

Erasmus +

art4t

Palermo-Copenhagen-Aarhus

coordinators

Roberto Albergoni, **Palermo** MeNO, Italy
Peter M. Boenisc, **Berlin/Aarhus** Aarhus University, Denmark

mentors

Gry Worre Hallberg (Sister's Hope), **Copenhagen** —artist
Egle Oddo, **Palermo/Helsinki** —artist
Başak Şenova, **Istanbul/Vienna** —curator

participants

Silvia Bernardelli, **Genova**
Rikke Bogetoft, **Aalborg**
Gerlando Chianetta, **Agrigento** (took part in Palermo)
Cirkeline Dahl Bondesen, **Copenhagen**
Bona Dyssou, **Budapest**
Rikke Frigast Jakobsen, **Copenhagen**
Nicoline Gandrup Thyrsted, **Aarhus**
Simone Glatt, **Mainz**
Marija Iva Gocić, **Belgrade**
Federica Marra, **Padua**
Giulia Mattera, **Rome**
Rebecca Minten, **Basel/Bern**
Karoline Normann Fløysvik, **Aarhus**
Livia Ribichini, **Rome/Groningen**
Chloe Sassi, **Bagnolet/Paris**
Kamila Śladowska, **Warsaw** (took part in Palermo and Aarhus)
Edoardo Spata, **Ragusa/Palermo**
Frida Stenbäck, **Helsinki/Vienna**
Andreea Tudose, **London** (took part in Palermo and Aarhus)

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THE GROUP EXHIBITION: *LIQUID SATURATION*
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Art Rethinks Transformation for Training was coordinated by **Roberto Albergoni** and **Peter M. Boenisch**. Funded by the **Erasmus+** Programme of the European Union, **ART4T** was organised and promoted by **MeNO** (Italy) in partnership with **Aarhus University** (Denmark).

ART4T explored innovative non-formal training methodologies in the field of interdisciplinary contemporary art, based on sharing the process of artistic creation between teachers and learners. To foster innovation, **ART4T** involved training sessions and production-oriented learning activities founded on shared creative processes. The programme followed experimental educational models and tools.

The training programme ran both in Italy and Denmark through **three interconnected curricula**, which were based on artistic research, production, and practices with two artists—**Gry Worre Hallberg/Sisters Hope** (Copenhagen) and **Egle Oddo** (Palermo/Helsinki), and a curator—**Başak Şenova** (Istanbul/Vienna).

The programme started with online (Zoom) planning meetings among the coordinators and the mentors. The call for **ART4T**, which attracted a high number of applications, followed these meetings and consequently 20 participants were selected. The first phase of the training also started with online (Zoom) lectures and workshops, including the hybrid Presentation of **ART4T** Project at **Chiesa dei SS. Euno e Giuliano** and simultaneously online (Zoom) on 25th May 2022.

Then, the second phase was realised in **Palermo** (between 14-25 September 2022) with workshops, lectures, field research, assignments, activities, workshops, performances, and an exhibition. **ART4T** produced three types of artistic outcomes in Palermo: (i) performances of the mentor artists: **Gry Worre Hallberg/Sisters Hope** and **Egle Oddo**; (ii) performances of the participants in two venues: **Palazzo Sant’Elia** and **Chiesa dei Santi Euno e Giuliano**; (iii) an exhibition: “Liquid Saturation” took place at Palazzo Sant’Elia in Palermo under the coverage of the **BAM–Biennale Arcipelago Mediterraneo**, curated by **Andrea Cusumano** (September 2022-January 2023).

The third phase started with online (Zoom) lectures in preparation for workshops in **Denmark**. In Denmark, **ART4T** was realised sequentially in two cities: **Copenhagen** and **Aarhus**. In Copenhagen, **Gry Worre Hallberg/Sisters Hope** organised a workshop at **Sisters Hope Home**, dedicated to reflective intensification. Then in Aarhus, **Egle Oddo** and **Başak Şenova** conducted workshops and peer-to-peer tutorials. Aside from these scheduled training secessions some expeditions, lectures, and workshops were presented by **Peter M. Boenisch**, **Miranda Laurence**, and **Barbara Simonsen** in Aarhus. A public programme, designed by the participants, took place at **Aarhus University** on 25th January 2023.

Now, this publication concludes **ART4T** by documenting the process through the accumulation of notes, dialogues, and observations by the mentors and the participants. Unfortunately, due to budget limitations, the visuals—which are the integral documents of the entire process—were not included in this publication. If possible, future iterations will hopefully compensate for this important component.

ART4T has been a productive journey. It has been a learning curve not only for the participants, but also for the mentors and the coordinators. Diverse perceptions, responses and actions for political, ecological, social, cultural, physical, and psychological inquiries have led the programme to become a rich resource for collective and creative ways of producing.

INSUTURO

ANDREAS CUSUMANO

BAM, the Mediterranean Archipelago Biennial, was once again held under the banner of experimentation. After two dense and particularly demanding editions, the third, titled INSATURO, saw the light of day in a post-pandemic period. Covid had already forced us to postpone the biennial for a year, but more than anything, it led us to reflect on the necessity and urgency of this project and why it should be kept in Palermo.

The transversal theme of the Mediterranean sea as a horizon for people remains the background of our work, and Palermo remains our reference for looking into this horizon. However, for this third edition, we intended to redefine the very soul of the biennial by conceiving it primarily for contemporary artistic experimentation, and starting with residential projects, we gave particular attention to young artists.

What we missed most during the pandemic were the personal encounters and the shared presence, which go beyond a simple exchange of information. Palermo is therefore a meeting point, not only a metaphorical landing place, but a real hub for contemporary artistic research and for the exchange between practices and research from different places and contexts around the globe. From this point of view, the **ART4T** residency project has become a milestone on the biennial's path of constant transformation. And it is on the basis of the success of this first exchange between artistic practices and residencies that we have paved the way for a new design for the biennial: a catalyst for research and experimentation—outside the realm of the market but within the artists' individual needs.

PROCESSES OF POETIC LANDSCAPES

SISTERS HOPE

During September 2022, Sisters Hope worked with a selected group of emerging artists and researchers from across the EU in the Crypt of Chiesa dei Santi Euno e Guiliano. The training explored and unfolded poetic and sensuous landscapes within and in the city of Palermo. The outset is Sisters Hope's own unique performance method: The Sisters Performance Method - Sensuous Learning. This method is rooted in the exploration of what Sisters Hope terms 'The Poetic Self'.

The traces of this process are now accessible to the public, who are invited to explore a landscape dedicated to the sensuous and poetic parts of our being in the crypt.

A Poetic Self Exercise started on designated times – Participants placed themselves comfortably on the red carpet and followed the spoken voice guiding them. When an exercise ended, they wrote their reflections on a piece of paper, and then put it in the glass box in the room. All the reflections were collected and sent to The Archive at Sisters Hope Home located on the outskirts of Copenhagen, Denmark.

“The Poetic Self is not fiction. Nor a character. It is you. Something that lives within you that you might or might not express in your everyday life. Your inner inherent poetic potential that you explore and unfold.”

Sisters Hope is a highly acclaimed and award-winning Copenhagen-based performance group and movement spearheading a whole new way of performance artwork, inspiring generations to come. Their work unfolds at the intersection of immersion, intervention, activism, research, and pedagogy.

In their durational performances, they explore different aspects of what they call a Sensuous Society – a potential new world arising from the post-economic and ecological crises. Currently, they are introducing a whole new artistic paradigm that they term 'Inhabitation', which moves beyond both spectatorship and participation in a more permanent unfolding of the aesthetic that stimulates ecologic connectedness and sustainable futures.

<http://sistershope.dk>

WHAT WOULD A SENSUOUS SOCIETY BE LIKE?

ROBERTO ALBERGONI IN CONVERSATION WITH GRY WORRE HALLBERG -SISTERS HOPE

ROBERTO ALBERGONI: I would like to start with the title of the project, ART4T - Art for Training. In a way, ART4T is the continuation of another project called A.R.T., acronym for Art Rethinks Transformation. I think that this idea of rethinking transformation—post Covid, capitalism, communism, and the difficulties of the financial system—is very much linked with the necessity to go beyond economic rationality as the only system that can govern the world. So, what I would like to ask is what you think makes this idea of rethinking transformation possible. And, when we say ART for Training, would it be correct to consider this as a kind of human training where new citizens are trained, and not only as training for art professionals?

GRY WORRE HALLBERG—SISTERS HOPE: Thank you for the question, Roberto, and also for providing the context for the entire project. For me, Art for Training is linked to the vision of a Sensuous Society and the Sensuous Society Manifesto, because the idea or the question that our manifesto poses is “what would society and different aspects of society be like if it were governed by the aesthetic dimension instead of the economic rationality currently governing society?”. My understanding of the aesthetic dimension is from the perspective of aesthetic philosophy – as sensuous and poetic perception, cognition and understanding, a more sensuous and poetic mood of being in the world, and a more sensuous and poetic mood of being together in the world. Being immersed in this mode of existence can lead to art production. Although the aesthetic dimension is present in everyone, everywhere, and at all times, it is not necessarily nurtured in everyone and everywhere, because we are governed by this economic rationality. Hence, the aesthetic dimension is not prioritised very highly for the individual human being or in the spaces that we inhabit—such as cities. When you are immersed in art, either as an artist or through working in the art system, you do have access to the aesthetic, but that art is to some degree exclusive. That is why I talk about 'democratising the aesthetic' or providing access to a more sensuous and poetic mode of being in the world for everyone, both within and outside the art sphere.

I think Art for Training, in a way, also uses or applies the aesthetic dimension as a training program for a way of being in the world. In Art4T, emerging artists submerge in this approach to life and begin to understand their practice in a context that can move beyond the sphere of the art institution and open up another way of inhabiting spaces – and ultimately the world. This is something essential, because we need a more ecological approach to existence if this planet is to survive. The aesthetic dimension that we have access to in the art system intensifies or gives access to those other modes of being that liberate a different way of existing in the world, in spaces, and within ourselves – and I believe that we must open that space.

ROBERTO ALBERGONI: Thank you, Gry. I think that many people around the world would call you crazy or claim that you are chasing a utopia. However, in your Manifesto you say that the Sensuous Society is no utopia; that it “is a framework to explore the radical idea of the aesthetic dimension, the sensuous and the poetic as the highest value of society”. Did your experience in Palermo play a role in inspiring this principle or support this theory in a practical way?

GRY WORRE HALLBERG—SISTERS HOPE: Yes, first about the utopia part... For me, it is fundamental that the Sensuous Society Manifesto is a radical framework that enables the exploring of an alternative way of being in the world, taking the aesthetic dimension—the sensuous, the poetic, and the arts—as a catalyst

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GRY WORRE HALLBERG—SISTERS HOPE: Yes, first about the utopia part... For me, it is fundamental that the Sensuous Society Manifesto is a radical framework that enables the exploring of an alternative way of being in the world, taking the aesthetic dimension—the sensuous, the poetic, and the arts—as a catalyst for the transformation of society. It is not a conclusion, and the reason for this is because we haven’t experienced it yet, therefore we don’t know in actuality what a Sensuous Society would be like. I’m sure there would be dysfunctionalities there as well: how would we exchange resources if we closed down the monetary system? Who would lead - the most beautiful or the one who experiences the world most intensely? And so forth... So, it hasn’t been lived yet, and you can’t claim something that you haven’t thus far experienced to be a utopia. But you can make visible how the aesthetic dimension has been underprioritised and unpack the value in it.

In relation to the time in Palermo, I don’t know if I understand your question correctly, but engaging in these processes is not necessarily a utopian process either as we are human beings, and everything is filled with friction, with all the different desires and ambitions we all have within us. That’s interesting,

because at times, the production processes of Sisters Hope don’t resemble a utopian Sensuous Society either since we are still immersed in the logic of our current paradigm: economic rationality. So, our pre-production modes are in a way defined or determined by that logic; everything is. Then when you move into what we would call the manifestations, the other logic—in our case the logic of the Sensuous Society—begins to emerge, and that dissolves some of the problems that might have been there before as another layer unravels, which really is quite healing.

In terms of Sisters Hope, I think that people tangibly find their Poetic Self (which is central to our performance method) and begin to be and experience the world through their Poetic Self. This changes the perspective, and they begin to approach their practice—and sometimes life—in a different way. It influences and impacts the way we immerse in or gaze at the context in which we are situated.

ROBERTO ALBERGONI: You said that when “we change spaces, we liberate new potential”. What we tried to do through BAM was to change its conceptual space, rather than following the usual way of implementing a contemporary art biennial, and we tried to do this by placing the role of the artist at the centre of the project and working more on the relationship between the artists, as well as between the artists and the local context. Based on your experience, do you think that BAM was able to unearth new potential?

GRY WORRE HALLBERG—SISTERS HOPE: Yes, indeed. I think that intention is apparent in everything you do and when you enter the space, you feel it very strongly and palpably. As you know, we worked in the plaza in front of the place where we exhibited, and the complete openness of the space turned out to be extremely significant. Naturally, you can choose to work site-specifically where the concealed and protected space can hold a ‘secret energy’ and the magic of ‘the cracks in the city’, which, in turn, can safeguard the energy and atmosphere that you want to uphold.

In the plaza, we worked in a space bristling with daily life on a Friday and Saturday night, with all these various local inhabitants and different people entering the plaza, so our manifestation became very interventionist. I think it was the Sensuous Society coexisting with current everyday life. As I said, when you work site-specific and in an interventionist manner, you can choose spaces that are more concealed, so you become more protected. We, however, were not protected (in the plaza); we directly intervened in everyday life. In such a situation, where we are situated in the plaza anchored in the vision of a Sensuous Society, the auditive universe, the visual universe, the universe that we represent with the Poetic Self and the Sisters Performance Methods becomes very important. It needs to be rooted and very strong so that it doesn’t crumble under the pressure of everyday life.

These emerging artists were just beginning to explore their Poetic Self. Yet, the surrounding atmosphere and the presentation of their practices and explorations were strong enough that it not only coexisted with everyday life, but also intervened or intersected with it. The intervention into this specific local context was extremely significant. So, what at first seemed like an unprotected space became a symphony of co-existing impressions. In the training program, we focused on the Poetic Self, externalising the Poetic Self (your body as an image and your own tableaux), and relating from the Poetic Self (interactivity design). With that we stay strong, stay rooted, and then meet the world through the Sensuous Society, from our Poetic Self. There are three levels in the method: finding the Poetic Self; the image of the Poetic Self — externalising the Poetic Self, which is the visual image where externalising your Poetic Self creates an externalised image in the city; and lastly, relating through the Poetic Self, which is the interactivity design based on something that they wanted to exchange with the participants or the ordinary citizens of Palermo. Therefore, that exchange is part of the method and exploring these 3 levels in the plaza was part of their process. The method is, thus, also there to protect us and strengthen us in a context where we also work as interventionists.

ROBERTO ALBERGONI: I remember your fantastic work in the plaza, where the young people in the surrounding area worked with the artists. When experimenting with this concept of the aesthetic through the Sensuous Society, is it easier with trained people such as the artists, or is it sometimes easier to experiment with

untrained people like the young people in the plaza? What kinds of different reactions do you get when you experiment with different kinds of people?

GRY WORRE HALLBERG—SISTERS HOPE: It's true that I have trained people with different backgrounds. I found that people who come from a professional background are truly interested in learning this method to translate it into their practice and use it in their own artistic work. Of course, this disciplinary interest makes a lot of sense and that is also why we teach it, as well as to spread the whole idea of art that emerges from an intention in order to unfold the sensuous and poetic in other people. Other groups, such as the young people in the plaza that you mentioned, typically come without expectations, and are surprised as a result. For example, we have this takeover performance where we take over the leadership of real upper secondary schools, which is similar to the encounter with the young people in Palermo Plaza. When you talk about 'democratising the aesthetic'—as we do—in such groups, some people who would never have had access to the art system or exhibitions discover that there is a poetic and sensuous mode of life that could be accessible to them.

It is about making something accessible to someone who doesn't necessarily get inputs from the art system, which to some can be extremely gratifying and liberating. They might feel they encountered something special for the first time in their lives, perhaps something that they unconsciously longed for but didn't know existed. And then an understanding might dawn on them that this way of existence might be within their reach. And from there, these rings can spread into other local contexts.

They are different processes, but many experience this deep resonance or longing when they are introduced to this method. They may not come to it from the same position in life, but they often experience similar feelings, and for many people, the aesthetic dimension of life is underprioritised or completely inaccessible. When you get a chance to be in the world from this space within you, you often grasp it. I do too. I have carved out this little space and time where I manifest existing in the world in a different way, and I feel the same longing afterwards. Experiences such as these support the argument that the aesthetic dimension is generally overlooked, and that the poetic and sensuous are inherent in us. Otherwise, this deep longing would not emerge when we come across it. It is as if our life source recognises it. That's also why in Sisters Hope Home—our 5 year-long performance piece—we talk about how we can move from constant longing to permanent belonging.

ROBERTO ALBERGONI: You had students from different European countries in the group. Do you think that applying your method in different regions, such as Northern or Southern Europe, leads to different reactions? And do you have different approaches for presenting your method based on where you are?

GRY WORRE HALLBERG—SISTERS HOPE: Not really, although you might think that it would be very different in different cultural contexts. Perhaps it is a bit linked to what I said before, that in my experience this poetic potential is inherent in everyone, independent of cultural context. It taps into another existential layer where the layer of cultural context seems like a thin membrane underneath another kind of life flow, where the sea of the poetic and the sensuous is in motion. I see that everywhere, even when we travel to places as different as China or Greenland. The interesting part is how small the differences in experience are when people tap into their Poetic Self and work with this method. It demonstrates how connected and similar we actually are as Earthlings. When we talk about cultural context, we usually focus on differences, but with this method, I see more connectivity. Often, the Poetic Self is more than human or multi-species. When people meet each other from their Poetic Self, the question they ask is not "who are you, what do you do" or "where do you come from?" but "what is your Poetic Self?", and the answer might be "I'm the Asteroid", "the Spreading Fire", "the Fluid Creature", or "her Porcelain Spirit"..., where you might then ask "why are you the Asteroid?". This brings a completely different opening to the conversation. We meet at a different wavelength when we meet one another from our Poetic Self.

ROBERTO ALBERGONI: Creating a relationship between people from different places might ease the way of creating healthier relationships between cultural identities such as different states and nations. It could

lead people to transcend beyond identity and think about their connectivity from a more humane dimension. It could enable having a better world.

GRY WORRE HALLBERG—SISTERS HOPE: Yes, I really think so.

In Sisters Hope Home, we have people living there in their Poetic Self over longer periods of time, and it does create a completely different social environment; the way we communicate is different and focused more on the poetic level of existence. It's not bound to nationalities or ethnicity or other markers of identity, it is linked to something else within us — our inner landscapes.

Again, for many, it becomes a new mental ecology based on the sensuous and poetic, which then opens up another way of connecting to the human community and to the environment at large (see the findings in my PhD: "Sensuous Society – Carving the path towards a sustainable future through aesthetic inhabitation stimulating ecologic connectedness").

ROBERTO ALBERGONI: I would like to come back to the contemporary art system and BAM, and take a look at the future of BAM. The economic rationality within the contemporary art system is prominent. Many aspects of the art system are based on economics. Do you think that a biennial such as BAM, which hasn't received much public funding and has hardly had any connections with the gallery scene and art market, would be able to survive in the future?

GRY WORRE HALLBERG—SISTERS HOPE: I think that BAM is a very important part of the future. I have always worked with performance art, and it's the art form I know best. Our work at Sisters Hope hasn't entered into the circulation and economic transaction of galleries. This is something we are actually considering. However, so far, we've worked solely with performance art and installations that are in flux. In that sense, we are not really in dialogue with the world of gallery economics.

From the rationale of a Sensuous Society, which looks at different systems such as education, the city structure, or governance, we can pose questions that evoke certain responses. For example, if we ask what school would be like in a Sensuous Society, it can elicit ideas that it should be a place where people are taught more than how to sit on chairs in front of desks, that it should be a place where tactile experience of the world is understood to be as important as logic, etc. Or the question of what the city of a Sensuous Society should be like would definitely unlock the sensuous and poetic layers of the cities and teach its citizens to activate the poetic gaze when they move through the city. Likewise, questioning what the art world of a Sensuous Society would be like would put responsibility on the art system—since the aesthetic dimension would then be the governing principle—to create spaces where there is access to an intense poetic mode of being in the world for everyone.

If we were to move into a paradigm that went beyond the economic mindset, it would completely change the role of the art system. Moving into a Sensuous Society would bring forth the vision of the aesthetic dimension in defining the role of the art system. Perhaps that is what you are already doing at BAM in trailing this path, which would make you pioneers.

ROBERTO ALBERGONI: Thank you so much. Your words certainly provoke thoughts for the future of BAM, and for shaping its next edition.

POETIC LANDSCAPES

SISTERS HOPE IN CONVERSATION WITH THE PARTICIPANTS

GRY WORRE HALLBERG & NIKOLAJ RAMUSSEN—SISTERS HOPE: Please describe how your artistic/research practice resonates with The Sisters Performance Method—Sensuous Learning. How did you connect with the sensuous and the poetic?

RIKKE FRIGAST: I was very inspired by how Sisters Hope's performance method demands a certain space and rhythm as a starting point to be able to unfold. It involves the rethinking of the surroundings and the pace of everyday life in order for us to be able to connect with the more poetic and sensuous part of our beings. In this, it tries to rethink and question modern life structures and the hierarchy of values in our current society. All of that resonates deeply with my art practice and research in which I am eager to develop more sustainable art practices in order to create more sustainable and caring structures and values in our society.

I feel a strong connection to Sisters Hope's very specific aesthetic, but at the same time, it leaves very little space for my own aesthetic to unfold—or you can say that my aesthetic was swayed in a certain direction within the frames of Sisters Hope. It is within this frame that our individual 'showcases' became a collective one, and was perceived as such by the audiences / participants. It was also very inspiring how inclusive it felt and that several different entries were offered to connect with the method. It was really facilitated with great care.

KAROLINE NORMANN FLØYSVIK: My practice has always been driven by humour and an ironic point of view. Therefore, working with the sensuous and poetic was a way of challenging my practice and learning to work from a different state than I'm used to. Working with humour allows putting a distance between oneself and the world in order to observe and analyse. It was, therefore, interesting to work from within and to take my own sensuous and poetic self seriously. Even though this way of working is far from my usual practice, I felt very open to it and enjoyed widening my horizon. I believe this comes from the fact that working with the sensuous and poetic is very physical, it is something that is experienced through your body, and therefore, something you will have a relation to no matter what you think. For me, it was a way of learning, or unlearning a way of being in the world, and slowing down and really noticing what happens when you hyperfocus on your senses.

CIRKELINE DAHL BONDESEN: My artistic practice is mainly choreographic —I strive to embody the method almost as a process of translation. To make what is a mental and untouchable thought into a sensuous and physical experience, and its opposite: to mentally process and articulate what is already completely understood in the body and its senses. This resonates with the methods of Sisters Hope since they are continuously exploring how to inhabit the sensuous and how to learn from that.

MARIJA IVA GOCIĆ: My artistic and research practice aligns with the Sisters Performance Method in its focus on sensory immersion, poetic expression, and introspection. I also prioritise the role of intuition and the irrational in my work. I don't typically rationalise the process or inspiration behind a new project while I'm working on it. I often find that rationalisation comes retroactively. After working with Sisters Hope, I also try to follow this approach in my everyday life.

I also explore a range of themes related to human relations, interaction, and communication. Interaction is often a method I use in my work too, and I frequently collaborate with other artists. My work often takes the form of immersive and interactive pieces that encourage audience participation and engagement. , I gained a deeper understanding of the importance of these aspects of my practice and the value of unlocking the poetic and sensuous.

BONA DYSSOU: The experience of first meeting Gry online on one of the preparatory sessions, when she started the Poetic Self exercise with us before Palermo, stayed with me for a long time.

Sensuous:

I felt an affiliation with the approach represented by Sisters Hope, where we started to find our inner Poetic Self by choosing symbols, images, and motifs. We did a lot of exercises where we were able to go deeper in observing ourselves, our environment, and our own inner feelings about the Poetic Self, and then connecting these experiences and the emerging Poetic Self with the experiences of others, and with their Poetic Selves.

Poetic:

For me, the Poetic Self was created through connections. The way the different Poetic Selves connected and resonated with each other, interacted and then created the Poetic Landscape with the audience was a very important experience. This kind of sensual, sensitive way of working was close to my heart. It was nice not to think in terms of verbality, nor look for the final product and what we wanted to show, but to look for what was going on inside us and only then start the performative work.

Lately, I have become interested in turning a performance into an experience that is more like a ritual or event, a unique experience for both participants and performers. In my last show, the material was fed by the internal work with the performers, and we worked out the piece based on that. Together with the performative sequences, we were trying to engage with one another and the audience by being in the moment and reacting directly to what was happening that night between us.

I think it's very important to be able to work with collaborators in an atmosphere of trust, where you dare to try out a lot of things and focus on being completely present in front of the audience.

In my artistic practice, I find it very interesting to change the theatrical rules between the performers and the audience. I strive to make pieces where the audience can be free to take part in a variety of ways: eating, drinking, talking, partying, and engaging with the performers. Of course, structure is necessary, but I am interested in its limits and methods. Sisters Hope realised this audience participation in Piazza Magione, where the locals and the audience who came to check out the Poetic Landscape were able to engage with us based on how they felt and what the connection with the performer allowed.

Presence is very important for me. So is the atmosphere of trust. The most important thing is the mutual trust with my colleagues. In this last show that I mentioned, sharing a deep connection and building trust with all my colleagues, and working only with those whom I absolutely trusted was crucial. I know that artistic manifesto is very important in Sisters Hope. We worked with real presence and connection amongst ourselves and the audience in the streets of Palermo. Our inner work with our Poetic Self through the method began, and I was happy to improve it. I am curious to see how we will continue the work.

FEDERICA MARRA: In my artistic research, I look for the nuances that build reality. I'm convinced (due to my anthropological and artistic studies) that the world and our perception of it is a construction made of layers. I always try to highlight these layers; I try to show the construction in both my method (using overlapping) and my output. I think that different points of view on an event can enable us to understand it in different ways. Therefore, different ways of learning can lead us to a different knowing of the world. I think that reality is much more complex than we think. Being connected to the sensuous and the poetic and searching deep inside ourselves, looking for unexplored feelings and for unexplored way to be is a great opportunity to experience the world in a completely different way than what we are used to.

RIKKE BOGETOFT: I view my artistic practice as therapy; a way of navigating and understanding the world. I try to allow myself to be curious, to listen to gut feelings and emotions, to be completely present. I have struggled with neurological disorders since childhood, and some of my earliest memories are of my mother guiding me through a body scan every night before bed. Of course,

I didn't know what a "body scan" or "mindfulness" was, but each night it helped me relax my body and calm my mind.

What a surprise it was to experience the Poetic Self exercise and be transported right back to that nighttime ritual. I started recognising many of the tools I had learned in cognitive therapy and utilised every day. I immediately linked the sensuous to the mindful. This sentiment is best encapsulated in a moment of our time in Palermo: My twin in name and I joined Sisters Hope as evokers in a public performance of the Poetic Self exercise. After the evocation, we retired to a back office, camouflaged as a dressing room. As we entered, I could see a figure in the corner, but I had left my glasses off and could not identify them. Under the gaze of this mystery spectator, we silently undressed. A sensing of the body and being sensed—as I unbuttoned my shirt, I felt as if I was watching myself from all sides, completely immersed in a momentary performance.

In such moments, I wonder where the line between reality and performance lies, and whether life isn't just art incarnate.

SIMONE GLATT: I have to say that for a long time, I struggled with the method of Sensuous Learning and finding my Poetic Self. I think it requires a lot of openness and vulnerability, and not everyone is willing to be that. I believe that working on this for multiple days helped me, and thus I was able to reflect on it every day during—as well as after—our sessions. In my artistic practice, I always strive to include audience members as an active part of the performance. The method of Sisters Hope focuses on the individual in becoming their Poetic Self, and thus contributing and influencing others. In finding and discovering your Poetic Self and subsequently working on your performance, you must also work on your interactivity design. The help, support, and guidance I received from Sisters Hope really helped me create a more impactful performance regarding the inclusion of the audience.

Finding my Poetic Self also helped me discover what was important to me as a person and artist. To be able to understand what impact I wanted to make with my art was a very powerful experience, which I was lucky to have had through the methods of Sisters Hope.

GRY WORRE HALLBERG & NIKOLAJ RAMUSSEN—SISTERS HOPE: How did the Poetic Self contribute to this process?

FEDERICA MARRA: Normally I start working with words, and from there I try to find the connection with what I'm working on, studying the layers of what I'm interested in. With the Poetic Self, the words come later; you first have to deal with the deepest part of yourself, and this can be scary. When you are not in control, you just have to accept that maybe what you're feeling is not what you want, but in a way it has silently always been there. It's like creating a connection with that part of yourself that you don't welcome when you are completely in control, awake. We all know that with meditation you can have similar experiences: when you allow yourself feelings and thoughts to emerge from deep down, the possibility of unpleasant feelings is high. The Poetic Self method takes it one step further. You give your unconscious self a form, an image, a way to perceive. I think this provides the chance to reconcile with that part of yourself. It is from this that you gain the power to be so sincere and powerful in every artistic action, because it comes from a place where lies are just not possible, and every movement or gaze is something naive and real, without barriers. Well, I think it's a long, difficult (and sometimes sad) process, but it's worth it. In my case, it contributed to giving me that type of honesty that I always seek. To be communicative you have to be honest, and it's hard with all the superstructure that we have to deal with every day and every moment of our lives.

RIKKE FRIGAST: For me, the Poetic Self exercise is a way of creating a concept from within and of staying true to something that you care for deeply. It helped me transfer my research interest into a bodily and sensuous experience. And from that, I developed a whole new way to collect data from within my artwork. It plays with a fine line between reality and fiction in asking us to create the Poetic Self, which exists in both the body and mind. I know that Sisters would say that it is not fiction, but I think that for me, some kind of fictionalisation happened in the creation of my Poetic Self, even though the actual performance as my Poetic Self was created through an authentic and real meeting.

CIRKELINE DAHL BONDESEN: The Poetic Self reminded me that no matter the subject I investigate (which are lately connected to the ideas of free bodies, sexuality, and gaze), there is always the true core from where I wish to communicate. This core is, in my case, connected to truly wanting to share with the world from a place of something I would almost call service – to make art a medium for intimacy and dialogue. This is the power source that lies beneath every subject as an energetic form that the Poetic Self contributed to making me aware of.

SIMONE GLATT: The Secret Magician helps others find their best self and sees everyone as an artist in their own right. I think the Poetic Self helped me discover what I wanted to do with my art and what I wanted my audience to experience and feel.

MARIJA IVA GOCIĆ: Discovering my poetic self had a profound impact and many implications for me. To begin with, I see it as the most fun possible way to take the first step in the process – the first step that was relatively easy to take, but took me very far. It was particularly interesting to me when I learned that the poetic self can be understood as a primal energy that has been present since the beginning of time, changing forms until it found its way into us. This made me consider my origins, roots, and history.

At the same time, various cultural influences in Palermo and the city's rich history made me examine the themes of ancestry, cultural identity, and religious identity. This was a very intense process for me, and it also gave me more confidence in my decision to pursue art. Finding a poetic self served as a starting point for me to delve deeper into these themes and think more about how they shape my sense of self. In performances I presented, I tried to capture and convey this sense of self-exploration. .

KAROLINE NORMANN FLØYSVIK: The Poetic Self was the starting point of this process. It contributed by creating a new kind of consciousness in me, and making me aware of my thoughts and senses in a new way. I would describe it as a hyperawareness, which allowed me to open up and take in all the details of the world around and inside myself. Finding my poetic self was a way to find a new layer in my inner monologue, through which I experienced a new way of thinking in pictures.

RIKKE BOGETOFT: The process of discovering my Poetic Self gave form to feeling. It defamiliarised my view of myself in that I was invited to explore all of my crevices under the lens of the sensuous and the poetic, as if meeting myself for the first time. Like a fog lifting, directions and motivations became clear to me; each day I became more attuned to the whims of the Witch. All my choices were informed by her—what to wear, what to eat, what to write, what to buy. The Witch told me which back alleys to wander and which sights to see. I was her when I slept and showered. She first showed her face during an exercise in Palermo. We were asked to inhabit a space in the surroundings of Sant'Euno. Located in Piazza Magione, the church is neighbour to restaurants, private residents, and many casual users of the public space. Perusing, a drainpipe caught my eye. Soapy suds bled out onto the hot concrete, inching their way closer to me and seizing land. As the water seeped into the porous concrete, tiny streams of air bubbles emerged. Suddenly I was completely surrounded, floating on a little dry island in the middle of a boiling sea. I saw myself swimming with a long tail, like a sea snake, from Denmark to Sicily. Visions of mermaids, nymphs, and alchemists appeared and from their midst emerged the Witch—a creature of myth and nature, care and desire. We greeted each other as old friends and new lovers. Conjoined, at last.

BONA DYSSOU: We had already started working on our Poetic Self online. I felt a lot of self-imposed pressure to really look inwards when creating it, because as Gry and Nicolaj indicated, a person does not change their Poetic Self later on, but it evolves and changes with the person throughout their lives.

I feel that the Poetic Self has been inspired by very deep feelings, and although I'm still at the beginning of my journey with her, I hope I can take her further. She is characterised by great strength, awe, and mystery. I gave "her" large tasks to improve. It has been very exciting to work out more and more of her details and to learn how she has connected with the other Poetic Selves.

GRY WORRE HALLBERG & NIKOLAJ RAMUSSEN—SISTERS HOPE: Through the program, you developed a showcase which was presented to an audience. Please describe what you did and the thinking behind it.

KAROLINE NORMANN FLØYSVIK: My showcase consisted of being dressed all in black as my poetic self, the silent flame, where I had placed myself as a living sculpture in Piazza Magione. I was tied to two heavy rocks that had fallen out of the rock fence surrounding the grass, and I was holding a smaller, yet heavy rock. I was standing in what I think translates as a «motherly» posture, carrying the rock as if it were my baby. I was silent, but if passers-by stopped and I felt that they were willing to engage with me, I would offer them the rock to hold for me, and in that way include them in my tableau. The thought behind the living statue comes from my exploration of my poetic self, who, I found out, is very heavy. Therefore, I wanted to explore a bodily picture of this heaviness. It could be a picture that people could watch in context with the other participants' performance, and it was an experience where they could also hold and feel the heaviness of the rock as a symbol of the heaviness of my poetic self. The goal was to make a poetic, physical manifestation of a feeling, as well as to explore how the people watching reacted to such a still standing manifestation. Would they just walk away, or would they stay and try to understand what the living statue was or could possibly mean?

RIKKE FRIGAST: On the front patio of the church Santi Euno e Giuliano, surrounded by a beautiful fence/lattice, I created something between a kind of nursery room and private bedroom, which was very much inspired by the dormitory rooms I saw at the Monastery S. Catarina. I placed a bed with long white sheets and a pillow, and next to it a table with a beautiful large mirror on top. On the table, I placed an old-fashioned wooden hair brush and a small pot with ink and pencil. I was wearing a black dress, a white top tied at the back (with connotations to aprons), and a beautiful transparent headpiece borrowed from Sisters. When one or more people entered, I took their hand and asked if they wanted to give or receive care. If they said 'receive', I made a mark with the white ink on my left arm and then asked if I could brush their hair or if they wanted to lie on the bed. If they laid on the bed, I sat by their side and sang a Danish lullaby. And if I got consent to brush their hair, I placed them in front of the mirror and brushed their hair with great care at a very slow pace for a few minutes. If they said they wanted to give care, I made a mark on the other arm and asked them if they wanted to brush my hair. I took off my headpiece, gave them the brush and placed myself in front of the mirror. The marks on my arm were thought of as a way of collecting data.

SIMONE GLATT: In my showcase "The Tree of Words", I offered paper to the people at Piazza Magione who wanted to hang a note describing a word, a wish, or a dream on the tree behind me. The tree was sadly withered due to the hot weather. The pedestrians that passed by and chose to engage wrote a word on a small piece of paper. I took that piece of paper and sealed a short piece of yarn on it with melted wax, and then hung it on the tree. After that, I offered another note to the passers-by, who now became an active participant. The second note thanked them for their contribution and asked if they wanted something in return. If they agreed, I offered them one of three letters in German, Italian, or English. People mostly chose the letter in their own mother tongue. However, if they chose English they got a letter with an German poem inside, if they chose German they got a letter with an Italian poem inside, and if they chose Italian they got an English poem.

With "The Tree of Words", I wanted to offer the people at Piazza Magione a possibility to share something that was on their mind right then and there or something that mattered to them deeply. A lot of people took the opportunity to do so and wrote down words that they particularly liked, wishes for their future, and also some quite intimate thoughts. My idea was that the simple act of asking someone what they thought, what they wished for, and simply how they were and then listening to them and appreciating their words (by collecting them and treating them with the utmost respect) would be a powerful act.

The idea behind the three letters with the different languages was that you would not get what you chose but perhaps what you needed (without you knowing) instead, while learning something new through the unexpected.

MARIJA IVA GOCIĆ: I made a performance diptych ("Source Altar" and "Post Altar") – one dedicated to the contemplation of ancestral relationships, and the other to the contemplation of what we leave behind and what comes after us when we are gone. The setting of the San Euno Crypt added an eerie and otherworldly quality to the performance "Post Altar," which was presented as part of the Sisters Hope "Poetic Landscape Processes". The Crypt, a historic site originally used for the mummification of human bodies, invites the participants to consider their own mortality and the ways in which our actions can impact those who come after us. As it was a site of attempts to extend life beyond death, this also serves as a reminder of the human desire to cheat death and defy the natural cycle of life.

The performance incorporates elements of Butoh dance. It begins with a slow awakening, a birth represented by rising from a curled up position, and culminates in walking those present out of the crypt. The setting of the crypt serves as a contrast to the traditional associations with birth, and presents a reminder of the cyclical nature of life – the constant renewal that occurs as one generation gives way to the next. The naked body serves as a church altar, drawing connections between the human form and spiritual worship. The use of Butoh, a form of dance often associated with the surreal and the absurd, adds a sense of otherworldliness to the piece. As I moved through the crypt very slowly, those present were also confronted with the passage of time. The aim was for the participants to enter a trance-like state, allowing them to fully engage with and contemplate these themes.

CIRKELINE DAHL BONDESEN: In the showcase, which took place in a public park, I created 3 simple instruments out of glass, metal, and water. My piece invited 3 participants at a time, who, after a short ritual in silence, selected an instrument to play. I "donated" my moving body to the music they played together in what became an instant composition—an improvisation for 3 musicians and 1 mover. We had to activate our listening ability, our ability to read nonverbal cues, and for a short moment we created a tone together, an atmosphere and a dynamic that was unique for each showcase. My idea behind it was to investigate how we could meet in an intimate but also playful setting as strangers, creating sound and movement together. The concept allowed us to play with both taking initiatives but also flexibly changing shape through the initiatives of others. A dialogue of giving and taking. My best memory of the showcase was when we had 3 local people as participants, and they broke so many of the so-called rules of the design that we ended up breaking into fits of laughter the whole time.

BONA DYSSOU: An important characteristic of my Poetic Self is change, concealment, and trust is a key issue for her. She is very much defined by her past. I wanted to show her in different states, and to experience and show different stages of her story, to show a few moments from the journey she has taken in her life so far, to where she is now.

The Poetic Self, "Théo", escaped from the jungle and hid the object most precious to her in a secret place so that she could retrieve it at any time. But in her distraction, she was unable to find it when she needed it. I showed this flight and search while trying to avoid people (the audience and the other performers) in the space and trying to conceal the panic that was overwhelming her. But obviously, the character wanted to hide and escape; however, I didn't want to hide her completely, because I wanted to show her journey. At some point, she found her ring, realising that the key to finding it was to relax and slow down. When she understood this rule—that the more stressed and frightened she was, the calmer and slower she had to behave—she was able to leave the forest, hence able to solve anything. This rule is a key element in her life that she has to practice.

The next part showed her arrival in Europe, an extract from her new life. Symbolically, she found the right clothes on the street for her transformation. She wanted to blend in with society as a person of high calibre. She was ready for the next stage of her life, finding partner(s) for her challenge – fighting for the truth, against darkness in the world. She didn't know anybody, but now wanted someone to accompany her. The only thing she had was her ring given to her by someone of great importance to her, her clothes, and her memories. Unlike what she wore in the forest, she found an elegant dress and high-heeled shoes. She put them on and her gait changed.

She walked to a table set for a dinner for two in the middle of the square, where she found the last of the clothes to complete her elegant attire. Two chairs at the table facing each other—she sat down on one—two plates, two wine glasses. She sat alone, waiting. She was waiting for her partner to come, but she didn't know who that would be. When someone came up to her, she communicated with them based on whether or not she trusted them or felt sympathetic towards them.

She trusted very few people, so she often didn't communicate at all, or if someone was just looking at her, she tried to ignore them. If someone dared to sit down with her, she started contact with them. The first time when she felt real trust towards the person who sat down across from her, they had been holding long and deep eye contact for minutes. Others were watching them. The Poetic Self started to offer food and drinks to the person as they kept eye contact. They started to communicate, talk, getting to know each other, and as her trust started to grow, she started to cry. She might have found the first person to trust in her new life.

FEDERICA MARRA: In my Poetic Self research, I found a tree, I felt that tree and all its intelligence, its emotions, its compassion. I felt so powerless and so ungrateful. The trees were such wonderous creatures, so silent and so wise. From that experience, I wanted to thank them because I felt that this was necessary. I built a sequence of movements with my hands to simulate praying, I took two simple movements from the Christians and Muslims and two from the sign language of Sisters Hope, and the meaning was: "thank you, life, unity, thank you". I chose not to speak, because I didn't feel that it was necessary. I created a space where I could follow a circular path: I believe in symbols and archetypes, which are an ancient way of communicating, so I decided to use the magical triangle around the tree I chose and made three stops at the angles. I wanted a safe place to welcome the audience: when someone came to my triangle, I established a connection with them with my eyes and then I opened the triangle, I let them come (one person at one time), I closed the triangle, and showed them the sequence of movements with my hands. Then I pointed to the first stop; sometimes I went before them and they followed me, at other times they already knew and just wanted to do that by themselves. We thanked the small tree 3 times. At the end, people sometimes needed to repeat the movement and I just let them do that. Before opening the triangle again, I gave them some pumpkin seeds or nuts or herbs and let them go. I did this because I think if we build a balanced relationship with nature, it will provide us with its fruit. That is how agriculture works, but we often forget that. I believed people needed to thank nature, and when they came inside the triangle, they accepted all the rules without even thinking. They felt safe, and I was very grateful to them and to that tree that had made it possible.

GRY WORRE HALLBERG & NIKOLAJ RAMUSSEN—SISTERS HOPE: What kind of influence did Palermo have on your process? Being a public place, how did the site-specific location of Piazza Magione affect your showcase?

CIRKELINE DAHL BONDESEN: The days we spent in Palermo—walking around, tasting and smelling things—and visiting its hidden treasures and historic sites slowly built up a context for creating. Palermo is a melting pot of cultures and traditions living not only side by side, but together. Creating a showcase in Piazza Magione facilitated an exceptional meeting between performers and locals in a moment where the interactive artwork lived uniquely between us.

FEDERICA MARRA: Palermo did not influence my process, but Piazza Magione as a site-specific space did. It has a particular energy, it's a beautiful square but, for example, the ground is full of shards of glass. It has some olives trees, but also people who sleep under them. There are bars, people who have fun, but also homeless people. The decision to do something active with people was a bit difficult to think of at the start, but I think the energy of the place put me on the right course of action. People participated, they were very proactive, and I heard some kids say to the others: "her religion is praying to nature", and I felt so proud of them for they knew what was going on as soon as they saw me and my strange triangle with a tree in the middle without any words of explanation. It was clear and they were all very respectful and curious. Perhaps at times, art has to go to this particular place. I felt that I received a lot of energy from the people as well as from Piazza Magione.

BONA DYSSOU: It was wonderful. I saw how the space took on a life of its own in our performance, and it was fantastic. My Poetic Self wasn't interacting very directly with others. There was interaction, but the Poetic Self was very secretive about its identity, so it was harder to connect with it. Yet, I had experiences that made me want to help it so much when it was down. There was amazing power in feeling that she was not being viewed as an exhibit. Despite communicating with few people other than her chosen final dinner guest, she was still engaging with more people. The power of the Poetic Self unfolding in Piazza Magione was amazing. The locals were very interested in the process. At the beginning of the performance, when the Poetic Self was in the forest, a local man on a bicycle tried to make contact with her, and he wasn't discouraged by the strange and confused behaviour of the Poetic Self.

RIKKE FRIGAST: I was very inspired by the density of religious symbols in the city of Palermo—the beautiful old churches and all the small and personal Catholic altars appearing all over the city. Also, I was very inspired by Egle's project of creating a garden together in the city of Palermo and her invitation to do collective gardening (even though I didn't play an active role in it). It made me think of nuns and other female communities built on caregiving. I then found out about the Monastery S. Catarina where nuns used to live from 1311–2014, and I went there by myself one afternoon. Here, I was very inspired by the arrangement of their dormitories and the description of how they used to bake cakes for a living, and how some of them kept a braid of real hair in their rooms. The church we were working in, as well as the aesthetic of the sisters, was also a great inspiration for my showcase, and I was probably more inspired by the church than the actual Piazza. I needed to be surrounded by some kind of wall to create the feeling of a private dormitory room or women's room.

SIMONE GLATT: Palermo, known as the most conquered city ever, is full of different cultures and influences. This shows, for example, in the street names, which are sometimes in Italian, Arabic, or Hebrew. The city, located in the Mediterranean, is hot and near a volcano. Weirdly, this seems to have an effect on the people, where the city is vibrant and always buzzing, and daily life unfolds mostly in the streets and in public spaces. There is this sense of community that is hard to describe. It seems like the people there are always open to chat, to take in new people, and live very much in the present.

KAROLINE NORMANN FLØYSVIK: The context of Palermo had a huge influence on this process. Re-reading the biography of my poetic self, I could see how the physical change of scenery—coming from a cold climate into a warm one—influenced how I felt in my own body, and therefore how I sensed and experienced the world. During the manifestation, I had certain experiences with the audience, that emphasised the specificity of the Piazza Magione as a location and context for the showcase for me. The piazza was a place where people hung out in the evening, adults as well as children. Some children that had talked a lot to me when rehearsing came back on the evening of the performance, this time together with their mother. While the kids ran around the piazza, the mother stood beside me and tried to converse in Italian. I signalled that I did not speak, but that did not stop her from talking to me. I do not understand Italian, but I managed to understand her through her tone and body language, as well as picking up the words: «mother», «child», «hard/struggle». After standing there for what I felt was quite a while, she left, but looked at me with very caring and warm eyes, and made a heart symbol with her hands, as if to say thank you for the conversation.

This experience stood out to me, especially in contrast with the more «trained» audience that arrived later from the festival. They were more afraid of interacting or disturbing my peace. I saw that the locals were not afraid at all to talk, and asked a lot of questions as to why we were there and what we were doing. I was really touched by this and was glad that the people usually coming to this piazza were the ones who interacted the most.

RIKKE BOGETOFT: When I got invited to Palermo, it felt like a homecoming. Returning to Italy where I grew up to perform my art was going to be a full circle moment. But when I got there, I wasn't all the way home; I was a tourist. A Northern mermaid swimming in the Mediterranean Sea. I started reading about the patron saint of Palermo, Santa Rosalia. The almost humorous parallels between the dual existences of Rosalia and myself became inescapable as I

wandered the city of Palermo. Could two realities co-exist? Could I be both tourist and local? Could Rosalia be both saint and goat?

I started reading about the patron saint of Palermo, Santa Rosalia.¹ The almost humorous parallels between the dual existences of Rosalia and myself became inescapable as I wandered the city of Palermo.

Could two realities co-exist? Could I be both tourist and local? Could Rosalia be both saint and goat?

Shedding my tail, Swimming up stream—La processione della Strega attempts to tackle duality and identity amidst the throws of expectations. A three-part site-specific performance and tableaux reaching from the wet marble of Palazzo Sant’Elia to the scorching sun in Piazza Magione.

Adorned in plastic flowers and Sicilian pearls, I walked through the halls of Palazzo Sant’Elia. My tail slithered behind me, all the way down to the twin fountains in the courtyard.² The water was cool and soft against the hard marble. I gathered my tail and soaked it in the fountain and lifted it above my head – I gasped upon impact. I threw the tail behind me and dove into the fountain. Finally submerged, my flesh swayed and swam in the marble sea. I rested, I sang, my tail was soaked, wrung, and thrown. Like my dreams of a homecoming, the water was soothing at first; but slowly it turned me cold and frigid, gasping for air in between the singing, now broken and slow. I gripped the slippery marble and painstakingly climbed out of the fountain. I slithered across the courtyard, up the stairs and back into the halls of the Palazzo, leaving behind a trail on the wet stone.

Exposed and wet, I wrapped myself in a silver robe sourced from the trash treasury of Palermo. Bearing an alms box containing burning incense, I led the Procession of the Witch from Palazzo Sant’Elia to the crypt of Sant’Euno.

This city walk snaked through the busy streets of Palermo, and several joined the procession or slipped a donation in the alms box. By the end, my body was warm and strengthened by my new comrades. Transformed, I entered the crypt.

When I reemerged, I passed my fellow performers in Piazza Magione and glided toward the centre of the square. Here hangs an icon of Santa Rosalia.³ I stood before her and offered the alms box, still seeping smoke through the coin slot. Palms open, I spread my arms out before me and invited an embrace.

As I held each person, I gently stroked their backs until they broke away. Many welcomed the embrace; others just accepted it. A group of kids dared each other to engage, and when the last teenager finally built up the courage, they celebrated her.

Some tears later, the incense was no more. I gathered my robe and looked upon Rosalia – my silent guardian and muse. I slowly made my way back to the crypt of Sant’Euno and laid my bones to rest.

1. In 1624 when Palermo was ravaged by the plague, Santa Rosalia appeared. She ordered her bones to be retrieved from the mountain and carried in procession through the city, after which the plague ceased. Her shrines are everywhere in Palermo, depicted by a crown of white roses and a skull. In 1825, a geologist discovered that the relics were in fact goat bones. The attending priests, horrified, declared that Rosalia would not show herself to a nonbeliever and locked away the bones. Her relics are no longer on public display.

2. One had become a wash bowl, occupied by a fellow performer, Andrea Tudose, washing white linen and raising them up to the sky.

3. This icon depicts Santa Rosalia appearing before the hunter who retrieved her bones in 1624, during the plague ravaging Palermo. She told him where to find her bones and instructed him to lead the city procession. He followed her instructions and found her bones in a cave, exactly where the apparition had foretold.

RIKKE FRIGAST: I am the **Caretaker** (I wonder these days if **Caregiver** would be a more accurate name).

Unfortunately, my biography is in the notebook in the Sisters Hope Home and it would feel wrong to try to rewrite from memory, because it is so defined by the context in which it was written.

My object totem is a hairbrush.

SIMONE GLATT: My Poetic Self’s name is **The Secret Magician**.

There was a pebble lying on a riverbank and soaking up the sun. The pebble was firm, but also round and soft to the touch. Eventually, the river rose and the pebble went into the water and travelled with the river. Through the stream of the water, the pebble became smaller and smaller and left a mark everywhere it travelled, just like The Secret Magician who leaves their mark on people and places—mostly without them knowing—and leads them to achieve the best version of themselves.

BONA DYSSOU: My Poetic Self’s name is **Théo**.

She was born in the forests of Central Africa. She learned how to survive on her own, because she lost her parents and everyone who was important to her and had to fight for her life. She saw and lived through a lot of pain and brutality. She found a way to leave the continent on a boat, and moved to Europe. Her life purpose is to change her life story and to fight against the dark, finding people whom she can fight, work, and be together with.

But the first step for that is to find people she can trust. She can travel through space and time. She travels through different societies, fighting for the weak and searching for partners. She is like a secret agent, she can blend into the country and culture she is in. She likes to change her identity like that. Because of her difficult past, she learned to behave differently when she needed to hide. She has to learn to trust people, because she is really afraid.

She has a ring, which she hid in the forest. This ring is from someone very dear to her. It is a magical, healing ring. Now she tries to survive without her ring, which is why she hides it in the forest, and uses it only when she is desperate, in a situation that she can’t solve without the ring. There is a problem, though: when she is frightened, anxious, or in a rush, she can’t find the ring. She is now learning that she has to slow down under such circumstances. She truly wants companionship and is traveling across the world to build her team.

KAROLINE NORMANN FLØYSVIK: My Poetic Self’s name is **The Silent Flame**.

She was born a long time ago. She does not remember when her time started. She lives through different times, constantly living and being reborn through the flames. That is why she is so heavy. Carrying all the experiences from past lives. She walks constantly and silently. Not saying a word about the weight she carries. But it burns inside her. A small but strong flame. She leaves traces of ashes. Her sticky skin and hair collect everything. The world glues to her. But she keeps walking, knowing it will at one point be over, and then start all over again. She mourns this vicious cycle of repetition but carries her sorrow silently. The flame is her saviour, transformation her blessing, and repetition her cross. Maybe she’s a witch? Some would say so, but she will never say. She is a slow-walking widow, repeatedly mourning her own deaths. Her skin is crusty and dirty from the thick air that surrounds her. She is young because of her eternal rebirths, and old because of the times experienced that stick to her core.

MARIJA IVA GOCIĆ: My Poetic Self’s name is **ZRAK** .

It’s translation is ray of light (Serbian), sight (Czech), and air (Croatian). I am Zrak. I swim through water. Water surrounds me, stretching as far as I can see. I feel a sense of playfulness and peace. I swim close to the surface. Just me. Above me in the right corner I see a light. Is that the sun?

It’s always there, no matter where I go. It is my source, my parent.

I feel free. I can move wherever I want and at whatever speed I desire, bringing time and space with me as I go. I realise they travel together with me.

My being is warm and light. I am a ray of sunshine.

I try swimming deeper. I suddenly feel cold. I feel myself shrinking. I realise I mustn't go too deep. I'm coming back to the surface.

I realise I must not stray too far from my source. Otherwise, I will disappear. I look below me. The depth scares me. I wonder if I'll have to stay at the surface of the water forever. I want to dive!

Suddenly everything becomes meaningless. I don't want to disappear, but I also don't want to be stuck at the surface forever.

I become terrified of diving. I don't want to disappear. I have an irrational fear that some kind of force will pull me down. I spend my time on the very surface of the water.

Time passes and I become braver. I feel that one day I will gather the strength to go deep into the darkness. This becomes my dream.

RIKKE BOGETOFT: My Poetic Self's name is **The Witch/La Strega**.

Commonly found in forests, near lakes, and deep underwater. Sightings have been made in Scandinavia, near Brazil, and along the Mediterranean coast. Can be identified by her distinctive twin tail and strong scent of incense. The Witch adorns herself in pearls and petals, often hoarding her treasures; seashells make an excellent lure. The Witch's song is hypnotic and inviting. While not venomous, the Witch may cause irritation if disturbed, approach with caution.

Shedding may occur in an attempt at rebirth. On rare occasions, shedding may be caused by poor humidity.

FEDERICA MARRA: My Poetic Self's name is **Fera Mater**.

In Latin it means wild mother, and I'm a large old tree. When I was young, I experienced fear, I didn't know if I could grow where I was—there were storms and winds—but I did. I inhale during the day and exhale during the night; time is slow. I experience the magnificent sense of the time passing by watching animals and human beings, creatures who come under me to get some rest or seek protection. They cut me a bit, they build nests in and on me, they sleep under my leaves. It hurts, but I have learned compassion, because I love them all.

I don't speak a common language, but I can communicate through whispering between my branches. I am now wise. I know that death is just a path I'm following. Every time an ant bites me or lightning strikes me, I suffer, and I love it, because I live to be welcoming. I am following my nature and my path, until the end.

CIRKELINE DAHL BONDESEN: My Poetic Self's name is **River**.

I do not possess the original text anymore since it was given to the Sisters Hope archive. The text referred to the power of water: of being borderless, flexible, able to change shape.

Nurturing and life giving. It also connected me to the destructive powers of the water in a river – its ability to break down resistance, to create new paths by destroying old ones and overflowing huge areas.

The name and principle of River united me with a deep sense of empathy for all living things, as well as the power of destructivity—the balance of giving and taking. Pure life force.

COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE FACILITATES INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

EGLE ODDO

“Conventions and norms are best expressed and embodied in traffic; crowds become amplified sonically and in motion and weight, streets form nodes, networks, and bottlenecks. Mental states adjust to speed, awareness awakens, and driving often is a state in which self-reflection and auto-poesia emerges. To meet this urban bloodstream, we look at how a meshed space for emerging relationships acts as a location for knowledge creation rather than product development or production.”*

In 2021, I was invited by Andrea Cusumano to conceive a work for BAM—Biennial of Mediterranean Archipelago, focusing on the importance of process and study in generating an artwork. The intervention was framed within an Erasmus+ project led by the MeNO association in cooperation with Aarhus University, who had invited artist Gry Worre Hallberg to do the same.

The idea of Art4T: Art Rethinks Transformation for Training was to interact with a group of young artists via our own creative methods and artistic production, inspiring them to ignite collaboration in the local context. The proje went through multiple transformations and developments due to the changing conditions of the production. To potentiate the pedagogical offer for the Erasmus+ participants, I invited curator Başak Şenova—who specialises in processes—to support the participants in a rigorous recognition of opportunities, sketches, and potential collaborations as part of their learning journey.

Finally, my intervention for BAM included five outputs: a workshop with 15 participants resulting in a group exhibition and a series of performances; a site-specific performance-installation; a community-responsive permanent public work; and most importantly, under the auspices of the Collective Intelligence sessions, I facilitated the formation of a work group, which continues to foster independent collaboration even after the end of the project.

*Timo Tuhkanen, IL TRAFFICO, relational art piece presented by Collective Intelligence at Manifesta 12, Palermo 2018.

THE SITE-SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE: *UNSATURATED*

EGLÉ ODDO

As part of the syllabus for Art Rethinks Transformation for Training, I was asked to share my own creative method with the participants, thus producing a work for them. Taking cue from the conversation I started at A Present Heritage (BAM, 2019),¹ my performance referred directly to the continuous processes of disintegration, decomposition, and recombination that characterise the Sicilian territory, where the oscillation between vitality and mortality is a determining factor. The performance was presented in Area Madera on 23.9.2022, with the title Unsaturated. I was buried under 983 kg of soil. The public entered the space without knowledge of the position of my body, while the sound of small creatures excavating underground filled the space. Silence. A clarinet started to play a note tenuta, Rebecca was breathing for me. I slowly came out of the soil, my hand first. I engaged with the appalled gaze of the audience, and after collecting my hoe and gathering into a cloth the very soil that was covering me, I gave tools and seeds to the audience to carry and left the space followed by the public. I was attired in a long dress dyed in iron rust, wearing blue-sky boots, and while I crossed a wedding ceremony on the street, the crowd parted like a miniature Red Sea to let us pass. I first reached an abandoned urban ruin and following the rhythm of the church bell doubled up by the clarinet, I hoed the red soil, planted a few seeds of sorbus, and Suvi watered the soil. We continued to walk to the garden that I had prepared during weeks of work with the local inhabitants in Piazza Kalsa. At the garden, there was another audience waiting. I called the participants by their names; together we planted local ancient grains, watered the garden, and contemplated the soil falling gently on the seed, falling again at the rhythm of each bell chime. A long silence followed. Then the clarinet played once more to close the action.

The matter I decided to focus on was soil. Soil hosts numerous biological communities that interact with each other and support the life of the entire planet, which takes its name from the precious living substrate that characterises it. Soil is an element marked by an unequivocal materiality as well as connoting a high symbolic charge, oscillating between mortality and vitality.

Decomposition is a vital force for the continuous regeneration of the soil and its biological communities. The performance was based on elements borrowed from a study of pedology—the field studying chemistry, morphology and classification of soils—and botany. The study of the performance was inspired and guided by the research of botanist Anna Scialabba, biologist Karim Ben Hamed, art historian Suvi Vepsä, and philosopher Elisabetta Di Stefano.

I also collaborated with Timo Tuhkanen/sound design; Rebecca Minten/clarinet; Suvi Vepsä/water carrier; Suvi Hänninen/fashion design; Soko Hwang/graphic design; and Johanna Fredriksson/management. My research with this performance was supported by the Juhani Kirpilä Foundation, The Finnish Cultural Foundation, Arts Promotion Centre Finland, and Frame Contemporary Art Finland.

1. "The post-war experience, the introduction of telematics in daily communication, environmental disasters, market instability, austerity policies, global migration, the sixth mass extinction – how does the present agglomeration of generations manage to deal with these problems on a collective level? What kind of collaboration is desirable to connect the different knowledge needed to solve problems? What role is envisioned today for historical memory?", Eglé Oddo, text for A Present Heritage, a performance festival designed for BAM—Biennial Mediterranean Archipelago, 2019. <http://bampalermo.com/events/leredita-presente-a-present-heritage/>

Here is an account of my performance written by curator Irina Mutt:

Matter that matters.

It all started with darkness. No room for moving, every inch of your body is surrounded by matter: limbs, chest, head. There's no air to breathe. The first instinct would be to panic.

But the opposite reaction to panic feels good; just being there, becoming matter, soil, minerals. When you transform, when you become, then nothing has the logic or rules of society; there are no milestones, nowhere to go, just the pulse of living beings, the buzz of little bugs, until all fades. It feels almost like being dead. But this is not the end, it is the beginning.

Research says that gardening improves mental health. Digging, burrowing into the soil spreads into the air Mycobacterium vaccae, a bacteria that triggers the release of serotonin in our brain. Serotonin is produced in the brain and is responsible for making us feel relaxed and happy.

Life is a balance of living and non-living beings, species, bacteria, minerals, and chemical reactions. Some bacteria can kill. But what is killing or dying in an infinite process of becoming? There is no beginning or ending if everything is transformation and mutation.

A female body emerges from a pile of soil. The moves are slow, paced like a ritual that comes from ancient knowledge. Like seeing an animal giving birth—all so fragile and intense, ruled by instincts, powerful and dangerous. Giving birth enables the possibility of death. A female body emerges from the soil, like a seed, like a sculpture discovered by an archaeologist. Half goddess half zombie, a female body emerges from the soil in front of a silent audience that witnesses this transformation. Long robes cover the body, folding like marble, heavy, bone white covered by red oxide.

Components in the soil, along with the weather, are what enable or make difficult to grow plants and vegetation. An excess of iron can affect the plant's growth.

Like in our blood, components have to be balanced. Soil and blood, as sources of life, are interconnected, sharing some elements like iron.

The oxide of iron gives a red colour. Iron deficiency in our body causes less haemoglobin, which makes blood less red.

In a similar way, soil with lots of iron presence will look reddish.

We become a silent troupe, walking the streets, crossing squares and parks. Walking in silence, with slow-paced agitation, just some humming, the friction of our steps.

We walk together, like a swarm of insects, half human, full animal. We approach a wasteland. There's a plot of land that seems to have been worked on before.

Wastelands are a liminal space, an excess, a residue with the potentiality to become something else: a park, a parking lot, buildings, a new art centre to gentrify the neighbourhood. These sorts of city spots are rarely pictured by tourists or shown on media during political campaigns. You will rarely see a tourist or a politician posing in front of a wasteland, with its decaying walls covered in graffiti. Despite wastelands not being a touristic or political campaign preference, for some of us, these are places of hope. Its emptiness is our hope. In the middle of gentrification and aggressive urbanism, those dysfunctional spaces are a disruption. Places where something powerful can happen before they become something else. Something more expensive, more functional, more productive than a barren land and ruins.

(I am not female', written on a ruin with graffiti)

THE PUBLIC ARTWORK: *EVOLUTIONARY GARDEN*

EGLE ODDO

The garden that I reached as the final station of my performance was a public artwork that I realised in collaboration with the local inhabitants and with participants Rikke Bogetoft, Bona Dyssou, Giulia Mattera, Rebecca Minten, Edoardo Spata, Kamilla Śladowska, Frida Stenbäck, Andreea Tudose, and art historian Suvi Vepsä. I worked on it for several months before the workshop leading to the performance. A garden needs long planning and a relational approach with human and non-human communities. It is a mirror of the community that hosts it. Its destiny depends on many variables: weak and powerful forces that regulate climate, social interaction, urban planning, random occurrences, and individual civic sense.

I chose the collection of seeds to plant in the garden following conversations with botanists and local inhabitants. The garden hosts local fruit trees, wildflowers, and ancient Sicilian grains. The mix of seeds is called *evolutionary garden*, because it gathers different varieties and different populations of the same species, thus creating a pool of genetic biodiversity that could possibly favour an in-situ adaptation of new varieties in the face of climate change.

Several local inhabitants have spontaneously taken on the task to water the garden and protect it from vandalism. They asked me to continue with more gardening interventions in Piazza Kalsa. Gardening gave me the opportunity to further my sensorial study of soil for the performance. As for the process with the participants—they joined in on spontaneous gardening sessions, asking me questions, enjoying the physical labour carried out with *esprit de corps*, documenting their interaction with the soil, with the water, the insects, the stray dogs, the curious passers-by. Again, gardening together facilitated the formation of natural bonds among the participants that would not have taken place in a compressed hierarchical environment.

Through the history of painting, in many scenes related to birth appears—next to the woman starting labour—a midwife serving a plate of clay.

It was believed that clay helped women recover from the loss of blood after giving birth. This plate of clay is what the servant is offering to Infanta Margarita in the Velazquez painting, Las Meninas. It was said that Infanta Margarita had anaemia, and it was believed that eating small pieces of clay helped with iron deficiency.

It is said that it is quite common to have soil and dirt cravings during pregnancy.

We plant some seeds in this piece of land whose beauty is seen by so few. The land belongs to the ones who work it, it is said.

We dig the soil, toss the dirt, allowing bacteria and oxygen to activate, we make holes and put the seeds inside. Whatever will happen with these seeds will happen. No one has much control over these things, in fact. No matter how much you try to intervene.

A sudden drop in temperature, too much rain, hail, or just some animal can end your plans of growing something. But we came here for the wonder. For the hope, not for the success or functionality of things.

We are in a wasteland planting seeds, ready to fail, ready for death. So, we are ready for life.

EVOLUTIONARY GARDEN

EGLE ODDO IN CONVERSATION WITH
SUVI VEPSÄ

EGLE ODDO: What is an evolutionary garden?

SUVI VEPSÄ: Evolutionary garden is an experiment, a gesture, a proposal, and a set of practices—to quote feminist theorist Donna Haraway,¹—for staying with the trouble of our urgent times. It is a work of art, but not an artwork; it is an ongoing process that escapes any attempt of finalising or clear definitions. It confuses the (artificial) boundaries between culture and nature, urban and wild, human and nonhuman, and connects art to the everyday.

Evolutionary gardens allow plants to exist on their own terms, free from objectification and exploitation that usually defines plant-human relationships. It gives space to the plants to interact and evolve without human intervention, and thus, creates a possibility for something new—even unusual—to emerge. Working in an evolutionary garden, our goal is to join plants in their movement and growth, as philosopher Michael Marder² suggests, instead of controlling them and subjugating them to any anthropocentric need or desire.

As anthropologist Anna Tsing reminds us, human nature is an interspecies relationship.³ We depend and continue to depend on other species, and turning our attention to these relationships is now more important than ever. Based in reciprocity and care, the evolutionary garden is a space for interspecies connection and communication across differences.

Finally, on top of all this, an evolutionary garden is just what the name suggests: a garden. It is a place to sit in, to sense, to eat, to think. It is a place for rest.

EGLE ODDO: What was your role in the creation of the garden?

SUVI VEPSÄ: My answer to people when they ask me what my plan or a goal is when starting these projects with artists is that I do not have one. I go to a place, to a project, and see what happens. This “not-knowing” is an important strategy as it leaves space for wonder, open questions, and unexpected answers. Making-with—a term I use to describe my practice—is not a method in the traditional sense (in the sense that it can be standardised, repeated, and transferred to any situation); it is rather an attempt to somehow conceptualise my approach to art and research, heightening the dissolution of the hierarchical separation of the subject and the object of knowledge. I think my role is to constantly travel between the outside and the inside, hence, try out new perspectives, postures, and points of view. I want to explore the possibilities for knowledge that emerge when we turn our attention from the art-as-object to art-as-process; what art does rather than what it is. My aim is to articulate these gestures in a way that denies ultimate and final truths. Since I don’t have to really worry about schedules and other practicalities, I have time to focus on observing and wondering. I think the most important task I have is to stay attentive, ask questions, and listen to the answers. By this, I do not only mean asking questions to Egle, although that is also important, since working with a project for a long time can make some details feel self-evident. I must also stay attentive to all the more-than-human others involved, stay attentive to their stories, and bring them forth in a way that does not simplify or claim to know them.

1. Donna J. Haraway. *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chtulucene* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2016).

2. See Michael Marder, “The Place of Plants: Spatiality, Movement, Growth,” *Performance Philosophy* 1 (2015): 188.

3. Anna Tsing 2012, “Unruly Edges: Mushrooms as Companion Species,” *Environmental Humanities* 1 (2012): 144.

As Haraway reminds us: “These are the times we must think; these are the times of urgencies that need stories.” Ultimately, I would like to see myself as a storyteller.⁴

EGLE ODDO: How do you evaluate and describe the impact of the context on the work done to plan, establish, and maintain the garden?

SUVI VEPSÄ: In making evolutionary gardens the material, cultural, and social specificity of the time and place that we are working with affects every aspect of the process, from choosing the seeds we are working with to how we work, how we move our bodies, how we relate to each other, and how we think. All forms of knowledge are always embodied, situated, and reflecting the particular conditions they are produced in, as Haraway emphasises.⁵ The ideas and practices always emerge from the particular conditions.

Each garden is its own, singular assemblage (though they are also always connected to each other), and none of them can be repeated exactly in the same way even in the same place, let alone somewhere else. Even after working with Egle’s Performative Habitats in Mänttä Art Festival in Finland throughout the summer of 2021, in Palermo, I was constantly surprised and had to learn everything again from the start, from handling the tools and my body with the different kind of soil and weather, to approaching people and the various more-than-human critters we encountered.

Locality is the key here, as it is in environmental questions in general. We need to start somewhere, and something that works here might not work over there. Moreover, we need to remember that especially in these urgent times we live in, the conditions and contexts are always changing. As Haraway insists, to stay with the trouble we need to become capable of response.⁶ Evolutionary gardens are cultivating response-ability by, for example, reviving ancient, more resilient varieties of wheat in Palermo—a place that suffers from drought, or experimenting with the possibilities of growing Italian durum in the latitudes of Central Finland.

EGLE ODDO: How do you evaluate and describe the participation of other young artists from Art4T in the creation of the garden? What was the impact of the gardening work that you observed on them?

SUVI VEPSÄ: My favourite thing about working in Palermo—compared to Mänttä, for example, where we spent most of the days on our own—was the community, or rather, the multiple little communities we managed to create around the project. Quite a lot of people from Art4T joined us in the beginning, even though their days were already full of their own programmes. People ran around the city collecting seeds and coffee grounds, and this must have had an effect on their own artistic process as well. I saw many beautiful works inspired by the vegetal world, gardening, and the streets of Palermo. Interestingly, even the people who did not visit the garden participated in its formation by eating, as the seeds from the stuff they ate were collected and taken to the garden by yours truly. I think it is very easy to get very deeply invested in the garden, because even though it is often forgotten nowadays, interacting with plants and the soil is, in one way or other, something we were always supposed to do. You get drawn into the project by curiosity and the fresh air, the sunlight on your skin and the serotonin increasing bacteria in the soil do the rest. Making is connecting, as sociologist David Gauntlett⁷ has stated, and being connected feels great.

EGLE ODDO: What was the role of the performance in relation to the existence of the garden?

SUVI VEPSÄ: When it comes to evolutionary gardens, the concept of performance and performativity goes beyond performance as an artistic gesture. I think feminist theorist Karen Barad’s notion of agential realism is useful here. According to Barad, all bodies—human and more-than-human— “exist only as a result of, and as part of, the world’s ongoing intra-activity, its dynamic and contingent differentiation into specific relationalities.”⁸ The garden is an assemblage of different beings—people, plants, soil critters, the sun—“reaching into each other”, as Haraway⁹ puts it, and this becoming is performative in itself. But coming back to the event, I think that it was Insaturo that brought the garden into the realm of “art”. By this, I don’t mean to dismiss the process or deny the artistic value of the garden itself. But as I came to notice in Piazza Kalsa, for

4. Donna J. Haraway. 2016. *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chtulucene* (Durham & London: Duke University Press.), p. 37.

5. Donna J. Haraway. 1991. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women. The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge), p. 193.

6. Donna J. Haraway. 2016. *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chtulucene* (Durham & London: Duke University Press.), p. 1

7. David Gauntlett. 2011. *Making is Connecting: The social meaning of creativity, from DIY and knitting to YouTube and Web 2.0*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

most of the people we encountered every day, framing the project as “art” did not mean anything. For them, what mattered was that something nice and beautiful was happening, and that the garden was something they could keep taking care of after we left. And the plants care even less about art! (I still remember Egle’s reaction to my theoretical ponderings about thinking with plants in art research when we worked together for the first time: “The plants don’t care about the art or the research. So, there’s your answer!”) We come back to the question of context.

Finally, I must add that when it comes to the symbolic and material connections between the gardens and the performances, from sound to costume design, the thoughtfulness in detail continues to amaze me. For me, these details—created in collaboration with professionals from different fields—and the feeling you get from figuring them out is what makes the work as a whole so enchanting.

EGLE ODDO: What was your experience of the performance as an insider?

SUVI VEPSÄ: I got invited into the performance relatively late, and I only had a broad idea of what was going to happen. So, once again, I was hovering between being an insider and an outsider, a performer and a viewer. I did know more than most people, so the surprise and confusion in the beginning of the performance was not as big. But nothing ever goes as planned, does it. Much of the final performance was a surprise to us all. Performance never works in only one way. It is a reciprocal interaction between the performers and the audience. During the performance, we needed to constantly stay attentive to each other and to the audience, follow each other’s movements and respond to them in the moment. This made the whole experience quite intense and even emotional, especially because it was something I had never done before.

EGLE ODDO: What was the impact of the performance that you observed on the Art4T participants?

SUVI VEPSÄ: The impact of the performance might not have been so apparent or visible right away. Very often, art creates a movement, a gesture, a faint mark that becomes perceptible only after some time. I cannot speak for anyone else’s experience other than my own, but at least for me, the event still resonates when I look back on it months later. In general, I think people were quite inspired by Egle’s way of working and teaching – at least I was. Collaboration is key here, and in Palermo I saw people coming together to create, share knowledge, learn together, and help each other. I heard some of these connections have evolved further beyond Art4T, which makes the project even more valuable.

8. Karen Barad. 2007. *Meeting the Universe Halfway. Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham & London, Duke University Press. p. 353.

9. Donna J. Haraway. 2003. *The Companion Species Manifesto. Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press. p. 6.

THE WORKSHOP

COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE

EGLE ODDO

My activity with the Erasmus+ participants was conducted via five online sessions recorded in meeting minutes, a ten-day workshop in Palermo in September 2022, and a three-day workshop in Aarhus University in January 2023. As part of my ethical standards for transparency and accountability, I kept a work diary during the whole project, which I partially share here to describe the process:

The *Collective Intelligence (CI)* method consists of a series of deep dive sessions up to a month; it comprises of encounters where artists, thinkers, and activists work on parallel and shared projects, influencing each other in a convivial frame. I developed the method in 2016, during the Pixelache Festival: *Interfaces for Empathy*,¹ while studying evidence pointing out that facilitating the surfacing of collective intelligence is the most effective tool for working through tasks, solving problems, and creating interactive experiences.² *Collective intelligence* can be defined as shared or group intelligence that emerges from the collaboration, joint effort, and competition of many individuals and appears in consensus decision making. How to trigger and manage collective intelligence at its best is an experimental process that I have been researching with different communities due to my collaboration with expert scientists. My sessions focus on governance seen as an inclusive process, cooperation and social cohesion, and interspecies collaborations. The trans-disciplinary practice for BAM was designed in the profile of the participant artists, in a context that was equally unknown to them. As a facilitator having familiarity with the context, I connected the participants with elements that could potentially trigger their imagination and interest, seeking unexpected assemblages, intuitive actions, and heuristic knowledge.

During my sessions, I favoured an interaction between the participants based on sensorial encounters with the context, following the teaching of cognitive neuroscientist Katri Saarikivi:

Throughout history, collective intelligence has secured the survival of our species. The vital importance of collaboration resonates in the numerous neural mechanisms we have that give rise to empathy, consisting of skills for understanding other people's thoughts, feelings, and for acting altruistically. At the moment, humankind is facing problems of tremendous urgency and scale. Simultaneously, we have been able to devise fantastic tools that have made humans more connected than ever before. However, our digital tools for collaboration are still in their infancy. Ironically, they do not support many things that are highly important for functional human interaction such as

feeling of shared context, physical touch, synchronisation, and rich expression of emotionality. Very often, these shortcomings seem to inhibit the emergence of empathy in digital environments, and as a consequence, collective intelligence.³

With this in mind, on 16th August during the first online meeting with the participants, I presented them with the method, objectives, and outputs of my Collective Intelligence workshop. It was significant that I unfolded the whole process in front of them from the beginning. Reading from my notes:

Starting point: BAM is presented as an occasion to form new projects, to study topics and contexts together, and to meet cultures and communities that live close to the Mediterranean Sea.

Aim: to facilitate the formation of a community able to activate its own specific collective intelligence, and to find out together what this will entail.

The research questions I asked the participants: How do we get in touch with a specific context? Do we inquire about the role of different visual cultures, vernacular practices, and non-human knowledge? Do we take the position of an observer, a participant, or what is the position we feel comfortable in taking in this specific context?

Outputs: a series of individual works to be transferred on a hexagonal sculpture for a public group show indoors; a series of performances presented at the opening of the group show; a performance producing a public artwork in the form of a garden, outdoors; a series of notes for an online publication to edit together in January 2023.

I pointed out that to avoid a colonialist approach, it was necessary to understand the local context of BAM not only as a place, but also as a community and a participant, and I took a series of simple steps to facilitate the sessions: generate a bond with the context, design a relational space for the participants to connect with each other, and finally support their creative process. During the first three days in Palermo, I led all the twenty participants exploring the context via guided visits that I organised for them ad-hoc, taking them to specific sites and communities in Palermo. For me, it was extremely important to give them at least a small taste of the densely layered complexity of the Palermitan territory and society.

First, they encountered theatre director Claudio Collovà and voice virtuoso Miriam Palma, initiators of *Area Madera*, an alternative space for experimentation with voice, body, dramaturgy, and wellbeing. During the visit, Miriam and Claudio generously shared the touching and intimate accounts of their emotional path that led them to buy and transform the space from a ruin into a community-driven research laboratory.

On the second day, I took them to the *Danisinni* quartier. During a two-hour visit led by Giuseppe Cento, they explored the quartier with its common spaces and resources, and were able to appreciate the intricate history and effort that led the inhabitants of Danisinni to independently build, maintain, and run their library, edible gardens, museum, public park, zoo, cinema, auditorium, circus, primary school, and international artist residency in a spirit of progressive independence, cultural growth, and curiosity. During the visit, participant Giulia Mattera asked how they were able to interact with so many 'outsiders'. Giuseppe's answer was enlightening: "it is your decision to perceive yourself as an outsider; since you are

1. See Pixelache.ac page: <https://www.pixelache.ac/projects/collective-intelligence>

2. See the slideshow by neuroscientist Katri Saarikivi: <https://www.slideshare.net/katrisaarikivi/the-importance-of-collective-intelligence-and-empathy-in-digital-environments>.

3. Extract from panel discussion at Pixelache Festival, Lapinlahti Hospital for Mental Health, Helsinki 2016

here now, you are one of us if you wish". At the end of the visit I disclosed to the participants my own source linking me with the Danisinni community. My mother Lucia Zanetti is a social worker who, during forty years of dedicated activity, contributed to relevant positive change in the societal fabric, and thanks to her, I grew up in close contact with multiple realities of the territory, actively participating in initiatives and learning first hand mediation techniques.

On the third day, I took them to the picturesque Garibaldi Park in Piazza Marina. Sitting under the lushness of Ficus macrophylla, I asked each participant to share their own poems, or poems that were very important to them, by reading them out loud in the original language. The session soon reached a graceful intensity, improving the general sense of confidence in the group. The mini-symposium was facilitated by my father Franco Oddo and his wife Chaibia Hammani, who shared a brief excursus on the history of Sicilian and Moroccan poetry and ignited the process by sharing their own poems. Again, the choice of offering the participants my own personal links first hand with the territory and my vulnerability was done on purpose to convey a sense of trust, familiarity, softness, honesty, emotional availability, and to improve the relational process aiming at the formation of a collaborative group.

Another important aspect was my choice to require from the participants a clear and steady commitment to their participation in my daily workshops, and fifteen of them were delighted to adhere: Silvia Bernardelli, Rikke Bogetoft, Cirkeline Dahl Bondesen, Bona Dyssou, Rikke Frigast Jakobsen, Marija Iva Gocić, Giulia Mattera, Rebecca Minten, Livia Ribichini, Chloé Sassi, Kamila Śladowska, Edoardo Spata, Frida Stenbäck, Nicoline Gandrup Thyrsted, and Andreea Tudose. This was important to create a climate of mutual respect for each other's time, and to keep up building on peer-to-peer structures. The activity continued, alternating between group and individual sessions facilitated ad-hoc, experimenting with reciprocity via tangible exchanges including gardening together, foraging, sharing meals, swimming together, playing music, and dancing. All these activities cannot be considered marginal when the aim is to facilitate the emergence of empathy between individuals who do not know each other and who are preparing to accomplish a common task.

As we have learned from the neuroscientist Katri Saarikivi, synchronicity (music, dance, swimming) and sensorial activation (gardening, sharing meals) facilitated in a convivial frame where there are no hierarchies naturally activate our mirror neurons, which are responsible for conveying intuitive and deep connections, and for creating a sense of belonging.

In the third phase, each participant was busy creating their own artwork and supporting each other. I could agreeably observe that there was an ethical approach shared among the fifteen participants who attended my workshop; they strived to respect individual needs when working together, avoiding thinking of themselves in terms of exceptionalism. That favoured community building.

After the production during BAM, the project ended in 2023 with a three-day session in Aarhus University, where together with Başak Şenova, we facilitated an analysis of the process in Palermo aimed at creating a series of texts for this publication, and a final public presentation on site.

THE MEETING MINUTES OF SESSION 16.8.2022

Keywords uttered by participants during the meeting:

contemporary art; community; objective; excitement; team; methodology; collectivity; vegetal entanglements; site-specific; eco-feminism; open-mind; anxiety; shy; new work; heavy; bureaucracy; floating in the ocean; nature; nervous; artistically confused; choreography; exhausted; change; feelings through artistic process; non-verbal; melted; heatwave; performance; outside stage

Keywords provided by participants to describe what *context* means to them:

situation; environment; people; people's privileges; historical context; environmental context; complexity; opposition to simplicity; positioning oneself working in a context; meaning of context changes; situated knowledge; space; field for action; people perceiving things through their feelings; associations; entanglements; being in relation to relations; political situations; care in handling the context; care-work in relation to context.

Direct experience of *collective intelligence* described by participants:

Living on a farm, I had to gain an overview of general management in order to understand my own specific tasks. Durational performance in the woods, without connection or devices. Immersed in the natural-cultural space, I had an illumination of the perception. I started noticing and seeing for the first time, gaining new knowledge from the non-human community, building new knowledge together.

During a residency with artists from different nationalities, we performed together for twelve hours, and I sensed that we developed a communal intelligence with the contribution of musicians playing live, which elevated the shared sense of time.

The internet as a place where collective intelligence may convey problem solving. Sharing a problem with others and listening to solutions sometimes triggers a form of telepathic communication.

The difference between kinesthetic intelligence and collective intelligence: one is simply an attribution of space-sensing; the other is an understanding of context, roles, rules, and the possibility of playing with all those elements.

Collective memory is the accumulation of collective intelligence, past and present experiences layered up.

FACILITATING THE EMERGING INDEPENDENT WORKGROUP, MEANDRX

From the very beginning of the journey with the participants, I made certain that my objective through the *Collective Intelligence* sessions was to facilitate the formation of a group where individuals would be able to influence each other in a convivial frame. I could not predict if the group would be operative only during the project or further, although my aim with facilitation was to create durable collaborations among the participants. That was the most valuable capital that they could gain from this project, a durable network of peers.

The *Collective Intelligence* method is based on the knowledge of how intentional and unintentional memory work. Deep learning happens with unintentional memory, therefore more than giving a set of established instructions, I strived to form shared structures and sets of instructions emerging from common discourse.

During the last part of the training in Denmark, while analysing the whole process and outcomes with the participants, I had the joy of seeing that the group had gained its independence and was seemingly continuing to work together under the name *Meandrx*.

REFLECTIONS ON PARTICIPANTS

EGLÉ ODDO

SILVIA BERNARDELLI was intrigued by the story told by Miriam Palma about how she managed to buy and restore the Area Madera space—the account of how, exactly when she needed her friends and acquaintances more than ever, those little seeds of care she planted in her relations throughout her life were ripe and gave her back. Miriam was feeling supported, and she called that experience luccicanze (luminescent). Silvia hung on that term related to such an impressive experience and elaborated it into an installation piece for the hexagonal object. She took the story as an invitation to focus and find what really matters. She created a black box with a small circular and inviting hole, and when the viewers came in close contact to peep inside, their movements shook the canvas, making the glass pendulum inside the black box oscillate and blink with light reflections. Silvia was interested in the idea that we constantly influence each other, and we need to do it responsibly. The work turned out to be personal and autobiographical; she was striving to show an intimate world unfolding from the perspective of an introverted person. I found her intervention with the light elegant and inspiring, at the same time discrete and compelling, a timid question, a suspension inside a crowded flow.

RIKKE BOGETOFT participated in all the activities I made available. She was constantly busy experiencing the context with intensity, taking notes. She then transferred some of her drawings onto the hexagonal object. Besides various solo performances, she also performed with the ensemble Tuning Liquid Bodies, joining the group in their choreography. Her familiarity with the local language and places partially created a sense of belonging and partially a sense of extraneity, leaving her in a liminal space. The day we spent at the beach with the group had a strong impact on her imagination, driving her into a specific experiential pattern which resulted in an iconic performance titled Shedding my tail, swimming upstream—La processione della Strega. She bathed in the fountain of Palazzo St Elia and left it crawling on her belly, her legs numb like a mermaid out of her element, dragging behind a long tail of wet white cloth. She was also inspired by the gardening activity at Piazza Kalsa where I showed her the hiding place of the giant carriage used to take Saint Rosalia around the city. Inspired also by that element, she made another performance on the public street dressed like the Saint and carrying her bones, which a legend tells were in fact the bones of a goat. Rikke shows the intensity and self-consciousness of a fulfilled artist, her anarchic yet irrefutable process strikingly stands out by keeping the public close and outrageously engaged.

CIRKELINE DAHL BONDESEN realised two performances at Palazzo St. Elia, one individual and one in collaboration with *Tuning Liquid Body* group (Rikke Bogetoft, Cirkeline Dahl Bondesen, Rebecca Minten, Chloé Sassi, Gerlando Chianetta). In her individual performance, she was drawn by the posture of classical sculptures and paintings representing the female body. She was interested in first embodying and then breaking those postures, creating a contrast to the patriarchal gaze that had trapped those bodies into postures of obligatory grace, modesty, and softness. Her movements on a plinth followed variations of rhythm. She used her voice to take space and to finally break the illusion of the sculpture. In her collaboration with *Tuning Liquid Bodies*, she seemingly led the pace of movement of the bodies intertwined and enveloping the space. In the whole process she was very generous, sharing her profound knowledge of the body and its language, creating significant moments of suspension and aesthetic magic for the audience as well as for her peers.

BONA DYSSOU worked on the sense of belonging, on finding home or a new home. She was drawn by the cultural melting pot present in Palermo, and was attracted by the evident coexistence of so many cultures. She felt that she

was no longer in Europe, but that Sicily was closer to the African continent culturally. She had a strong illumination during our session with poetry under the *Ficus macrophylla* where she started to create a performative work made by different poems in different languages. She was drawn by the intensity in the eyes of a black man she saw on the street, his fierce, hangry, painful gaze. She thought of him missing his home, and by creating a carpet of poems, Bona thought of creating a home, an emotional home without walls, an architecture made of trust, fragile and immaterial. The pages with the poems used in her performance found a place close to the hexagonal object and were exhibited. I have rarely experienced a work so honest and direct, intense and rich of biographical elements, and yet available and porous to the emotional life of the public.

RIKKE FRIGAST JAKOBSEN was present at my workshops although she did not create a work specifically as a result of it. I was delighted to converse with her and follow her process and research with concepts and acts of care. Her investigation took her close to casually meeting a nun and having a conversation with her. She was curious of the dedication and abnegation needed to bestow one's life to take care of others. Rikke's performance was busy first hand with acts of giving and receiving care, and I could directly observe and perceive on my own body the sublime talent she has in designing and performing acts of care.

MARIJA IVA GOCIĆ worked on a diptych of performances. The one at Palazzo St. Elia was a performance about contemplation of the ancestors. She was influenced by the Spasimo church; the building without a roof looked to her like an enormous carcass of a prehistoric animal. She rehearsed a lot, enduring a fixed pose with clay and candles on her body. During the act, she had a small candle on the palm of her hand guiding her for the timing of the performance. The public attending became instantly silent and discreet in her proximity, feeling the power of the image created by her curled and illuminated vulnerable naked body, placed like a marble piece in the central niche between two staircases. She created a hypnotic and haunting performance, a piece where she absorbed the specificity of the space through her own bodily presence, and through the same body, she reflected the space back, tinted with universal and timeless light.

GIULIA MATTERA participated in the gardening sessions in Piazza Kalsa. She collected samples from the garden and placed them in a jar that she had received from her grandmother, which was charged with emotional value. She spent time taking notes and observing. She needed to process several ideas before landing on the idea for her performance at Palazzo St. Elia. She designed an abstract garden and made it available to the public with a one-on-one action. Her visual aura was placeable in mediaeval iconography, her right hand tight behind her back and connected to her hair. She was mute as she conducted her audience in a journey inside a relational path unfolding through plants, scents, and aromas. Several samples and notes from her process, as well as from her performance, were transferred by hand to the hexagonal object, becoming at the same time a page of diary and of ancient knowledge shared with the public. Giulia has a remarkable proficiency as a performer, her movements as well as her designed notes created a coherent path illuminating a specific vector human-nonhuman.

REBECCA MINTEN I invited Rebecca to perform in my work *Insaturo* because of the unique talent she has as a musician and improviser, which I noticed during several sessions. I could also rely on her rigour and discipline, which are very important elements especially when improvising anew with artists one works for the first time with. She played in the space almost every day and I paid close attention to her, listening to acoustic qualities unfolding during her rehearsals. She seemed intensively aware of the sonic space she occupied, and she created accordingly. This ability shone also in the group performance with *Tuning Liquid Bodies*, where she played and danced intertwined with the bodies and voices of her colleagues. The performance occupied a balcony in Palazzo St. Elia, and while the ripples of sound bounced from stone to corner, the image of the performers was seemingly shattered and reflected by the many glass windows dislocated around them. The instant composition of sound and bodies in movement was in itself an intense laboratory of multidisciplinary languages and collaborations.

LIVIA RIBICHINI was immediately drawn to the exercise proposed by Basak, to observe the balconies in Palermo as part of a hybrid public / private space. She observed especially where architecture was somehow failing, like a glitch, becoming an installative suggestion showing other possibilities perhaps beyond functionality. She realised a video where all these images of seemingly dysfunctional architectures were morphing into each other. The audio accompanying the video was the urban carpet formed by the voices on the street—the bells, the market, the voice of Miriam Palma. Livia spent a lot of time dialoguing with a local carpenter who specialised in repairing chairs. Together they built the box hosting her video-projector for the installation. The work was projected on the hexagonal object, integrating the abstract image of doors and openings into the frames of the sculpture. In my opinion, Livia's work had a specific connection with Silvia's. Livia was truly capable of conveying the direct experience of the context into a refined conceptual digital piece in a very short time.

CHLOÉ SASSI was the initiator of the Tuning Liquid Bodies group. With her intensity, she has a specific ability to start collaborations and processes as she naturally shares her energy and ideas, involving others in her initiatives. Due to a health problem, she was unable to join directly in the performance at Palazzo St Elia, but in my opinion her contribution was already planted and rooted in the group show experienced by the public.

KAMILA ŚLADOWSKA, observed the similarities and differences of the local context, comparing them to her context in Poland. One was the way the Catholic faith pervaded all societal and cultural levels, sometimes twisting content and relations, creating hierarchies and hyper-normativity. She took some syntax from the Catholic visual language (specific colours and motives) and decided to create a painting that would speak loudly about the non-binary natural sexuality, contamination, and organic interconnectivity of life. She took inspiration from the body of different plants, and visually merged them with animal genitals. She wanted to convey elements related to a joyful spirituality that celebrates diversity of life forms and their relationships. She installed her painting and braids made of regenerated fabric on the hexagonal object, instantly creating vigorous connections with the works of the other participants. Her meticulous and erudite work as a painter was counterpointed by her generosity in helping others and being available to participate, discuss, analyse, evaluate, and criticise productively.

EDOARDO SPATA participated in all the activities I made available. As a result, he created a work called Hot Veins, which was on display on the hexagonal object. He started his research wanting to realise a collaborative object by engaging with local communities. He had an epiphany when he saw an old man blaming a child who was dumping trash in a corner already crowded with debris, quite a common phenomenon in Palermo. He saw the scene as if through the lens of a camera, and this seemingly objective gaze made him rethink his position in the local community. He started to document by photographing several sites where people were spontaneously abandoning trash. He framed the scenes with such aesthetic that the trash appeared beautified, re-evaluated and up-cycled as a resource, hence the name Hot Vein. He realised a map, like a tourist guide, pointing out that in different quartiers the quality of the trash was different, although the sites presented similar characteristics in terms of accessibility. Edoardo was able to create a multidisciplinary complex work where scenography, sculpture, photography, conceptual art, and environmental art were juxtaposed in a magistral fashion.

FRIDA STENBÄCK was interested in the economic battle of lobbying to substitute oil-based products with environmentally friendly materials. Sometimes firms end up using wood instead, creating an excessive exploitation of forestry, visible in Finland. In her trip to Mexico, Frida got to know about agave plants, and through research, found out that they were used in Italy as well to produce a cloth called SISAL fibre. In Palermo, she located some agave plants on Monte Pellegrino and collected seeds and leaves. She built simple DIY tools and started cleaning the fibres and weaving. This task was very time consuming, and Frida was participating in all the group activities while constantly moving her hands on agave leaves. At some point, I thought of Frida as the 'white noise' of the group, because her constant yet discrete laboriousness provided a resting visual anchor for all of us, a durational performance placed inside

our activity. In Palazzo Sant'Elia, she performed both the agave weaving and had a piece installed on the hexagonal object. She aimed at showing the cross-section of the paper skin and its patterns, therefore pierced the paper surface and at the same time intertwined her fibre, showing the consistency, colours, and texture of the plant. Her work was able to bring together social aspects of labour, technology, sustainability, and global economy with a strong aesthetic choice to leave the mere documentation of the craft aside, to show instead the enchanting beauty of the plant body, its fragments visually regenerated inside the weaving pattern.

NICOLINE GANDRUP THYRSTED was inspired by our visit to Fontana della Vergogna in Piazza Pretoria. She saw a spontaneous and complex theatre panopticon unfolding in front of her eyes, people with their stories, their expressions and voices interacting as in tableau. Life becoming art becoming life. After this experience, she started to pay attention to voices and sounds in the city, and an encounter she had with a street artist playing the harp in Piazza Marina was especially important. During a one-on-one session with me, she confessed her terror of using her own voice, and I suggested an exercise to de-construct words and voices by resting it on abstract sounds. This idea helped her connect the sounds she heard in the city with the stories / tableau vivant she had experienced without understanding the language. She started to observe the voices and language from the point of view of sound in context, bodies in situations, and expression unfolding, and she transcribed her sonic stories on the hexagonal object using phonetic signs, thus apparently incorporating the sound with its direct meaning. She also performed at Palazzo St. Elia by reading a newspaper in Italian in one-on-one sessions. I admired Nicoline's courage in overcoming her initial frustration with her process and being able to create such a strong and situated piece, extraordinarily respectful of the context. I "I feel that the research could develop into a piece, including performance, dramaturgy, and installation.

ANDREEA TUDOSE was interested in the food industry and the labour of Romanian women in the care and agricultural industry. She explored sites where these women were recruited to work and researched the dynamics of the social phenomena locally with the contributions of a researcher from Palermo University. She reflected on what would constitute fair pay when asking somebody to give up their life and become a servant in the care industry or agro business. Her work reflected on the extractivism that deletes the life of migrants, considering them as tools at the service of first class citizens. In her installation on the hexagonal object, called "Prodotto Siciliano", Andreea exhibited fruits and vegetables crushed with her body and applied gold on them. Her performance at Palazzo St. Elia was a durational repetition of house chores; in a beautiful fountain she washed a cloth that hung from a high balcony, endlessly descending and rolling it while her hands were in motion all the time. Her work was proficiently developed in its iconographic and conceptual references and was a strong critique of class and privilege. The remains of her performance were installed close to the hexagonal object.

THE PROCESS: A RESEARCH OF DOING

BAŞAK ŞENOVA

“Undoubtedly what is thus palpitating in the depths of my being must be the image, the visual memory which, being linked to that taste, has tried to follow it into my conscious mind. But its struggles are too far off, too much confused; scarcely can I perceive the colourless reflection in which are blended the uncapturable whirling medley of radiant hues, and I cannot distinguish its form, cannot invite it, as the one possible interpreter, to translate to me the evidence of its contemporary, its inseparable paramour, the taste of cake soaked in tea; cannot ask it to inform me what special circumstance is in question, of what period in my past life. .”*

I was invited to take part in the ART4T programme by Egle Oddo in the beginning of 2022. Although the project seemed to be very demanding with many travels, long hours of work and engagement, and ambitious goals with undecided planning components—at that stage—and a limited budget, it was still very attractive because of the actors and the institutions of the project. I have had a long history of trustworthy and successful collaborations with Oddo,¹ and her enthusiasm to make a project that started in her hometown was quite charming in itself. Furthermore, being an admirer of Andrea Cusumano’s curatorial work, the project’s attachment to the BAM–Biennale Arcipelago Mediterraneo—which he curated—played an important role.

As mentioned earlier, I have had productive experiences in my collaborations with Egle. I curated her solo shows, she took part in some of my group exhibitions in Vienna, Stockholm, Helsinki, Rome, Istanbul, and Tunis; we co-authored academic articles; lectured together; participated in panels and seminars; and since 2018, I have been taking place in her working group for The World in Common project. Therefore, “I have closely observed that Egle has developed and composed a unique participatory artistic methodology, which is very well-structured, considerate, responsive, and persistent in action. This methodology

* Marcel Proust. 2004. *Swann’s Way*, trans. Lydia Davis, London: Penguin Books, p.6

1. I have started to work with Egle Oddo in the framework of the CrossSections project, an interdisciplinary platform for explorations into artistic research and education through dialogue and production. CrossSections was designed as an interdisciplinary platform for explorations into artistic research and education through dialogue and production. Over the course of three years (2017–19), 19 artists, together with other scholars and cultural workers, have organized various meetings, accompanied with residencies, workshops, exhibitions, performances and book launches in Vienna, Helsinki and Stockholm. The project partners were Kunsthalle Exnergasse–WUK in Vienna; IASPIS – the Swedish Arts Grants Committee’s International Programme for Visual and Applied Artists; Konstfack University of Arts, Crafts and Design; and NFK–The Nordic Art Association in Stockholm; Nya Småland with different locations in Sweden; HIAP–Helsinki International Artist Programme and Academy of Fine Arts – University of the Arts Helsinki in Helsinki; Center for Contemporary Arts, Estonia in Tallinn; and Press to Exit Project Space in Skopje. With this project, my objective was to create a collective, interdisciplinary, and critical research platform and a network that integrate the process of producing into knowledge exchange and distribution models in the context of art. During this project I have been acquainted with Oddo’s practice and methodology.

reveals a very particular relationship between artist and partici-pants, and has a potential to create difference in the perceptions, responses, and actions for the political, ecological, social, cultur-al, physical, and even psychological ur-gencies of our era”.² In this respect, working on a joint curriculum and to experiment new perspectives and forms through a participatory training methodology was my main objective. Furthermore, due to her acquaintance with Palermo, she would be connecting us (mentors and the participants) to the local realities by providing insight, since “the participatory nature of her artistic methodology is based on her capacity to apply communicative protocols that ad-dress a well-planned accessibility for the audience and the public at large”³.

There was also another component in this project: both Egle Oddo and Gry Worre Hallberg/Sisters Hope would perform alongside the participants. Discovering Sisters Hope was a nice reward this project brought. However, it was a challenging task since I had very limited knowledge of this multi-layered, process-based on-going project. I was thinking about utilising the participants as a bridge to connect the performances of Oddo and Hallberg. Hence, I discussed this idea on my second online lecture with the participants prior to our Palermo phase (on 23rd August 2022). I also had a few Zoom meetings with Hallberg for the same purpose. Nonetheless, upon my arrival at Palermo, through my observations and interactions with Sisters Hope, I realised that her project had already been curated in detail and there was no room—or space of latitude to shape or add anything—for another curator. Consequently, I decided to approach the performances of these two artists in a well-balanced manner and distance: I canalized my entire curatorial undertakings on the participants’ artistic productions at Palazzo Sant’Elia. The same venue also became the hub for us for the lectures, workshops, and a collective artist’s studio. We were getting together and sharing many amazing moments, discoveries, and diverse themes from the early hours of the day till late hours at night. Finally, this process that spanned over 10 days gave life to 14 performances and the group exhibition at Palazzo Sant’Elia, which was integrated into BAM–Biennale Arcipelago Mediterraneo, which took place in the same venue.

In the meantime, I had lectures and sessions in which we discussed the participants’ assignments, terms, and keywords that they processed through their works such as dramaturgy, scenography, design, composition, structure, rhythm, and improvisation. We discussed different working methodologies, thinking processes, modes of observation and reflection—especially in the context of Palermo, the role of the audience, and documentation. Their assignment regarding Palermo’s balconies was remarkable and opened a lot of doors of perception for further artistic iterations. Inspiring meetings and discussions took place with Peter M. Boenisch and Egle. I also organised scheduled peer-to-peer meetings with all the participants. At the end, I had guided, had conversations with, and given feedback to all the participants who had contributed to the programme with performances. The intensity of the interactions with the participants were varied. My sessions were mandatory so that I could remain informed of each performance by the participants that took place both at Palazzo Sant’Elia and Chiesa dei Santi Euno e Guiliano. I feel satisfied and confident of all the 9 performances and the exhibition, and am proud of all the artists presented at Sant’Elia. I would also like to acknowledge the performances of Karoline Normann Fløysvik, Federica Marra, Cirkeline Dahl Bondesen, and Bona Dyssou as I was very impressed with many facets of their work at Chiesa dei Santi Euno e Guiliano.

I then used the Denmark phase to work on this publication as a tool for accumulating notes, feedback, and input from the participants and the mentors. It was also an opportunity to talk about further project plans for the future. Once again, I had quite gratifying sessions and peer-to-peer meetings with the participants. The entire process was very experimental for me – I discovered some unknown intellectual territories and earned some amazing life-time friends, which were all very enriching.

2. Senova, Basak. 2022. “A Persistent Participatory Action”. *Performative Habitats. Between Art, Philosophy and Science*. Ed. Lori Adragna & Egle Oddo. Postmedia Books, Milan. p.88, ISBN 978-8874903368

3. IBID. p 86

THE GROUP EXHIBITION: *LIQUID SATURATION*

EGLE ODDO & BAŞAK ŞENOVA

EGLE ODDO: As a result of my workshop, different outcomes were presented from the start as opportunities, including a group exhibition consisting of a series of drawings, printed images, handwritten notes, and installations displayed on a hexagonal object, a sculpture I created to provide a substrate and host the participants' creations. The hexagonal object was meant to be the working diary of the participants during their ten-day residency, making their process visually available for the public of BAM. It also had the function to help participants focus on their intuitions, see their ideas in relation with the ideas of their peers, in a spatially integrated way.

To produce a group exhibition from scratch in only seven days was an ambitious goal, that is why it was important to create a team spirit along the way, and it would have been impossible to realise it without the presence and mentorship of curator Basak Senova. With her method, Basak provided a rigorous deep dive journey into the professional experience of creating a display out of process-based fragments. With her wide experience in composing a curatorial narrative while dealing with dynamic displays and in dialoguing with artists dedicated to research and process, Şenova, who who titled the exhibiton as **Liquid Saturation** engaged with each participant, giving them the necessary confidence to transform their on the spot creations into a series of visual candies for the public of BAM. The challenge of producing a group exhibition was accepted by eleven participnats. The group exhibition offered an insight into their instant and interpretative process in relation to the local context by presenting elements still in-the-making, malleable and fresh approaches, and potential impressions for future works. They expressed intuitions, impressions, and reflections as part of a collective artwork where each author maintained their own intellectual property, at the same time contributing to a shared and integrated vision.

BAŞAK ŞENOVA: It was quite experimental and engaging to make an exhibition in the same venue as a biennial by integrating into it. It was also challenging and endearing to curate this exhibition within the framework of an artistic environment in the shape of a hexagon with clear borders and form. Oddo's hexagon was a unifying tool, yet it was also provocative enough to challenge "shared" places, surfaces, and the context.

Seven artists complemented each other while remaining within the identity of their own visual language and content. Some parts of the works of Kamila Śladowska, Frida Stenbäck, Andreea Tudose, and Livia Ribichini even escaped from the hexagon and found other locations within the space. Silvia Bernardelli added an extension to the hexagon, and all the artists connected their work to the outside world through performances and other artistic strategies. The blend of research, uniqueness, the collective nature, and the performativity of the exhibition created its own aesthetics.

Participants who took part in the group exhibiton were: Silvia Bernardelli, Rikke Bogetoft, Bona Dyssou, Marija Iva Gocić, Giulia Mattera, Livia Ribichini, Kamila Śladowska, Edoardo Spata, Frida Stenbäck, Nicoline Gandrup Thyrsted, and Andreea Tudose.

The exhibition curated by Başak Şenova, was on display at Palazzo Sant'Elia under the coverage of BAM–Biennale Arcipelago Mediterraneo, curated by Andrea Cusumano (September 2022-January 2023).

THE SERIES OF PERFORMANCES: *LIQUID SATURATION*

EGLE ODDO & BAŞAK ŞENOVA

EGLE ODDO: I offered different outcomes, because during the selection process I had studied the profile of each participant and I wanted to provide them with a variety of possibilities, compatible with the limitations of the production. Besides the exhibition, the participants were invited to perform at Palazzo Sant'Elia on the opening day. They designed their performances in relation to their encounters with the context and to their individual research. They discussed their performances with me and Basak in order to acquire critical tools to self-direct and self-assess their outcomes.

The series of performances created a distinctive narrative in the space, revealing the productive influence of the time the group spent together, and the cohesion among the group members. In most cases the remains of the performances were installed and exhibited in the same room as the hexagonal.

BAŞAK ŞENOVA: The performances were in constant flux of changing and adapting to the venue and to the context in relation to each other. Time was the essential piece of the performance day, all the actions were shaped accordingly: keeping time; using time; enduring time; restarting time; and freezing time. The performance time could be considered one big exceptional performance that inhabited all performances without any fractures.

Participants who performed were: Rikke Bogetoft, Cirkeline Dahl Bondesen;, Bona Dyssou, Rikke Frigast Jakobsen, Marija Iva Gocić, Giulia Mattera, Rebecca Minten, Chloé Sassi, Frida Stenbäck, Nicoline Gandrup Thyrsted, and Andreea Tudose.

Performances took place at Palazzo Sant'Elia as part of the opening activities of BAM–Biennale Arcipelago Mediterraneo, curated by Andrea Cusumano on the 23rd of September 2022.

LIQUID SATURATION

curated by BAŞAK ŞENOVA

Palazzo Sant'Elia, Palermo 2022

BAM–Biennale Arcipelago Mediterraneo

curated by Andrea Cusumano (September 2022-January 2023)

EXHIBITION

"Hot Veins"
EDOARDO SPATA

"Six days with Mayahuel:
Experimenting with Agave Americana"
FRIDA STENBÄCK

"Shedding my tail, swimming up stream—La processione della Strega"
RIKKE BOGETOFT

"Prodotto Siciliano"
ANDREEA TUDOSE

"Luccicanze"
SILVIA BERNARDELLI

"Nonhuman Gardens"
GIULIA MATTERA

"Cult of non-binary fantasies"
KAMILA ŚLADOWSKA

PERFORMANCES

"Noi/We"
BONA DYSSOU

"Sorce Altar I"
MARIJA IVA GOCIĆ & VASSO VU

"Washerwomen"
ANDREEA TUDOSE

"Shedding my tail, swimming up stream—La processione della Strega"
RIKKE BOGETOFT

"Tuning Liquid Bodies"
REBECCA MINTEN
CIRKELINE DAHL BONDESEN
RIKKE BOGETOFT
GERLANDO CHIANETTA

"Scenes of Palermo"
NICOLINE GANDRUP THYRSTED

"Crossing passages", 2022
LIVIA RIBICHINI

"Scenes of Palermo", 2022
"Half Blade, Half Silk"
CIRKELINE DAHL BONDESEN

"Abstract Garden"
GIULIA MATTERA

"Tangled up in Maquey"
FRIDA STENBÄCK

ABSTRACTS

SILVIA BERNARDELLI: In September during BAM 2022, I had the chance to see Palermo through the eyes and the passion of a resident artist, Egle Oddo, who introduced us to places and people that we probably never would have had the opportunity to see and meet. All these stories and places have completely changed my perception of the city.

Since our first meeting in spazio Madera, I felt the need to go back to my roots, to those small things that we too often forget. However, just because they are simple doesn't mean they are easy to implement into our lives. I needed a 3D space to create that minimal depth and closure that would allow me to use the light more punctually. That's why I built an additional frame to the hexagonal object. Then I painted this additional panel black to cancel out any other possibility and let the viewer concentrate solely on a small, yet fundamental, glimmer of light.

All the people I met in Palermo—with all their different approaches to art and life, the places we visited, and the project we conducted—immediately seemed to me like a precise representation of the light that is inside each and every one of us, which carries us forward and is the driving force of projects that make us rediscover hope in a better world like Danisinni.

I represented the specificity of this context with a small hole, to talk about the small portion of a huge context that we saw, and from which I loved looking out.

My project "Luccicanze" is an invitation to look inside, at yourself and at others, and let yourself be inspired and guided by your inner light, always keeping in mind all the other bits of sparkle each of us have within.

CIRKELINE DAHL BONDESEN: I performed as a moving and speaking sculpture in the courtyard of Palazzo Sant'Elia to create a dialogue with two historic sculptures. They depicted classical feminine beauty with long dresses, soft curves, round shoulders, and slightly bent arms with flickering wrists. As a choreographer, I wanted to investigate the free or expanded feminine body. My questions investigated ways in which the classical portraits of femininity honour important principles of tenderness and care in our society, and how reducing these qualities down to belonging to womanhood only is a result of patriarchal thinking. My work explored what a full portrait of a contemporary woman would look and sound like through movement, voice, and poetry.

To create the work in the courtyard of Palazzo Sant'Elia meant negotiating the space we shared as artists: where my moving sculpture could be placed, when the performance could start, and how loud it could get. In the end, this negotiation resulted in a beautiful landscape of performances unfolding together, giving new context and meaning to one another. They were very strong together and elevated each other. My performance ended with me leading the audience to the connecting courtyard where Rebecca Minten started her clarinet solo from the balcony as the beginning of the piece Tuning Liquid Bodies with Gerlando, Rikke Bogetoft, and myself.

BONA DYSSOU: For the performance, titled Noi/Us, I was dealing with the themes of escape, loneliness, homelessness, and the search for a new home. The city of Palermo was a great inspiration for me. It is the connection between Europe and Africa; and it represents home for me. I wanted to give back to the city something of what it means to me—with its incredibly diverse, welcoming, magical atmosphere. In the performance, I wanted to represent the pain of a person alone and on the run. The figure I represented was inspired by several people I saw in the city, some family stories, and myself.

She cannot speak. She knows no language, knows no one. She is full of stories and pain. The figure crawls on her knees, desperate to tell her story, showing who she was before. Hundreds of handwritten poems by different authors from different countries fall from the sky. The final image is a chorus. My peers

from the exhibition crowd join me and begin to recite the poem of significance to them in their own language (each in a different language): Danish, Italian, Polish, Norwegian, Serbian poems, and finally—the fleeing figure starts to speak as well—a Hungarian poem. The character is revived when she feels she is no longer alone, through the pain of others and their innermost feelings. The many poems and languages merge into one piece of art. Different experiences and art come together; out of suffering comes strength through sharing—just like in Palermo.

—in cooperation with **FEDERICA MARRA, GERLANDO CHIANETTA, KAMILA SLADOWSKA, KAROLINE, NORMANN FLØYSVIK, and RIKKE FRIGAST**

RIKKE FRIGAST *Shedding my tail, Swimming up stream - La processione della Strega* is a three part site specific performance & tableaux reaching from the wet marble of Palazzo Sant’Elia to the scorching sun in Piazza Magione. It attempts to tackle duality & identity amidst the throws of expectations, and investigates the coexistence of realities.

The performance begins in Palazzo Sant’Elia, where a wet body crawls out of the fountain and up the marble stairs, shedding a tail it no longer needs. It wraps itself in a silver robe, and begins the second act: the Procession of the Witch. Snaking her way through the streets of Palermo, finally she reaches the crypt of Chiesa Sant’Euno in Piazza Magione. The robe drops and an unveiled body offers a last rite - an unconditional embrace.

Shedding my tail, Swimming up stream - La processione della Strega is a ritual of rebirth inspired by the story of Santa Rosalia and the parallels of my own identity qualms. Rosalia became the Patron Saint of Palermo after her bones were carried in Procession through the city and consequently lifted the plague ravaging the population. Later, her bones were discovered to be not human, but goat bones; thus, granting Rosalia a dual identity of Saint and Goat.

MARIJA IVA GOCIĆ: The performance I worked on in Palermo was largely shaped by the city's rich history and cultural diversity. I drew upon the various influences present in Palermo and used them as a backdrop to explore the deeply personal and universal themes of ancestry, as well as cultural and religious identity. As a result, I presented a durational performance piece, "Source Altar I", that explores contemplation of ancestral relationships through the use of iconography, sculpture, and endurance. The work features a human body as a church altar, covered with clay and candles. The body remains motionless and present with the candles until the very last one burns out. It is a tribute to the enduring influence of our ancestors and a celebration of the cultural traditions that connect us to the past and shape our present. The performance invites the audience to consider the guidance, wisdom, and strength that can be gained from our ancestors, as well as the ways in which we may be burdened by their mistakes.

Although this was a solo performance, the people involved and my colleagues with whom I spent every day played a key role in the creation of this work. The most precious thing was that we shared each step of the introspection process with each other, as well as stories about our origins, our poetry. We even cried in front of each other. This allowed me to gather the strength to create a work that is very intimate. By working in the same space and having regular meetings, we were able to develop a sense of community. The use of candles all over my body in the performance added a layer of vulnerability to the piece, and the fact that I felt safe and protected despite this is a testament to the love and care that was present during the creation of the work.

GIULIA MATTERA: During my time in Palermo, I explored the role of the garden in my art practice. Specifically, I dug into old magic beliefs about the garden: superstitions, potions, divinations. The final outcomes were the performance Abstract Garden, and the reflective work *nonhuman gardens*—part of the collective exhibition at Palazzo Sant’Elia. The latter work analyses the research journey to create the performance. The exhibition and the performance reciprocally inform each other, lending context to one another.

nonhuman gardens is a visual artwork mapping the research that gave birth to the performance Abstract Garden. During the performance, I invited each

participant to choose between friendship, anxiety, sleep issues, love potions, invisibility, suspected infidelity, divination, and study. According to their pick, I either made them chew specific herbs, put lavender in their shoes, or prepared a mix of herbs with instructions on how to ingest them.

REBECCA MINTEN: *Tuningliquid bodies* is a choreographic piece for 4 performers, the clarinet and the balconies of the Palazzo Sant’Elia. The main idea consisted of tuning and bringing together all the different elements involved in the piece—the clarinet, the voices of the performers, and the bodies in movements. We worked by improvising with the material in collaboration with choreographer Cirkeline Dahl Bondesen.

We divided it into different parts in order to use the whole space. The balconies surrounded the courtyard where the audience would be. The work is, therefore, site specific with very limited space to move, and was created in such a context.

The improvised musical piece started with me musically “calling” my partners to join me on the balconies. From this point on, we explored the concept of tuning first with our bodies—split in two pairs on each side of the courtyard—before we progressively added the voices and gathered all on the same side. The material for my improvisation was simple enough for the three performers to follow the tones I was playing and create a polyphony that we could somehow manage to tune as well.

—in cooperation with **GERLANDO CHIANETTA, CIRKELINE DAHL BONDESEN and RIKKE FRIGAST**

LIVIA RIBICHINI: Crossing Passages is a multidisciplinary video installation that involves video, photography, paint, sound, artificial intelligence, and archiving.

During the days in Palermo while walking in the city, I documented the architectural elements that became dysfunctional through time with photos. I found this to be a metaphor of the city's circumstances. A broken present that hides traces of a living past. A frame of death that shows a hidden life. A constant fluxus between two states or even States.

The work I created reflects in its technicality the performative theme of movements, passing, and walking. In this way, the video became a sort of independent performer. An important encounter was with Giovanni Bono, the first ‘impagiatore di finocchietto’ of Palermo's city centre. We worked together for several days. It was incredible to hear the stories from his past, a gone Palermo and ancient craftsmanship. The past is needed to act in the present in order to foresee the future.

EDOARDO SPATA: *Hot Veins* consists of the mapping of abuse collection points within the urban centre of the city of Palermo, promoting the recovery and reuse of these resources. The aim of the work was to share with the local community the approach developed during the two-year project 'Mondo Nuovo', in which themes such as productive autonomy, adaptation to the context, and an economy that looks at waste as a resource are fundamental. During the process of comprehension of the context, through guided tours and autonomous exploration, I realised how the themes of autonomy and reuse of the context were already present in the city. So, I started an operation to engage the citizenship in a collective project, but clashed with the natural diffidence the community felt towards a foreigner. From this process Hot Veins was born; a passive action that, through the documentation of the widespread practice of abandoning materials, ennobles and localises them for the community.

FRIDA STENBÄCK: *6 days with Mayahuel - Experimenting with Agave Americana* was presented during the BAM Festival as part of a longer process that emerged from my interest in learning about non-wood-based biomaterials and plant fibers such as agave. I wanted to learn more about the plant by engaging with its materiality, using my personal energy in slow manufacturing processes performed by hand.

Alongside the enjoyable manual labour and meditative flow state that I entered into for six days, I researched the history and how agave had found its way to Sicily with the ships of Columbus after his colonisation travels to North and South America. I also learned about the Aztec myths surrounding the plant,

specifically the story of Mayahuel—the deity of agave who brings nourishment and fertility—and discovered how the plant had further lost the beauty of its expressions, as the only hear-say that reached me was that agave fibers had been utilised mainly for military clothing for the Italian and Spanish armies during the World Wars.

KAMILA ŚLADOWSKA: The "Cult of non-binary fantasies" is a painting installation about gender and the human being's relationship with nature in the context of Catholic society. I reflected on the interactions between nature, gender, and Catholicism.

In the Catholic church, people are taught that in the hierarchical order god comes first, then the human being, and beneath them are non-humans. This artificial hierarchy creates toxic tensions within the culture. Due to Jesus' life, human suffering is fetishicised and eroticised. Pleasure and nature are regarded as sinful, but hiding the natural makes people desire it more.

The composition refers to the Catholic altars, creating a non-normative altar for those who do not feel represented in the Catholic culture. The installation consists of braids that have been historically associated with women, although they are made of fabric, not hair. They seem to be alive as biological beings. Some escape the room and some merge together with the roots painted on the hexagonal object. The powerful roots push to break through the lush ecosystem of Palermo, where I saw the banana liana for the first time in my life – a very straight forward expression of sexuality. The modified liana was placed at the centre of the altar's hierarchy. The change of the colour from green to violet resembles the simulacra of a sex toy. The fruits become human genitals. Around the space appear scropio-like seeds, and oregano that perfumes the altar. The viewer feels surrounded by a strange ecosystem where objects are somehow, but not fully, recognisable and the human merges together with the non-human. The mysterious sexuality holds up the interactive tension of the viewer.

NICOLINE GANDRUP THYRSTED: Coming from a theatrical background, my way into the work was to research Palermo and its history and try to make some sort of connection to stories or plays that already exist, and through that to come up with ideas on how I wanted to work when I got there. It didn't work out for me at the beginning. So after some initial attempts, I let it go and decided to simply discover Palermo and let the city and my feelings about being there guide me. It was scary and frustrating because I knew there was a deadline for finishing some sort of product, and not understanding the language and the culture, I felt like a child trying to understand a grown-up's world most of the time. But when I began to go with that frustration and use the experience of my inner child observing and listening, ideas began to emerge, and the language and the fact that I did not understand it became my starting point in what would become my process and my end piece in an investigation on how we, as humans, communicate and create meaning when it cannot be received through verbal language.

It also became the starting point in a more personal understanding of how I usually work around my fear and frustration to avoid such situations, but that it is often right in the midst of all that where we find answers.

ANDREEA TUDOSE: Points of departure for both durational performances, *Prodotto Siciliano* and *The Washerwomen* were Alessandra Sciurba's research on Romanian migrant women working in agriculture and in informal care work in Sicily (University of Palermo), and Hochschild's 'Love and Gold'.

"... we make a fetish of an SUV, for example—we see the thing independent of its context." (A. R. Hochschild, Love and Gold)

For *Prodotto Siciliano*, I wanted to interrogate the fetishising of Sicilian produce, the majority coming from Ragusa, tended to and grown by hands that are not Sicilian in the slightest. Currently, the majority belong to Romanian women who, due to structural inequalities within the EU, occupy the position of slaves in Sicilian farms. I used different parts of my Romanian body to crush the produce (this performance was not shared publicly, but it was documented) and then added gold foil to the cracks, where mould began to grow. The plan was for the vegetables, in the absence of human bodies, to give a 3-month durational

performance of decomposition, dropping off the structural wires that held them in place. The smell and spores spread throughout the room, leading people to move differently (to avoid unpleasant sights/smells) and attracting swarms of flies, causing unexpected migrations of non-human beings. This is a challenge to the artistic notion of 'still life': the migratory movement that must happen for these fruits and vegetables to come into being is mirrored by the process of decomposition.

The Washerwomen was an unbroken durational performance (circa 2 hours) of the washing and wringing out of about 10m worth of sheets, in the courtyard of Palazzo Sant'Elia, while singing, dancing, poetry recitals, and other artistic performances were taking place simultaneously. I wanted my physical presence in the palazzo space and the interminable line of sheets—held together with metal safety pins (precarious and domestic)—fed down to me from the balcony to be a reminder that domestic work is constantly going on somewhere, imperceptible and taken for granted. However, even in this instance when it is visible—literally aired in public—there is still hidden physical labour that can't be seen up on the balcony: the washerwomen who came in shifts to hold the sheets to provide tension so they could slide down slowly.

I wanted to juxtapose the architecture of the courtyard, the statues of beautiful, young, coveted women sculpted with their folds of material with the highly sought-after female migrant labour.

LITTLE DISCOVERIES: A COLLECTIVE CONVERSATION

EGLE ODDO, BAŞAK ŞENOVA, SILVIA BERNARDELLI, RIKKE BOGETOFT, LIVIA RIBICHINI, CIRKELINE DAHL BONDESEN, BONA DYSSOU, KAROLINE NORMANN FLØYSVIK, RIKKE FRIGAST, SIMONE GLATT, MARIJA IVA GOCIĆ, GIULIA MATTERA, KAMILA ŚLADOWSKA, REBECCA MINTEN, NICOLINE GANDRUP THYRSTED, EDOARDO SPATA, FRIDA STENBÄCK, ANDREEA TUDOSE

KAMILA ŚLADOWSKA: How did you interact with the public space, local community, and non-humans during your process?

EGLE ODDO: I created an evolutionary garden, which is a work of public art. The garden was installed in a public square, Piazza Kalsa, which was neglected and full of debris. I started to work on the site, cleaning it, bringing in natural soil nutrients and new healthy soil. During this process of care, local inhabitants, driven by curiosity, started to interact with me and with the garden, wanting to help. They manifested consensus for what I was doing; seemingly my action was triggering their civic sense and love for their quartier. Also, some of the participants of Art4T came to the garden with me during spontaneous sessions. For the locals, to see so many young people joyfully busy with the soil and plants was very refreshing and started creating anticipation and hope. The square turned from an inert neglected site into an animated and participating public space, where everybody felt invited and entitled to take care of the common good. During the gardening sessions, I observed that turning and oxygenating the soil, watering it, and placing nutrients into its folds was calling out a lot of insects. There was seemingly a great activity of Arthropods and Pterygota, as well as spiders. It was very rewarding to see the presence of butterflies and bees in the evenings during irrigation. I also interacted with plant seeds, which I collected and sowed in the garden. Researching the seeds to form a seed collection implied a study of the needs of plants and how they interact with each other and with the biomass of insects and other beings. I measured the content of active biomass in the soil (the presence of bacteria and fungi that are beneficial for the vitality of the soil) before and after our intervention. The biological vitality of the soil was sensibly activated after our gardening intervention was completed, and it seemingly is still improving and growing while the seeds germinate and the plants grow.

BAŞAK ŞENOVA: Rebecca, could explain the nature of your collaboration with Egle Oddo through “Insaturo”?

REBECCA MINTEN: My contribution to Egle's performance was probably the last thing I was expecting to do during my stay in Palermo. When she invited me to perform, I didn't know what to expect even two days before the performance. Improvising with fellow musicians is something I am used to, but I had no idea what kind of interaction I would have with Egle during her performance. Except for the part that took place in Area Madera where she had specific wishes, I was free to play whenever I felt like it. It happened twice, but in two very different ways.

The first time was on the Via Santa Teresa, where I decided to try to merge with the soundscape; I would follow the rhythm of Egle ploughing the soil as well as the bells that were ringing at the same time.

My second intervention in the Piazza Kalsa was a far more challenging decision, because I interrupted a very long moment of silence and contemplation in the garden Egle had created. So, my impact on the general atmosphere was much

bigger at this point, the natural soundscape had taken more space and I didn't want to go against it because it was very musical in a way. But as soon as I started, I was immediately able to connect with Egle. I remember very clearly my final note uniting with her blowing on the remaining soil in her hand before leaving and finishing her performance. It was a completely new improvisation experience for me, interacting simultaneously with the natural soundscape, which added another dimension to my usual practice.

Egle, why did you take the risk of inviting me to be part of your brand new performance just two days before it took place if you had been preparing for it for such a long time?

EGLE ODDO: Well, I heard you practising in this little closet in the Palazzo Sant'Elia for a few days, and I liked it. We also had this talk where you explained to me your current struggle with finding a way to connect with interdisciplinary practices without ending up being the accompaniment. That gave me the idea of the invitation.

I created this performance outside Palermo, and I knew that I would have to adapt it to the specific context anyway. And because of your biographical connection to Sicily and your presence, you were an additional “local element” that I decided to invite.

I gave you complete freedom to improvise because since sound is your medium, you would know better than I what you had to do. I also thought that Palermo's soundscape might be fertile for you, because there were already some autonomous elements like the composition or the urban sound pattern. On the Piazza Kalsa, for instance, I was aware that the bells would probably ring, and I was planning on using them for performing, but I didn't tell you. And I didn't have to, you reacted directly because sound is your domain!

We had to trust each other; it's not only about me daring to ask you, but also about you trusting me and accepting this crazy request. Of course, your presence created a focus on sound elements that I hadn't planned on before coming here and I had to adapt in order to dialogue with you.

REBECCA MINTEN: Were you satisfied with the performance?

EGLE ODDO: Very satisfied. I could feel it during the performance, and looking at the documentation confirmed that all the elements that were important to me worked out. Naturally, I want to work on it some more; there are plenty of things I would like to develop, and I am not completely satisfied with everything I did in my performance. It was the first time I did it and obviously there is still a ways to go. I want to rethink it and go much further with it.

EGLE ODDO: How about you? Can you think of things to develop from your side as well?

REBECCA MINTEN: For sure. Now that I know the performance, I can think more about the sound material I'd like to use. It could be interesting if we work on it together and reflect a bit more on the role I have in this performance, since you told me that I was now part of it and not just an element specific to Palermo.

On the other hand, it was, in my opinion, very smart of you not to give me the time to prepare anything last time. Even if it was a very intense experience, I loved that you forced my spontaneity, and it created a setting that wasn't replicable anymore. That's the beauty of improvisation.

EGLE ODDO: What were the elements that made you decide to trust me and accept my invitation?

REBECCA MINTEN: First of all, I guess I was flattered that you offered. It also meant a lot that you let me improvise, because you were involving me and my personal language directly, and not “just” music. You very quickly understood what I was aiming for when collaborating with other artists, which is not always that obvious, and you promptly found a way to help me in my process. By putting me in this insane situation, you gave me an opportunity to learn a lot. I also felt that you knew exactly what you were doing, I still do.

BONA DYSSOU: Egle, can you briefly tell me about the mythical being who guided us through the journey of the circulation of life and creation? How was she born?

EGLE ODDO: I believe you are speaking of my presence as a performer. I do not use characters or characterisation when I perform. That is the main difference between theatre and performance art. I do not impersonate somebody; I do not build a character. I am myself. Completely present. I am busy understanding the world through the logic of art practice, that is where my intensity comes from when I perform. So, to answer your question, the creature was me, with my story and my presence. And in just one act, I wanted to show you how deadly it is to love a place that you cannot return to live, how sweet it is to return to a family you cannot leave.

NICOLINE GANDRUP THYRSTED: Kamila, you talked about the Catholic traces in Palermo as inspiration for your work. Can you tell me more about what it was in Palermo that sparked your interest and how you worked with it?

KAMILA ŚLADOWSKA: I come from a strongly Catholic society in Poland. I even used to attend a Catholic school where I saw all the negative influences of the church on society. The church tempts people with theatrical and decorative aspects of the ritual in order to apply its poisonous politics on gender, nature, women, sexuality, or in general, on the entire life cycle. As an atheist woman, I felt discriminated in Catholic society and it is one of the main reasons why I emigrated to Finland where I do not experience the toxicity of Catholicism anymore on a daily basis. All of these memories came back to me in Palermo where the Catholic church is also very visible. I would like to quote here a part of my text written during our training in Arhus: “The desire for love and nature comes out against the Catholic jail of norms. Blocking natural desires makes people desire more, as in the case of nuns feeding greedy people with fat and sweet “virgin tit” cakes. I recognised the hierarchy where the Catholic god and humans are regarded as more superior than other beings”. In Catholicism, humans become like god in relation to nature: the human has the right to discriminate and destroy in the name of what is considered a saint in the church. I remade the compositional solutions and aesthetics from Catholicism in order to represent the struggle with the oppressions present in the culture. In fact, humans’ relationship with nature is not that hierarchical. We do not possess the ecosystem, we are part of it. I believe that the harasser-victim relationship should be replaced by an empathetic co-operation. Everything in Catholicism is either “good” or “bad”. However, in reality the nature of human beings and the ecosystem are far more complex and diverse. People and reality are not as dualistic as the Catholic church would like them to be.

NICOLINE GANDRUP THYRSTED: Quite early in the process, you began to collect different objects and material in Palermo. A chandelier that was broken for instance. I’m curious about that part of your process. Is it for inspiration? Did you have an idea about how you would use the objects? Or what was your motivation for collecting? And how did it affect your final work, because you didn't you all the objects, did you?

KAMILA ŚLADOWSKA: As a visual artist/painter, I choose the material and technique at the beginning, right after selecting the subject. In this case I had a two-week time frame. Usually my process is a lot longer. I tend to work with time consuming crafting techniques, which I link to sustainability and slow painting. The situation in Palermo productively pushed me to change the habits when it came to the materials and techniques in order to complete the piece in two weeks. The circulation of matter through recycling is very important to me. I choose either biodegradable or recycled material to work with. Dumpster diving brings a lot of joy and inspiration. I was getting a sense of Palermo’s aesthetics through collecting objects during the long walking trails. That is how my process linked to Edoardo's research on recycling. I asked him for second-hand market recommendations or local dumpster groups on social media. I even strolled around in the most popular one in Palermo. Edoardo gave me some old fabrics from Sicily, including a violet advent shawl that he had found in an abandoned church. The faded fabrics quickly got connected with the idea of braiding and the priests’ shawl will most probably appear in my next exhibition. The braids were later processed in the salty sea waters of Mondello. At the flea market where Silvia found the crystals for her work, I found the naturalistic grapes made out of

glass. This paradoxal item arrived with me to Helsinki and appeared in several performances. It is a long term or never ending process of creating your own library of tools. Collecting the seeds and biomass was connected to Egle’s garden, and morning journeys to Ballaro market provided the oregano herbs meant to perfume the altar. I have simultaneously been collecting the conceptual and material bases. Each object brought forth ideas, however I have curtailed some in order to adjust to the entire exhibition space and to the concepts of the artworks created by the group. I resigned the beeswax on cotton because when I started to melt it down, the smell encouraged the hornets to massively fly into our studio at Palazzo Sant’Elia. I used the scorpio-like seeds found at Via Roma, watercolour paints bought in the local art supplies store, and a ceramic candle found on a balcony at Sant’Elia. It is a bit like choosing paints—sometimes you use them all, but some you save for the next time.

SIMONE GLATT: Egle, how do you see your work being influenced by activism, and where do you see a difference between political (eco) activism and art, if any?

EGLE ODDO: I work mainly with relational project-art and process-art. In a climate of intense social and political turmoil, it is natural that my practice also gets influenced by the present global fight for civil rights. I do not necessarily seek to embed my work in a specific political content or propaganda, at the same time, my work is the expression of my beliefs and my values, therefore it also conveys a political view.

There is a great difference between activism and art. Activism always has a political and civil function; art, on the other hand, always functions in the realm of aesthetics. They can sometimes intertwine proficiently, like in the case of the productions of Jonas Staal, ruangrupa, Forensic Architecture, Erkan Özgen, Andreco, Marta Moreno Muñoz, Terike Haapola, and many artists who use their work to campaign for civil rights. I often collaborate with activists as well as scientists, but I do not attempt to exchange roles. I find it more accomplished for my practice to create inter- and trans- disciplinary workgroups, and let experts carry to the table different knowledge that influences one another. I enjoy it when, during such collaborations, my artistic practice dedicated to the safeguard of biodiversity creates bonds of solidarity with eco-activists, and further inside the societal fabric. This is something that happens quite often when I work with my evolutionary gardens.

ANDREEA TUDOSE: Egle, I was very intrigued when you said that you were taught to cite the references and introduced your mother and father and their respective work. Could you further elaborate on how being open and transparent about your personal links to the territory was important in the process?

EGLE ODDO: To be able to avoid a colonialist approach, or worse, self-exoticism (which is also very common among artists), one needs to be transparent with one’s sources of knowledge and references. Instead of creating myths about the territory and my person, I was interested in creating bonds. Therefore, I found it important to share my own primal sources of knowledge in that territory and context with simplicity, directness, and transparency. I was asking a lot of you all, to actively listen to the context and to share your thoughts in the form of public artworks. My goal was to instil trust among the members of the group. To create peer structures, one needs to provide an example. To cite one’s references is also in opposition to a patriarchal approach, where there are supermen and superwomen who do not need to quote their cultural debts in a context.

From my text: "(...) the choice of offering my own personal links with the territory and my vulnerability first hand to the participants was done on purpose to convey a sense of trust, familiarity, softness, honesty, emotional availability, and to improve the relational process aiming at the formation of a collaborative group."

BONA DYSSOU: For me, Egle's performance and garden were closely connected to the homeland, and it somehow also connected me with the feeling of homesickness, and her deep love for the land and all the living creatures of Sicily.

Egle, when you started to work on your piece, was it important to think that it would be linked to Sicilian soil? Through it, have you worked on your relationship with your homeland?

EGLE ODDO: You definitely centred my aim with that performance! I was precisely working on my relationship with my homeland, and it was very intense, full of emotions, and quite challenging. I was so shaken by the process of creating that piece that I sought the mentorship of a performer I love and respect, Elvira SantaMARIJA Torres. I asked her for advice on how to deal with such burning fire when working with the homeland. She is an expat like me, and she has returned many times to perform in her homeland. She gave me invaluable tips that I keep close to my heart. It was difficult to deal with the deep nostalgia I have for my homeland and my family. I made that performance for them and for you. For the participants sharing the creative journey. I designed the workshop with a specific path. In the first three days, I organised encounters to show you the context and my own relationship with it, and you met my parents as well. That was important to create a common ground, and to try to connect you all with your own feelings of homeland. Then there was the phase where you all worked on your creations, and I was supporting your process. When I next performed for you, it was my way to communicate to you all my struggles and strengths, not just using words but using our common mother tongue: art practice. I had planned for your exhibition and performances to be the last action that we would share together. A dialogue between artists, communicating through their mediums and their stories.

GIULIA MATTERA: Frida, your relationship with agave feels very intimate from my point of view. How would you describe it in four words? And how would you elaborate on this human-vegetal journey you have embarked in?

FRIDA STENBÄCK: Aside from it being an intimate relationship, I would describe my approach and relationship to agave as grateful, enthusiastic, curious, and considerate.

I developed a great interest towards plant fibers through weaving, crafts, and the need to learn more about non-wood-based fibers.

My journey with agave began during my visit to México in April 2022, where I was introduced to the locally cherished and historically valued plant and its multitude of uses, mostly in the form of beverages, but also through a brief encounter in the form of textile. This happened while we were visiting Teotihuacán with a group of students from the Social Design studio of Die Angewandte, and I happened to ask about the material of a very particular cloth that was among the many fabrics a man was selling as souvenirs in the area. The sturdy, lace-like cloth seemed synthetic at first, but with my broken Spanish I soon discovered that it was indeed made of agave. The moment this man showed me the sample of the fibers he had with him, still intact with the spike of the plant, and explained how the spike could be used as a needle for lacing, I was mesmerised.

I didn't really have the opportunity to get my hands on agave while in México, so in Palermo I was really excited to encounter the plant again while wandering in the bay area on my 4th day of residence.

After a day of careful consideration, I decided to return to the bay and cut a single lower leaf from three different agaves as I wanted to avoid causing too much stress to a singular plant. Then I embarked on a pretty intense work flow for five days. First with bare hands, then with vinyl gloves and simple wooden tools to avoid irritation and to ease the separation of the fibers from the leaves. I used a piece of plywood as a scraping board and a block of wood for the scraping, which I got from two local carpenters at Piazza Domenico Peranni.

I spent two days preparing the paper, creating the assemblage, and beginning the weft. After the opening, I stayed in Mondello for a few days, and on my third and last day, Suvi and I went hiking on the Monte Pellegrino. When we came down from the mountain, there was a recently bloomed agave waiting for us on the side of a closed road. I felt so lucky to be witnessing this, even if I would have rather seen it in its full bloom as agaves only bloom once and then quite swiftly, wither and die. I returned to the agave on my last day to pick five seed cones, cut some leaves, and most importantly, to thank Mayahuel and say goodbye.

BAŞAK ŞENOVA: Andreea, since both your artistic approach and the methodology you followed in Palermo were quite experimental, I wonder how you would describe your experience of working with me from an artist-curator relationship?

ANDREEA TUDOSE: The thing that really struck me whenever I approached you to discuss my idea was that you seemed to listen really deeply and hear and see deeply into the project. I didn't feel you were bringing or adding, but uncovering and teasing out connections and metaphors already present in the work. I was really amazed by how much I felt you 'got it' when you gave suggestions, and how much it helped me reflect on my process and see what I was doing.

LIVIA RIBICHINI: Andreea, I also want to talk about the works we created for the hexagon installation in Fondazione S. Elia: *Prodotto Siciliano* and *Crossing passages*. The former shows traces of labour exploitation, of working bodies; the latter uses the traces of the context to show the invisible presence. Do you think that even if our works are apparently very different, they can have common ground on the topic of 'invisible bodies'?

ANDREEA TUDOSE: Yes absolutely. 'Invisible bodies' is a great description for both works! The human body is the currency for both works but it's eerily absent: we're left with only sound and the traces of the human interaction that built the beamer box in yours, and the fruit and vegetables grown by many human bodies and indented by mine in 'Prodotto Siciliano'.

They're also works that involve exhibition-goers' bodies: as they make their way around the hexagon, the beamer will project your work onto their body at some point, however briefly, and as for mine, there's the smell of rotting produce...

I think it's also interesting that in 'The Washerwomen', you volunteered as one of the 'invisible bodies' (to the audience in the courtyard) helping to lower the sheets. In fact, for that performance I was wearing your dress! An interesting presence-absence of bodies even in the costume.

LIVIA RIBICHINI: Why, then, is important in our works to talk about bodies without showing them? What is the value we give to the traces? I personally think that traces automatically involve a dynamism, a sort of propensity to moving. In 'Crossing Passages', the traces of the audio recordings in Palermo and the photos of the broken doors presented in video generated a possibility of living another present, the installation became the performer and the full context became the presence.

ANDREEA TUDOSE: That's really interesting, what you say about moving! I guess it ties in to several movements I was thinking about in these pieces: migration being the main movement I'm concerned with in my work and the traces that will be left of this migrant labour (agricultural and care work are actually pretty traceless: food gets eaten and the people who receive the care die), so in 100 years it will be as if these people doing this labour never existed if we don't create any records of their existence and work. There's also the movement in the observer from consumer (of food, of care, of investigative journalism, documentaries) to someone who engages with the world and sees processes, not products. There's this quote by A.R. Hochschild from Love and Gold: "we make a fetish of an SUV, for example—we see the thing independent of its context. We disregard the men who harvested the rubber latex, the assembly-line workers who bolted on the tires, and so on..."

I think this really ties in to your idea about living another present, no?

LIVIA RIBICHINI: We are on the same page here. It's amazing to see how our themes are intertwined and analysed from different angles. As a conclusion, I'd say that the invisible is political.

ANDREEA TUDOSE: Frida, when I was in Palermo I was thinking a lot about duration: how to give an idea of something that is constantly growing, or constantly happening, and also how care work happens over a long period of time, and what adequate pay would even be for work on that scale.

And of course, there you were, constantly working with agave! I found it very inspiring watching your work process: you would partake in activities but all the while, your hands were constantly working with the agave, even at the beach. Your piece, in many ways, was the most durational of all the pieces. Even during the opening of the exhibition, you were still weaving, even afterwards and the day after!

And of course, your piece is the only one that references time in its title ‘six days with...’ !! Can you say a bit about your relationship with time over those days?

FRIDA STENBÄCK: Thank you Andreea, it’s such a compliment that my process was inspiring to you and what an insightful equation with duration and care work. In many ways my work was about care, even if from an ecological and slightly abstract vantage point, and with a material or perhaps materialising approach. My interest and methods of working with agave stem from care and consideration of our planet, its plants, beings, and our interconnectedness. I really wanted to engage with the materiality of agave, to fuse our energies and to experiment with incorporating the plant to arts and crafts, to creation and transformation rather than consumption.

As for my relationship with time over the days with maguey, I quite literally became absorbed by the plant and immersed in a flow-state of separating the fibers. It’s a bit difficult to reply to how I experienced the passing of time; I guess time sort of vanished during the flow state and the meditateness of the simple manual labour, which brought me groundedness in the present but also an oscillating focus between the plant, myself, and the surroundings.

However, the reality of the tight schedule and the passing of time really struck me when we finally got the chance to work on our piece in the actual exhibition space. Suddenly a new chapter of the process began, a mixture of focus and flow infused with some stress. On the last two days, ‘time’ suddenly became available – our schedules and the guide of Sant’Elia were intervening with my meditative bliss!

I would like to ask you a similar question about time and duration as your work The Washerwomen represents, to my understanding, a milestone or a scene in a much longer process. What is the relationship of time in regard to your research, observations, and contemplation? How has it all culminated in the very physical and labourous two-hour performance you gave in Palazzo Sant’Elia? Alternatively (or if you wish to elaborate further on both questions), I would like to ask you what you think about the relationship between care and constancy, and the often negative affiliations to slowness or simply a labour that requires effort?

ANDREEA TUDOSE: I found myself in a very similar but opposite process to you with regards to time, actually. I was very envious of you most of the time because you had a very material thing to do with your hands, whereas I was reading and doing a lot of conceptual work. When I finally decided on the materials and got them, I felt very rushed and stressed, so it was interesting to share that experience with you. There was something about the process of having too much fiddly, manual labour in a short space of time, and knowing I could always have done more, spent more time figuring out better ways to do it, that mirrored the economy of care. There is no upper threshold for how much care you can take of someone who is ill or dying, but there is a very definite line between ‘good enough’ care and substandard care, and often that’s the difference between life and death.

RIKKE BOGETOFT: Andreea, you often work with making the invisible visible, such as care work and agricultural work. Can you elaborate a bit on the importance of making care workers’ working conditions visible, and what role the act of care plays in your artistic process and practice?

ANDREEA TUDOSE: My first instinct is to say that my work, very much like the industries it is trying to point to, relied on a lot of invisible work from others.

For example, for ‘Prodotto Siciliano’, Kamila helped me paint the canvas with gold pigment and egg yolk on the last day. She knew how to do it, I am not a painter so I had no clue. She very kindly gave her time and expertise to help me out. I’ve been thinking a lot about Romanian—and more broadly Eastern-European—migrant workers who work in the agricultural or care industries and end up competing with each other for wages that are anyway unfair. In this context, the fact that it was Kamila who helped me was incredibly significant. We had many conversations in Palermo about Eastern Europeanness and a feeling of being treated as ‘less than’. The two of us painting the canvas together felt like an extension of the proposition: the possibility of some kind of Eastern

European defiance through solidarity. I also helped her with some practical things for her work, so in the end it was not the one-way extraction of Eastern-European female labour I feared it being!

‘The Washerwomen’ relied on voluntary labour from various women in the group, who came in shifts (we worked out a timetable before) to very literally do invisible labour up on the balcony. Not only was I completely reliant on them, but they were completely reliant on each other to come and relieve one another. If someone didn’t show up for their shift, the person doing it had no choice but to continue until someone else came. Being so interdependent replicated the structures that we live in but allow ourselves to forget about. And this is also why I find it so important to make invisible work visible, because we are all implicated all the time whether we would like to be or not: we all eat and have to eat. We cannot boycott or opt out. We have all received (varying levels) of care in our lives to make it to adulthood. As much as we may want to value care work differently, we can’t help but be a part of the system that we are in.

I’m very curious to know, as your piece also centred around care work, did you manage to find a way of doing it differently (asking in utopian hope), without replicating the structures that already exist?

RIKKE BOGETOFT: Because I was working within the Sisters Hope’s framework and the piece was developed partly through their method, some of their almost utopian ideas were transferred into my piece. In Sisters Hope’s works you are asked to do things slowly, staying in the present, paying attention to any little movement and action. And for me, doing slow care work is already thinking about care work in a different way because speed and efficiency is such a central part of care work in our current institutions—whether these are hospitals, nursing homes, or families. Because care work is devalued and not given enough resources in the Western world, we push care workers to run too fast all the time. For me, the big paradox is that the ‘care’ in care work will disappear if it goes too fast, because a central part of care work is to have time to create relationships, be present, and listen to another person or pay attention to a certain object and their needs.

A central assertion in my performance was also that you need to receive care to be able to give care. You cannot be this inexhaustible vehicle of care, just giving and giving. But if you run too fast and never take the time to receive care or take care of yourself, you will burn out. I think that in encountering a slow kind of care where you remain in the present, care will perhaps automatically flow back and forth through the giver and the receiver as you take the time to read each other’s signals and stay with each other in the act.

I don’t know if I found a way of doing it differently, but to return to your practice, I really wanted to make care work visible with my performance as well. And to make people reflect on what care means to them. I will also say that the acts of care I performed—brushing someone’s hair or singing them a lullaby—was not care work done for pragmatic reasons or out of necessity. It was care made for someone to feel cared for and seen. Maybe that is doing it differently?

SILVIA BERNARDELLI: Nicoline, do you think it is possible to create a universally understandable story? If so, would you choose to do it using verbal language specifically for this story or would you shift to a non-verbal language?

NICOLINE GANDRUP THYRSTED: Yes, I think it is possible to create a universally understandable story, because many aspects of human life are the same no matter where you’re from: the love for a child, the pride in your work, the need to feel valued and understood, and the fear of failing, for instance.

I think that a universal language can be many things, and in many ways we already have it with laughter, cries, applause, hugs, and kisses and I believe that we can communicate with each other in different verbal languages, yet also understand each other just through gestures and sounds like those. I mean, children do it all the time!

So, in creating of a universally understandable story, I would try to look at the elements of life that unite us rather than ones that divide us. I would work with the recognition of sounds and kinesthetic sense, and maybe actually combine

different verbal languages to examine when the use of that is no longer relevant in our understanding of each other.

KAMILA ŚLADOWSKA: Cirkeline, from what was the meaning and role of water in your performance at Piazza Maggione?

CIRKELINE DAHL BONDESEN: Based on the Poetic Self Method developed by Gry Worre / Sisters Hope, I was working with an element. I chose the element water, or maybe it chose me as it resonated the most with me because of its inherent dualism of destructive and nurturing powers. During the Poetic Self meditation, I felt connected to water's ability to both destroy and nurture and found water to be a perfect example of life's balance of giving and taking. These specific characteristics of water influenced my Interactive Design – the part of the method that consisted of creating a design through the interaction with others. In the design, which took place in the public square Piazza Maggione, I created 3 simple instruments out of crystal glass, metal, and water. My piece invited 3 participants at a time who, after a short ritual in silence, selected an instrument to play on. I "donated" my moving body for the music they played together in what became an instant composition – an improvisation for 3 musicians and 1 mover. We had to activate our listening abilities, our ability to read nonverbal cues, and for a short moment we created together a tone, an atmosphere, and a dynamic that was unique each time. My idea behind it was to investigate how we could meet in an intimate but also playful setting as strangers, creating sound and movement together. The concept allowed us to play with both taking initiatives but also flexibly changing shape through the initiatives coming from others. A dialogue of giving and taking. My best memory with the showcase was having 3 local kids as participants. They broke many of the so-called rules of the design and we laughed a lot together the whole time.

RIKKE FRIGAST: Giulia, you often work with both human bodies and the non-human. Can you elaborate a bit on what role the act of care plays in your artistic process and practice? How do you take care of your materials, surroundings, your co-creators, and yourself?

GIULIA MATTERA: Care is amongst the key principles I embrace to navigate my artistic practice. Care fundamentally comes down to embodied listening. By embodied listening, I mean an attentive observation that goes beyond listening through my ears; it moves through the whole body, both in a material and spiritual sense of the word 'body'. The act of care, from a human perspective, is an exercise of attunement to being in the universe, and the universe is made of a continuous intermingling of humans and nonhumans. For example, whatever food a human ingests travels through the material body, at the same time affecting changes in their mood. So, how can a line be drawn between human and nonhuman when they are interrelated in their very materiality? I believe that the hierarchical discourse where nonhumans are commodities for humans to dispose of is part of the discourse on gender disparities, racism, and climate issues. The problem is the idea of being isolated, disembodied, of perceiving oneself as a unit separate from their surroundings. So care, in a way, is an attentive practice of noticing. There isn't a single recipe on how to care; care is instead a process of learning what is needed in specific contexts, what my collaborators might need in a specific context, how I can give care according to where I am in my life at that very moment. Care is noticing that I am always co-creating with the environment I am situated in. Care is respecting multispecies agencies, and learning from them.

Practically, in my artistic process, care often means slow times to process. When collaborating with a nonhuman during a performance, I try to familiarise with them beforehand, and to understand whether that nonhuman is okay with entering a performative space. It is tricky—an ethically heated debate—to understand whether there is consent from a nonhuman, but I guess the fact of attempting to investigate this form of consent already broadens the human-nonhuman interaction.

GIULIA MATTERA: Rikke, what has led you to work with the subject of care? Was there a specific episode that led you to investigate caregiving?

RIKKE FRIGAST: I think it came to me when I started to collect stories from people working in both the theatre and art fields in Denmark—stories from

processes and productions where friends, colleagues, or I myself felt mistreated, misunderstood, or maybe even violated or where we couldn't speak up about our discomforts and insecurities, etc. I felt that too often, artists would be on the other side of a process, close to burnout or just miserable because of a lack of good and caring communication, and a supporting and nurturing framework.

At the same time, I was very eager to understand the core of the term sustainability, which I would describe as a three-dimensional term containing a want for both social, ecological, and economical change.

It made me wonder what is needed to create more sustainable systems both in our societies in general and within the theatre industry, and for me, care was one of the central answers to that question. I think that we need to place care as a central value of how we live, work, and create to achieve a more sustainable world and future. I mean, what if our systems were driven by care and connections instead of money and growth?

I was also very upset to realise how much we (in Denmark and in the Western world in general) underrate care work and care workers in general. Why do nurses, midwives, teachers, pedagogues, social and health workers have some of the lowest incomes when what they do is indispensable? That made me want to investigate and make visible the importance of care work through my practice as both a dramaturg and director, and that is why I ask the question of whether you want to give or receive care in my performance at BAM.

Giulia, how do you think your performance at BAM investigates the relationship between humans-nonhumans or maybe even takes care of the relationship between them?

GIULIA MATTERA: I think that the performance Abstract Garden was an attempt at giving space to, and creating a door for (often critiqued) superstitions about the nonhuman in the present world. This performance investigated the folkloristic beliefs about the mutual impact between the human-nonhuman, and the continuous non-dual give-and-take happening in any garden. Care, in the case of this performance, is in the willingness to offer to the participants remedies from the vegetal world that can bring them back to the awareness of already being in constant dialogue with the nonhuman.

KAROLINE NORMANN FLØYSVIK: Maria, in both of your performances, you work with endurance and stillness in different ways. Where does the curiosity for this come from? And how do you approach this work with your practice?

MARIJA IVA GOCIĆ: My interest in working with endurance and stillness in my performances stems from a variety of sources. First, the curiosity comes from my interest in the human experience and our innate capacity for resilience and fortitude. I am captivated by the idea of pushing the boundaries of what we believe to be possible, both physically and emotionally, and finding ways to sustain oneself in the face of adversity, as well as to maintain a sense of purpose and meaning. On a personal level, I also feel a connection to the idea of toughness and resilience, which is a quality that is often associated with my home country.

My interest in endurance is also informed by the philosophy of George Bataille, who argued that true freedom and sovereignty can only be achieved through excessive expenditure and surrender, rather than through activity and control. He believed that only through giving and wasting energy, money, or any kind of goods can one attain freedom. In my performances, I aim to bring these complex ideas to life through physically demanding endurance-based pieces.

In terms of approach, I work with a combination of physical training and a deep commitment to the creative process. I see my practice as a constant exploration, where I am always looking for new ways to challenge myself and to push the limits of what I am capable of. I also hope to inspire viewers to reflect on their own strength and resilience, and to encourage them to tap into their own inner resources to overcome obstacles and reach their full potential.

EDOARDO SPATA: The action you performed on 'Sicilian products' seems to express a kind of violence and/or rebellion, correct? If so, towards whom was it directed?

ANDREEA TUDOSE: I'm still unpacking the action: yes, it was violent. It felt simultaneously defiant and desecrating. It was also a comment on my place in all of this. Firstly, like everyone else, I also eat so I'm implicated. Secondly, I had reservations about me making something by myself about this subject (Romanian migrant women in agricultural and care work in Sicily), because while I am Romanian, I have class and educational privileges that mean I am not the one doing this kind of work. This is why I wore a frivolous and slightly outrageous bikini while doing it, because 'someone like me' comes to Sicily on vacation, or an artistic residency. However, when I visited the Romanian Orthodox Church on the first Sunday we had in Palermo, I realised that maybe I wasn't so far removed after all. Within ten minutes of arriving at the church, I was asked by an Italian woman if I was Romanian and if I wanted work looking after her elderly, sick mother. By virtue of being a Romanian woman and placing my body in that space (I have a great photo of where I was standing when she came over to me, there was a sign on the floor that said 'Il tuo posto e qui'), I was involved and implicated as well. So the action on the fruit and vegetables expresses that duality: the fact that I have the economic means to buy this produce simply to squish and destroy it and 'make art' with it, but also the frustration that I too have skin in this game.

EDOARDO SPATA: The non-human migration that develops in your work has a role of subsistence and consumption for those involved. How would you frame the purpose of human migration?

ANDREEA TUDOSE: Big question. Of course, being Romanian colours my answer to this. When Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU (like Poland before them, etc), their main contribution—and probably the pressing reason why they were 'welcomed' into the EU—was cheap workforce. A. R. Hochschild puts it really well in *Love and Gold*, where she writes about migrant women:

Today, coercion operates differently. While the sex trade and some domestic service is brutally enforced, the new emotional imperialism does not, for the most part, issue from the barrel of a gun. Women choose to migrate for domestic work. But they choose it because economic pressures all but coerce them to.

The yawning gap between rich and poor countries is itself a form of coercion, pushing Third World mothers to seek work in the First for lack of options closer to home. But given the prevailing free market ideology, migration is viewed as a 'personal choice'. The problems it causes we see as 'personal' problems. But a global social logic lies behind them, and they are, in this sense, not simply 'personal'.

EDOARDO SPATA: Still life is considered by many to be an exhibition of style. Would you consider the work presented during BAM in this way?

ANDREEA TUDOSE: I think I really wanted to smash that idea of 'still life', which to me seems like an artistic parallel of the consumerist idea of product. I was thinking about who gets access to spaces of reflection and imagination, art and play, and which processes we are interested in uncovering and which we are not. Generally, there is a lot of excitement about artists' processes – they're highly glamorised, whereas the process of how a tomato came to be a tomato? Less so. I was interested in how I could point to the process of a tomato becoming a tomato, which involves so many exploited migrant bodies, and finally decided that maybe by displaying the process of decomposition as a kind of durational performance, we would move towards it by momentarily suspending this notion of 'product' or 'still life'.

In fact, my rotting fruit and vegetables were not so still at all, and caused quite a bit of commotion at Sant'Elia. Within a couple of days I'm told (with a hint of reproach) they attracted swarms of flies and decomposed all over the floor, creating a terrible smell and a terrible mess. Their final battlecry, and final installment of this performance, was relayed to me by Carla from MeNO in Denmark: she got an angry call from the superintendent to come and clean 'the mess' up. She said she had to clean the floor on her hands and knees, while crying on the phone to her mother asking her how to clean parquet flooring. While I personally owe her a drink, structurally I find it fascinating to see the subject of my work (that of the reliance in Sicilian society on Romanian migrant female labour for agricultural, cleaning and care work) twisted on its head in this way.

Edoardo, I have the feeling that we had opposite trajectories. I thought I was an outsider to my topic and then realised—to my surprise—just how implicated I was, and I think you probably considered yourself an insider, until you were made to feel like an outsider in Palermo. I'm interested to hear you say more about this.

EDOARDO SPATA It was actually a surprise to me as well (especially thinking about the years I spent studying Sicilian culture). I found myself in an environment whose language (verbal and aesthetic) I knew but was unfamiliar with its constituent dynamics. The outcome of the project was strongly influenced by this feeling; leading me to observe what was happening around depriving myself of critical judgment and considering it simply as it appeared. To this day, looking back on that feeling, I think it stemmed from complexity. Having explored what cultural identity is, I found myself with a great deal of notions devoid of specific experience. Upon the arrival of this epiphany, the sense of belonging that I took for granted turned out to be insubstantial.

BIOGRAPHIES

mentors

GRY WORRE HALLBERG is the founder and artistic director of the award-winning performance group and movement Sisters Hope, and of the architectonic and curatorial experiment Dome of Visions. She recently published her PhD, Sensuous Society - Carving the path towards a sustainable future through aesthetic inhabitation stimulating ecologic connectedness, arguing for the necessity of practices and spaces for aesthetic inhabitation in order to transition into a more sustainable future. She has won the esteemed arts prize VISION, among others, and has received work grants from The Danish Arts Foundation over several years. She was appointed IETM Global Connector 2021-2022 and Performing Arts Committee Member–The Danish Arts Foundation 2022–2025. Worre Halberg (she/her) lives and works in Copenhagen. **SISTERS HOPE** is a highly acclaimed, award-winning Copenhagen-based performance group and movement spearheading a whole new way to performance, inspiring generations to come. Their work unfolds at the intersection of immersion, intervention, activism, research, and pedagogy. In their large-scale durational performances, they explore different aspects of what they call a Sensuous Society—a potential new world arising from the post-economic and ecological crises. In their ongoing groundbreaking 5-year performance, Sisters Hope Home, they have been introducing a whole new artistic paradigm that they term ‘Inhabitation’, stimulating ecologic connectedness and sustainable futures. Sisters Hope has also developed their own performance method, Sisters Performance Method – Sensuous Learning, which is the outset of the training of Sisters Hope's performers and is taught widely at art schools and beyond. Sisters Hope was co-founded by ‘The Sisters’ Gry Worre Hallberg and Anna Lawaetz in 2007. Today, the group unfolds as an international troupe of performers and creatives from various backgrounds, led by artistic director Gry Worre Hallberg and executive director Nikolaj Friis Rasmussen.

EGLE ODDO is an Italian artist. She is a graduate of Palermo's Academy of Fine Arts, and has worked in Cuba, England, France, Finland, Germany, Italy, Nicaragua, Spain, Sweden, and Russia. Her work focuses on linear and non-linear narrative as an art form. Interested in operational realism—the presentation of the functional sphere in an aesthetic arrangement and its inter-relationships—, she combines photography, moving image, installation, sculpture, environmental art, and experimental live art. In her pieces, industrial production morphs towards delicate handcraft; life forms appear and emerge out of sculptures and objects; film photography appropriate digital images; selected trash mix with fashion; and precious edible minerals and ancestral recipes are served as part of ritual meals. Oddo is also creating a public artwork in the form of an evolutionary garden, a miniature place where biodiverse species live, entangled in a vivid exchange with the local community. Her work has been presented at international biennials, museums and relevant institutions, as well as cutting edge and independent alternative spaces and events, including MAXXI Museum of 21st Century Art (Rome), Manifesta12 (Palermo) , Zilberman Gallery (Istanbul), 3rd International Casablanca Biennial (Casablanca), Finnish National Museum of Photography (Helsinki), 54th Venice Biennale (Venice), Triennial Agrikultura (Malmo), MACRO Museum of Contemporary Art (Rome), Gallery Bikini Wax (Mexico-City), Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo (Turin), Club Solo (Breda), Kunsthalle Exnergasse (Vienna), Transmediale (Berlin), Pace Digital Gallery (New York), and Loop (Barcelona). Her research is awarded and supported by private and public foundations internationally, such as Italian Council, the Finnish Cultural Foundation, Kone Foundation, the Arts Promotion Centre Finland, the Swedish Cultural Foundation and Oskar Öflund Foundation, Oddo (she/her) lives and works in Helsinki.

Assoc.Prof.Dr. **BAŞAK ŞENOVA** is a curator and designer (PhD in Art, Design, and Architecture) who has been writing on art, technology, and media, initiating and developing projects and curating exhibitions since 1995. Şenova is the Turkish

correspondent of Flash Art International and she was one of the editorial correspondents of ibraaz.org (2012-2016). She is a member of the editorial board of PASS, International Biennial Association's (IBA) journal and a corresponding member of the Secession. Şenova acted as an advisory board member of the Turkish Pavilion in Venice Biennale, the Istanbul Biennial, and the Biennial of Contemporary Art, D-O ARK Underground in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She curated the Zorlu Center Collection for two years (2011–2012) while also acting as the editor of its publications. Şenova curated the Turkey and Republic of Macedonia pavilions at the Venice Biennale in 2009 and 2015. She co-curated the UNCOVERED project (Cyprus, 2011-2013); and the 2nd and 5th Biennial of Contemporary Art, D-O ARK Underground (Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2013 and 2019). She acted as the Art Gallery Chair of (ACM) SIGGRAPH 2014 (Vancouver), the curator of the Helsinki Photography Biennial 2014, and the Jerusalem Show VII: *Fractures* (2014). In 2016, she curated Lines of Passage (in medias res) Exhibition in Lesbos; and in 2019, the inaugural exhibition of B7L9, *Climbing Through the Tide in Tunis*. Between 2017-2019, she has been worked on the CrossSections, a research/process-based art project, and curated five groups and three solo exhibitions in the context of the project in Vienna, Helsinki, Stockholm, and Rome in 2018 and 2019. In 2022, she concluded the Octopus Programme with two exhibitions that took place in Tunis and Vienna. In 2022, she concluded the Octopus Programme with two exhibitions that took place in Tunis and Vienna. Currently, she holds Senior Postdoctoral Researcher position at the University of Applied Arts Vienna with her PEEK project, awarded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF). Şenova (she/her) lives and works in Vienna.

participants

SILVIA BERNARDELLI (1995, Genoa) is an artist and curator. After a one-year orientation in fine arts at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy, Amsterdam, Bernardelli started studying set design and fine arts at Accademia Santa Giulia, Brescia, which she completed in 2022. Her studies focused on light and sound design, and on theatre pre-production where she worked in strict collaboration with directors. Bernardelli experiments with the final curatorial aim of creating ephemeral sets that carry people across other times and spaces. She believes that art installation is one of the best ways to grow a sense of empathy in people, which she hopes will sooner or later be one of the drivers of change. Currently, she works as an art curator for M.A.D.S. art gallery, a gallery that operates in the physical and metaverse venues. She also works on personal projects for music video settings and art installation. Bernardelli (she/her) lives and works in Genoa.

RIKKE BOGETOFT (1995, Gurre) is a queer-feminist transdisciplinary researcher and performance artis. They began their formal art education in Veneto, Italy at Liceo Artistico Bruno Munari. In 2020, they completed their BA in Art and Technology at Aalborg University with the research project *The Naturalignment Procedure*, exploring the transformative affordances at the intersection of nature, performance art, and technology. Their work is inspired by childhood myths and alternative visions—exploring the ritualistic, the playful, and the sensual through participatory, immersive, and defamiliarising forms. Grounded in art-based research, their artistic practice toys with performative and interventionist action, as well as ephemeral, conceptual, and site-specific work. Bogetoft works locally and internationally with performative and interdisciplinary research projects, such as *No Rio Que Separa* (2021, Brazil) directed by Cunts Collective; and *Colours of Being* (2022). Currently they are unfolding their performance discipline in durational practices exploring identity, sexuality, and transformative processes, as seen in *Studsning* (2021, P224), *Mating* by Pierre Hyughe (2022, Kunsten), and *Objects of Pleasure* (2022, Brolandingerne). Bogetoft (she/they) lives & works in Aalborg.

CIRKELINE DAHL BONDESEN (1991, Odense) is a choreographer and performer. She trained as a dancer at The Royal Danish Ballet School (2003-2007) and pursued her interest in social dances and improvisation by taking part in the underground dance scene in Paris between 2015-2019. Her work explores power dynamics such as sensuous knowledge vs. rationality, gender, sexuality, and gaze. Text and literature are often part of her work as sources of inspiration or a medium in the performance. She is currently exploring methodologies from

contemporary theatre along with human and site-specific methods in search of deeper connections with the audience/participants. She has choreographed touring productions for stage such as *INTUITION* (2021) and *ELEMENT* (2020), as well as site specific work such as *RÅ KROP/RAW BODY* (2022, Dansekapellet, DK). The work was created with the artist collective Funen Dance Company (Det Fynske Dansekompagni) which she co-founded in 2019. She received a grant for her work from the Danish Art Council (Statens Kunstfond) in 2021. Dahl Bondesen (she/her) lives in Copenhagen, and works locally and nationally.

BONA DYSSOU (Budapest, 1987) is a theatre director and performance artist. She studied at the Budapest University of Theatre and Film Arts, and has a master's degree in theatre directing from the University of Mozarteum, Salzburg. (2022). Her works explore rituals based on any kind of transformation and rites of passage, as well as the visual and performative representations of existence, violence, and death. For instance, based on real events and court documents, she has adapted a novel at Piroska, Ódry Theatre (Budapest 2019). In the same vein, she also created a stage production of Witold Gombrowicz's Yvonne, Princess of Burgundy (2020, Budapest, Ódry Theatre). Her most recent work, which took place at Edith Bar, Budapest (2022), experimented with the fusion of happening, celebration, and stage shows. Dyssou (she/her) lives and works in Budapest.

RIKKE FRIGAST JAKOBSEN (1992, Holstebro) is a freelance dramaturg and theatre director. Frigast Jakobsen has a bachelor's degree in dramaturgy from Aarhus University and Freie Universität, Berlin (2019,) and is currently writing her master's thesis in dramaturgy at Aarhus Universitet. She works in theatre, opera, classical music, and contemporary dance and has a special interest and experience with facilitating cross-artistic and collective processes. She is very engaged in developing more transparent, caring, and sustainable theatre work by making visible and rethinking unhealthy structures in our society through both her works and practice. As a dramaturg, she has worked on performances such as the backyard opera Dido & Aeneas (Kollektivet Venteværelset, 2020), *100 sange and Sandmanden* (Aarhus Teater, 2021), *INSTITUTIONEN* (The National School of Performing Arts, 2022), and the double bill dance performance *Björk* (Holstebro Dansekompagni, 2022). In 2021, she debuted as a theatre director with the intergenerational performance *Ø – a music performance for children and their grandparents*, created with the classical music ensemble Lydenskab. Jakobsen (she/her) lives in Copenhagen and works in Copenhagen, Aarhus, and Holstebro.

NICOLINE GANDRUP THYRSTED (1993, Horsens) is a freelance dramaturg, actor, and performance artist. She holds a master's degree in Dramaturgy from Aarhus University (2021). Thyrsted works in devising processes, especially immersive ones, where you collectively generate ideas and material. On the acting scale, she likes to examine everything from complex and psychological characters to a role that is more of a facilitator, a bodily piece of installation art, or something in between such as dance or physical theatre forms. Her work includes projects such as *HEDDA* (2021), an Aarhus-based performance project which examined the immersive and side specific possibilities of Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*, *Are we PISD?* She has also devised a project and performance at the University of Aarhus (2017); developed educational material for use in public schools and gymnasiums for Theatre Mikado's play Til sidste fjer (Until the last feather); worked as an actress in the museum *Den Gamle By* (Old town) in Aarhus from 2016-2020 and in performances such as *The Tempest*, *Horsens Theatre* (2011), *Love is colder than death*, Roedkilde Theater School (2013), and the movie *Hvidstengruppen II*, A Regner Grasten production (2020). Thyrsted (she/her) lives and works in Copenhagen.

SIMONE GLATT (1991, Lörrach) is a freelance theatre director. In 2014, Glatt completed her undergraduate degree in theatre at Ludwig-Maximilian University, Munich, with a focus on performance in public places. She subsequently graduated from the Guildford School of Acting with an MA in Creative Practice and Direction in 2017. Her work makes particular use of disembodied voices. In the years 2020 and 2021, she produced and directed the audio walk *The Excursion of the Dead Girls* based on a story by Anna Seghers, and the interactive audio drama *Taste-Away* for the State Theatre in Mainz. There, she also directed three shows: *Alma / It's My Birthday* by Kathrin K. Liess (2019), the German-language premiere of *In the Nighttime* (before the sun rises) (2019) by Nina Segal, and most recently *Wanted_Negative. The Disappearance of Lucia Moholy* (2021) also by

Kathrin K. Liess, which tells the story of a forgotten photographer of the Bauhaus. In this production, she was also responsible for the stage design as well as the soundscapes. She is interested in the recovery of untold and under-recognised stories through experimental theatre practices using innovative spaces and technologies. Glatt (she/her) lives in Mainz and works internationally.

MARIJA IVA GOCIĆ (1998, Belgrade) is a performance and visual artist. She is currently in her final year studying philosophy at the University of Belgrade. In her artistic practice Gocić combines performance with other forms, most often installation and sculpture. Her work mainly explores human nature and relations, but also endurance and horror. She has been showcasing her work since 2014 and is a member of Art Kultivator, a non-profit organisation that works in marginal and alternative cultural fields. She is also a founding member of "Experience", an experimental theatre troupe based in Belgrade, where she is both a playwright and a performer. Notable "Experience" performances include *Choice* (Co.Labs, Brno, 2022), *4 The Experience* (Belgrade Art Week, 2021), and *Muted Privacy* (Belgrade Pride Festival, 2019). Gocić's recent exhibitions include *Bajka* (Kula Gallery, Belgrade, 2022), *Product: Love* (Mikser Festival, Barajevo, 2021), *Should I Stay or Should I Go* (O3one Gallery, Belgrade, 2020), and *I Am a Tyrant* (Kolektiv Gallery, Belgrade, 2019). Gocić (she/her) lives and works in Belgrade.

FEDERICA MARRA (1992, Padua) is an interdisciplinary artist. She has a bachelor's degree in Organisation and Management of Cultural Events (Florence, 2016) and a postgraduate degree in Digital Exhibit (Venice, 2019). She also holds a degree in Physical and Contemporary Theatre (Laboratorio9, Sesto Fiorentino, Florence, 2016), and is currently in the process of obtaining her master's degree in Anthropology. Marra's practise explores the perception and construction of reality (through concepts such as time, space, colour, sound, nature, spirituality) and the ways in which places are inhabited. She has performed at the Cultural Centre of Padua, Villa Barbarigo's monumental garden, Mater Acquae's festival, and in public spaces in Padua and Pisa. She has exhibited two site-specific artworks called *Eterotopia #1 and #2* (sound and video installation) in Padua and Venice, as well as a videoart work called *Reflection* in Ars Electronica's online selection. She has worked with the musician and artist Roberto Paci Dalò to make a radio drama based on the Funkhaus by Heiner Müller. Marra (she/her) lives and works in Padua.

GIULIA MATTERA (1991, Rome) is an artist-researcher. She holds a master's degree in Performance Making from Goldsmiths College (UK), whereas her undergraduate studies at the University of Warwick and the University of Pisa focused on art and communication. Her practice explores ecology, non-human, human body, human-nonhuman collaboration, everyday life, and its socially structured mindsets. She has shown her work in international venues and festivals, amongst others: Grace Exhibition Space (NYC, 2018), DfbrL8r Performance Art Gallery (Chicago, IL, 2019), Venice International Performance Art Week (Venice, Italy, 2017), Warsaw International Performance Art Weekend (Warsaw, Poland, 2016), the MAXXI Independent (Rome, Italy, 2018/2023), and]performance space[(Folkestone, UK, 2017). Mattera (she/her) lives and works in Rome.

REBECCA MINTEN (1999, Basel) is an Italian/German musician and performer. She grew up in Geneva where she started to play the clarinet at the Conservatoire Populaire de Musique de Genève. She holds a bachelor's degree with honours from Bern University of the Arts where she still studies in the class of Ernesto Molinari. Currently, she is pursuing a master's in Music Performance in the same school, specialising in bass and contrabass clarinet. Minten mostly focuses on contemporary music, interdisciplinary creation, and free improvisation although she comes from a classical music background. She is also involved in jazz and Balkan/klezmer music. She has co-founded various groups that are all currently active in Switzerland and abroad: the Tzupati Orchestra (Balkan/klezmer), NoRest! (free improvisation quintet), FÜNMT (contemporary music), Duo Edaphos (contrabass clarinet duo), and IPSO (interdisciplinary collective). She has been performing in festivals such as the Darmstädter Ferienkurse für Neue Musik (2021), the Winterthurer Musikfestwochen 2021, Klangspuren Schwaz 2021, Mixtur Festival 2022, and the Musikfestival Bern where she led and created the project *inSENSé* in 2022. She participated in the summer academy of the Ensemble Modern Frankfurt in 2021 (IEMA). She has received scholarships from Hirschmann Stiftung (2022) and Fondation Nicati-de-Luze (2022-23). Minten (she/her) lives in Bern and works internationally.

KAROLINE NORMANN FLØYSVIK (1998, Stavanger) is a dramaturg. She has a master's degree in Dramaturgy from Aarhus University (2022). She has been working as a dramaturg and production leader for the theatre performance *Justice Warriors* (Fritter, Fadøl og Forestilling, 2022), where she also worked as an actress in *Dok800* (2022) and *Nirvarna?* (2021). She wrote, directed, and acted in the theatre performance *Pasta og Menn* (Hjernevind, 2018-2020) which went on a national tour in Denmark, visiting both professional theatres and various schools. She is currently working in the newly-founded Norwegian theatre group Vannari Teaterkompani (2022-23) as a dramaturg and co-creator. She also explores the multimedia field between XR and theatre as a project manager at White Hole Theatre, and is a member of PLASTIC Collective in Viborg, DK. Fløysvik (she/her) lives and works in Aarhus and Viborg.

LIVIA RIBICHINI (1994, Rome) is an artist and set designer. She has a background in Scenography (Academy of Fine Arts, Rome, 2017), Ribichini started her career by making lighting installations and studying the interactions between the viewer and the physical space. She completed a master's program in Media, Art, Design and Technology (Hanze University, Groningen, 2021). Her research reflects on the diversity of identities between users and avatars in the virtual and physical world. She experiments with sensations, perceptions, new media, and technology. Some of her clients are Rewire Festival (NL), Inter-University Center for Dance Berlin (DE), and Museo Nazionale Scienza e Tecnologia (IT). Ribichini (she/her) lives and works in Groningen.

CHLOÉ SASSI (1996, Ithaca, NY) is a French transdisciplinary artist. She graduated from the Fine Arts School of Villa Arson and the High Studies of Social Sciences in Paris (EHESS), where she presented research about immersive spaces as a way to re-enchant the world. Sassi focuses on art from the perspective of an immersive and embodied experience. She searches for an “enhanced corporal perception” by stimulating human senses to bring the audience into a “contact zone”. In pursue of this view, she founded Somme Sensible (Sensitive Sum), a collective that creates hybrid events as participative experimentations. Sassi also processes video and photography as an archive for sensorial and relational explorations (INTERSPACES, 2022). She develops her interpretations in symbiosis with their surroundings (SABLE CULTE, 2021), working mainly from a state of ultra-presence and improvisation. Sassi (she/her) lives in Paris and works internationally.

KAMILA ŚLADOWSKA (1996, Warsaw) is a visual artist, who various media and techniques with special emphasis on painting. She graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw in 2020, also doing an Erasmus+ exchange programme at ESBAMA Montpellier in 2018. In addition to her studies at the Faculty of Painting, she studied Costume Design at MSKPU in Warsaw in 2020. In 2017, she was a laureate of the “Armenia- Tożsamość i Miłość” painting prize held by the Bardzo Biała Gallery in Warsaw. She received the scholarship from the Ministry of Culture of Poland twice in 2017 and 2018. Coming from an anthropocentric environment, she tries to learn about painting from non-humans. The artist researches topics of diversity and cultural anthropology in the context of post-humanism. Recently, she has been developing the concept of imaginary ecosystems. Her work has been shown in many venues including in 2022: the “Comfort Zone” support programme at Solatorium; *Megalepiota*, Myymälä2's Process Wall, Vapaan Taiteen Tila, Kunsthau Jägermeister and Yö galleria; in 2021: Luna gallery in Helsinki; International Nature Film Festival in Savonlinna; *Supermarket Museum*- virtual exhibition curated by Agro Perma Lab; HIAA Fest in Bokvilla; “In Feminis Veritas” Feminist Art Festival in Berlin, *STØND LEEG*, Antwerp, “In Feminis Veritas” Feminist Art Festival in Berlin, Kunst Market in Malmö Sweden; in 2020: *Forum for food sovereignty* organised at the Culture House of Służew; in 2019: *Dance, dance, colour haze*, Sinfonia Varsovia (2019); a solo show *Diffusion*, Warsaw University. In 2022, her work was funded by Taike Arts Promotion in Finland and the city of Helsinki. Śladowska (she/her) lives and works in Helsinki.

EDOARDO SPATA (1997, Vittoria) earned a bachelor's degree in design in the MAN MADE course of the MADE Program Academy in 2020. During his studies, Spata exhibited in the group exhibition '3D Thinking' curated by Andrea Anastasio (2019). Spata produces and creates in the fields of design, architecture, and installation art. His works consist of an analysis of the contemporary, aimed at the creation of functional works, useful for human adaptation to its context.

In 2021, he developed a nomadic project called “Mondo Nuovo” that led to a series of installations in his context of reference (Sicily) and concluded with the installation of the latest work (Nomad Theatre) during the “SITU” Festival (2022). He also exhibited 'HOT VEINS' during the group exhibition 'Saturazione Liquida' designed by Egle Oddo and curated by Başak Şenova in occasion of the 'BAM Biennale Arcipelago Mediterraneo' in 2022. In 2023, he presented his first solo exhibition *Free-Ego* at Zona Blu in Milan.

FRIDA STENBÄCK (1991, Helsinki) is a visual artist and designer. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from Aalto University's Design Department (2021). Currently, she is pursuing a master's in Social Design at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. Stenbäck produces interdisciplinary works in visual arts and scenography. She works for grass-root festival productions. Her practice is guided by eco-social values and follows the joy of learning through delving into societal topics, expressing and experimenting with different materials and processes. She has recently focused on hand weaving, ceramics, dialogue, and drawing. She is a former member of the Asbestos Collective and one of the co-founders of Asbestos Art Space, a low threshold city space for arts and activism in Helsinki. In 2019, she became a member of Pixelache Helsinki. Stenbäck (she/her) lives and works in Vienna.

ANDREEA TUDOSE (1992, Drobeta Turnu-Severin) is an actor and artist. After obtaining a BA and an MPhil in languages and comparative literature from the University of Cambridge (2016), she was awarded a scholarship to study at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris (2017). She trained in acting for the stage and screen at L'Entree des Artistes, Paris (2014), and in physical theatre and performance making at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre in Estonia (2019). She is interested in the material, socio-economic, and linguistic reality of migration and how it influences artistic practice. Currently, she is working on a project with Romanian migrant workers in the food industry with Projekt Europa, and is Assistant Producer for the Odd Eyes Theatre. Tudose (she/her) lives and works in London.

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EDITOR
BAŞAK ŞENOVA

AUTHORS
ANDREA CUSUMANO, BAŞAK ŞENOVA, GRY WORRE HALLBERG,
EGLE ODDO, ROBERTO ALBERGONI, SUVI VEPSÄ,
SILVIA BERNARDELLI, RIKKE BOGETOFT, LIVIA RIBICHINI,
CIRKELINE DAHL BONDESEN, BONA DYSSOU,
KAROLINE NORMANN FLØYSVIK, RIKKE FRIGAST,
SIMONE GLATT, MARIJA IVA GOCIĆ, GIULIA MATTERA,
CHLOE SASSI, KAMILA ŚLADOWSKA, REBECCA MINTEN,
NICOLINE GANDRUP THYRSTED, EDOARDO SPATA,
FRIDA STENBÄCK, ANDREEA TUDOSE

PROOF READING
NUSIN ODELLI

GRAPHIC DESIGN
BAŞAK ŞENOVA

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