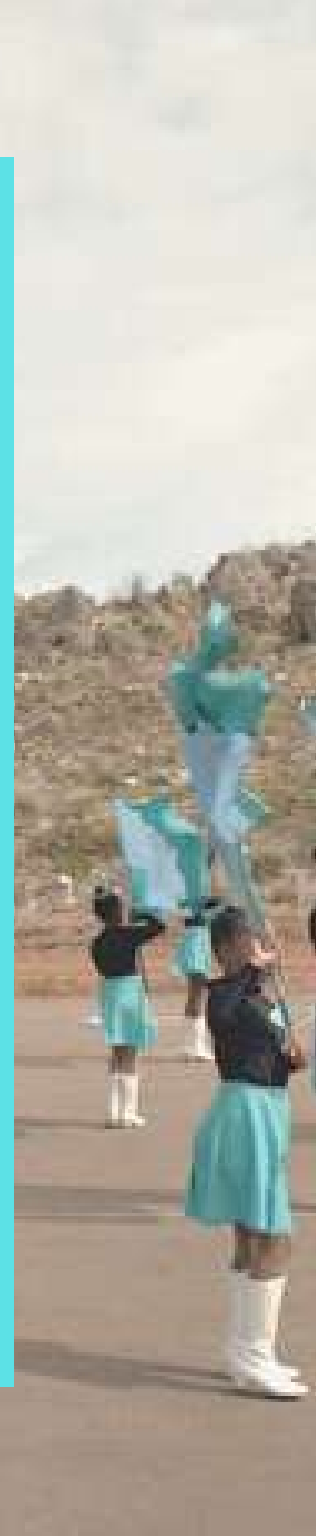




Atlas of Transitions

Experiences beyond the
spectacle of migration



ABOUT THE PROJECT

“Atlas of Transitions. New Geographies for a Cross-Cultural Europe” (<http://www.atlasoftransitions.eu/>) is a European project co-financed by the European Creative Europe programme. Promoting cross-cultural dialogue in local communities through culture and performing arts, this project reflected on and sustained artistic activities for intercultural encounter and cohabitation in European cities. The project included eleven partners in seven countries, mainly theatres and cultural organizations (Emilia Romagna Teatro Fondazione - project leader, University of Bologna, and Cantieri Meticci in Bologna, Italy; Le Channel Scène Nationale in Calais, France; Tjeter Vizion Ngo and A.T.K. - Albanian Theatre Association in Elbasan, Albania; Théâtre de Liège and DC&J Création in Liège, Belgium; Powszechny Theatre in Warsaw, Poland; Motus Terrae in Lavrio, Greece; Backa Teater in Gothenburg, Sweden). At the same time, the network was enlarged to seven university stakeholders, coordinated by the Department of Sociology and Business Law of the University of Bologna.

This network was composed by the University of Lille in France,

ABOUT THE PROJECT

the Centre of Migration Research at Warsaw University in Poland, University of Elbasan in Albania, the Centre for Ethnic and Migration Studies at the University of Liège in Belgium, the University of Gothenburg in Sweden and the National Technical University of Athens in Greece.

For all the duration of the project, the collaboration between artists, researchers and practitioners assured the variety of the approaches adopted by each partner, opening new paths for collective action and reframing the narratives and the spaces where diversity is usually confined, thanks to an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach.

Atlas of Transitions developed several creative methodologies in different spaces and contexts, engaging local communities, migrants and refugees in experiences always shared with local citizens. Likewise, it implied various languages, artistic expedients and practices focusing on the notion of *participation*. This term to be understood as in-common practices where to share through artistic processes, able to produce strategies of reciprocity and mutual understanding.

The role of arts



The role of arts

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- **Discourses and narratives:** arts can play a crucial role in challenging negative representations of migration, promoting inclusive and collaborative spaces of expression and artistic creation, spaces of resistance, disruption and negotiation. Opening spaces for imagination and action, while keeping its political value as a place of subversion and critical reflection, arts are depicting the paradoxes of mobility (in)justice in different ways. In this sense, arts are fundamental tools for proposing alternative spaces of representation and action about migration and refugeedom, challenging the role played by media in depicting and managing the “migrant crisis” and the values associated with it. Specifically, performing arts can provide innovative ways to represent migration, challenging hegemonic and xenophobic rhetoric that depicts migrants as potential criminals or as passive victims.
 - **Space:** Arts can represent a symbolic and physical space where to problematize and tackle new and established forms of exclusion and social inequalities, often through innovative and critical instruments. In this sense, arts can be intended as a form of right to the city, by sustaining an active participation of people with different backgrounds and a reappropriation of



urban space. It gives life to renovated and unconventional relations between individuals, groups and the contexts where artistic practices are developed and enjoyed by the audience, often engaging peripheral areas.

- **Relations:** The powerful role played by performing arts is inscribed in its experiential and relational nature, as well as in its transformative effects at the level of cultural uses, values, spatial organizations and identities. Artistic projects sustain a direct and creative collaboration between people, while contributing to overcome the temporariness and the 'ephemeral' side of arts production and consumption. An important aspect concerns the possibility to promote audience development, creating new relational paths between artists, the audience and the public sphere.

- **Politics:** intervening both on the socio-political and the aesthetical dimension of the performance, arts can promote forms of empowerment, new capabilities, new hybrid identities. Moreover, intercultural performances can have the effect not only at the social level, but also in terms of economic and political integration, amplifying the voice of migrants and refugees while



promoting intercultural dialogue. Performing arts can re-shape daily practices of cohabitation and inclusion and promote new forms of politics and acts of citizenship. In particular, when artistic creations meet the concept of 'politicality', they become spaces of conviviality and positive hybridity, in which people can interact and perform both commonality and diversity, while perceiving themselves as part of the same symbolic, cognitive and physical universe.

Action research in motion



Adopting an approach aimed at co-creating some of the performative practices and processes from the earliest stages of the investigation, action-research seemed to be the most appropriate methodology not only to better understand the relationships between migration and arts, but also to develop other narratives on the migration phenomenon through the voice, ideas, creativity and skills of migrants themselves.

The action-research was not limited to try to blur disciplinary boundaries, enriching the perspectives on the phenomenon, but also to promote, through different ways, a mutual collaboration between artists, researchers and participants of some of the workshops proposed during the project. This methodology, indeed, is based on the idea that there is a link between knowledge and action. In this sense, participation is intended in terms of democratic approach to the research, while action refers to the necessity that the research is aimed at contributing directly to the change of a specific situation. Hence, many of the projects are to be considered as the result of a process of cooperation that has alternated moments of theoretical reflection with performative interventions, research in the field with opportunities for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary dialogue, developing results in which the theoretical, practical and analytical dimensions are strictly interrelated.

Experiences and projects



On the next pages a short and non-exhaustive list of the experiences and projects developed along the period 2018-2020. For a complete list of the activities realized within the project “Atlas of Transitions”, please visit: <http://www.atlasoftransitions.eu/>. Some experiences developed during the project can be also explored in the book: Roberta Paltrinieri, Paola Parmiggiani, Pierluigi Musarò, Melissa Moralli (eds.) (2020), *Right to the City, Performing Arts and Migration*, Milano, FrancoAngeli.

“Referendum”, the political potentials of an urban experiment

The Cuban arti(vi)st [Tania Bruguera](#), whose work conceives the use of art as a tool for social and political change, intended this project both as a performance and as an experiment of political activism. Lasting ten days, the project consisted in an urban referendum campaign, where the question “Borders kill. Should we abolish borders?” represented an invitation to reflect on migration and borders. The project was conceived as a participatory project since the formulation of the question.



This latter was chosen after various public debates that engaged researchers, local organizations, activists, social workers, citizens. The project consisted in different phases. It started with the organization of open public discussions held in Bologna at the Arena del Sole theatre, where the participants were invited to discuss the statement and the question to be used in the “artist” performance. Moreover, with the help of trained volunteers and students, the “referendum” was realized through static and mobile voting positions in the centre and in the periphery of the city of Bologna, together with the organization of six open discussions along the duration of the performance. In terms of communication, the project was promoted through site-specific posters in different areas of the city, while a scoreboard marked the daily results of the referendum, making visible the urban response to the question, presented in a final public event. [See more](#)

Bologna (Italy) 2019



“Referendum”, the political potentials of an urban experiment

ph-Michele-Lapini

Tania Bruguera's "School of Integration", a Two – Way Exchange



Working at the intersection between art and education, [Tania Bruguera's School of Integration](#) pilot project in Bologna was conceived as a temporary project modelled on the German schools dedicated to the integration of immigrants, but reversed their modus operandi. Classes were taught by local people originally from countries around the world, members of the different communities of foreigners—immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees—who reside in Bologna.

The lessons took place inside a university facility, with the aim of creating a short circuit around the issue of who is entitled to construct knowledge. Enacting a form of critical pedagogy, the communities gave lessons on a range of disciplines they were proud to share, including knowledge of the body, artisan skills, oral poetry, symbolic practices, culinary traditions and contemporary musical cross-pollinations. By inverting integration policies intended for migrants, it was created a space for people to experience the idea of transculturation as an alternative to traditional assimilation migration policies, resulting in a new kind of shared learning experience, while disrupting the conventional dynamic between immigrants and locals.

Bologna (Italy) 2019

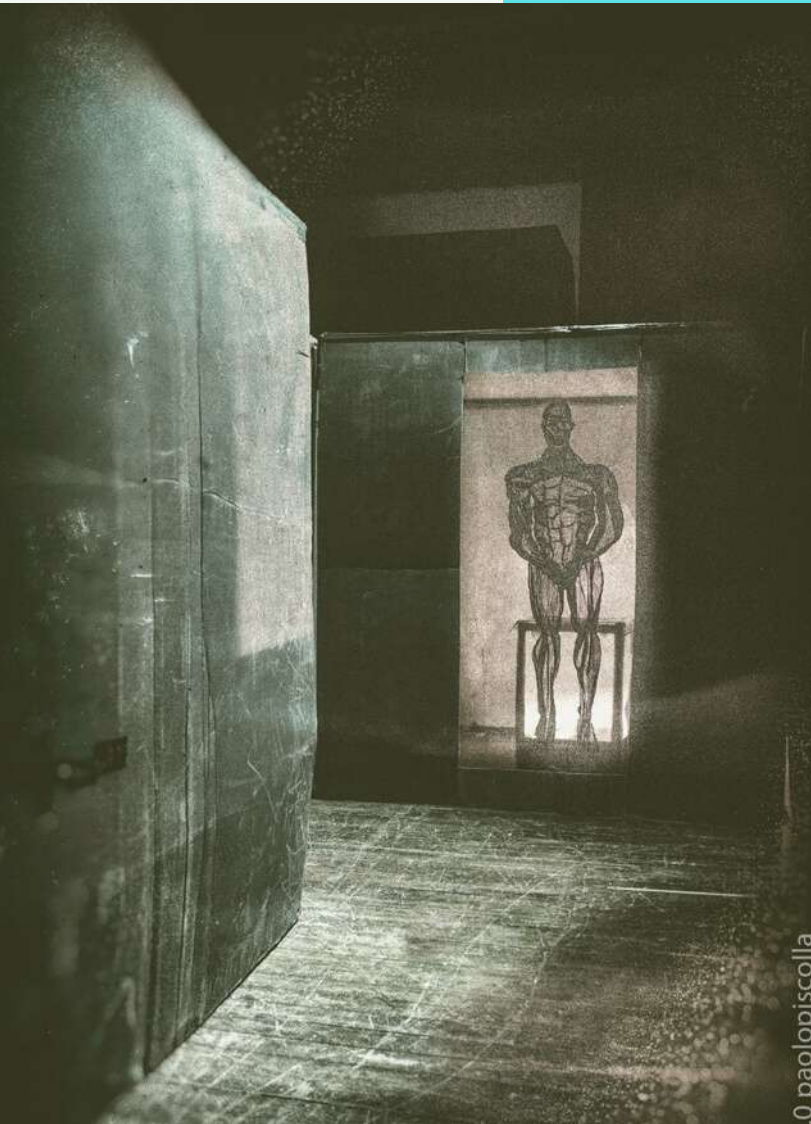


Maps of Transitions (and emotions)

In the first phase of this project the researchers collaborated with an association of second-generation migrants, that proposed a series of workshops addressed to asylum seekers who were living in a reception centre in Bologna. The aim of the workshop was to develop an urban itinerary based on their daily life experiences of the city and the emotions (fear, happiness, doubts, etc.) they experienced in relation to such places.



Cantieri Meticci, spaces of encounter in the neighbourhoods



Cantieri Meticci is a theatre company from Bologna that works at the intersection between aesthetics and activism, carrying out large-scale theatre projects involving asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and Italian citizens, often culminating in major artistic events open to the local community. The collective uses artistic tools to stimulate a public debate on the ongoing relations between newcomers and host countries, stimulating the public on the issues of migration and intercultural dialogue.

Adopting a participatory methodology, Cantieri Meticci aims at maintaining a constant interaction with the local community and the spectators who take part in the activities, favouring the encounter between foreigners and citizens, aimed at widening spaces of social and political inclusion. Secondly, the theatre collective intends to improve participants' artistic and cultural skills, supporting a company of professional actors/activists. Cantieri Meticci usually develops performances that shed light on issues such as exploitation, border control, human rights, intercultural relation, while keeping a direct involvement of the public in the performance.

See more about the productions implemented along the project: [Autostrada del Sud](#) and [The Nigger of the Narcissus](#)

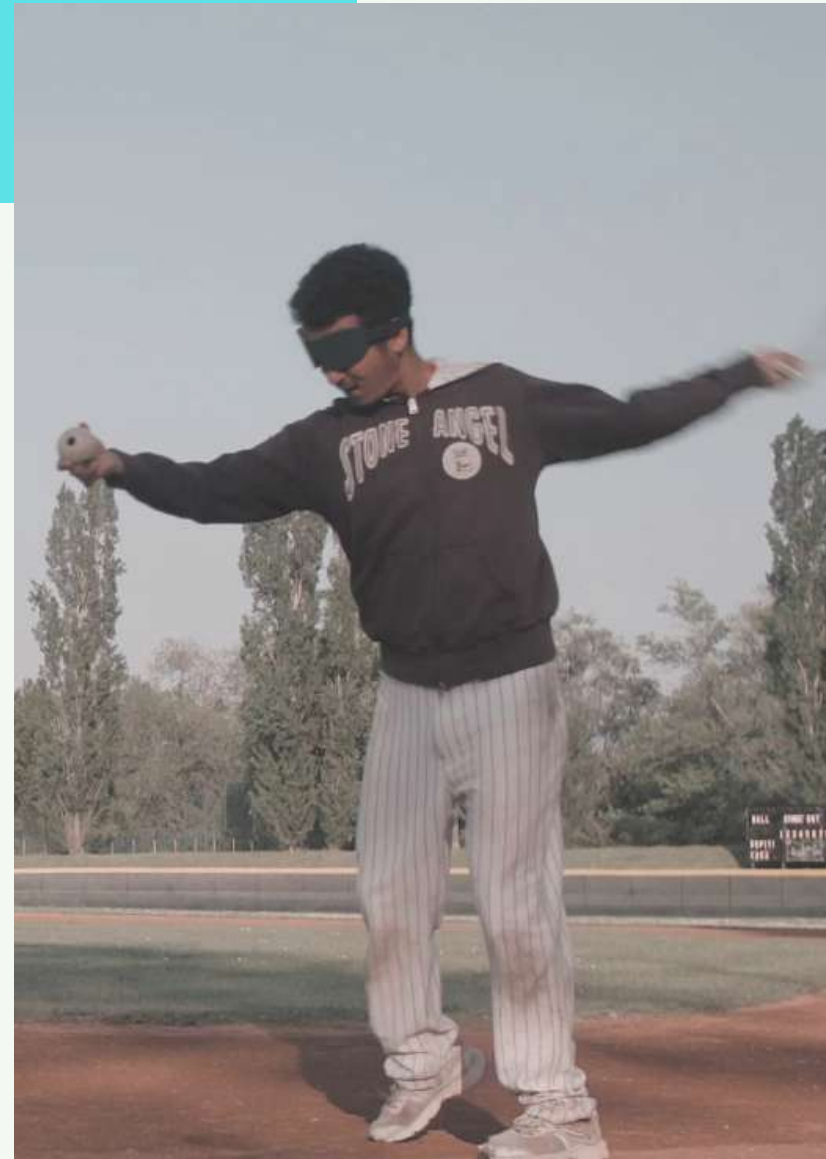
Bologna (Italy) 2018-2020

Cantieri Meticci, spaces
of encounter in the
neighbourhoods



ZimmerFrei's “Saga” documentary docu-series

[ZimmerFrei](#) is a collective of artists working on public space through the combination of different languages, ranging from documentary films to video art, sound and environmental installations. Within *Atlas of Transitions*, the collective organized three cycles of workshops dedicated to Italian and foreign teenagers (15-22 years old). These workshops consisted in the creation of sound, image and storytelling archive by intercultural groups of teenagers and youngsters. During the workshops, the



groups not only got in contact with the video-art projects and the documentaries made by Zimmerfrei; they also re-elaborated their own personal stories through an active involvement in the project. In particular, the three workshops – focused on storytelling, writing and image transposition practices – brought to the realization of a four-episode documentary, entitled [Saga](#). The documentary gave an alternative vision of the city of Bologna, thanks to the contribution of the young participants, who used different languages: from individual storytelling to scripted images, from interview to open dialogues, from informal conversation to rewriting personal stories, passing through urban walks. Thus, the workshops have been able to promote forms of encounter and dialogue, supporting intercultural and intergenerational diversity as an inescapable source for the creative process.

Bologna (Italy) 2018-2020



Alessandro Carboni's “Unleashing Ghosts from Urban Darkness”



Using an approach founded on critical cartography and experimental geography, and combining them with performance practices, the choreographer and researcher [Alessandro Carboni](#) based his work on the four principles of his method, Embodied Map (EM) Tools, an instruction booklet translated into eight languages based on four principles: Observation; Capture—mapping the space through bodily actions; Extraction—selective reenactment of the action in a studio; Transmission—choreographic score. Young people from

15 different countries mapped portions of the city, starting from a peripheral district to the city centre, collecting forms, situations and events they encountered during their urban experience. The corporeal maps were then "remapped" in a choreographic score titled [Unleashing Ghosts from Urban Darkness](#), an aesthetic and insightful re-enactment performed along a live urban path with the audience. Urban life with its transformations, rhythmic patterns, forms, situations, events, was thus the material to be observed, captured, re-enacted and transmitted through the body, used as a cartographic tool for corporeal maps. [EM Tools video](#)

Bologna (Italy) 2018



Taoufiq Izeddieu's “Cent pas Presque”

Radically questioning the “experience of walking”, the wellknown Moroccan choreographer [Taoufiq Izeddieu](#) worked on a massive collective action in public space. After two weekly sections of intensive dance workshops with a group made up of young foreign women, elderly people, migrants from shelters, dancers, citizens both young and old, during the performance [Cent pas Presque](#) approximately 80 people interrupted the daily flow of life



for sixty minutes by walking in slow motion for 100 meters on the main artery of the city centre, by slowing down their movements, gestures, in a gradual crescendo of intensity. An ensemble of migrant and local musicians—formed for this occasion—produced captivating live music, making participants and spectators plunge into a rhythmic spiral, capable of creating a discontinuity in the perception of the rhythm of the city. This performance queried the automatic, habitual and mechanical shopping route. It also served to shake up perceptions, in a sort of suspension of the senses that involved hundreds of people who literally reoccupied the street, dancing freely and singing joyfully at the end of the walk. [Video interview](#)

Bologna (Italy) 2018

Taufiq Izeddieu's "Cent pas
Presque"



“Incredible Paths” – sharing views on migration.



Under the guidance of the theatre director [Didier Ruiz](#), a group of 25 researchers, residents and exiles prepared a seven-minute speech, eachone with a particular question that united their testimonies. Six “itineraries” were thus proposed to the public, two of which dedicated to families with children aged 8 and over. The people were invited on a journey with an unusual path along which they could meet four people who each have a unique point of view, experience and some knowledge on the topic of migration.

Each path consisted of four stations lasting seven minutes each, which allowed the spectator to confront face to face and in an intimate way, with four different points of view on the theme in the short period of 35 minutes. The itineraries have been composed by combining scholarly, scientific or expert opinions juxtaposed with narratives of people's daily reality and experiences of exile and migration journey. These brief meetings required no prior knowledge on the subject and one could participate regardless of one's opinion on the topic, which made for an intense human experience filled with generosity, curiosity and respect for each other. [Video interview](#)

Calais (France) 2019



Motus Terrae's “Monuments of Conflict & Convergence”

Lavrio is a working-class city in south-eastern Greece, which owes its multi-ethnic and multilingual nature to its history as a place of mineral exploitation and, therefore, attractive site for thousand of workers having different origins and backgrounds. [Collective Motus Terrae](#) choose this city as a kind of “laboratory” where to explore the issue of cultural diversity and how this is portrayed through the differences of the various “microcosms” present in the neighbourhoods: each one unique in its structure, functionality and aesthetic design, carrying the cultural characteristics of the given group, where in the end are combined all together to create multicultural community.



Together with 30 students from the Technical University of Athens-School of Architecture the city was mapped, not on spaces-basis, as usual, but through the narratives of the first, second and third generation of local inhabitants and by deeply exploring their migration stories. The first phase of the project was aimed at promoting the personal experience of the territory, going through familiar relations, conflicts, fears, common memories, shared knowledge, through the testimonies of the citizens in form of guided tours in the neighbourhood. The second phase concerned the investigation of the city identity and its capacity to be a melting pot of cultural diversities capable to coexist in a composite social texture: a local team composed of residents and university teachers, worked together to imagine contemporary monuments able to act at a symbolic level and to represent the social dynamics of both accordance and conflict currently existing in the city. Unfortunately, the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic have rendered impossible for Motus Terrae to continue with the implementation of the creation of a live performance in the public space in Lavrio. Nevertheless a [short film](#) has been produced, which replicates the performance's ambience and explains the original concept of the project.

Lavrio (Greece) 2018-2020



Momette's “The Great Hands Collection”, an evolving giant atlas of hands



It is said that the palm lines trace a map of our interior landscape, revealing its path, its destiny. What do we see in them? What do they make us feel or tell? Within this small and intimate perimeter the artist Margane Marqué alias [Momette](#), developed her graphical and poetic concept as an invitation to a peaceful walk in the palm of everyone's hand through a creative act of drawing. Here the hand is intended as a blank sheet.

Drawing the hand's outline and using markers, brushes, pencils, collage and embroidery techniques an intimate world is created and a territory is defined where to reflect personality and tastes. The project initially developed through [Mano a Mano Workshops](#), a preparatory series of encounters with refugees, students and social workers, locals adults and children which generated travel stories and inner landscapes through drawings, paintings, soundtracks, images, photographic hands portraits and storytelling. With all the materials accumulated along her journey, Momette gave birth to The Great Hands Collection, a large-scale exhibition of hundreds of handprints collected during her path: an immersive installation at the crossroad between a theatre room and an artistic atelier and a refuge where the visitors could spend time drawing and meeting other people.

Calais (France) 2019



Strefa WolnoSłowa and Powszechny Theater's intercultural engagement

[Strefa Wolnościowa Foundation](#) organizes workshops, performances and artistic events focused on intercultural dialogue, where both amateurs and professionals are invited to collaborate and where the boundary between art and social intervention is blurred. In the frame of Atlas of Transitions, Strefa Wolnościowa has constantly worked in an [asylum seekers](#) centre of a neighbourhood in Warsaw combining physical and storytelling techniques. At the same time it collaborates inside [Powszechny Theater](#), located in the Praga district in Warsaw, whose motto is “theatre that gets in the way”, which means taking an active role in



tackling down important and uncomfortable issues in public debate, such as nationalism, racism, religious fundamentalism, postcolonialism and other current pressing issues. Here inside Strefa Wolnościowa manages Stół Powszechny, a space for cultural encounter where, among other activities, organized "Open Institute" a training program reflecting on the artistic methods of work with migrant communities and on the relation between art and social engagement. The workshops were creative and critical occasions to discuss about practices able to involve in the arts foreign people by engaging various fields of action. In the frame of Atlas of Transitions both Strefa Wolnościowa and Powszechny Theater implemented theatre productions, the first one involving refugees and migrants together with locals, the second by inviting foreign artists to work with their actors' ensemble. Addressing the specific issue of performing arts in relation with migration, the collaboration between Strefa Wolnościowa and Powszechny Theater has showed the effectiveness of the relation between an institutional theatre and an organization able to make a field work, bringing experiences, know how and a network of ground connections. Their collaboration is still going on after the project end.

Warsaw (Poland) 2018-2020

Strefa Wolnościowa and
Powszechny Theater's
intercultural engagement



Backa Teater's “Hierarchy of Needs”



The project carried out by Backa Teater under the direction of Mattias Andersson, was explicitly addressed to the younger migrants who left their homes, their families and friends, with the hope of finding a future in Europe. Initially the hip hop dance was identified as the right doorstep to involve the youngs, setting up a collaboration with the Twisted Feet company and, at the same time, collecting the young migrants' own stories. But happened that the director received a script from the young playwright and actor student Adel Darwish who

came to Sweden from Aleppo, Syria, three years before. It was then staged together Twisted iFeet dancers, young migrants involved in the process and actors of Backa Teater. The text was direct, poetic and bewildering, written in the midst of a chaotic present featured by war, frontiers and borders between people. This was exactly what was needed: a play not cementing the prejudices or stereotypes but focused on life in an existential level. [Hierarchy of Needs](#) shifts from reality to fantasy in three different time dimensions. What has happened and what will happen? Who is alive, who is dead? Is present and past always attendant in the future. Which needs are relative and which are universal? As Adel wrote: "If you don't have any needs your drive is based on what you want and not what you need. If I didn't have any needs my life would be much better. If humans didn't have needs there wouldn't be any wars." Here a short [documentary video](#) about the performance.

Gothenburg (Sweden) 2019



“Sortir du Noir”, who will remember them? a travel by Mary Jimenez and Bénédicte Liénard

The topic of displacement was the reflection lens of the filmmakers Mary Jimenez and Bénédicte Liénard, who are engaged on the topic of migration with films and reportages since a long time. [Sortir du noir](#) focused on the reality of lacking recognition and dehumanizing of those who loose their life in the Mediterranean, mainly denying the fundamental duty of burial, bounding them to endless exile. Facing the absence of burial funeral rituals, the project shed light on one of the basic gestures through which the community recognizes itself.



photo by Dominique Houcmant

The project grew up as a work in progress, accumulating an archive with recorded materials and interviews along the routes of migration. Through a double shooting enquiry between 2017 and 2019, the two artists collected testimonies about a shipwreck on the Tunisian shore in a village bereaved by the disappearance of about fifteen young men. The testimony of the mothers of the missing ones, where delivered in an artistic format where the interaction between image, sound, environment and live performance designed a kind of new shared ritual inside an immersive space, giving the floor to the grieving women who are never heard. Making theatre the place for plea of the forgotten, the project exposed the contradiction of European migration policies demonstrating the cruelty of the externalization of borders.

Liège (Belgium), 2017-2019

“Sortir du Noir”, who will
remember them? a travel by
Mary Jimenez and Bénédicte
Liénard



photo by Dominique Houcmant

Muna Mussie's “Punteggiatura”



Language, as a political and emotional space and an aesthetic tool, was at the core of artist [Muna Mussie's](#) project. It began with the idea of collaborating with a group of Arab and African women participating to an educational project aimed at teaching Italian language and over time evolved into a sewing workshop. Mussie - born in Eritrea and resident in Bologna - decided to sew a book titled [Punteggiatura](#) (Punctuation), an evolving form of “collective creation”, based on encounters, interviews, word of mouth, improvised research.

The book was an embroidered “social fabric”, made from the dialogue with women from different parts of the world, from Congo to Palestine, Nigeria, Russia, Argentina, China, Moldavia and Cameroon, and currently living in various areas of the city. Some of them had arrived in Italy shortly before, after traveling for months or years, caught between one border and the next. In collaboration with several social organizations, the artist met over 40 women to discuss the topic of the book, a message to be handed down to the next generations, a way to delay something into the future and dispel one’s own taboos.

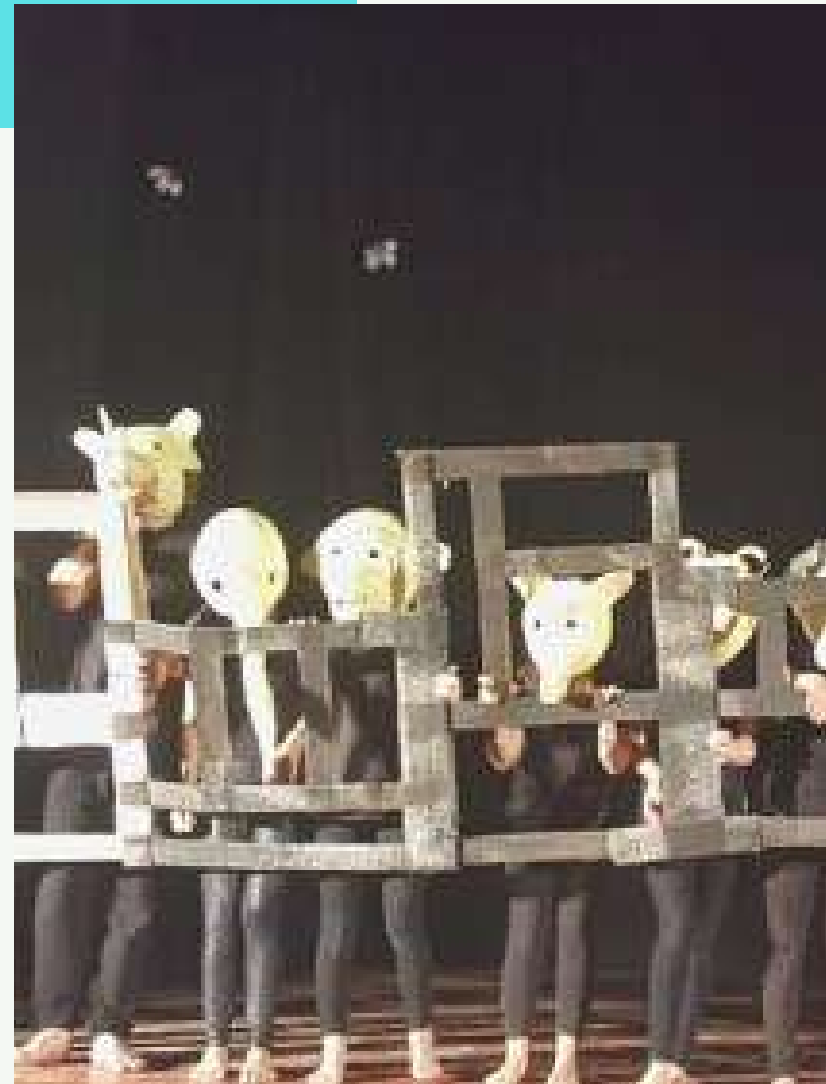
Bologna (Italy), 2018

Muna Mussie’s “Punteggiatura”



Forum Theatre, the Albanian experience

[Tjeter Vizion NGO](#), an organization with social background based in Elbasan, carried out a consistent communication campaign raising awareness about radicalism, religious fundamentalism and specifically against discrimination addressed to Albanian returnees emigrants, that nowadays represents a crucial social issue in the country. As further step of the campaign, a practical experience based on participatory theatre technique involved a group of people made up by social workers, students and youngsters.



Starting from the different materials collected during the campaign and led by one artist able to facilitate the theatre dynamic, the group worked both on the text composition and as actors in the performance titled [The Story of Mandi](#). The experience adopted the method of Forum Theatre, a technique under the umbrella term of Theatre of the Oppressed by Augusto Boal, which allows to engage the audience both as spectators and actors, with the power to stop and change the development of the performance, reflecting on issues of social justice with the aim to explore solutions to oppression featured in the representation.

Elbasan (Albania), 2019

Forum
Theatre, the Albanian
experience



Atlas of transitions Festivals

Discover here the programs of the 9 festivals and of the summer school organized along the project

Bologna (Italy), 2018 [Atlas of Transitions Biennale Right to the City](#)

Elbasan (Albania), 2018 [Atlas of Transitions 20th Skampa International Festival](#)

Warsaw (Poland), 2018 [The Art and Society Happy City](#)

Bologna (Italy), 2019 [Atlas of Transitions Biennale Home](#)

Calais (France), 2019 [La saveur de l'autre](#)

Göteborg (Sweden), 2019 [A Changed Europe](#)

Elbasan (Albania), 2019 [Atlas of Transitions 21st Skampa International Festival](#)

Warsaw (Poland), 2019 [Atlas of Transitions Festival](#)

Liège (Belgium), 2020 [Atlas of Transitions Festival](#)

Bologna (Italy), 2020 [International Summer School Performing Resistance](#)

Bologna (Italy), 2020 [Atlas of Transitions Biennale We The People](#)

Atlas of transitions in numbers

- 11 partners in 7 European countries working together along 40 months
- a collaborative action research with a network of 7 European universities resulting in an edited publication
- 10 international festivals with European and non-European artists and creators
- 63 intercultural workshops co-created with refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and local communities
- an International Summer School attended by 1245 people all over the world
- 14 new multidisciplinary productions
- 165 performances
- a web platform
- with 8 Focus reportage
- around 52.800 intercultural and international audience





ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA

Le Channel
scène nationale Calais



teatr powszechny
Theater that gets in the way



BACKA TEATER



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