

VIDEO

A HOUSE IS NOT A HOME

by Emanuele Rinaldo Meschini



2017, 14 mins
vimeo.com/254822211
 Password: house2436

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.

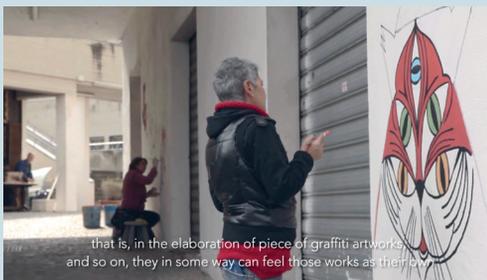
KEYWORDS

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



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).



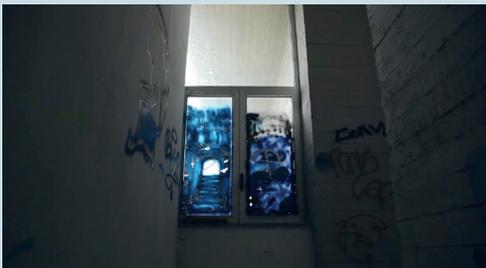
They were recorded in a single session since, during the previous months, the research topics were selected and analyzed through a series of meetings with the starring of the video.

The relationship with Laborintus and PIACCA associations started in May 2016 because of an artistic project developed with Alessandro Fornaci, artistic director of Laborintus' art print laboratories. From the point of view of my doctoral research (Social Practices in Contemporary Italian Art since the Nineties, University Ca' Foscari, Venice), the attention to Corviale came from the studies on the Italian pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 1976. In that occasion, the first artistic project conceived for Corviale was presented by the Italian artists Carrino, Magnoni, Lorenzetti, Unicini and Fiorentino. Combining these two searches, in the summer of 2016 together with Fornaci and other artists from Laborintus, we started to organized an exhibition about the re-elaboration of 1976 project. During the preliminary work to realize this exhibition, It was clear the importance of communication and coordination of these spaces, especially for PIACCA.



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 from Biella and beyond its territory, in many other Italian regions.

KEYWORDS

Experience, Community, Migration, Participatory art practice, Anthropology

THE AUTHOR

Leone Contini has exhibited or held intervention at Cittadellarte, Biella, 2016; Topane i-Amire, Istanbul, 2016; 2nd Tbilisi Triennial, Georgia, 2015; 3rd edition of the Biennial Of Contemporary Art D-0 Ark Underground, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2015; Kronika and Imago Mundi, Bytom and Krakow, 2015; Delfina Foundation, London,

visual ethnography

2015 and 2014; MART, Rovereto, 2015; Galleria Civica, Trento, 2014; Khoj, New Delhi, 2014; Kunstraum, Munich, 2014; Villa Romana, Florence, 2014; DOCVA, Milano, 2014 and 2015; Kunstverein, Amsterdam 2013; Tirana Art Lab, Tirana, 2013; Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci, Prato, 2012; Frigoriferi Milanesi, Milan, 2012; Chan, Genova, 2012.

Among the residency programs attended: Ottomans and Europeans, Fondazione Pistoletto, Biella, 2015; Kronika, Bytom, Poland, 2015; The Politics of Food, Delfina Foundation, London, 2014 and 2015; InContext: public.art.ecology - Food Ed. III, Khoj, New Delhi, 2014; Tirana Art Lab, Tirana, 2013; #1 Under Construction Open Residency, 89weeks and Zico House (Beirut) and Frigoriferi Milanesi (Milano), 2012. Contact the author at: leone.contini@gmail.com



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'

phase after a recent 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 imagine a near future and the perfume of okra flower risotto, pride of the Biellese, protected by a Slow Food stronghold.