituals related to the birth or the death of twins. In a 1963 article on the material culture of Acioli, Boccassino published a photograph of a similar vessel: "Kirubu. Pot with two 23 cm. high openings. Each is 12,5 cm. in diameter. It is considered an object of worship because it is used only in the sacrifices made on the occasion of the birth of twins [...]. In another pot which is almost exactly the same as the one represented in this figure [...] the two mouths are so close that at one point they touch".



Fotografia 12

Northern Uganda, 1933-1934. VI B 3 141I – Tomb of the twins, gelatin silver, cm. 9x12, ICCD GFN Archivio fotografico, Fondo Boccassino (RBN000009).

The tombs are made up of plant material of various kinds and at their base were placed objects which belonged to the deceased. Noteworthy are the recipients that had been used while the deceased was living for drinking and eating. The tomb depicted in the photograph was that of a twin, as evidenced by the two-mouthed receptacle seen at the base. Burials are located near the houses or, as in this case, near the granary and in the early period of mourning the tombs are surrounded by fences. In an article in 1973, Boccassino reports: "It is common among the Acioli to throw away, or rather, that is to say throw on the tomb the objects that most served the deceased [...]. This violent, ritual act is called *bolo agulu wi lyel* = (breaking of the pots on the grave). During a burial I approached near to the tomb to better follow and photograph the ritual but as soon as the pit was covered, they hurled objects over it, including a squash gourd, a bowl that broke into multiple pieces, shattering upwards in different directions; and one piece, dry and sharp, brushed my hand and the lens of my camera".



Fotografia 13, 14 e 15

Northern Uganda, 1933-1934. VI B 9 216a - VI B 9 216b - VI B 9 216c - The burial of a child, gelatin silver, cm. 9x12, ICCD GFN Archivio fotografico, Fondo Boccassino (RBN000032, RBN000033, RBN000034).

These photographs and the following are part of a sequence created by Renato Boccassino on the actual burial of a child, protagonist, in life, of other images taken by the ethnologist documenting the relationship between alternate generations. The child, in fact, helped his blind grandmother in all her affairs: some of the photographs portray him in the act of assisting her. The sequence is commented on by Bocassino (1973): "The habit of digging a grave near the hut is widespread. [...] The old grandmother, almost blind, looks deeply at those who dig the graves, then, crawling slowly reaches her grandson's grave and sits next to it to be with him. [...] Notice the fenced eyel, which surrounds another tomb in the village".



Fotografia 16

Northern Uganda, 1933-1934. VI B 9 217 - The Burial of a child (Payco): then the cleansing of hands over the grave, gelatin silver, cm. 9x12, ICCD GFN Archivio fotografico, Fondo Boccassino (RBN0000035).

The ritual ablutions of the hands and feet during the funeral ceremony are repeated continuously to avoid the possible contamination of the participants of the burial. Boccassino adds that dropping the water which has washed the hands on the disturbed ground helps in consolidating it, and so completes the operation appropriately.



Fotografia 17

Northern Uganda, 1933-1934. VI B 9 224b - The killing of a goat with knees and elbows to avoid contamination, gelatin silver, cm. 9x12, ICCD GFN Archivio fotografico, Fondo Boccassino (RBN000040).

This photo and the next three are part of a very long, articulate and detailed sequence. Boccassino writes (1973): "The first day after the death of a deceased, relatives from other villages continue to come to perform funeral laments [...]; the second, third and fourth day after the death are important for the sacrifice of a goat that includes many elements of manism [...]. The sacrifice of a goat is part of a ceremony of purification to destroy the harmful consequences of the impurity that emanates from the corpse."



Fotografia 18

Northern Uganda, 1933-1934. VI B 9 225b - The killing of a goat with a stick, gelatin silver, cm. 9x12, ICCD GFN Archivio fotografico, Fondo Boccassino (RBN000041). Boccassino (1973): "The second day after death, a brother of the deceased gives him a sacrificed goat, which can be replaced by a hen if there are no goats in the village [...]. In Pabo and in various other districts, the victim is quickly killed with the stroke of a stick".



Fotografia 19

Northern Uganda, 1933-1934. VI B 9 227b - Kneeling over the goat, gelatin silver, cm. 9x12, ICCD GFN Archivio fotografico, Fondo Boccassino (RBN000042).

"At Pajole and Puranga the goat must die slowly. It is suffocated near the tomb by repeatedly and forcibly pressing its neck and chest with the elbows and knees". Describing the beliefs about the contagion which stems from the impurity of the corpse, cola, Boccassino (1973) writes: "An elder from Puranga explained to me their thoughts on cola: 'Our ancestors have told us that if those who have buried a deceased don't sacrifice a goat, by suffocating it with their knees on the grave, they will be infected by the disease caused by cola. Cola is a shadow of which we do not see the body [...], it is an impurity that enters the body of men and ruins it [...]'".



Fotografia 20

Northern Uganda, 1933-1934. VI B 9 230 - Cooking the goat, gelatin silver, cm. 9x12, ICCD GFN Archivio fotografico, Fondo Boccassino (RBN000044).

Boccassino (1973): "The elderly people who had contact with the corpse when they buried him cut the goat's meat into pieces and boil it in a pot, on a fire near the grave. On the same fire they also cook corn meal made with the flour, which was in the hut of the deceased. This ritual meal is taken in silence only by those who had buried the corpse".



Fotografia 21 e 22

Roma, November 11, 2016. Alberto Sobrero with his students (photo Antonello Ricci).

FILM REVIEWS

CHRISTINE MODERBACHER

University of Aberdeen

Robert de Wavrin, from the Manor to the Jungle

Film by Grace Winter, Luc Plantier

2017, 85 min

Producer: Image creation.

Coproducers: Cinematek, RTBF



[www.youtube.com/
watch?v=stRKICZ9deA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=stRKICZ9deA)

Christine Moderbacher is an Anthropologist and Documentary Filmmaker. (Harraga 2008, Men at work 2010, A Letter to Mohamed 2013, Red Earth White Snow (2017). She is currently doing her PhD at the department of Anthropology at the University of Aberdeen, as part of the project KFI - Knowing from the inside. In her films as well as her anthropological work she is mainly focusing on migratory and marginal worlds as well as visual and textual storytelling.

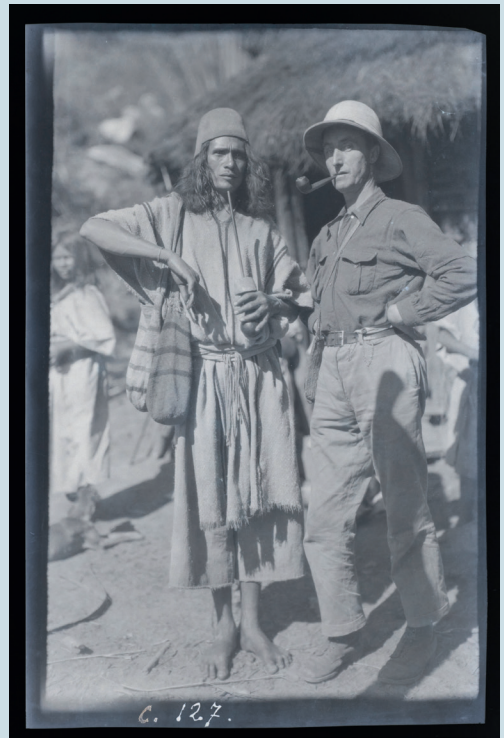
At this point, most anthropologists probably think that there is not much new to discover in the history of early visual ethnography. The essay documentary "Robert de Wavrin, from the Manor to the Jungle" proves the contrary. The film invites us to follow the intriguing life and work of the Belgium noble Marquis Robert de Wavrin who was one of the first to travel to and in several Latin American countries with a 35mm camera. Divided in 8 chapters, the feature length film sensitively weaves together biographical elements and astonishing archival footage shot between 1913 and the late 1930s when the beginning of the Second World War set an abrupt end to Wavrin's journeys.

It is due to one of the directors of the documentary, Grace Winter, that the work of this almost forgotten filmmaker and ethnographer can be seen anew. She found the Marquis' rushes while working on the documentary collections at the Royal Belgian Film Archive in Brussels. In no less than ten years of work, Winter archived more than 6000 meters of footage and around 2000 remaining photos that were kept safe in shoeboxes at the Brussels Cinquantenaire Museum. A former anthropologist, she reconstructed one of the Marquis' missing films and situated the work of Robert de Wavrin within the larger history of ethnographic cinema. This

contextualization seems at times quite pedagogical when watching the documentary but does achieve what many films in and about the discipline lack: it makes early ethnographic history accessible and interesting for a wider audience. Alongside this accomplishment, the carefully edited film sheds light on two specific topics that make this research documentary particularly important.

One of them is the strange life path of Robert de Wavrin himself. Born 1888 into a Belgium noble family in Flanders the Marquis, 25 years old, fires his rifle at two children collecting nuts on his property. Leaving one of them seriously injured, his body perforated with no less than forty-eight bullets, Wavrin goes back to his house, ignoring the fact that privileges of the nobility had been rescinded in Belgium in 1789. Sentenced to one year in prison, he flees the country soon after and embarks on his first journey to Buenos Aires. The initial encounter with the Robert de Wavrin – one that leaves the viewer quite bewildered – is at first reinforced by his personal notes that are read aloud throughout the film. They seem to proof a cliché in portraying yet another European explorer that dreams of freedom and independence in the “exotic world”. But, as the introductory quote hints at the outset of the film, we slowly get to know another Marquis, one who is deeply moved and changed by the encounter with the people who are yet to become his friends: “If a man finds himself facing another man he will say to him: “I am a man. Who are you?” And the other will answer: “I too am a man.”

With this statement the directors determine the underlying topic and strength of the film.



Slowly deconstructing the first impression about the protagonist given through his own writings and footage, the film tells the story of a man who undergoes a profound change while getting to know the stranger. “To understand the Indians` mentality, you have to be alongside them, dispensing with your own knowledge or perception of things, to see them with just the knowledge possessed by those people you are trying to understand,” he writes during his second travel. Read against the backdrop of an area where the so-called “savage” where exhibited in “Human Zoos” - with the last human exhibition only being banned in Belgium in 1958 - the film gives space and voice to the work of a man who developed a deep appreciation of the people he encountered. “I visited savages who are less savage than those “civilized”

people,” he writes after learning about the outbreak of the first world war. His personal growth reflected in his diary entrances and the empathy for the people he got to know, impacts the second element that makes this film so relevant within and outside the anthropological discipline: While some of the first photographs presented are well within the line of stereotypical representations of the Western adventurer, showing the filmmaker with hunted animals laid out at his feet, the thoroughly edited rushed focus more and more on daily life scenes of the people he lives with. These images bare an intimacy and attentiveness that is rarely seen in footage from this time. Countering the striking features of the first ethnographic films that reduce the other to the status of an exotic creature, Robert de Wavrin is sitting in the middle of a group of Indians, joking and laughing with them. Even though the title of his most known film “In the Land of the Scalp” that is shown in excerpts in the documentary mirrors the spectacular sensation of the “exotic” in the 1930s, the material does not offer bloodthirsty evoking images but focuses on long scenes of the ceremony itself. His camera most of the time at eye level, Wavrin depicts people who do not pose to be exhibited and measured but look into the camera with pride. This is especially underlined when the directors chose to show original footage in silence, like the moving portrays of Mataco Indians and their face-paintings. Whilst the music composed for the documentary does not always add to the poetic intensity of the footage itself, it is within these silent moments that the Marquis’ photographic eye and respectful gaze seems especially captivating. Instead of focusing on physical features

and differences, the original footage captures families sleeping and laughing with their kids, fathers who teach their little sons how to deal with bow and arrow and the knowledgeable craft of entire villages to use their environment at its best. We see daily gestures of life that are common to all humanity, which is - as the documentary rightly suggests - partly due to the fact that Robert de Wavrin travelled on his own expenses and could allow himself an independent, and patient gaze. Winter and Plantier manage to keep the change of the explorer’s character interesting until the end, refusing to give a distinct opinion but leaving the viewer with an uneasy sensation by showing compelling portraits of individuals from tribes that, to a large extent, do not exist anymore. In a future anthropologies manifesto written during the Conference of the European Association of Social Anthropologists in Tallin in 2014, the participants of the Anthropology at the Edge of the Future workshop wrote that “Anthropology of the future is accretive. It builds on traditions, reflects on pasts.” (cited in Salazar, Pink, Irving and Sjöberg 2017: 2). While not all of the history of anthropology is worth building on, this film shows that there is early ethnographical work that very well deserves reflection.

Christine Moderbacher
University of Aberdeen

References:

Salazar, Juan Francisco/ Pink, Sarah/ Irving, Andrew/ Sjöberg, Johannes (eds.): *Anthropologies and Futures. Researching Emerging and Uncertain Worlds*. London, Oxford, New York, New Delhi, Sydney: Bloomsbury 2017

BOOKS RECEIVED

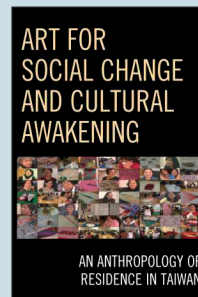


Arnd Schneider
**ALTERNATIVE
ART AND
ANTHROPOLOGY**
2017, Bloomsbury

While the importance of the relationship between anthropology and contemporary art has

long been recognized, the discussion has tended to be among scholars from North America, Europe, and Australia; until now, scholarship and experiences from other regions have been largely absent from mainstream debate. *Alternative Art and Anthropology: Global Encounters* rectifies this by offering a ground-breaking new approach to the subject. Entirely dedicated to perspectives from Asia, Latin America, and Africa, the book advances our understanding of the connections between anthropology and contemporary art on a global scale. Across ten chapters, a range of anthropologists, artists, and curators from countries such as China, Japan, Indonesia, Bhutan, Nigeria, Chile, Ecuador, and the Philippines discuss encounters between anthropology and contemporary art from their points of view, presenting readers with new vantage points and perspectives. Arnd Schneider, a leading scholar in the field, draws together the various threads to provide readers with a clear conceptual and theoretical narrative. The first to map the relationship

between anthropology and contemporary art from a global perspective, this is a key text for students and academics in areas such as anthropology, visual anthropology, anthropology of art, art history, and curatorial studies.



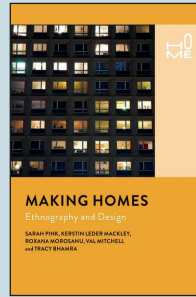
Wei Hsiu Tung-Edited
by Gerald Cipriani
**ART FOR SOCIAL
CHANGE AND
CULTURAL
AWAKENING. AN
ANTHROPOLOGY
OF RESIDENCE IN
TAIWAN**
2013, Rowman &
Littlefield

Artistic residency has become widely adopted in Western countries while only recently having become popular and well-supported within Taiwan. This book explores the challenges that this form of art practice faced in contemporary Taiwan from the revocation of Martial Law in 1987 to the 2000s—arguably one of the most exciting periods in the sociocultural history of the island. Case studies show what is at stake politically, historically, and socially in artists' endeavours to give shape to a sense of Taiwanese identity.

Despite the prevalence of artists engaged in social issues in today's world and the undeniable contributions of artistic residency to contemporary

art practice, little literature or scholarly research has been conducted on the practical, conceptual, and ideological aspects of artist residency. Very often, it is perceived in very narrow terms, overlooking explicit or hidden issues of localism, nationalism and globalization. If artistic residence did indeed emerge from the radical movements of the 1960s and 70s in the Western world—and especially Britain—then this book argues that the contemporary sociocultural context of Taiwan calls for redefined, culturally-specific models of residency.

The precarious geo-political situation of Taiwan has made issues of cultural identity—tackled by artists and successive governments alike—very sensitive. A new genre of artistic residence in Taiwan would mean that artists involved from whatever cultural background operate as engaging interpreters; their roles would not be confined to mirroring culture and society. These artists-in-residence would contribute to cultural awakening by offering ways of negotiating creatively with otherness, and this for the sake of a better social life and shared identity.



Sarah Pink, Kerstin Leder Mackley, Roxana Morosanu, Val Mitchell
MAKING HOMES. ETHNOGRAPHY AND DESIGN
2017, Bloomsbury

Making Homes:
Anthropology and

Design is a strong addition to the emerging field of design anthropology. Based on the latest scholarship and practice in the social sciences as well as design, this interdisciplinary text introduces a new design ethnography which offers unique and original approaches to research and intervention in the home.

Presenting a coherent theoretical and methodological framework for both ethnographers and designers, the authors examine 'hot' topics – ranging from movements and mobilities to im/material environments, to digital culture – and confront the challenges of a research and design environment which seeks to bring about the changes required for a sustainable, resilient, 'safe', and comfortable future. Written by leading experts in the field, the book draws on real-life examples from a wide range of international projects developed by the authors, other researchers, and designers. Illustrations throughout help to convey the methods and research visually. Readers will also have access to a related website which follows the authors' ongoing research and includes video and written narrative examples of ethnographic research in the home. Transforming current understandings of the home, this is an essential read for students and researchers in fields such as design, anthropology, human geography, sociology, and media and communication studies.

VIDEOS RECEIVED

DENIAL

A film by Derek Hallquist
Bullfrog Films Distribution
(2016, 92 mins)



Every day our changing climate pushes us closer to an environmental catastrophe, but for most the problem is easy to ignore. As people we often

find it difficult to face change. We'd rather be in denial.

David Hallquist, CEO of a Vermont utility, has made it his mission to take on one of the US's largest contributors to this global crisis, our outdated and vulnerable electric grid. Under David's leadership his utility was one of the first to implement a smart grid. In order to make the widespread use of renewable energy sources practical, David argues, we first have to build a smart grid which uses digital communications technology to detect and react to local changes in usage, thereby decreasing outages and increasing efficiency.



AWAKE, A DREAM FROM STANDING ROCK

A film by Josh Fox, James Spione, Myron Dewey
Bullfrog Films Distribution
(2017, 89 mins)



The Dakota Access Pipeline is a controversial project that brings fracked crude oil from the Bakken Shale in North Dakota through South Dakota, Iowa and

eventually to Illinois. The Standing Rock Tribe and people all over the world oppose the project because the pipeline runs under the Missouri river, a source of drinking water for over 18 million people, and pipeline leaks are commonplace. Since 2010 over 3,300 oil spills and leaks have been reported.

Moving from summer 2016, when demonstrations over the Dakota Access Pipeline's demolishing of sacred Native burial grounds began, to the current and disheartening pipeline status, AWAKE, A Dream from Standing Rock is a powerful visual poem in three parts that uncovers complex hidden truths with simplicity.



The film is a collaboration between indigenous filmmakers: Director Myron Dewey and Executive Producer Doug Good Feather; and environmental Oscar-nominated filmmakers Josh Fox and James Spione. The Water Protectors at Standing Rock captured world attention through their peaceful resistance. The film documents the story of Native-led defiance that has forever changed the fight for clean water, our environment and the future of our planet. It asks: "Are you ready to join the fight?"

DEATH BY DESIGN

A film by Sue Williams
Bullfrog Films Distribution
(2015, 73 mins)



Consumers love - and live on - their smartphones, tablets and laptops. A cascade of new devices pours endlessly into the market, promising even better communication, non-stop entertainment and instant information. The numbers are staggering. By 2020, four billion people will have a personal computer. Five billion will own a mobile phone. But this revolution has a dark side that the electronics industry doesn't want you to see. In an investigation that spans the globe, award-winning filmmaker Sue Williams investigates the underbelly of the international electronics industry and reveals how even the tiniest devices have deadly environmental and health costs. **DEATH BY DESIGN** tells the stories of young Chinese workers laboring in unsafe conditions, American families living with the tragic consequences of the industry's toxic practices, activists leading the charge to hold brands accountable, and passionate entrepreneurs who are developing more sustainable products and practices to safeguard our planet and our future. From the intensely secretive electronics factories in China, to the high tech innovation labs of Silicon Valley, **DEATH**

BY DESIGN tells a story of environmental degradation, of health tragedies, and the fast-approaching tipping point between consumerism and sustainability



THE SEARCH FOR GENERAL TSO

A film by Ian Cheney
Bullfrog Films
(2014, 73 mins)



This mouthwateringly entertaining film travels the globe to unravel a captivating culinary mystery. General Tso's Chicken is a staple of Chinese-American cooking, and a ubiquitous presence on restaurant menus across the country. But just who was General Tso? And how did his chicken become emblematic of an entire national cuisine? Director Ian Cheney (King Corn, Big River, Truck Farm, The City Dark, and Bluespace) journeys from Shanghai to New York to the American Midwest and beyond to uncover the origins of this iconic dish, turning up surprising revelations and a host of humorous characters along the way. Told with the verve of a good detective story, **THE SEARCH FOR GENERAL TSO** is as much about food as it is a tale of the American immigrant experience.



A BOLD PEACE

a film by Matthew Eddy, Michael Dreiling
Bullfrog Films Distribution
(2017, 89 mins)



In his famous "Cross of Iron" speech in 1953, President Eisenhower critiqued the military-industrial complex while asking, "Is there no other way the world may live?" In Costa Rica today, we glimpse another way to live. In 1948, Costa Rica dismantled their military establishment and intentionally cultivated security relationships with other nations through treaties, international laws, and international organizations. Free of the burden of military spending, they used the financial savings to invest in their people, creating strong public institutions including public higher education and universal health care. In short, Costa Ricans created a society committed to peace, solidarity, and international law. They have survived with safety and relative prosperity for nearly 70 years without a standing army. **A BOLD PEACE** details the events which shook the country to its foundations, culminating in the 1948 civil war and the decision to abolish the military. Over the decades, the Costa Rican model has survived several serious crises, but the current threats may be the most formidable of all.



TRIBAL JUSTICE

A film by Anne Makepeace (2017, 87 mins)



TRIBAL JUSTICE is a feature documentary about a little known, underreported but effective criminal justice reform movement in

America today: the efforts of tribal courts to create alternative justice systems based on their traditions. In California, the state with the largest number of Indian people and tribes, two formidable Native American women are among those leading the way. Abby Abinanti, Chief Judge of the Yurok Tribe on the northwest coast, and Claudette White, Chief Judge of the Quechan Tribe in the southeastern desert, are creating innovative systems that focus on restoring rather than punishing offenders in order to keep tribal members out of prison, prevent children from being taken from their communities, and stop the school-to-prison pipeline that plagues their young people.



FROM THIS DAY FORWARD

A film by Sharon Shattuck
Bullfrog Films Distribution
(2015, 76 mins)



With her own wedding just around the corner, filmmaker Sharon Shattuck returns home to examine the mystery at the heart of her upbringing: How her transgender father Trisha and her straight-identified mother Marcia stayed together against all odds. From This Day Forward is a moving portrayal of an American family coping with the most intimate of transformations. As the film evolves into a conversation about love and acceptance in a modern American family, it raises questions relevant to all of us. As individuals how do we adapt to sustain long-term love and relationships? Where do sexuality and gender intersect? And how do families stay together, when external forces are pulling them apart?



SACRED COD

A film by Steve Liss, Andy Laub, David Abel
Bullfrog Films Distribution
(2016, 65 mins)



For centuries, cod was like gold, driving men to extremes. Cod were so abundant in the waters off New England that fishermen used to say they could walk across the Atlantic on the backs of them, and generations of men from places like Gloucester and Cape Cod spent their entire lives chasing the coveted fish. In recent decades, something began to change in the Gulf of Maine. As the region's cod catch plummeted, government surveys of the iconic species reported increasingly dire results. Scientists and environmental activists raised alarms about overfishing and the warming ocean. They urged officials to act.

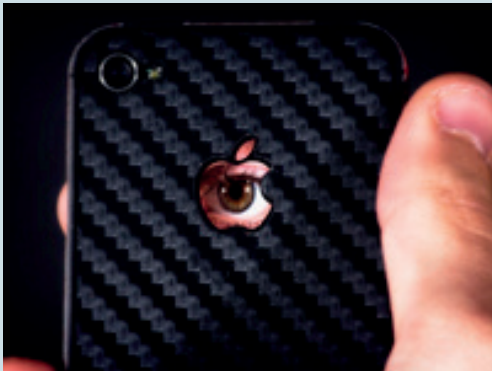


CELLING YOUR SOUL

A film by Joni Siani
Bullfrog Films Distribution
(2017, 48 mins)



In one short decade, we have totally changed the way we interact with one another. The millennial generation, the first to be socialized in a digital world, is now feeling the unintended consequences. **CELLING YOUR SOUL** is a powerful and informative examination of how our young people actually feel about connecting in the digital world and their love/hate relationship with technology. It provides empowering strategies for more fulfilling, balanced, and authentic human interaction within the digital landscape. The film reveals the effects of "digital socialization" by taking viewers on a personal journey with a group of high school and college students who through a digital cleanse discover the power of authentic human connectivity, and that there is "No App" or piece of technology that can ever replace the benefits of human connection.



HOW TO LET GO OF THE WORLD

A film by Josh Fox
Bullfrog Films Distribution
(2016, 127 mins)



In his new film, Oscar-nominated director Josh Fox (**GASLAND**) continues in his deeply personal style, investigating climate change - the greatest threat our world has ever known. Traveling to 12 countries on 6 continents, the film acknowledges that it may be too late to stop some of the worst consequences and asks, what is it that climate change can't destroy? What is so deep within us that no calamity can take it away?



VIDEO

A HOUSE IS NOT A HOME

by Emanuele Rinaldo Meschini



2017, 14 mins

vimeo.com/254822211

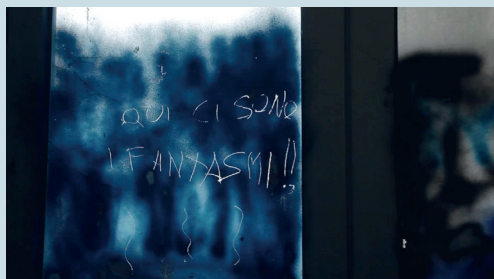
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ABSTRACT

Unlike the commonplace and popular opinion, people change faster and more easily than the spaces they live in. The suburb has its own aesthetic that permeates people by modifying and shaping their very approach to city in terms of distance, detachment and marginality. This marginality, in spite of everything, seems to be the only real thing. This video tells the story of the two cultural associations, Laborintus and PIACCA, inside the Corviale district in Rome, describing the changing and the stasis, the inner movement of people and the firmness of the place.

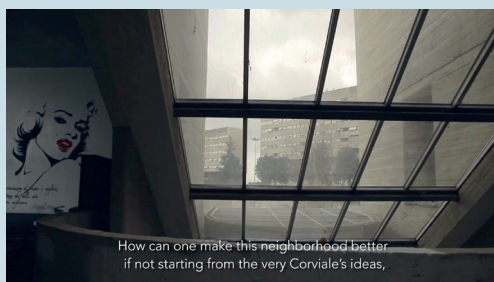
KEYWORDS

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THE AUTHOR

Emanuele Rinaldo Meschini is a PhD Student focused on Socially Engaged Art in Italy since the Nineties. As an independent curator, he has curated project with Italian and European art galleries and museums such as Ethnographic Museum Luigi Pigorini (Rome) where he curated the series of exhibitions titled Declination of Community. He is specialist in Cultural Heritage (Specializzazione in Beni Storico Artistici, Università di Siena) with a particular focus on art and activism in Italy during the Seventies and the Venice Biennale held during that decade. Since 2013 he has been collaborating with the Italian art Magazine Contemporart and is the author of the column "Arte Sociale". Contact the author at: emanuelemeschini@live.com



Corviale is a district in the southwestern part of Rome. The New Corviale, however, is a public housing complex built in the Eighties and made entirely by a single concrete block in which about eight thousand people live. Corviale represents a synecdoche, a part for everything, where the building identifies an entire area. Built by a team of twenty architects led by Mario Fiorentino, the construction phase started at the beginning of the seventies and finished in 1983.

The building is developed horizontally through a continuous concrete structure of about one kilometer (958 meters). For many years Corviale represented the other face of the Le Corbusier dreams of self-organized suburbs. There have been several issues that have been repeatedly added to the neighborhood. Corviale, however, resists despite everything and everyone because it found its balance through the people who live in there. Different realities coexist within this space/world. The two that this video describes, sprout out as occupations of abandoned space in between 2007 and 2014.

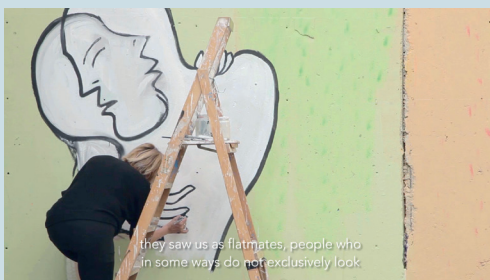
These space occupations do not respond solely to the need for a cultural alternative but also, and above all, to a working and social need from the people of neighborhood itself.

The main figures of the video, Alessandro Fornaci and Massimiliano Lustrì, respectively artistic director of Laborintus and president of PIACCA, tell a story of redemption and reality. The interviews were filmed on Monday, March 20th (2017).



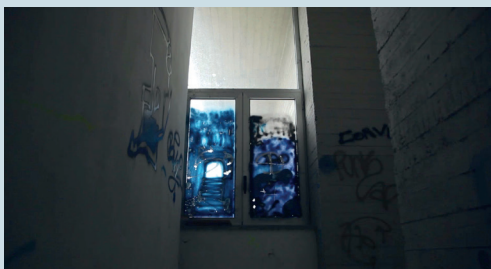
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This communicational demand brought to a series of meetings, that took place in the autumn of 2016. These meetings were aimed at defining common goals and, above all, at defining the role of the two associations within the neighborhood. These meetings were followed by a series of important development works in the area, carried out not only by cultural operators but also by the residents of the area. Over the last months and with a greater definition, especially at the level of space, the two associations have begun to carry out important social work in the neighborhood also in term of social services. PIACCA has created a small informal economy, especially for those people in the neighborhood who are struggling to enter/re-enter in the world of work.

Despite these efforts, the periphery, meant as a physical place, continues to exist in its concrete pressure, showing almost impassivity. The research work that has led to the realization of this video, which is about the immutability of things and the unstoppable changing of people, has been developed over the course of ten months during which I have changed my role within the Corviale and the associations. I started as a curator involved in an exhibition project and I become more than a participant observer, taking part at many meeting and redevelopment works. In particular, in October 2016, I arranged, with the help of anthropologist Rossana Di Lella, two meetings with young adult from the neighborhood in order to understand how to develop the spaces according to their interests.



A NATION OF MIGRANTS

by Leone Contini



2016, 8 mins
vimeo.com/205058082
 Password: 12345



ABSTRACT

The video investigates conceptual and methodological aspects of the artwork *The Bank of the Migrating Germplasm* (2016) developed for the second edition of the program *Connective Residency* at Cittadellarte Fondazione Pistoletto (curated by Cecilia Guida and Juan Sandoval). The 'bank' is built on the relations, the stories and the moments of conviviality and dialogue with local actors, including the temporary guests of the asylum seekers centers near Biella. It's a paradoxical device, able to record social interactions in the form of foreign seeds from displaced gardens, created by migrants for migrants, and scattered around Biella and beyond its territory, in many other Italian regions.

KEYWORDS

Experience, Community, Migration, Participatory art practice, Anthropology

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There is a paradoxical economical sector growing in Italy: temporary accommodation for asylum seekers. The complex of this activity generates an injection of EU money on territories otherwise withering. Motors of this new economy are the bodies of the migrants, housed and fed till the verdict of the panels: the integration process starts for the few recognized as refugees, the ones receiving a negative response automatically become 'clandestines'. In a span of time sometimes lasting for months, the mere existence of these 'guests' determines a paradoxical situation: while their 'uncertainty' produces a real economy, their 'agency' is nullified by their being kept 'on hold'.



The counter-strategies I have implemented to try and (re)build a 'text' together with the Other originate from the archetype image of a seed coming from a distant geography which reactivates its own vital potential in a foreign land, and from the subsequent constellation of sub-stories marking a subversion of the 'given' relationships of power: the migrant occupies a plot of land, they sow it (with seeds almost always informally imported), they reap the fruits and process them through their own cooking traditions. It might not be by chance that agricultural activities are thriving in some of the shelters, and that many migrants already settled on the territory 'practice' a garden of nostalgia, whose minimal form is often a simple vase on the balcony with an aromatic plant from 'the Country'.



The Bank of the Migrating Germplasm, around which I have structured my project for Cittadellarte's Connective Residency, is a collection of migrating seeds present on the national territory. The aim of this living archive is the heritage of an asset of biodiversity that is generally perceived in negative terms both by ordinary people and in 'agro-culinary politics', in contrast with the ancient varieties presumed 'ours'. My impatience entered into a 'generative'

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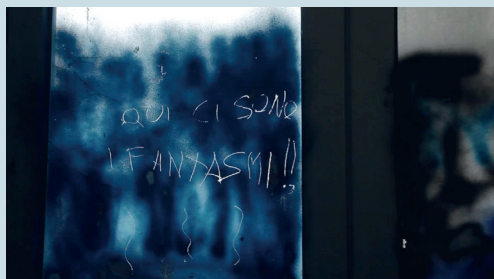
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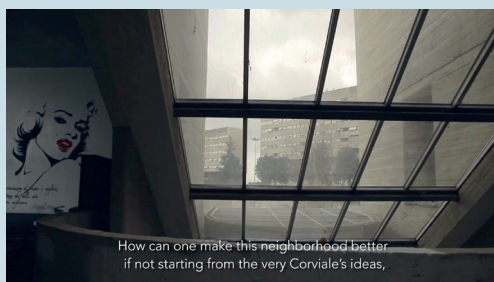
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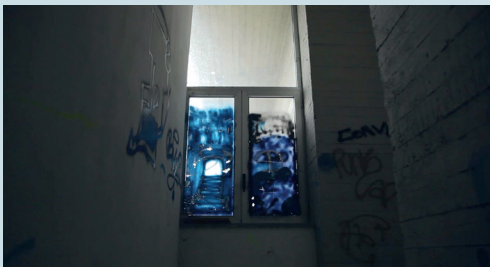
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