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# **DESIGN VS ART IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA**

# Ulysses Does Not Come back Home. From Maps of Migration, Small Constellations of Artistic Influences in the Mediterranean Landscape

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## **Keywords**

Art, Migration, Built Heritage, Mapping, Counter-Cartographies.

## **Abstract**

Ulysses, hero of Greek mythology, spends ten years of his life in war and as many again to come back home. On the return journey, he crosses the entire Mediterranean area. The map of his pilgrimage for centuries has represented an ideal thread that weaved the image of the Mediterranean as a place of shared history. Today Ulysses does not come back home, he still travels along the same waters, but to escape from it. Other Omero have felt the need to design these new routes to testify, with the evocative power of art, a new topography of the Mediterranean Odyssey. These cartographies, experienced by anti-heroes whose name is “no one”, trace paths that intersect men, things and landscapes, in a meeting that generates changes.

Art does not finish its role with the story telling: while it follows the traces of these new journeys, it generates transformations. Artistic actions contribute to define new identity of the places; they transform the memory of them and promote the construction of the sense of belonging of new community profiles. The paper wants to explore a wider role of the art in the urban and landscape transformations, by reading in a critical way different experiences.

## 1. Introduction

Ulysses, during his pilgrimage, crosses the entire Mediterranean, from Asia Minor to North Africa, to Central and Southern Italy, helping to draw the image of a closed sea, surrounded by lands not so far one from the other but plenty of cultural diversity often, unconsciously, mutually assimilated. A place of conflicts, but above all a place of exchanges.

Ulysses crosses this ancient sea in order to end his life path by regaining his origins. While doing this, he becomes a witness of the many expressions about himself that the Mediterranean owns. For him, Omero traces roads full of mystery and discoveries but, among dangers, suffering and losses, a strong reality is clear: Ulysses knows where he wants to go. His destination is home; his personal cartography takes shape as an emotional conquest anchored into an unshakable certainty: his pilgrimage is a return act.

The contemporary Mediterranean Sea no longer hides mysteries: its cartography is official and, by now, taken for granted. Nevertheless, in the millennium of global connection and individual georeferencing, this secular sea has become, once again, an unknown and deadly surface, on which to trace thin escape routes. They are uncertain lines into a dark sea that separates people from “other” worlds, where it seems possible to conquer the minimal human dignity, which represents the right to survive. Today, therefore, other Ulysses still sail, but they will never go back to home. They sail through the same sea, but their destination is the escape itself. Their journey has become an unknown trip, a painful choice without alter-

natives. Other Omero felt the need to describe new routes to testify, with the evocative power of art, the beginning of a new topography of the Mediterranean odyssey.

Others have settled along these paths, placing tangible signs oriented to honor, to testify and sometimes, to increase the encounter and the mutual knowledge as an opportunity for human enrichment. Art plays a not secondary role in these scenarios, thanks to the universality of its languages. So, small constellations of artistic contaminations born in the Mediterranean landscape and their mapping, still to be designed, could reveal unexpected geographies.

The following paragraphs want to explore the contribution of the art in the urban and social transformation, by presenting, through a common thread, different experiences developed in recent years. The case studies analyzed have been chosen following a thematic and virtual journey:

- the construction of a new narrative geography (Orangotango collective; Philippe Rekacewicz),
- the role of mapping as transitory re-elaboration of the travel experience of migrants (Crossing Maps; the work of Bouchra Khalili, Studio Azzurro),
- the construction of community building practices for places (Mimmo Paladino; Isaac Julien; Christoph Büchel),
- active actions for the reinforcement of the intercultural dialogue and the sense of belonging (Matera, Belmonte Calabro, Rosarno, Arte Migrante, City Art).

## 2. Migrant counter-cartographies: revolutionary representations and sensitive narrations

The new Mediterranean cartographies trace paths that intersect people, things and landscapes, inevitably generating changes. This requires a change in the interpretation of the connection between individual and environment and between “form and background”<sup>1</sup> (Bollini, 2011). They are not conventional maps: they are, rather, narrative processes that arise from a challenge within the classic representation of hegemonic spaces.

The *Orangotango collective*, which edited *This is Not an Atlas* (2018), a summary of counter-cartography for political actions, talks about “three c”: criticism, countertrend and cartography.

Maps, atlases, globes seem to offer a neutral and realistic look at the geography of our cities and of the planet. In reality, they fail to inform their audience of scale distortions in their representations and of their Eurocentric character. Historically and politically, cartography has been, yesterday as today, a domain instrument. It serves to establish boundaries, to signify properties and to establish power. The non-atlas proposes to break with this use<sup>2</sup> (Nigra, 2019).

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1. “Following a sort of inversion in the ‘connection between shape and background’ the physical context is carried in front and is getting studied and conceptually defined with deeper detail than the individuals and the groups. The approaches to the subject are very different. Following the psychological perspective different interpretations of the connection environment-individual are proposed: the first one attributes to the environment the role of independent variable that - by means of the actual stimulations - produces effects on the individual behaviour; in a second perspective the persons are interpret of the environment according to the specific peculiarities; finally an hypothesis assumes that people and the environment due to the mutual interactions give rise to reciprocal influences” (Bollini, 2011).

2. “Les cartes, les atlas, les globes semblent offrir un regard neutre et réaliste sur la géographie de nos villes et sur celle de la planète. En réalité, elles omettent d’informer leur public des déformations d’échelle de leurs représentations et de leur caractère européocentrique. Historiquement et politiquement, la cartographie a été, hier comme aujourd’hui, un instrument de domination. Elle sert à fixer des frontières, à signifier la propriété et à asseoir le pouvoir” (Nigra, 2019).





**Figure 1.** Julia Risler, Pablo Ares, *Iconoclastas*. Critical mapping and collaborative practices. Source: Kollektiv Orangotango+, 2018, p. 88. Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 License (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

The purpose is to experiment alternative ways of visualizing the world, safeguarding personal experiences, in order to make visible what people really perceive and experience in the immediacy of their everyday life, projected into the exceptional nature of epochal phenomena.

Who traces these cartographies becomes a sensitive mediator – and the artists are spontaneously fitted to this role – of collective practices as well as of intimate confessions: the result is the discovery of lines and routes and their distortions describe the real geopolitical and social dynamics of our complex contemporaneity.

Atlases are valuable objects because they appear to provide a science-based representation of territorial divisions and present a

unifying glance at the world as a whole. (...) While atlases express stability, or rather give the illusion of it, the antiAtlas wishes to reintroduce borders dynamic nature and complex manifestations, and to provide a critical approach to border representations. (...) Maps are not only political but also epistemological devices (Parizot et al., 2014).

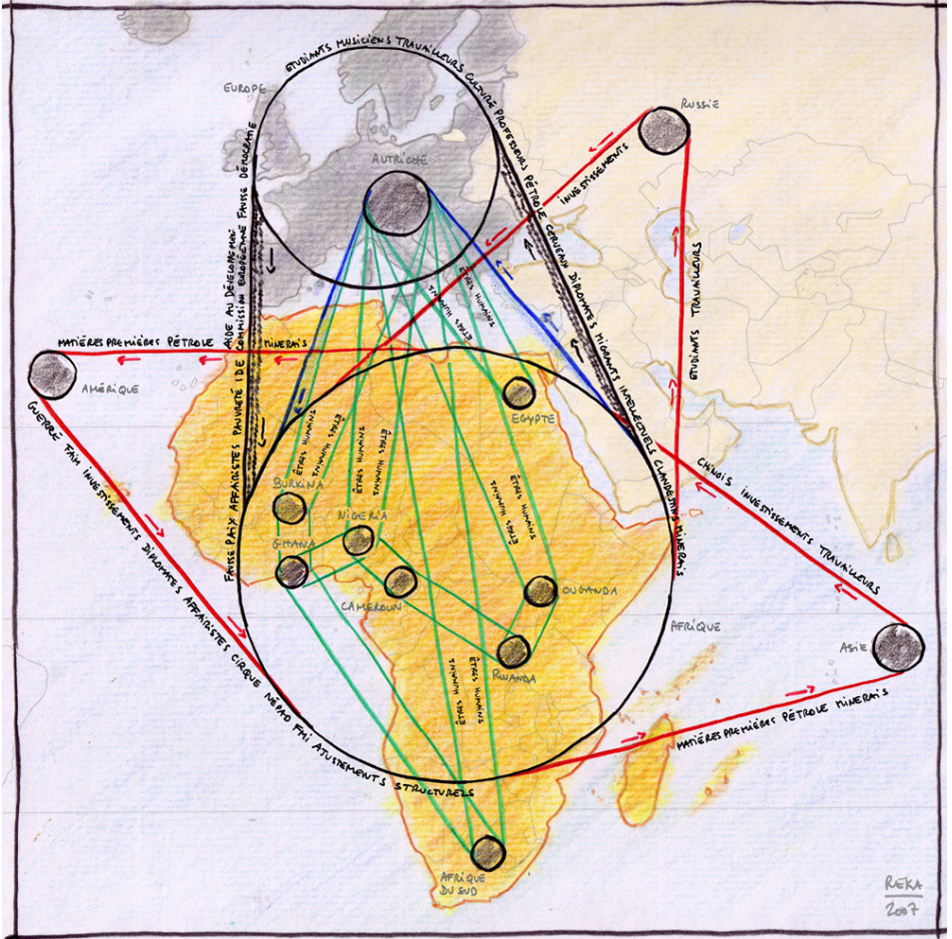
Cognitive, community, participatory and narrative mappings: the experiments developed with these new tools of knowledge are many and they have proved to be particularly suitable in formulating alternative perspectives for understanding migratory phenomena. In the contribution, some of these experiences will be retraced, in order to track down some of the places where the encounters of routes and territory generates, by means of art, story-telling opportunities. These are experiments where the landscape is modified by events tracks but also by the reconquest and regeneration of spaces; where different projects generate inclusion and identity, rather than separation and sense of not belonging.

## 2.1. Geographical sketches

Philippe Rekacewicz, geographer, cartographer and information designer, often creates freehand drawn maps.

The sketch is a malleable “transitional work”; it is the place of graphic experimentation, a more authentic detector and more faithful to the thought of the cartographer than the computer, which instead betrays it: it crystallizes in a cold and artificial way often changing situations (Rekacewicz, 2009).

His cartographies, made by soft lines, with short handwritten notes, define an apparently transitory iconography, however, able to undermining the defining action of boundaries and classifications, revealing their inexorable anachronism and misleading communication.



**Figure 2.** Philippe Rekacewicz, *La grande roue africaine*. Sketch presented at the Museum of Modern Art in Vienna in November 2007, during the exhibition “Waypoint to Sharon Stone”. Source: Wikimedia commons. License Creative common CC 4.0: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/deed.en>.

It is an experimental and analytical cartography, used as a tool for developing socio-geographical projects. It is often generated by two-dimensional transpositions of individual narratives that, by their different perception of borders, review the representation and self-assertion rules, investigating the relationships between cartography, art, science and politics.

It is impossible to talk about the migration of human beings without evoking the boundaries that other human beings erect. (...) Borders at the same time gather men and separate them. They move in time and space when history upsets the geography of the world. (...) The cards, firstly respond to the question “where?” and then they allow us to understand “what”, ie how human communities produce their territory. Behind every map, there is an intention. The map borns from an idea; it is a mental construction before a paper (thegreatchers, 2011).

## 2.2. Cartographic meetings

The experience of *Crossing Maps*<sup>3</sup> is an experimental and participatory mapping laboratory based on a pluralistic approach between humanistic and artistic disciplines. This laboratory joins artists<sup>4</sup>, geographers and photographers, who supported some migrants in visualizing their travel experiences. “We reinvent the figurative meanings that generally reduce a border to a line and migration to an arrow, and take account of the political and practical complexity of the crossings (...)” (Mekdjian, Amilhat Szary, 2015).

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3. *Crossing maps* is an artistic-scientific experiment that is part of the *anti-Atlas of Borders collective* (Mekdjian, S., Moreau, M., 2016).

4. Including Marie Moreau, Lauriane Houbey e Fabien Fischer.

The laboratory activity was carried out with twelve asylum seekers from a day shelter in Grenoble (CH), invited to use among them improvised maps, designed like visual tools capable to overcome their language barriers and permitting exchange information about their origins, their travels, but also about useful city information.

(...) Cartography serves as an act of communication and as an act of presenting oneself. Few words are used, mostly just features. Maps are also drawn to help others in the community: to show where to sleep, where to eat, and where to receive medical treatment in Grenoble. Cartography thus becomes tactical (Mekdjian, Amilhat Szary, 2015).

The map drawing becomes an act of self-identification, but also a tool for the construction of perceptive relationships with the places: an act of mental, transnational and transcultural reconstruction of the person/space relationship. The process starts with a key words collection: a symbolic meanings system representative of the different personal experiences that intersect with the geographical sketches of the participants, enriching themselves with further words. In this way, “adhesive maps” (drawings accompanied by post-it with the keywords) have took shape, as well as works embroidered on tablecloths or tracks molded into clay.

Crossing Maps shifted the focus towards individual experiences of crossing borders. In doing so, the project helped to re-humanize what surveillance tools have sought to dehumanize. (...) Maps, drawings and audio recordings created during the workshop draw on polyphonic narrations that assist us in seeing and hearing the

multiple points of view on contemporary border crossing and asylum (Mekdjian, Amilhat Szary, 2015).

### 2.3. A black marker

Between 2008 and 2011, the French-Moroccan artist Bouchra Khalili, sensing the centrality of migratory crises as a political subject and as a dramatic human event, merges into the geographical epicentres of these new scenarios, to meet its protagonists.

Her listening action is apparently neutral: Khalili, in fact, records these random encounters on video, without ever appearing or speaking and never framing the faces of her interlocutors, who, in these way, become pure narrative voices.



**Figure 3.** Lorenz Seidler, ESEL0866. *Bouchra Khalili, The Constellations*. Source: <https://search.creativecommons.org/photos/d0d61378-b76c-46e0-9b4b-3249cb17cddb>. "ESEL0866" by eSeL.at is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

“(…) The artist asked these people to tell the story of their journey from their birthplace to their current position, tracing the path with a marker on a large map” (Carrion-Murayari, 2017). The result is the artistic-political installation *The Mapping Journey Project*: eight videos and likewise voices, speaking with different languages and English subtitled, but, above all, eight hands that simply draw the course of their journey between the Mediterranean Sea and the lands. “What emerges is an alternative geopolitical map (…)” (Baldini, 2016).

The film technique adopted by Khalili lies in the conceptual substance of her intentions: the poor visual quality of the image gives way to an inflexible formal minimalism, where the rigorously fixed scene is filled by the narrative voice of who is drawing his own dramatic wandering. “It is a methodology that gives precedence to the storytelling voice as constructing reality” (Nawi, 2015).

The stories reveal to be authentically epic, both in words and in the evolution of the drawn paths: unimaginable, twisted, endless. These are travels defined by a continuous tension to the “crossing” (the sea, the border, the artificial and militarized obstacle) and by an equally recurrent get away from the final destination, often never reached. These paths consume life years and they are so incredibly close to Ulysses’ journey, for that obvious unwavering will to arrive. Khalili does not use any kind of the classic iconographies of the media migration narrative and she leaves us alone and unarmed in front of the development of rationally inconceivable geographies as well as of temporal paths expansion, true expression of human resistance.

Khalili uses mapping to unhinge the possibility of any fixed ideas of regionalism or nationalism; of past as distinct from present, or of centre as discernible from periphery. In her work, mapping becomes the outgrowth of the storytelling, and the vivid three-dimensionality of history guides her understanding of geography (Nawi, 2015).

Finally, Khalili reinterprets these maps in the project *The Constellations* (2011), where the wanderings of her migrant narrators become eight constellations: white dots lying on a compact blue background. In this way, physical places generate imaginary and abstract forms: an astronomical geography that gives a sky corner to these contemporary Ulysses. “A sort of geographical and human ‘recognition’” (Grella, 2018).

### **3. Small constellations of connections and contaminations**

Art does not finish its role with the story: while it retraces the tracks of these new journeys, in fact, it is able to generate real transformations into the territory. Artistic actions become a real presence and contribute to define new places identities, transforming their memory and by promoting the construction of the sense of belonging of new community profiles.

Art, design and landscape are increasingly linked by mutual influences and relationships. Art goes beyond disciplinary boundaries to embrace multiple contexts: from the landscape to the built heritage, it produces significant transformations in the urban contexts, in landscape design and, today more than ever, in the social context.



### 3.1. About doors, boats and people. Art & Migration: community building practices for places

A new Mediterranean awareness could also be defined by tracing the presence of many places where alternative collaborative forms take form. They are experiences that, among the mediation of suffering and the self-representation affirmation, place, side by side, migratory cartographies with small constellations of connections and contaminations.

A new mapping could start from the *Porta di Lampedusa-Porta d'Europa*, a sculptural presence, made by Mimmo Paladino (Celant, 2017), which faces the sea from the cliff of the small Italian island. An ambivalent symbol that offers itself like an open passage, but, above all, like a silent simulacrum that looks at the thousands of anonymous Ulysses who lost their lives facing the many dangerous routes of the African and Middle Eastern diaspora. Mimmo Paladino comments:

“The artist should not celebrate but tell. I tried to explain something that had to do with a forced exodus, something understandable to all peoples. This is why I wanted to bring it as far away as possible from the town and as close as possible to the sea and therefore to Africa” (Bolzoni, 2008).

The *Porta di Lampedusa* overlooks a different idea of the practice of the border: a paradoxical, impassable and yet porous place, simultaneously interior and exterior. A border that continuously moves itself, settling down, along the daily routes of migration, where the boats arrive, be it a landing place or a shipwreck.

The boats are a powerful and inevitable icon of migratory drama and they mark the first places on the map to follow that we are still tracking. The British director and artist Isaac Julien films them in *Western Union: Small Boats* (2007), appropriating their undeniable and perverse aesthetic presence. They fleetingly appear as actors in a narrative that displaces people, environments and actions, by altering the boundaries of places and times, in order to disorientate our apparent certainties and reverberating the human traumas of the migration between nature and architecture, filtered through the poetics of images. “(...) It is through the emphasis on aesthetic experience that *Western Union* explicitly takes up the image of Europe as a utopian fantasy and Promised Land that subtends many depictions and analyses of contemporary migration” (Chubb, 2016). Boats are abandoned at the extreme edges of the Mediterranean as visual disturbances, perturbing interferences. Actually, they are places that modify the surrounding space with their presence, defining new terms of habitability and new forms of interiority.

*Barca nostra* is its errant testimony. It sunk in 2015 in the Sicilian Canal, with of 700 to 1000 people on board and it is recovered two years later, to remain in custody at the Nato army base in Melilli (Siracusa). In 2019, the artist Christoph Büchel took the boat to the Venice Arsenal, as part of the *58th International Art Exhibition*, thanks to a complex agreement that changed its status from a “special waste” under seizure, to an art work. This will allow its final repositioning in Sicily, in memory of its victims. *Barca nostra* contaminates landscapes with its intrusive presence, being monument and memory of

itself: architecture of the impassable and the unacceptable geography, but also foundation of the inhabiting of a collective conscience that does not cancel, but honours and dismantles every geography of the limit.

(...) work of caesura, a radical approach, from which arise questions on an ethical and aesthetic level. No mediation, decoration, caption, symbolic re-elaboration. No aestheticization or possible narration. (...) a ‘reverse Trojan horse’, in the battle of contemporary political strategies. So Büchel wanted to call it (Marsala, 2019).

Art contaminates the Mediterranean landscape with multiple strategies: sometimes it traces signs that transforms into disturbing elements, often settling just where the usual social systems of territorial government demonstrate their strongest structural limits, to act as a mediation tool and triggering new collective and shared experiences.

For example, in the program of *Matera European Capital of Culture 2019*, *Silent Academy* finds space. It is a “school of trades”, where “to give voice to the ‘silenced’ competences of refugees and asylum seekers (...) The teachers will be the migrants, with the aim of involving those who have acquired professional and training experiences in the countries of origin, but cannot exploit them in Europe for reasons linked to their own status and their own integration path”<sup>5</sup>.

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5. See the website <https://www.matera-basilicata2019.it/it/programma/temi/riflessioni-e-connes-sioni/1356-the-silent-academy.html>.



**Figure 4.** *A new dress for Tessy*, BR1. Photo credit ©Pietro Micucci. Courtesy Silent Academy.



**Figure 5.** *The school of trades* of Silent Academy, Matera 2019. Photo credit ©Luigi Porzia. Courtesy Silent Academy.



**Figure 6.** *The school of trades* of Silent Academy, Matera 2019. Photo credit ©Antonio Sansone. Courtesy Silent Academy.

Here the new Ulysses can speak through the concreteness of their craft knowledge and interact with the territory by exchanging and disseminating skills: a logical reversal that transforms a generally perceived presence as a social and economic burden into a generator of opportunities. The most intimate identity of one's know-how becomes a community asset.

#### **4. Art and built heritage for the intercultural dialogue**

The new geographies traced by the moving populations have brought to the attention of the international community the theme of intercultural dialogue since the beginning of the new century. Starting from the Universal Declaration of UNESCO on the Cultural Diversity of 2001, to the Convention on the protection and promotion of diversity in the cultural expressions of 2005 up to the proclamation of 2008 as the year of Intercultural Dialogue, the theme of *care* for diversity has been the *leitmotiv* of numerous actions proposed to address the complexity of the issue.

How do art and cultural heritage intertwine with the new paths designed by the wandering populations? Norberg-Schulz (2007, p. 22) stated that “the identity of man supposes the identity of the place”, indissolubly linking the practices with the space.

Art has the ability to insert itself in this relationship between man and context, establishing permanent links and generating unexpected consequences: artistic initiatives are very often *site specific* and implemented on a reduced scale, which favors the interaction between the different subjects involved.

The built heritage, even in its less “monumental” expressions, represents the physical evidence of cultural memory, a place where the population reflects and recognizes itself, strictly linked to the local identity. Exploring the space once again through the art, therefore means rereading and re-interpreting its reference points; it means sharing a common heritage to reconstruct a complexity of lost relationships, by reorganizing our environment so that it can give life to open and inclusive practices.

The art can represent a tool to look at these phenomena in a new way, assuming the role of *driver* in the promotion of inclusion processes and transforming the built heritage into an exchange place. A strongly “regenerative” action able to activate new “relational geographies” and capable to trigger chain reactions with direct repercussions on the cultural and human capital of the places.

The integration process requires places of sociality: art enters into relation with urban spaces rehabilitating them with actions that, despite their brevity, are able to link the relationship between people and contexts, starting to weave resistant connections. In this sense, art increasingly takes a “social” connotation, promoting integrated regeneration processes that involve multiple categories of people, also able to reactivate economic and productive cycles, generating plus value for the territory. In this process of physical and social modeling, the recognition of the “other” as resource and the active participation of citizenship are the ingredients capable of welcoming diversity and thus prefiguring new scenarios.

At the completion of the process, the art returns the place and its cultural heritage as a reference point to host the new identities.

In February 2019, the small medieval village of Belmonte Calabro (CS) was the “creative yard” of an interesting experiment guided by the London Metropolitan University and by the Mediterranean University of Reggio Calabria, together with the architectural collective *Orizzontale* and the cultural association Le Seppie (Debellis, 2018). For four days, students, migrants and local workers have designed and built together temporary structures with the aim of promoting the discussion between different cultures and encouraging the inclusion. This vision seeks to contrast the depopulation of minor centers through the integration of new community profiles, also creating new professional opportunities.

In Rosarno, another small village in Calabria, famous in 2010 for strong controversy due to the widespread phenomena of illegal recruitment, the *A di Città*<sup>6</sup> festival has carried out for several years an important job to mend the relations between the resident communities and migrants, by organizing an annual festival of Urban regeneration. Founded on the concepts of Participation, Laboratory and Sharing, the experience, today concluded, has left an archive of the memory for a new idea of city, also thanks to an international opening to students and artists.

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6. *A di città*. Retrieved from <https://adicitta.wordpress.com> [26-9-2019].



#### 4.1. The “art of integration”: artistic actions as mediation device

The migrant experiences a condition of fragility of social relations, he does not feel part of a place.

The search for identity therefore requires a continuous process of exchange and interaction and the art can represent in this sense a device of *cultural mediation*, effective in favoring these processes.

In fact, the artistic actions allow to build spaces for meeting and dialogue between the native communities and the new arrivals, building relationships of sharing and exchange. Art also has a very strong narrative potential, it can tell stories, giving voice and translating the memories of migrants, thus promoting a reworking of the journey and the *trauma*.

This environment thus prepares to welcome new identities and even the territories, due to the contamination of practices, undergo transformations.

In 2017, on the anniversary of the shipwreck near Lampedusa, Studio Azzurro realizes a video installation entitled *Migrant Children. Stories of travel and hope* (Studio Azzurro, 2017). Five children tell of their interminable journey and during the storytelling, their words charged with a very strong symbolic dimension. The art thus becomes the instrument to give voice to the hopes and projections of these *small* travelers, facing and exorcising themes such as the threshold, the border, oppression but also opening positively to new meetings, and throwing the hope of what Mimmo Lucano, speaking of his Riace experiment called an “utopia of normality” (Dietmar Sokoll, 2018).

*Arte Migrante* is instead a project born in 2012 and today it has several active groups scattered throughout the national territory that uses art in all its forms as a *bridge* to favor the expression and comparison of diversity. Through the organization of open evenings and using art as a *mediator*, moments of active community are created, where each individual is free to affirm and enhance their specificity and their right, also to a *cultural inclusion* (Connecting Cultures, 2013).

#### **4.2. Suspended identities: Art for the construction of the sense of belonging**

In the current global context, the concept of belonging does not have very defined boundaries: it represents the clearest evidence of the identity and of the need of people to relate to others and to the place, by expressing themselves through a multiplicity of forms. The need to recognize oneself part of a community and to anchor the identity to some material reference points, represents a natural tension of the human being. In the figure of the migrant, the symbolic reference points that define the sense of belonging are interrupted.

The psychiatrist Amilcar Ciola (1997) has well described the condition of the migrant as a “person sitting between two chairs”, effectively describing the condition of those who live perpetually in precarious balance between the belonging to the original context and the research of new links. This condition of imbalance is difficult to manage, especially due to the painful past and to the uncertain future. Therefore, the identities of migrants are *suspended identities*, in search of a synthesis between the multiple reference points that the migratory journey has multiplied.

The formation of a cultural identity and therefore the construction of the sense of belonging, that includes the definition of all those elements that contribute to a process of self-identification, necessarily arises as the result of a difficult synthesis. The concept of *place attachment*, at the center of environmental psychology studies, summarizes the connection between people and places from an emotional point of view but also *physical*, as it is closely related to the nature of the place and *social*, for the sharing process.

The place in all its manifestations represents an indisputable reference point for the definition of identity and for the construction of the sense of belonging as an expression of a primordial need. Belonging to a place means recognizing oneself through its reference points and the condition of displacement calls into question these key principles. To settle the sense of belonging, it is necessary for the place to be experienced and this is precisely what art does, thus contributing significantly to the process of empowerment and favoring a positive perception of places and of living.

The effects that art can generate through these actions are many: it increases the *care* for territory, it intensifies the perception of security of places, it reduces prejudices. Art thus actively participates in the processes of social inclusion, rethinks the public sphere and contributes to building new identities. The cultural association *CityART* has been working for several years on the possibility of using art as a mediation device for conflicts, invading different places in the city of Milan with “creative incursions” of Community art.



**Figure 7.** Roger Ranko, *Mondo In Fame*. Sculpture with iron recovered from disused industries (80x60x93). Basa\_Menti project, CityArt. Photo courtesy CityArt.



**Figure 8.** *Contact\_Open (your) house project*, CityArt. Façade colors. Photo credit ©Angelo Caruso. Courtesy CityArt.

In particular, in the 2016 the *Basa\_Menti* project, led into the Municipality 2 of Milan, one of the most *difficult* areas of the city due to its strong multi-ethnic presence, 28 artists who, through their works, have used art to trigger the social change, activating inclusive strategies.

“(...) each of the invited artists was provided with a cement base, previously used for another temporary public micro-architecture event. City Art, in the logic of recovery and recycling, asked the artists to use these bases to transform them into a work that relates to the context in which the project was born: confrontation and contact between cultures” (CityArt, 2019).

In this way, art takes on a didactic/formative function and the final product of these actions is not only an object to be contemplated, but a real experience to share: “To respond to degradation with art and beauty, the project involved young artists to paint the shops’ shutters and turn the street into an open-air art gallery. To foster relationships and dialogue, including intercultural ones, he organized meetings in condominiums to guide and inform about the proper management of separate waste collection” (CityArt).

The other project *Contact\_Open (your) house* developed in 2017, always focusing on zone 2 in Milan, has worked through the art for the construction of a “network of closeness and solidarity” among the inhabitants in order to combat housing distress (CityArt). The building in Padova 36 street, *A house, many stories*, where an interesting experiment in social housing is underway, represented the core of the project.

To the demand for inclusive and transcultural spaces in the new millennium, social art develops a plurality of ways of collective participation, using public and private spaces, and the residence in Padova street has transformed the courtyard into a “*relational sculpture*”, with ephemeral works created *in situ* by artists of different ages, backgrounds, techniques and languages, with integrative intercultural purposes (CityArt, 2019).

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**Figure 9.** *Crossings 2019*. Photo credit © Giovanni Amendola e Nicola Barbuto. Photo courtesy LaRivoluzionedelleSeppie.



**Figure 10.** *Crossings 2019*. Photo credit © Giovanni Amendola e Nicola Barbuto. Photo courtesy LaRivoluzionedelleSeppie.

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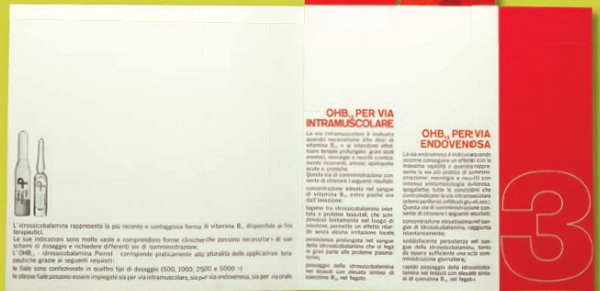
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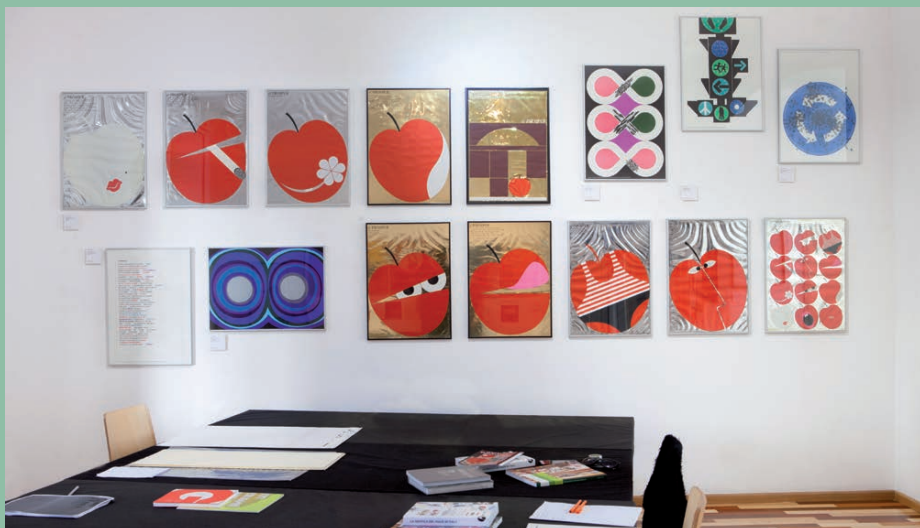


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