

**The Art of Memory:
archival practices and systems of remembering**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

This practice-led PhD addresses the possibility of creating archives as an artistic practice able to question existing cultural structures, and filling the gaps in the construction of history and knowledge. The context for this thesis takes into consideration the increasing privatization of content in communication in the digital era, and its influence in the construction of memory; the continuous flow of pictures documents what is happening instant by instant, creating a condition of ubiquity, emotionality and synchronicity for social users of social networks. It also focuses on theoretical and practical approaches to images in contemporary art, through archival practices and the photographic medium.

The key concern of this thesis is that visual culture can address matters of political awareness and social change; this suggests that cultural production becomes the opportunity to test the appropriation of critical perspectives by spectators. In this thesis, I have used my own multi-layered projects as a basis for reframing the role of spectatorship in the digital era: the relationship between the photographer and photographed and how physical engagement can play an important role in addressing visitors' responsibility towards the contents of the artwork.

In memory of my father Renato

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Prologue

At the start of the PhD project, I was interested in developing and understanding the dynamic relationship between conflictual and tragic periods of history (Italian terrorism in the 1970s, “Mafia Wars” in 1980s) and mediatized memory in both digital and traditional archives. Some of my previous projects were produced after extended field visits to areas of conflict such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Northern Ireland, and sites of left-wing armed struggle in Italy. My interest is primarily focused on events that took place during my childhood, between 1978 to 1992. In this period of my life, the events I perceived were filtered through my youthful perceptions on daily life, and then rediscovered when I was an adult through archival and witnesses as under-represented or forgotten stories. In the last four years, my research has developed in response to these realisations, to specifically address systems of memory, brain functions, and how progressive and increasing use of social networks has transformed the concept of *collectivity*. These experiences have brought me to a position where I seek to define the perspective of *spectatorship* in the digital era. In fact, I have progressively reflected on the conceptual premises and reasons behind my own practice, analyzing the relevance of physicality and the importance of representation in my works. Recent reflections on digital archives and virtual communication have informed my concerns into the creation of interactive installations in the exhibition space, focusing the connection between the design decisions and concepts.

My practice has turned into the *action and process of selection*, which involves both the operation of memory *and* storage systems. Systems of memory can reveal how the human brain tries to decipher imaginary things. The choice of dealing not only with reality but also with the immaterial (something intangible like imagination and language) is also, for me, a political matter. How does memory react to different temporal and geographical conditions? How can these parameters interfere in the continuous process of the “reconstruction of a memory”?

Working with primary sources, such as testimonies, photographs or documents, I will interrogate the process of selection (of images, stories, encounters) and the authority by which memories are archived or rejected. While my previous artistic projects have departed from a concern with real facts (Italian leftist terrorism, war in the former Yugoslavia), this thesis will prove that my interest was primarily directed to finding a condensed deposit of personal memories of people and their dynamic evolutions in the context of a collective reconstruction of identity. For instance, *Nema Problema* (No

Problem) is a collection of nine images and nine texts, realised in 2009. It recounts, through portraiture, landscape, and interviews, the dramatic lives of women touched by the trauma of war in the former-Yugoslavia. They are victims of torture and sexual abuse, who were imprisoned in Bosnian detention camps and are now fighting to take the perpetrators of these crimes to the International Court of Justice in The Hague. *Muri di Piombo (Lead Walls)* proposes an analysis of Italian and historical identity, through a series of 50 photographs taken at scenes of the terrorist attacks of the “Anni di Piombo”.¹

Looking at my practice retrospectively, I have endeavored to understand if the archival practice was more than a tool, if the process of archiving witnesses, pictures of places and objects was the main aim of my practice. To do this, I compared my recent work with older projects of mine, and also compared my work with the artistic processes used by other artists. I have concluded that the *leitmotif* of my work is the relationship between individual and collective memory: archival practice is an instrument to discover the nuances of this interaction, rather than an end in itself. Fictional or real memories are equally important if they contribute to a better understanding of our times, and if they can define collective imagination, regardless of their personal or geographical distances. For instance, this consideration is particularly important for the participatory project *Dreams' Time Capsule*.

Some of the projects I address in my thesis were initiated before my academic involvement at the University of Leeds. They were, first, open works in progress; second, the projects had each been stimulated to change their direction, which I developed during the period of doctoral study. Over a 14 year-long professional career, my work has been informed by a series of significant experiences of education and training in the Netherlands, France, Spain, Egypt, Bahrain, and my home country, Italy. Fieldwork helped me to delineate my area of interest, but only during my doctoral research, I did expand on the theoretical premises that underpinned my practice. Hence, although some projects had started before 2015, they have all seen a mutation during this journey. For instance, the *Dreams' Time Capsule* project (2011 - ongoing) was born as a participatory research project aimed at tracing collective memories and common imaginaries in dream encounters; today, in contrast, it traces social fragmentation as it coincides with political appointments, such as elections or demonstrations. As we will

¹ Later in this dissertation, I will speak further about this work. See p. 61

see, archival practices operate in a state of indeterminacy and continuous “rearranging”, in accordance with Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s concept of rhyzhome.²

On the other hand, some projects have been developed only during my doctoral journey, even though the collection of materials happened years before (i.e. *FORTEPLANO* | *Soundtrack under Tabrir Square*, 2016). My artistic practice was already conducted through field visits and cross-disciplinary influences, but it has progressed more harmoniously and becomes more structured within the academic context. The overall content of my dissertation will analyze the process of creating micro-archives and “open-works” (see definition at the chapter 1.1.3) in the digital era, and the relationship between representation and conceptualisation in photography. These two themes will be explored through the most significant works I produced over the last four years. Across these works, some recurring methodologies will be outlined, including the use of field visits and the study of interactive design installations. These represent the coming together of the physical and intellectual perceptions of the artwork.

Within the boundaries of my analysis, I will profile tensions and urgent instances of our time, such as the disappearance of public spaces, the difference between pre-digital and digital memories, and the alienation of individuals in the era of connectivity. To give an ordered overview of these matters, I will ask the following questions about the digital era and art:

- To what extent are methodologies conditioned by technological developments and the use of digital devices?

- How has digital access to art shows, through blogs and websites, changed the perception of artworks and spectatorship?

I will also consider two main questions about the artist's role:

- How does he/she remediate archival sources to create new community micro-archives?

- What significance can physical artefacts assume in the age of information technologies?

This dissertation will address these questions by proposing the physical tangibility of the exhibition space, and the experience of inhabiting the exhibition space, as ways to shift visitors’ presence as an active achievement of political awareness.

² Deleuze, Gilles; Guattari, Félix, “Becoming Animal”, in Kalof, Linda; Fitzgerald, Amy (eds.), *The Animals Reader: The Essential Classical and Contemporary Writings*, Oxford, UK: Berg, 2007, p. 19-23

1. Creating archives in the era of internet and the physical engagement of the viewer

In the twentieth century, advances in digital communication technologies enabled the wider production, organization and marketing of products, but also altered the legacies of popular culture and created new spaces for the misrepresentation of communities. With the rise of digital communication, institutional and state-sponsored archives are challenged and contested by individual, private and micro-archives, and personal remembering has shifted to more public and mundane spheres. The differences between pre-digital and digital memory are conditioned by technological changes that empower three predominant features of contemporary communication: ubiquity, emotionality, and synchronicity.

Ubiquity: the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai argues that a shared living territory conditioned pre-digital memory while digital memory bypasses temporal and territorial preconditions in favor of chance encounters and entanglements in digital (social) media.³ In the past, memorial activity was a product of communities that were sharing geographical and temporal environments. Thus, cohabitation in pre-digital memory was narrated by institutionalized archives composed of documents and photographs selected and organized according to geographical and chronological factors.

Emotionality: memory in the Cloud, the virtual space, acquires new dimensions that affect not only the individual and the collective but also temporal and spatial dimensions of encounters. Institutional archives are challenged by multiple micro- and personal archives, where feelings and individual perceptions are mainly important and they determine what enters the archive.

Contemporary micro-archives are created by individuals, and these have shifted towards the privatization of content. The use of widely recognizable devices (such as smartphones and social networks like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter) homogenizes memorial activities but they are still driven individually. Contemporary political debates are dominated by the repetition and variation of the idea of ‘one against many’ and the conversion of citizens into ‘followers’. Meanwhile, the anonymity of social networks allows expressions of anger and reduces complex debates to synthetic “like” versus “do not like.” It is evident that the poor communication of complex problems has prepared the way for the rise of populism, and it might further prepare the field for undisturbed authoritarian governments disguised as democracies.

³ Appadurai, Arjun, *Archive and Aspiration* in Joke Brouwer and Ariel Mulder (eds.) *Information is Alive*, Rotterdam V2 / Nai Publishers, 2003, p.17

Synchronicity: nowadays, connectivity and instant communication entangle users regardless of their time zones and historical contexts. Consequently, digital co-presence is essentially non-punctual, and it affects the collective rhythmization of the everyday: it is a mediatized routine. Virtually, our attention is attracted by different content, happening at different times and in different geographical areas. Nonetheless, as Martin Pogačar argues “events occurring at various points in the past appear in the interfacial geography as if it is present, causing a continuous actualization of the past in the everyday engagement with media and creates an endless now.”⁴

The risk is the canonization of memory: digital media objects will remain thanks to the continuous interaction of people to the re-presenting of the past in synchronous communication between individuals in various locations. The production of content is mainly focused on a fragmentary and continuous flow of photographs taken and shared through smartphones. Mobile phones, increasingly portable and wearable like watches, become essential personal items, edges between our private and professional life. Through them we express our thoughts, feelings, gazes, we can promote members of our own profession, or members of our private profiles. The majority of apps were created following the principle of ubiquity and synchronicity entailed by smartphone features. Uber, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter can localize us; collect our pictures or audio and video recording. Each process of sharing has to follow specific rules dictated by the app (for example in Twitter the maximum length is 150 words). These instruments of communication are driven by complex algorithms that entertain our “circles of friends”. The diffusion of content has the same distribution of a viral sickness, spread regardless of geographical boundaries.

The system of feedback alongside the use of social networks affects the production itself: as long as we acquire familiarity with the app’s functions, and we see the most “voted and appreciated items, we are self-trained and persuaded to modifying our ways of using them (for example using hashtags) in order to catch a larger audience. In a conference at the University of Leeds, while Sarah Ahmed used the expression “the most quoted is the most quoted” speaking about policies in the University and Academia, but I thought that the same happens in the virtual communication. In fact, the bijective sense of dissemination through social networks affects our perspectives on specific topics. Sharing without checking information is creating a series of side effects: such as the diffusion of fake news, and the consolidation of an uncritical acceptance of

⁴ Pogačar M. (2016) “Museums and Memorials in Social Media” in: *Media Archaeologies, Micro-Archives and Storytelling*. Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies. Palgrave Macmillan, London, p. 101

sources. This tendency of focusing on the popularity of the message, rather than its relevance and veracity, legitimizes a demagogic and superficial approach to issues.

Following these considerations, I started to reflect on physicality and the role of exhibitions in engaging visitors beyond virtual communication. The exhibition is the ideal scenario for testing the relevance that collective history has in contemporary society. However, for all said above, nowadays the diffusion of technological devices and social networks has obscured historical events, consecrating private archives and family albums. As the anthropologist Fabio Dei points out, monuments and representations of historical moments and societies have been deposed in favour of daily celebrations of the self. Memory has become more physical and continuously recorded in big data that will not be consulted in the future, with the attitude that only what is recorded deserves to be experienced.⁵

On the other hand, international exhibitions (Biennials, Manifesta, etc.) and modern museums have converted exhibitions in connective architectures, whereas Giuliana Bruno says - “the separate domains of private and public become connected, and the boundaries between the two are redefined”⁶. The experience of visiting a show has often transformed the spectatorship with new itineraries through memory and imagination. The use of space, the redefinition of light and sound are directed to create a public intimacy with the visitor through a persistent relationship between motion and emotion, through the sense of the *haptic*. As Bruno argues, “the Greek etymology of haptic tells us what makes us *able to come in contact with* things, thus constituting the reciprocal *con-tact* between us and our surroundings”⁷. In this sense, my interest for the physical engagement of spectators let them “able to enter in contact” with the content of my work.

For this reason, in my recent projects, I took inspiration from methodologies adopted during the 1970s, using Douglas Crimp’s expression that “works were constituted *in a situation* and for *a duration*,” and “the spectator *literally had to be there*”⁸. An artist’s practice can cross different disciplines, giving a broader perspective beyond the time and the location in which the viewer lives, and it is widely accepted that the art-

⁵ Dei, Fabio, “Antropologia e memoria. Prospettive di un nuovo rapporto con la storia”, in *Novecento*, 10, 2004 pp.27-46

⁶ Bruno, Giuliana, *Surface. Matters of aesthetics, materiality, and media*. Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 2014

⁷ Bruno, Giuliana, *Ibidem*. p.144

⁸ Crimp, Douglas, “The Photographic Activity of Postmodernism” in *October* Vol. 15 (The MIT Press, Winter 1980), pp. 91-101

work affirms not only its presence but also a new world, as an encounter that permits us to think otherwise. As Joan Gibbons explains “many artists have chosen the role of counter-histories and/or counter-memories of socially and politically oppressed communities (through gender, political belief or race).”⁹

However, we must recognize that artists’ artworks operate ever-changing questions rather than offering answers, in a dialectical process, where interrogations can move new reflections about the identity of a society in a specific time. For example, when I take pictures of places where leftist terrorist attacks occurred in the 1970s, I realize a fictional museum dedicated to an invented scientist whose story is firmly anchored in last century’s history of science and culture. When I systematize “dream encounters” throughout different countries and continents, I am dealing with cultural artefacts, where personal and public, or personal and politics, cohabit.

My works question my own identity, and that of the generation of my parents and my own, through the stories of other people’s lives and stories that I have not lived or experienced and that have not touched me directly. Filtering those distances, to build a bridge between myself - and consequently, the viewer - and these stories and places, through a sympathetic process of meticulous - scientific - research, I aim to shift the public’s attention towards often forgotten chapters of recent European history, as well as social issues affecting, especially, contemporary Italian society. These are fragments of the real, which are close to us, yet distant, almost invisible to the masses, but subtly feared. To go beyond this invisibility, I carry out a consistent process of research, starting from a rational, bibliographical study of news and photographic archives. This is followed by an extensive collection of first-hand information enclosing interviews and photographs to open up the human dimension of this history, with its actions and reactions: going beyond the definition of history, they talk about the human relationship with the ethics of death and time, setting the grounds for my emotional intervention on history and collective memory.

Maurice Halbwachs, in *The Collective Memory*, states that “an individual finds it impossible to remember without a comparison with the memories of others.”¹⁰ Similarly, when the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur speaks about the process of recollection and recognition in the construction of a common memory; he claims that in so doing

⁹ Gibbons, Joan, *Contemporary Art and Memory. Images of Recollection and Remembrance* (London: I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2007)

¹⁰ Halbwachs, Maurice, *The Collective Memory*, New York: Harper Colophon, 1950

“we encounter the memory of the others, shared memories, common memories.”¹¹ According to Ricoeur, John Locke was the first theoretician to define the notions of identity, consciousness, and self, introducing the expression “appropriate” to justify the concept of imputations of responsibility. This appropriation plays a decisive role on the path of remembering: with the intervention of psychoanalysis the patient can reconstruct his / her memory and through the definition of the border between self and the other, a comprehensive mnemonic chain is set on the path of oral history and narrative, whose structure is utterly public. This is the process of testimony passed from one to another, and eventually, it can be conserved in an archive, that will permit the testimony to survive long after the disappearance of the speaker and the “first listener”.¹²

Nevertheless, re-enacting memories is a process that makes the distinction between memory and history, even though they are mutually productive: as Dominick LaCapra argues, despite the inconstant nature of memory, it is crucial for history, which in turn provides instruments to critically check memory, composed from testimonies of primary witnesses and sources.¹³ In fact, LaCapra underlines how the testimony represents not only “a crucial source for history”, but also an instrument that “poses special challenges to history”: it questions the process of transfer operated by historians and their “acceptance of the subject-position with respect to the witness and his or her testimony.”¹⁴ The American historian argues that this sense of memory lives in the past, but its interpretation is a point of departure for future positions towards the present, thus memory lasts in the future. He criticizes the binary oppositions frequently made between memory and history, because they do not take into account the fact that the historian’s job stems from the ground position of memory, which, for LaCapra, is basically the essence of history. However, testimonies need to be tested by history, which can transmit “a critically tested memory”.¹⁵ Hence, memory and history benefit from an osmotic relationship: history has the role to provide a more exhaustive approach than memory by giving “demographic, ecological and economical overviews”; in particular, it tests the accuracy of factual or fictional remembrance. Meanwhile, memory

¹¹ Ricoeur, Paul, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2004

¹² Ricoeur, P., *Ibid.*

¹³ LaCapra, Dominick, *History and Memory after Auschwitz*, Ithaca, New York and London: Cornell University Press, 1988

¹⁴ LaCapra, D., *Ibid.*

¹⁵ LaCapra, *Ibidem*, pp. 10 - 21

serves to give the emotional consistency to the events (mourning and trauma, the intensity of an experience, the feel of an occurrence).¹⁶

The duty of memory in challenging history has been particularly significant in the confrontation between memories and experiences of ethnic minorities and official and institutional archives. Often, authorship of history has passed through the ownership and control of archives. As Aleida Assmann says, the “archive always belonged to institutions of power: the church, the state, the police, the law (...) without extended archives of data, there is no state bureaucracy, no strategy to organize the future and no control over the past.”¹⁷ Thus, questions over the ownership and the aim of an archive have progressively concerned philosophers and artists interested in challenging the concept of the production of knowledge and how history impacts on cultural memory. Assmann follows Jacob Burckhardt’s idea of “traces” and “messages” to define ways of maintaining active the process of memory. While “messages” are texts and monuments and directed to posterity, often produced by state institutions, “traces” are unintentional leftovers belonging to unrepresented and minority groups.¹⁸

Sas Mays argues that “the art’s relation to archival forms is not simply positive; the twentieth-century Western avant-garde’s antipathy towards the *status quo*, (...) has often been articulated through antipathy toward, for example, the state museum, figured as a mausoleum of dead forms.”¹⁹ Nevertheless, the archive has become one of the most addressed themes in contemporary art: including the use of existent archives for artistic projects, or the production of imaginary museums or collections as the artworks. James Putnam identifies two dominant approaches in archival art, in the artists that use assemblages and different objects collected to create their own *Wunderkammer*, and in those that explore “the parameters between natural and artificial materials, by imaginative manipulation and transformation”.²⁰

¹⁶ LaCapra, Ibidem, pp. 10 - 21

¹⁷ Assmann, Aleida, “Canon and Archive” in Erll, Astrid; Nünning, Ansgar (eds.), *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (pp. 97-108) Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010, p. 98

¹⁸ Assmann, Aleida, Ibidem, p. 98-99

¹⁹ Mays, Sas, “Witnessing the archive: art, capitalism and memory” in *All This Stuff. Archiving the Artist*, (eds.) Vaknin, Judy; Stuckey, Karyn; Lane, Victoria, Oxfordshire: Libri Publishing, 2012, p. 145

²⁰ Putnam, James, *Art and Artifact. The Museum as Medium*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2001

So-called “archival art” has crossed different disciplines from history to ethnography, geology to psychoanalysis. It has always been moved by an encyclopedic spirit but did not always coincide with the principle of historical authenticity.

The process informs the content: the systemic practice of collecting documents or primary sources is the work, even though it is unfinished. Hal Foster is one of the first critics to define archival art practice more like an “archival impulse”, where artists focus on “obscure traces and incomplete projects” that they “might offer points of departure”.²¹ Foster clarifies that archival artists producing collections rather than archives are less interested in the creation of institutional integrity and they suggest other forms of ordering. In fact, Tacita Dean talking about her practice uses the term “collection”, while Sam Durant mentions “combination” and Thomas Hirschhorn talks about “ramifications”. All of these remind us of the endless nature of the process. For a better definition of similar methods, Foster states that “a work is archival since it not only draws on informal archives, but produces them as well, and does so in a way that underscores the nature of all archival materials as found yet constructed, factual yet fictive, public yet private.”²²

Sas Mays has underlined the common identifier between those artists quoted by Foster: all of them show a certain tension “between the archive of the private, and the questioning of public archives.”²³ Generally speaking, their idea of archive corresponds to the figure of the “rhizome”, defined by Deleuze and Guattari in their *Thousand Plateaus*, as a network of “finite” parts, that do not have a beginning or an end, constantly inclined to further versions, and rearranging.²⁴ As Mays argues, in Deleuze and Guattari as much as in Foster, any “rhizomatic” figure needs to avoid fully ordered, centralized forms in order “to connect the unconnectable”.²⁵ Thus, the archival practice is able to maintain a non-hierarchical and rhizomatic form that expands and enables its principle of connectivity. Hence, its territory of work is not restricted to a specific territory. This stateless, “nomad” art creates a smooth space “independent of the classical paths to striation.”²⁶ In *A Thousand Plateaus*, nomad space and nomad art satisfy the

²¹ Foster, Hal, “An Archival Impulse”, *October*, Fall 2004, p.5

²² Foster, Hal, *Ibidem*, p. 6

²³ Mays, Sas, *Ibidem*, pp. 148-149

²⁴ Deleuze, G., Guattari, F., *Ibidem*, pp. 19 - 23

²⁵ Mays, S., *Ibidem*, pp. 146 - 147

²⁶ Deleuze, G.; Guattari, F., *Ibidem*, p. 543

haptic rather than the optical dimension, offering a way to escape the taxonomic order of the traditional archive. The haptic in Deleuze and Guattari reminds us of animality, embodied as it is by rats and wolves, that in the smooth space the haptic perception to create alternative ways of understanding. The interest of both Deleuze and Guattari for the haptic indicates an antipathy towards the archive, towards its vertical, hierarchical and centralised organisation.²⁷ While in Derrida, the haptic corresponds to the need for proximity, the necessity of creating a non-mediated relationship with the impression of the document, and thus the event to which it refers.²⁸

I am attracted by the collision between an archival practice and the physical engagement of the viewer in museums and art spaces. More specifically, during the last four years, I have worked on three projects intertwined with the notion of collection and memory, using methodologies diametrically opposite to ubiquity and synchronicity - features of contemporary communication. The *Dreams' Time Capsule* project is an ongoing audio archive produced by hundreds of participants, where inside an itinerant inflatable structure, their dreams and testimonies were recorded; *Lamine#01* and *Lamine#02* are two installations produced after a process of revision and selection of my photographic archive; *Il Pensiero che non diventa Azione avvelena l'Anima (Words without Action poison the Soul)* is a photographic installation of documents collected while contacting and visiting relatives' victims of the Cosa Nostra, the Sicilian crime organisation born in the 18th Century. The photographic reproductions of significant paperwork and diaries of magistrates and journalists composed a miscellany of the victims' daily instruments. This collection was systematized in a unique installation, accessible to viewers. Each of these works has given me the opportunity for a profound examination of the concept of knowledge and forgotten stories, whilst engaging the audience with my work in both gallery-based spaces and the public realm.

²⁷ Deleuze, G., Guattari, F., Ibidem, 2007, p. 545

²⁸ Mays, S., Ibidem, p. 147. See also Derrida, Jacques, *On touching, Jean-Luc Nancy*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2005, pp. 123 - 126

1.1. The Dreams' Time Capsule

1.1.1. Beginning and aims

Dreams' Time Capsule relates to a ten-year-long process-based participatory project about dreams. The practice was produced through surveys of the public, which were staged within an inflatable structure in which visitors could enter, inhabit, and bear witness to their dreams. The structure was installed in museums, university libraries, and public spaces. The aim has been to create a database and audio-installation in which testimonies of dreams and memories from different continents and generations could be deposited. The work focuses on the relationship between the individual and the society, the private and collective sphere and addresses increasing states of anxiety and fragmentation in the contemporary global community. Since 2011, the audio archive acquired more than 2000 recordings of testimonies in many different languages, during many participatory events hosted in various cities in Europe, Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East. The first step of the work involves the collection of testimony, followed by the organization of the audio recordings, the production of the publication, and finally, the recorded testimonies will then be returned to the original donors in 2021.

The collecting event is always hosted in the public realm by public libraries, museums, and non-profit art spaces to attract and host a broad and diverse audience, regardless of age, nationality, language, religion, education. The shell-shaped inflatable structure is a linen and cotton cabin, hand-stitched and inflated by two internal fans. It is EEC certified and was designed in collaboration with the designer Michele Tavano. It was produced in Piedmont, with the financial support of the Swedish Museum of Architecture. The structure can easily travel inside a suitcase and can be installed indoors or outdoors; it is designed to immerse the visitor in a unique experience of intimacy and silence, which favors the story of a dream and its audio recording by a directional microphone. The gatherings take place within a limited time frame, from three to a maximum of 30 days. The "DTC project" has involved many institutions including the Swedish Museum of Architecture, in Stockholm, Sweden that supported the production of the inflatable structure used for the events. Among the art organisations and museums that hosted the participatory event, there are Botkyrka Konsthall in Fittja, Sweden; kim? Contemporary Art Space in Riga, Latvia; the Museum Castello di Rivoli, in Turin, Italy; the University of Art & Design in Bogotá, Colombia; the Townhouse Gallery, in Cairo, Egypt; the Al Riwaq art space in Manama, Bahrain; the Maraya Art

Center in Sharjah, and Sikka Art Fair in Dubai, and the Yorkshire Sculpture Park in the United Kingdom. Facilitators, procured by the host institution, invite participants to enter the inflatable structure, providing them with a directional microphone. Recordings have no time-limit, the only instruction offered to the donor is to think about a dream that they do not understand but will be returned to them after a specific time. Participants are asked to give information about their birth date, nationality and email contact to return the registration to them in 2021-22, ten years after the beginning of the work. Additionally, they are invited to sign a consent form while recording their oneiric memory (see below), yielding all rights, and intellectual property. Names and email contacts are covered by anonymity.

Given the long period between offering their recording, and its delivery in 2021-22, it is expected that the recording will reflect their past expectations for the future, fragmentations, generational gaps, and tensions dictated by the distance of time. Being a process-based research study of about ten years, the project embodies a series of further considerations in an *a posteriori* approach, intertwined with over two thousand participants' future perspectives for their lives and any socio-economic changes in their respective societies. In particular, the project aims to answer two sets of questions:

- Assuming that dreams represent feelings and cultural backgrounds, how might they reflect social identity? If they are re-elaborations of our waking life, can they reveal social and political tensions in specific political contexts?

- How has sharing the same space informed the experience of thousands of people in the recording of their dream memories?

My interest in dreams, as repositories of collective memory, began in 2011, while I was conceiving my first solo show in a private gallery, during a temporary artist residency in Rotterdam. At that time, the *Maya theory* of the end of the world was resounding in the media, raising many questions before the deadline (how, when, why?). In this context, I started to reflect on the worst-case scenario and imagined that the end was possible: humanity might remain in the ruins of the buildings, while none of the women and men would survive. If every form of life disappeared, maybe some other entity or intelligent organism could visit our world and make it their new home. Then, we could also envisage, that in the future, the new inhabitants would be interested in the previous inhabitants of the earth. Like archeologists, they will try to know us, to understand our history. I asked myself: What would this organism find to define humanity? A part of humanity's knowledge will remain, collected and conserved in li-

braries, and museums; all the signs to understand our points of improvement, the monuments, the architecture, the technological progress represented by digital systems and technological devices. However, is this enough to report our existence? Considering the traditional classifications of knowledge and science, I realized that probably, elements of our history would be hidden to the organism, all the personal aspects of the human, our fears and desires, and the ability of imagination. I concluded that conventional systems of archives are inadequate for the complete representation of the human spirit.

Dreams' Time Capsule is an attempt to document an aspect of our knowledge, considered useless, even though it engages a significant portion of our daily lives. "Oneiric" memory embodies all those experiences lived out during our dreams. The time of sleep is commonly considered to be a time rest, to take a break from waking life, and to allow the body and mind to recuperate. However, we can say, with Ignacio Maiore, that considering the human body and its entire functions, it would be strange if this daily ability to dream would not have any purpose.²⁹

It is feasible that dreams might represent a dialogue between our unconscious and real life, a suspended time, where the conscience analyzes the events which occurred during the waking day, and our hidden and personal reactions to them. Maiore and other modern psychologists consider the symbolic domain of the dream to be a specific moment that permits the conscience to reveal its request, until its conditions will be accepted and solved in the conscious life. Therefore, dreams allow our desires to be expressed and, more importantly, they are a valuable resource for understanding challenges and for proposing solutions for our daily lives.

My first exhibition in a private gallery in Turin was also my first test using a white cube, and I took it as a way to challenge people's interest and engage them in my narration. During a long discussion about my education and poetry with the curator, I found myself retelling a dream that occurred to my grandmother Adalgisa when I was 16. After my grandfather died, Adalgisa moved to my family house. One day I heard her crying, which was her habit after her loss. While entering the room to support her, I was invited to sit on her bed and listen to a dream she just had about my grandfather on the day of his funeral. Relatives and friends were drinking and eating in her house. This friendly atmosphere made her feel angry that people were behaving as if it were a regular dinner, rather than feeling sorry that her husband had died. All of a sudden, someone rang the bell, and my grandfather arrived at his own funeral to ask my grand-

²⁹ Maiore, Ignacio, *Il corpo, La mente e la speranza*, Astrolabio, 2009

mother to fix the elastic band of his underpants, which was something she used to do while dressing a new pair of pants. While she ended that task, my grandfather wore his pants and left the home, taking the alley leading away from their property. She started to follow him, firstly walking, then running, to catch up to him, but never reaching him. When he arrived near the wall of the cemetery, he turned to her and said: "It is too early for you." Then, he entered a door full of light in the wall and disappeared through that mysterious passageway which returned to a solid surface of bricks immediately after.

Adalgisa looked at me asking what the dream could mean, and even though I did not have any idea, my first aim was to comfort her: so I replied that the light inside the door meant that grandfather was in heaven, and she seemed relieved. My grandmother's dream remained profoundly relevant in my own memory, staying there for a decade. I could trace many symbols in it: a door like a passage between two worlds, the chase to reach someone, the light behind the wall.

One main element stimulated my curiosity: Adalgisa was illiterate, where would she find material to feed that imagination? If novels could not inform her unconscious, these visions must have come from something else. Movies? Traditional folklore? Her background conditioned it. My grandmother was born into a family of farmers, living communally: 15 people among cousins, uncles, aunts, and close relatives, and after the marriage, she moved to a similar environment, my grandfather's family was even bigger, they were 23 people. She often told me that when she was living in the countryside, at the end of the day, women and men used to sit around the fire to tell stories and relate facts. During those gatherings, they would recount recent events from their lives or the lives of people they knew, or extraordinary stories they had recently heard. In those encounters, dreams were told where ancestors appeared, or in fact, the dreams turned out to be a premonition. Most of the time fiction and reality were difficult to distinguish. Myths represented wisdom that had been encoded in all humans. According to Carl Gustav Jung, the psyche is composed of three interacting systems: Consciousness/Ego, Personal Unconscious, Collective Unconscious. The first one comprises a series of thoughts, desires, memories, and emotions the individual is aware of, and this constitutes his/her sense of identity and personality. The Personal Unconscious contains temporarily forgotten emotions and repressed memories. The last system is shared with all humans and comprises latent memories of our ancestors: fear of the dark and dangerous animals that can kill us.³⁰

³⁰ Jung, Carl Gustav, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, London: Routledge, 1991

However, ancestral memories have developed within myths and archetypes. The Theory of Archetypes was based on Immanuel Kant's categories, Plato's Ideas, and Arthur Schopenhauer's prototypes. They compose a dynamic structure of ideas common to all humanity within which each adapts his order of knowledge and cultural identity, the experience of life, and personality. The idea of the Great Mother, for instance, is related to cultural and personal memories of individuals. Another famous Jungian archetype is the "monomyth" better known as the 'hero's journey'. In comparative mythology, this is a lone-hero leaving the safety of home and embarking on a risky ordeal because of a crisis. The hero wins a victory and then comes home changed, transformed or enlightened. The study of 'hero-myth' narratives began long before Jung was born when in 1873 anthropologist Edward Tylor first observed common patterns in the plots of the 'hero's journey' in world myths.³¹ Comparative mythologies, legends, religious books, modern fantasy, and sci-fi writers tell of brave protagonists undertaking dangerous journeys in other worlds, alternative coexisting realities, parallel universes, and multiverses.

Religious, mythological, metaphysical and philosophical concepts such as realms of supernatural beings and the spirits of the dead are found in cultures throughout the world, and in the oldest of these myths, people and spirits most often travelled between different worlds along sacred-axes such as trees, rivers, or mountains. In many cultures, the dreaming soul was often considered able "to leave the body and return, even traveling to the region of the dead".³² However, the dream is also considered as a form of discovery in most civilized societies, and many expressions in many languages embody this idea of a connection between the dimensions of sleep and wakefulness. The Italian anthropologist Salvatore D'Onofrio takes into account the Greek philosopher Artemidorus, who distinguished in his book of dreams between *enupition* (dream) and *oneiros* (vision of a dream). The first one is a clue of a future scenario, while the second is the actual condition known by the dreamer".³³ As Barbara Tedlock argues, "some anthropologists now describe dreams as part of a cultural grammar that can be used to both understand one's own consciousness and culture as well as the consciousness and cultures of others (...) Psychologists and psychological anthropologists have pointed out that because dreams are self-expressive they can help in the project of self-interpre-

³¹ Tylor, Edward Burnett, Sir, *Primitive culture: Researches into the development of mythology, philosophy, religion, language, art and custom* (2nd ed.). London: John Murray. 1873, p. 399-400

³² Tylor, Edward Burnett, *Ibidem*, p. 401

³³ D'Onofrio, Salvatore, "Sogno e racconto. La visione del santo nella *Terra del rimorso*", in *HORMOS*, vol. 9, 2007, pp. 105-132

tation.”³⁴ Even though dreaming is a universal function, its encounter is a social expression, thus it is mediated by the cultural and biographical backgrounds of those who are telling the dream. Thus, the *DTC* project started as a resource to explore how different contemporary societies and generations react in front of their dreamlike experiences in various religions, traditions, and geographical areas. So, how could I engage people in public events? How could I attract their interest? How would I economically support this process of collection across different locations?

To reach a wide variety of people living in various and often distant locations, and influenced by local contexts and traditions, I used a portable structure. At the beginning, I thought to buy a *yurtha*, but it was too heavy to ship and too expensive. Then I found images of some inflatable structures designed by the Berlin-based collective of architects Plastique Fantastique. I contacted them, and they agreed to loan me one of their bubble-shaped installations for a public event staged in Turin during the days of the Artissima Art Fair. The first collection event took place from the 3rd to the 6th of November 2011, in the public square Maria Vittoria in Rome, near to the Alberto Peola Gallery, where my solo show *Museum Caneira | the physics of the possible* was taking place. The show was a staged fiction based on the fictional character Alexander Prus Caneira, a professor of physics who disappeared while he was studying a worldwide ritual of bequeathing lockets from fathers to their sons. The lockets represented doors that, based on their owners’ testimonies, allowed them to wake up in different places to where they fell asleep. The fiction was supported in the show by the collection of lockets in a museum display, essays, and a mock-documentary. The discovery of passages to parallel worlds was documented and played as a prelude to the external bubble installation of the *Dreams’ Time Capsule* project. Visitors of the show were invited to believe that Caneira had found a possible link between the dream state and the scientific theory of “many worlds”.

The first collecting point was a success, more than one hundred people entered the blue-bubble shaped structure loaned by the German collective, during three days of heavy rain. Most of these people were touring the district of galleries in the center of Turin, during the days of the Artissima Art Fair. However, that first participatory event was a test for the public art installation. I could easily note that one of the problems was that the structure was too massive to be contained in a suitcase and needed to be shipped, besides, its fabrication, made with different welding pieces, was not resilient enough to support numerous travels and installations. Therefore, my next goal was to

³⁴ Tedlock, Barbara, “Bicultural Dreaming as an Intersubjective Communicative Process” in *Dreaming*. 17(2) : 57-72, June 2007

produce a new inflatable structure, finding collaboration with a designer and financial partner.

Udine-based designer, Michele Tavano, collaborated with me in the production of a new structure at the end of my solo show. Michele was intrigued by my view of touring a participatory platform that was created to engage visitors because he was always fascinated by itinerant modules of houses. An artist colleague put me in contact with an artisan based in Piedmont, with whom he had produced many inflatable installations. Mauro Oggero is an artisan who makes hot-air balloons and occasionally installations for artists. The first stage was designing the installation with Michele: over approximately two months, meeting twice a week, we improved the design. We discussed shapes and technical solutions, and we shared many drawings and considerations about what was more attractive and effective for an intimate experience.

The result has been a successful synthesis of form and function: the seashell-shaped structure convinced people to donate their memories, and established the best state in which they would be able to remember and relate one of their dreams. Previously, I had gathered testimonies via interviews and personal questions, and I was aware that something very personal and non-voluntary such as a dream could be difficult to expose to a stranger. Thus, I had to create the decoration or perfect environment to lead them from real life to a form of *confessional* behaviour in which they could be projected onto the dream-like sphere.

In the process of creating this installation, I remembered a dream encounter told to me by my mother a few months before I met Michele.

In the dream, my mother was near a detached house made of red brick, trying to find its entrance, touching every side of the house and every inch of it, but she could not find a way to access the building. Looking for some meanings in that dream on the internet, I found that the image of the house represents our soul. Since the beginning, I decided that the space that hosted visitors should be an abstract, empty and silent space, with a microphone. I had concluded that this was the best solution to protect the participants' intimacy to allow the donor to remember their dreams. However, my mother's dream remained in the forefront of my mind, and during conversations with the designer Michele Tavano, we spent a long time defining the door design: I imagined the structure, conceiving a small passage that forces the visitors to move and adapt their bodies to the narrow aperture. Similar to a tent, the entrance had an L-shaped zipper opening, located on the single layer area of the membrane. The door was 20 cm high from the floor, and required the donor to enter sideways, by one foot at a time. In

so doing, visitors would struggle to enter the capsule, to “physically” renovate their will to be part of the participatory process.

After sending Mauro Oggero a layout, he gave consistency to our design, with a large amount of calculation to reach the maximum weight allowed for suitcases by the majority of flight companies. After ten days Mauro provided the quote for the realization of the new inflatable structure, approximately ten thousand euros to build a hand-sealed structure with two covers (one waterproof and the other against strong sunlight in desert areas), and equipped with two small fans. After some hesitation, I was convinced by the need to produce a prototype that would solve the main problems presented by the Plastic Fantastique’s structure. Firstly, the repetitive deflation that occurred when the zipper was open to let enter visitors - the new installation would pump the air inside a cavity that surrounds the structure rather than directly into the space inhabited by visitors. Secondly, the fan used by the Berlin-based collective was too cumbersome to be contained in the same suitcase used for the installation. Oggero proposed two fans sized only 20x20x5 cm and they could be inserted inside the installation. Lastly, the first structure was built with plastic pieces pasted together, thus destined to be used for a limited number of times, while the new installation was hand-sealed and would allow infinite inflations and deflations without losing its resistance. I then spent approximately six months working with many curators, collaborators, collectors, and applying for funding. At a key moment, the curator of my solo show in Turin put me in contact with Magnus Ericsson, the former curator of the Swedish Museum of Architecture; he agreed to fully support the cost of the design and production of my installation in exchange for its presentation at the Arkitekturmuseet in Stockholm. Additionally, in June 2012, the project travelled to Cairo, where I was invited to spend two months in residence at the Townhouse Gallery. The Swedish museum and its curator liked the idea of staging it during the first free elections in Egypt, one year after the Arab revolution, which occurred after thirty years of the Mubarak dictatorship. Between March and May 2012, I confirmed the budget and we started the production of the capsule.

1.1.2. The encounter and memory

Although many research areas have explored dreams and the processing of memories, as well as social and personal experiences, the dream remains relatively un-

derstudied in terms of its relationship with our contemporary society, where social networking websites and the internet have increased the externalization of personal memories. The dream might be considered to be a useless element of our life and, therefore, discarded by the conventional areas of knowledge. In reality, the dream occupies a large part of our wealth of memories, because all dreams pass through our minds as life experiences and, even if we do not remember them all, it does not mean that they are not real.

In the anthropological field, there is a specific distinction between dreaming as a mental act, that could not be recorded, and the account of the dream, which is a “public social performance” that take place while the dreamer tells about his/her experience.³⁵ Dreaming is a unique state of mind where imagination and fragments of real life (memories) are mixed. I expected that there would be a constant negotiation between memory and imagination in people’s encounters during the project. At the beginning of the project, I met the anthropologist Salvatore D’Onofrio from the Laboratoire d’Anthropologie Sociales of Paris, who was interested in the relationship between dream and encounter. In his text “Sogno e Racconto”, he underlines how the concept of memory is connected to viewing. This is traceable in many languages, for example in modern Greek where the expression *eida ston hupno mou* (“I have seen in a dream”), or the other *eida éna òneiro* (“I have seen a dream”) are equivalent to *oneireuomai* (“to dream”). Generally, while the encounter begins the expression used is *eida ston hupno mou* (“I have seen in a dream”). In addition, D’Onofrio remembers that the nightly dream is also culturally associated with the desire to realize specific aims: Martin Luther King’s expression *I have a dream* embodied the hope of taking effective action against a *status quo*. Thus, the dream belongs to a series of conditions which enable humans to symbolically erase those space-time borders that are self-made by individuals. D’Onofrio argues that during the dream the human imagination dismantles what was realized during the day; while awake, the mind tries to elaborate a symbolic correspondence in accordance with the biographical and cultural background of the dreamer, in order to remove those obstacles encountered in sleep.³⁶ In his writing about Marcel Proust, Walter Benjamin uses the same image while describing Proust’s weaving of his memory as a counterpart of Penelope’s work of unravelling.³⁷ Similarly, “the day unravels what the night has woven.

³⁵ Tedlock, Barbara, “The New Anthropology of Dreaming”, in *Dreaming*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1991

³⁶ D’Onofrio, Salvatore, *Ibidem*, pp. 106 - 107

³⁷ Benjamin, Walter, “The Proust images” in Benjamin, W., 1892-1940, Arendt, H., 1906-1975, & Zohn, H. *illuminations*. London: Collins-Fontana Books, 1973, p. 202

When we awake each morning, we hold in our hands, usually weakly and loosely, but a few fringes, of the tapestry of lived life, as loomed for us by forgetting.” Thus, forgetting and remembering are two faces of the same process, and the fading memory of dreams is a constant condition of our waking.

The anthropologist Amira Mittermaier is one of the few researchers who has analyzed “the role of dreams in ‘undreamy’ times (...) their having significance in people’s lives and, more literally in the sense of having an impact of the visible, material world.” I met her in Cairo, while I was staging the collecting point at the Townhouse Gallery, at the beginning of July 2012, during the days of the first democratic vote after the end of the Mubarak dictatorship. She told me the connection between her expertise as an anthropologist, her familiarity with Egypt, and both Freudian and Jungian psychology.³⁸ Her book *Dreams That Matter: Egyptian Landscapes of the Imagination* considers the political and ethical value of the dream and how “Egyptian dream-stories not only are affected by political conditions, but are also themselves of political relevance in that they affect how people live in the world and how they relate to others.”³⁹ Her research influenced my work as a confrontation between “the dream’s inter-relational dimensions, and the persistent myth of the autonomous, liberal subject”, and how her “interlocutors’ understandings of the imagination” can rupture consolidated rational paradigms.⁴⁰

Remembering is a process activated by its use and by external impulses. In this context, dreams have been identified as a tool for dealing with traumatic events and all those states of anxiety experienced during waking life. Sigmund Freud’s concept of ‘childhood amnesia’ describes the lack of recall adults have of their first three or four years, and their lack of solid memories until around the age of seven years old.⁴¹ For over a century, there has been a debate about whether memories of these early years are tucked away in some part of our brains and need only a cue to be recovered. The most recent research suggests that the distinction of a cognitive Self appears around the age of two or three, and this is a crucial point in the process of the memory transcription

³⁸ Mittermaier’s Egyptian mother is a Jungian psychoanalyst and psychotherapist, and her German father is a psychiatrist and neurologist.

³⁹ Mittermaier, Amira. *Dreams That Matter: Egyptian Landscapes of the Imagination*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011, p. 2

⁴⁰ Mittermaier considers her interlocutors’ dream-stories as critiques to ratiocentrism theories in Connolly (1999), Foucault (1970), Latour (1993), and Tambiah (1990). Ibidem, p. 4

⁴¹ Freud, Sigmund, *Screen Memories*. (J. Strachey, Collected Papers, Vol. 5, pp. 47–69). London: Hogarth Press, 1899

of first memories.⁴² The concurrent development of language allows children to share with their parents and relatives a series of souvenirs that they lived. For instance, the psychologist Federica Artioli has demonstrated that, in Italy, young adults from extended families had earlier and denser memories than those from nuclear families, presumably as a result of more intense family reminiscence.⁴³ Therefore, we might surmise that narration improves our consciousness, and without it, recent memories would supplant earlier ones.

In general, identity construction is more dependent on self-narration and linked to autobiographical events in Western societies. The comparative study of social identities through oral memories should take into account cultural differences in sharing memories and the self-representation of attitudes. These cultural differences may surface across generations in which case memories of historical and political events help to identify each generation.⁴⁴ However, in Eastern and Asiatic cultures, autobiographical memory is not traditionally central, because the sense of recognition is achieved through a sense of collective identity, based on the effectiveness of group actions towards others rather than on the emergent individuality.⁴⁵

In Western countries, dreams are mostly considered to be personal experiences connected to daily life, like leftovers of emotions and images recorded during the day. On the other hand, in the Near Eastern countries, dreams are thought of as symbols, concepts, ideas representing larger notions and possibilities. In Arabic thinking, dream life is connected to the supernatural (*alam al-akbira*) and represents a threshold with the hidden, when the human spirit enters into contact with evil spirits (*Shaytan*). Lucid or revealing dreams are facilitated by a series of rituals before sleeping (praying, washing teeth, resting on the right side, examining one's conscience) and they cannot be revealed to everyone and have to be interpreted by religious authorities.

For instance, during the collecting events in Bahrain, Dubai, and Sharjah, I noticed a strong reluctance among the visitors to record their real dreams, and many people preferred to record desires rather than actual dreams. In Egypt, there was a different tendency: dreamlike narratives are commonly shared with family and friends, and

⁴² Conway, M. A. *Memory and the Self*. *Journal of Memory and Language*, 53, (2005) pp. 594–628

⁴³ F. Artioli, P.C. Cicogna, M. Occhionero & E. Reese, "The people I grew up with: sociodemographic factors in early memories in an Italian sample." in *Memory*, 20, (2012) pp. 189-197

⁴⁴ Holmes & Conway, "Generation Identity and the Reminiscence Bump: Memory for Public and Private Events" in *Journal of Adult Development*, Volume 6, Issue 1, (January, 1999) pp 21–34

⁴⁵ Markus, Hazel Rose, & Kitayama, Shinobu "Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation" in *Psychological Review*, 98(2), (1991) pp. 224-253

there is a series of symbolic interpretations coming from Ancient Egypt. In addition, in Colombia, I could verify the same value of epiphany given to visions occurred during sleep, coming from the shamanic tradition existing in South America. Colombian students and users of the University Library at the Jorge Tadeo University of Bogotá participated with enthusiasm in the project in 2013. Listening to their recording, I traced a different aptitude in the dream narratives. A pervasive sense of mystery around this aspect of dreaming is shared by all the participants, but it is particularly intense in the Egyptian and Colombian encounters. In fact, there are plenty of words describing events unexpected or their mysterious nature ('all of a sudden', 'mysterious light', 'suddenly') and they provide many details about rituals with candles, and deceased relatives appearing (Colombian dreams), or symbolic images like animals or elements of life such as water, fire, earth (Egyptian dreams). In contrast, recordings collected in Latvia and Italy revealed a consistent number of encounters with the image of the journey, leading the protagonist through exotic locations (deserts, islands, historical scenarios such as the Middle Age or the Second World War). There is a predominance of dreams where the historical and political context has a relevant role and create the scenario for the protagonist's action. Listening and translating Swedish narratives, I traced a peculiar presence of nature as a character of the dream (snow, ice, and the weather in general are recurring themes of these recordings).

In July 2016, the DTC project was hosted at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park over ten days. Visitors to the museum demonstrated massive participation, with about 300 recordings. The contents draw a more synthetic and private vision of dreams, probably influenced by the Freudian tradition of psychoanalysis, in contrast to previous cases. The recurring feeling of anxiety in the dreams could be interpreted by June 2016, EU Referendum in the UK. The recent Brexit result had occurred just a few weeks before and the persistent campaign of 'Leave' or 'Remain' surrounded people for many months, becoming the central theme of conversations, and political debates during leisure and work time. This contingency offered the opportunity to trace a recurring feeling of anxiety in the majority of recordings and allows a reflection on the role of media, electoral tests and their influence on our personal sphere. It raised particular questions about how we can read time and social contingencies through the variety of inputs received during a participatory and relational work.

1.1.3. States of consciousness: dreaming and remembering in the era of Digital Capitalism

In a prescient article from 1962, Umberto Eco argued that modern art was characterized by a new form of cultural production that he called the “open work”. The theory of open work was part of Eco’s growing insistence on *polysemy* in art, as well as his increasing emphasis on the active role of the reader in the production of meaning.⁴⁶ In the *DTC project*, engaging people to enter an inflatable installation, to sit alone inside it and record their memory of a real dream, produces an open work where the content is also conditioned and influenced by the contingency of the recording. How is the recording process experienced differently for participants who have shared the same space with hundreds of other people all over the world? Participants were aware of contributing to a collective process-based project informed by geographical and temporal coordinates and projected towards a future outcome. In Cairo, as they left the capsule, participants remarked on the unusual experience of being alone in one of the most densely populated cities in the world.

The variability of the process determines the continuous expansion of the action: in the interaction between the public and materials (recorder, chair, and installation) as well as in the period of registration and the time following transcription. The meeting between the participant and the inflatable structure creates a unique experience of timeless self-reflection and projection towards the future. From 2011 to 2019, the art project aimed to create a laboratory that can be both content and container, an experiment consisting of an archive of the process of oneiric memory, in a collection process of ten years’ total duration. I have already described before how temporal and geographical conditions have informed the art project, but there is another aspect to consider which remains unpredictable until the restitution of the testimonies in 2022: the distance of time between the recording of the dreams and their return to the donors and the restitution. Being a ‘time capsule’, the audio-file will be returned to its legitimate donor, in order to give her/him a memory that is parallel to the historical distance and allow them to understand and interpret it in the best possible way.

In a recent essay on participatory art, Boris Groys defines true interactivity as “as opening up to conditions, locations, and participation which contribute actively to the realization of a participatory work”. According to Groys, the tendency towards collabo-

⁴⁶ Eco, Umberto, *Opera aperta. Forma e indeterminazione nelle poetiche contemporanee*, Milano: Bompiani, 2013

rative work “questions and transforms the fundamental condition of how modern art functions - namely, the radical separation of artists and their public.” The economic valuation of artworks amplifies the distance between the artist and its audience, because the financial value is always mediated by professionals (galleries, art advisors, auctions). Thus, the binding value of art can be explored only in non-commercial practice. In an essay about participatory projects, Groys compares bodily and virtual participation underlining the fact that the “bodily experience, for which modern art has continually striven, is absent in virtual communication. As a computer user, one is engrossed in solitary communication with the medium; one falls into a state of self-oblivion, of unawareness of one’s own body, that is analogous to the experience of reading a book.” In fact, even though Net Art participatory projects and collections made online are participatory, they require a good deal of knowledge in using internet technology. While dealing with the idea of collecting dream testimonies, I discovered many websites where people can report their dream memories. I realized that digital devices make a differentiation on the basis of technological knowledge. On the contrary, I was looking for a system of collection accessible “here and now beyond education, professionalisation, and specialisation”.⁴⁷

On the other hand, collaboration in the creation of an artwork establishes a more egalitarian and democratic aspect to the project. It is a gesture that cedes control of the content of the recording and entails a different relationship between the artist and visitors. As argued also by Claire Bishop, this choice “is understood both to emerge from, and to produce, a more positive and non-hierarchical social model”.⁴⁸ Furthermore, cultural, political and social conditions that surround visitors during their participation make an additional contribution to the selection of the encounter destined to be recorded. In the time-frame between remembering, selecting, and telling their experience, participants are emotionally conditioned by different factors such as recent news, personal events and, generally, their environment.

However, over the last ten years, cuts to public funding for the arts industries has influenced artistic programmes: art spaces are less inclined to host non-commercial exhibitions, such as participatory projects, or ephemeral events. As Nicolas Bourriaud argues, the “(artist) dwell(s) in the circumstances the present offers him, to turn the

⁴⁷ Groys, Boris, “A Genealogy of Participatory Art” in *The art of participation: 1950 to now*, Freling, Rudolf, San Francisco : San Francisco Museum of Modern Art ; New York, London : Thames & Hudson, 2008, p. 19-48

⁴⁸ Bishop, Claire, “Viewers as Producers” in *Participation* (p. 10-17). London : Whitechapel and MIT Press, 2006, p 12

setting of his life (his links with the physical and conceptual world) in a lasting world (...). Its plan, which has just as much to do with working conditions in which cultural objects are produced, as with the changing forms of social life...”⁴⁹ These sentences are particularly significant for projects where costs, time, shipping, and work conditions are not covered by the economic value of the artwork. Additionally, for this reason, the flexibility of the *DTC project* in using external areas of the museum, filling gaps in the art programme, and proposing a commonly interesting theme, like dreams, at a low cost, was appreciated by museums, art spaces and institutions. Shipping costs for the installation were included in the costs of my flight. This strategy allowed me to tour the project through Europe, the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa through multiple venues such as museums, art spaces and university libraries. As with German-based conceptual artist Tino Sehgal’s ephemeral performances, many artworks in relational art constitute “moments of sociability”, or are “objects producing moments of sociability.”⁵⁰ Many artistic projects engaged in relational aesthetics are created to set in context the development of growing urbanism on a world scale that has brought increased social exchanges and mobility. Thus, relational art reminds us that memory is always formed at specific times and in specific places, contrasting contemporary activities of digital memory. In this sense, relational and participatory art are potentially able to give a sense of community in the notion of Jean-Luc Nancy, as an “interruption of singularities” where a better awareness of political and social conflicts can be addressed.⁵¹

Previously, the project traced pre- and post-election climates in some countries that have undergone significant political changes. In 2012, the research project took place during the first democratic elections in Cairo, after decades of former President Mubarak’s dictatorship. People between 20 and 40 years of age were voting for their first time. In the ensuing period, the military government removed the winning coalition only a few months after the results. In 2016, the project was hosted in the Yorkshire area, in the United Kingdom, just one month after the Brexit vote. Listening to the collected recordings, the majority of dreams and wish testimonies revealed a persistent use of the word “anxiety”. Given the nature of the survey’s engagement of its participants, with an appeal directed towards their future themselves, the investigation

⁴⁹ Bourriaud, Nicolas, *Relational Aesthetics*, Paris: Les presses du réel, 2002, p. 20-21

⁵⁰ Bourriaud, Nicolas, *Ibid*, p. 15

⁵¹ Nancy, Jean-Luc, *The Inoperative Community*, ed Peter Connor (Minneapolis Minnesota University Press, 1991), p. 31

revealed personal perceptions about the experience of being part of contemporary global society. As a consequence, the project represents an invitation for participants to gain a better comprehension of their pasts and actions and it can provide crucial insights into a range of themes, including personal expectations or anxieties about politics, or the formation of alternative social identities.

At the same time, the confrontation between recurring themes and words can give us clues to the main fears and desires shared by communities of the same country or continent, and if there are dominant state of minds or factors that condition our contemporary times. Even though memories of dreams will have little, ostensibly, in common with the convention of realistic narrative, they do represent a combination of historical, poetic and legendary forms of speech, where personal and collective imagination are intertwined. As Alessandro Portelli argues on oral history life stories, “The degree of presence of ‘formalised materials’ like proverbs, songs, formulaic language, stereotypes, can be a measure of the degree of presence of a ‘collective viewpoint’”.⁵²

As we have witnessed in the 2016 U.S. election, and the Facebook-Cambridge Analytica data scandal, the political potential stored in the complex networked analytics of information and their neural analogues is now being fully engaged as an apparatus of control. Data is used to create psychographic profiles and suggest what kind of advertisement would be most useful to persuade a particular person in a particular location for some political event. Economies of attention and inattention, cloud analytics, memes, social media, and fake news are subjectivizing communication. Could the worldwide wave of populism be the result of forms of embodied and extended cognition linked to contemporary neoliberal apparatus? How can this tendency be traced in contemporary art?

Considering what was said above about the need to recreate moment of sociability through artistic intervention, the *DTC project* should retain a physical form, represented by a final audio installation, which will create an experience for visitors. It would also represent a source of data readable from different scientific perspectives. The audio installation will embody the dream memories of all the participants, which will allow listening to hundreds of voices and encounters. I conceived a metal ring-shaped audio-installation in which five CD players will be installed. The movement of the CDs will animate the piece with a continuous and hypnotic dynamic. The audio archive will be accessible through headphones to visitors that can sit down on the floor or the

⁵² Portelli, Alessandro, “The peculiarity of oral history”, in *History Workshop Journal*, no. 30, Autumn, 1981, pp. 96 - 107

pillows to listen to the voices of the dreamers in the original languages. In so doing, the listening will be private and collective at the same time, as the act of recording was staged in the public realm but in a private and intimate space. Simultaneously, I will continue to work with scientists and researchers interested in analyzing the data and creating a database with the most recurring images occurred in this vast assemblage of voices from 2011-2022. This will lead to the publication of a collected volume with a selection of scientific contributions from the international academics involved during the research project, and the non-academics partners that hosted the participatory events.

At the end of the overall process, it will be interesting to see to what extent it was able to reveal the political tensions of the second decade of the 21st Century. Currently, it has achieved the creation of a network of museums and art spaces where the institutions themselves became temporary producers and arenas for social and aesthetic encounters. In so doing, it created discursive public spaces, where after leaving a trace, the audience received back the resonant memorandum to pay attention to oneiric activity.

1.2 *Lamine (Foils) #01 and Lamine (Foils) #02*

1.2.1. Emotions as systems of memory

With digital technologies, the “supply” of images does not find a correspondence in the “demand”. We are producing more images than we can see, print, or collect. We have progressively delegated our memories to digital cameras and smartphones. Hence, a significant amount of irrelevant images is stored in our external memories (hard disks, memory cards) and they are destined to be forgotten. Notably, new communication media have changed our perception of time and, therefore, memory. The present crushes us, and what happened two months ago seems to have happened years ago. What does this removal mechanism influence? Memory, like everything in the human body, has a specific function, to supply information for action, so we might ask how does its way of storing information today affect our actions tomorrow? Is visual art able to let collective memory survives through visualisation? And, what we retain of an experience, how do we recall its memory?

Neuroscientist Israel Rosenfield explains, “what the brain must do - it’s probably the principal reason brains evolved - is to create a stable, coherent sensory environment for the individual organism to understand and use. The brain does this by ‘inventing’ a range of perceptions: a series of constructs that we ‘see,’ ‘hear,’ and ‘feel’ when we look, listen, and touch.”⁵³ In a constantly changing perceptual environment, Rosenfield theorizes that sensorial data are the main tools to explore and stabilize a visual and acoustic knowledge, but emotions are the main elements for memory classification. Their intensity will decrease over time, but never disappear completely, while other details can. In other words, this means that our point of view, what we felt at that time, has priority over the information: perception plays a central role. We often observe different memories of the same event, because everyone sees things differently. The storage that is the stabilization of information in memory allows us to absorb the memories. As previously mentioned, Artioli noted that the members of large families have a greater ability to remember their childhood, because the narrative, the establishment of mythology around the past events, allowed them to hold more memory. In conclusion, we can say that the retelling is one of the ways to allow the process consolidation of a memory, transforming it from short-term memory into long-term memory. However, it can change slightly depending on the features added or obfuscated

⁵³ Rosenfield, Israel, *The Invention of Memory*, (New York: Basic Books, 1988)

during reiteration of the memory.⁵⁴

There are many artists that have worked with archival material drawing a delicate balance between archival material and new fictions or the re-enactment of archives: Tacita Dean is able to do so, in creating fictional characters anchored to history through narrations staged in the past; Zoe Leonard with her postcards of the Niagara Falls demonstrated that photography reminds all the time of the past and present of an event. Similarly, Fiona Tan uses archival movies and documentary about Indonesian colonies at the beginning of the 20th Century to re-stage the point of view of white educated people to colonised societies.

Following my interest in visualisation and memory, I encountered the book of Joshua Foer, a science-journalist who spent one year with a group of top “mental athletes”, some of whom were participants of the United States Memory Championship. Foer explains in his book, *Moonwalking with Einstein: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything*, that he was fascinated by those people who are able to learn an entire book in one hour, a chest of cards, or a numeric series in half an hour, and at the end he was curious to know how memory works. A group of researchers from the London School of Science & Technology analysed some of these mental athletes and found them neither smarter nor more educated than normal people. Rather they applied more time in training their memory every day, and when this happens, the areas of the brain used are the same as those used for orientation. Our ability of visualisation has a great power of memorization. In ancient Rome and Greece, masters used imagery to memorize their speeches. Foer remembers that the “memory palace” or “method of loci” technique applied visualisations of familiar information about one’s environment, to quickly and efficiently recall information. For example, Cicero used familiar places to recall arguments of his speeches and to report them to the audience. Thus, as proof of his research, Foer adopted this tested method on his own memory. He spent 15 minutes every day for a year learning by heart, poems, receipts and telephone books, then participated in the United States Memory Championship, and won it.

Being inspired by this literature, in 2015 I started to deal with my archive with the work, *Lamine (Foils) #01*, which is the first of a series of archival structures where I decided to include pictures taken in different journeys. *Lamine (Foils)* is a structure in iron that contains eight framed photographs installed in four vertical drawers that can be pulled out by the visitors, allowing them to create a new narration through images. The process of selection and revision of images stimulates the beginning of new narratives;

⁵⁴ F. Artioli; P.C. Cicogna; M. Occhionero; E. Reese, “The people I grew up with : The role of sociodemographic factors in early memories in an Italian sample”, in *MEMORY*, 2012, 20 (2), pp. 189 - 197

the pattern is a selected pile of pictures where new varieties in collocation enable a new life. Pictures are like objects with souls: inside the hard-drive, they were forgotten and almost lost, while chosen to be printed and exposed, they arise to a new fate. However, this new destiny would not work without the spectators: they pull out the drawer containing a couple of pictures, and they look at, study, and question them. This allows the pictures to entangle new gatherings with the viewer's own imagination and memory. The title hints at the metal drawers which hold the framed prints, but also to the imaginary foils existing in our mind, each of them with its color, reminiscent of a specific emotion and scenario of our past.

The photographs were taken in different years and journeys through Europe, India, the Middle East, and Latin America. All of them were chosen according to a personal criterion: they enclose the suspended atmosphere of a long journey between places that is difficult to decipher. Empty wardrobes in hotel rooms, booths that are witnesses to meetings, broken train rails, isolated Middle Eastern beaches, conspire to transport the viewer into a scene that is sometimes mysterious, sometimes surreal, where the story seems to develop in multiple directions, in an atmosphere of continuous drift. The work recalls the intimacy of continuous exploration, to the evocative and meaningful power of the image.

In *Lamine (Foins) #01*, the criterion for the selection was the search for the non-places situation, following Marc Augé's idea of the experience of super-modernity or late-capitalist existence. The non-place [*non-lieu*] refers to the anonymity of places to which we have become accustomed to during our daily journeys - train stations and airports - places without any historical connotation.⁵⁵

The second structure *Lamine (Foins) #02* addresses the sense of precariousness in contrast with the magical aspect of the reality: the unexpected beauty of sunshine projected onto a house is compared to unstable scotch tape that covers a hole in a water pipe. It tries to focus the problematic balance between the way we live and the way we struggle to manage the everyday. The entire series touches on these two forces traced through small elements in our daily life. Some images capture unique moments of peace and beauty like the temporary ray of the sunset projected on a wall in Cairo, a beautiful rainbow occurred in an overexposed and damaged film. Others focus the bu-limic and chaotic sense of our societies or are neutral images that can prelude to positive or negative events like an insect-shaped spot on a bedsheet. None of them gives

⁵⁵ Augé, Marc, *Non Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, Verso Books, 2003

much information about time and space, thus keep this idea of the existential human state.

1.2.2. Selection of memories: form and content

The *Lamine* series is the re-enactment of my personal photographic storage and it is inspired by a common problem regarding the oblivion of documents in a digital catalogue. The process of selection is the concept around which the artwork is built. It is inspired by the nature of remembering and forgetting, as part of active working memory operated by individuals, but also by societies. Aleida Assmann argues that the role of the archive is to “provide a kind of counterbalance against the necessarily reductive and restrictive drive of working memory.”⁵⁶ The photographic medium leads the author to collect temporalities, and create new documents; this activity implies a double aspect in regards to the value of the photograph as a document. This point is echoed by Gerhard Richter in the presentation of Derrida’s book on Photography: “witnessing the world, it brings also its significance as the object”.⁵⁷

This double meaning is often used by artists in the construction of meta-realities, or fictions, using the language of the museum exhibition or also that of the collection, to create a fiction. The vast amount of information or evidence creates the idea of universality, and reminds us of the ancestral *Wunderkammer*, which tried to represent the world in its variety.

On the other hand, as Eduardo Cadava reminds us, the photographic image “bears witness to the enigmatic relation between death and survival, loss and life, destruction and preservation, mourning and memory” so that the image often tells us that “what dies, is lost, and mourned within the image... is the image itself.”⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Assmann, Aleida. *Ibidem*, p. 106

⁵⁷ “Photography’s function as a witness is not necessarily limited to what is depicted in any single photograph, its apparent subject or content. Witnessing also takes place as the procedure of a recording, storing, and dissemination of technically mediated inscription; a photograph, therefore, also bears witness in that it activates the circulation of a certain cultural memory and exchange through its medium-specific modes of writing, inspection, and interpretation.” Richter, Gerhard, “Between translation and invention”, in *Copy, Archive, Signature. A conversation of Photography*, Derrida, Jacques, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010, p. XXIV-XXV

⁵⁸ Cadava, Eduardo, “Lapsus imaginis: The Image in Ruins,” in *October* 96 (spring 2001): 35–60, here 35. in Eduardo Cadava, *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 35

For all said above, the opportunity for inclusion or exclusion of an image, or information, is continually questioned and considered while the artist frames them within a new context. In the case of digital data that do not have a physical consistency, the existence is even more fragile: memories can be lost when devices are subjected to technological changes or accidents (such as de-magnetisation).

When I started this work, I felt the necessity to create a new narration, to find the main themes that could entail most of the images/suggestions collected during years. Like in the idea of finding a universality beyond my private memories, I have been looking for invisible and cultural codes behind my own process of producing images. The non-place is a cathartic element of my work that feeds the memory of an event and the feelings lived in that situation. Even when I do not work on my personal experiences, but on others' lives and memories, I find inspiration by coming back to the places involved: the search for evidence that I did not live personally brings me to the challenging action of visualising someone else's memory.

Precariousness is another key theme that I have found, looking at some of the pictures taken among different places and times. I started to reflect on the dualistic essence of precariousness: it can be solved positively through acts of unexpected beauty, or leading to the loss of integrity, to the accident.

The process of selection is mainly important while archives are organised by institutions of power. As mentioned before, their ownership has always been connected to their aim of controlling the past and organising people's future. For this reason, artists have progressively started to challenge the concept of archive, testing its limits. *Lamine* is inscribed in this same attempt. It is an experimental project addressing the failure of archives in organising history and cultural memory. I started by my own photographic archive to test the sense of incompleteness of compilations, and challenge the ownership of archives. Each organised compilation should be accessible and allow further and alternative organisations as a counterbalance for what was omitted. Any inclusion implies always an exclusion. Thus, *Lamine* engages people's imagination to integrate incomplete encounters as a reaction to the dictatorship of the archive. This idea dominates both the production and the presentation, shifting my action of selection to that of the viewer, who can select the pictures by pulling out the drawers of the installation. There is a coming together of the physical extraction of the pictures and the intellectual selection of images. As frames are pulled out and the content of images assimilated, the movement of eyes and arms involve 'spectators' perception towards the generation of new narration of those pictured places and objects.

Lamine#01 and *Lamine#02* were shown at the Artissima Art Fair in Turin and the Ma*Ga Museum of Contemporary Art of Gallarate, at the end of 2016. In this second show, visitors were invited to pull out the drawers of the two structures. They were attracted by the idea of touching an artwork, in contrast with the majority of museum visits, which generally prohibits contact with artworks. They were able to open all of the drawers and to look for meanings in and between the images, but the criteria were not disclosed to the visitors. Thus, they were free to draw their own ideas and conclusions. One criticism was moved by a couple of visitors who expressed their disappointment about the fact that the drawers could be opened only in one direction. This limited the number of viewers that could access the work at the same time. I take viewers' advice to heart because I realize how I could improve the interaction of the public for the design's conception of my next installation *Il Pensiero che non diventa Azione avvelena l'Anima* (*Words without Action poison the Soul.*)

1.3. *Il Pensiero che non diventa Azione avvelena l'Anima (Thoughts Without Actions poison the Soul)*

The project *Il Pensiero che non diventa Azione avvelena l'Anima (Words without Action poison the Soul)* started in 2014 when I was asked to conceive a work on the Mafia for a group exhibition. However, I was able to produce that project only in 2018, thanks to a series of favorable coincidences: the Manifesta Biennial taking place in Palermo in 2018, the collaboration with two host organizations, and the winning of a considerable funding. The first two factors contributed to achieving the latter, the recent financing created by the Italian Ministry of Culture, called “Italian Council” destined to support innovative artistic projects. The work embodies recurring themes in my work: the use of private and public archives, oral history, the double nature of documents like images and objects and their role in the digital era, and lastly, the relationship between historical events and my personal biography.

Despite the geographical and biographical distance between my childhood and the places and period in which these violent murders took place (and probably *because* of those distances), I was curious to investigate the violent and tragic period in Palermo called the “Mafia Wars”.⁵⁹ Everything started when the Corleone family decided to climb up in the hierarchic order of the Cosa Nostra organization. Tired of sharing the business with the other clans of the city, the boss Luciano Liggio and his pupils Salvatore Riina and Bernardo Provenzano created a violent army that killed all the components and friends of the clan rivals, to take control of the drugs trade. It is important to remember that at the beginning of the 1970s, Palermo took over control of the drugs trade from Marseilles, and became the main centre of production for the rest of Europe and the US market. The two Corleonese - Riina and Provenzano - and their mentor Liggio, together with their affiliates, killed more than a thousand people from 1969 to 1992, men of the Italian State, family rivals, journalists, activists, etc.⁶⁰ All those murders started before my birth and continued while I was a teenager, that long episode of violence was very familiar to me: I probably saw some documentaries about Palermo and the “Mafia Wars”, and my memory recorded those images in black and

⁵⁹ WikiMafia is an on-line source with protagonists and chronological narration of facts: https://www.wikimafia.it/wiki/index.php?title=Cosa_Nostra.

⁶⁰ Calabrò, Antonio, *I mille morti di Palermo*, Mondadori, Milano, 2016; see also Schneider, Jane C., and Peter T. Schneider. *Reversible Destiny: Mafia, Antimafia, and the Struggle for Palermo*. University of California Press, 2003

white of men laying down inside cars with windows that were entirely cracked. For this reason, I felt the need to dig into the causes of this extraordinary period, and set about seeking first-hand information, conducted during six field visits, across eight months, to find a substantial material for my photographic installation, and the final publication of the project.

In this chapter, I am going to relate the main phases of this long process, in five steps, for narrative reasons, even though sometimes they overlay each other. Firstly, I present the pre-production (beginning in 2014, the funding, the search for people, the search for locations); secondly, the collecting phase (the selection, shooting, editing and printing); then the publication - the production of the work (its communication), and lastly, the photographic installation. Alongside these phases, I have been reflecting on the social identity and memory of the “Mafia Wars” for the inhabitants of Palermo, and the role of the project in this context. Also, each phase had been conditioned by human factors: the negotiations with those who own the documents; the staff managing the public archive where the show took place, the curators of the project, the students, and teachers involved in the workshops and installation. All of these people agreed to collaborate with an artist in such a multi-layered project because of the resonance of the Manifesta Biennial, even though they knew that my show was not in the main programme. However, my work engaged with their Sicilian identity, enlightening an aspect of men and women who fought the Mafia that it is often neglected: they were killed for being too dangerous to the Mafia, thus for being brilliant investigators, magistrates, journalists, activists. In the ceremonies for their memory, it is always mentioned how and when they were murdered, sometimes who had been judged for the crime (after many years) but rarely is it mentioned in documentaries and public events what results and contributions they achieved, which was usually the main reason for their deaths. In my work, I underlined the connection between victims, for instance, sometimes a magistrate continued the investigation of his predecessor, who had been murdered by the person being investigated, only to be murdered himself, and by the same person. All were aware of the danger, but they continued their activities because they believed in making a serious contribution to a common fight. Thus, this project is related also to the work ethic and an unquestioning sense of duty of those who took a stand against the Mafia.

1.3.1. Pre-production: Starting and restarting, 2014 and 2017

As I said before, the project was in a state of suspension over the previous four years, mainly because it required many field visits, a curator, and the perspective of a final show (preferably accompanied by a publication) in order to persuade the victims' relatives to make accessible to my camera their relatives' belongings. Thus, for this specific project, I needed to be supported by consistent funding. That allowed me to reflect on how these practices are much more expensive than a regular studio practice. Working on collecting projects and oral history involves people, time and expenses to lead research in a place, which sometimes does not lead to the intended outcomes. This part of the work remains mostly hidden in the final work; it is the "backstage" of field research. Also, we should consider that those artworks derived from site-specific phenomena can rarely be re-used or even understood outside their national or local contexts. Therefore, their production cannot be supported by later purchase, instead they have a strong relationship with the social identity of the territory, so their production has to be financially supported from the start. The opportunity arose last year, with the first edition of the Italian Council funding, promoted by the Italian Ministry of Culture and addressed to unrealized projects by an Italian artist proposed by Italian or foreign organizations to show in Italy and abroad.⁶¹

In 2014, I started my investigation on the Sicilian Mafia at the invitation of the organization Connecting Cultures. The British Milan-based curator Anna Detheridge was planning a group show at the Palermo Palace of Justice, in collaboration with Costanza Meli, curator, and director of the Association Isole, based in Palermo. At that time, Connecting Cultures planned to include a series of artists whose practice is connected to social themes and Italian history. Some artworks were previously realized, others would be produced for that specific show, as in my case.

During a first residency period in Palermo, in May 2014, hosted by the curator Costanza Meli, I spent a few days visiting the public archive of the Gramsci Institute of Palermo. I am originally from the center of Italy and thus I had only a vague idea of what the Mafia was, gained from movies, or news. But like most of the people of my generation, I remember the murders of the two magistrates, colleagues and friends Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino, both killed in 1992, within 55 days of each other. I remember that those specific events impacted on me because I saw on the TV news a scenario of a war happening on the Italian territory, just the same as the one

⁶¹ See for the Italian Council funding: <http://www.aap.beniculturali.it/italiancouncilarchive/>

reported every day from Bosnia Herzegovina. The first bomb utterly destroyed the highway that connected Palermo city center to the city airport; it killed Falcone and his bodyguards. The second destroyed an entire square, to kill Paolo Borsellino and his bodyguards. Such an amount of destruction was planned to strike against just two men. The enormity of the attacks proves how dangerous those two men were for the Mafia's activities. What the Cosa Nostra did not consider was the reaction of Italians, and Sicilians especially. From the day after the second attack, they invaded squares and streets for weeks with demonstrations, and the Cosa Nostra started to lose its control of the territory and its support among a population full of social problems, often forgotten by the State. The deaths of those two magistrates, both Sicilians, both uncorrupt and considered heroes, were unacceptable. They arrived after the "Maxi" Trial, led by the two magistrates, the first and most significant hit to Mafia power. More than 475 criminals were jailed for the crime of Mafia Association.⁶²

I was only 14 years old at that time, and the center of Italy was hundreds of kilometers away from all those events. The typical problems of that age absorbed my thoughts: friends and personal conflicts with parents. Thus, when Connecting Cultures and Isole invited me to be part of that show, I was thrilled to fill a gap in my knowledge, and to investigate its protagonists. At the Gramsci Institute of Palermo, I ran into the inspiration for the project: the handwritten speech notes of the Sicilian politician Pio La Torre, the author and promoter of the first law that, under the crime of Mafia Association, allows the requisition of bank accounts and properties. In his notes, he was digging into the problematic relationship between the organization and the Sicilian society, through a series of questions and considerations: "Why the silence? Why do those who know, not speak? There are connections with public administration, shared interests, and corruption. How do we trace these affiliations, maybe by following the tracks of money we could map the corrupt men in public administration?" I was fascinated to look at the background of this law, the striking amount of notes and writings he produced to solve this rhizomatic boundary between criminals, public administrators, and businesspeople. Pio La Torre was a sort of researcher but at the same time a politician, someone who could change the laws, and change the organization of society. He grew up during the 1930s in a Sicilian farming family. Thus, he witnessed the frustration of poor farmers exploited by noble landholders for a little food. Every time they had to show respect and subjugation to their lords, who were unpunished for their unjust actions, because of their privilege. La Torre was too smart to work as a farmer;

⁶² Lupo, Salvatore, *The History of the Mafia*, New York : Columbia University Press, 2009

he firstly fought his father to study instead of working on the land, he studied and became a syndicalist, in a region and time where trade unionists were often murdered. Years later, he became a deputy of the Communist Party in the Italian Parliament, where he continued his commitment to abolish the landlords' privileges over the subjugated, the basis of the conservative power of the Mafia.⁶³ Thus, his meaningful handwritings were the first notes that convinced me of the richness of the daily paperwork that occurred on victims who died because of their actions against the Cosa Nostra. Another factor that pushed me in this direction was the small consideration of those notebooks as historical objects to preserve. They were gathered in a paper folder, without any particular system of conservation. I asked myself, if they existed, how and where the other victims' agendas, diaries, and official documents were preserved. I wanted to show the dedication of those men and women, through their writings, rather than just the pictures that showed their murderers.

Continuing the residency, I visited the house of Giuseppe Impastato (known as Peppino Impastato) with the curator Costanza Meli. Peppino Impastato is an activist killed by Mafia in 1978. He was the son of a Mafia man and he publicly denounced his father on the local independent radio station of the small town of Cinisi. Impastato was just 22 years old, and promoted his ideas through demonstrations and theatre actions. He started a revolution inside his own home - sometimes against nuclear power, or against the construction of the airport of Palermo, that was built on the land owned by a Mafia boss. But it was too much for a small town entirely controlled by the Mafia: one day in May 1978, he was kidnapped and killed by hired assassins, his body was tied to the train rails where it was torn to pieces. Moreover, his murder was overshadowed by the clamor caused by the discovery in Rome of the lifeless body of Minister Aldo Moro, killed by the Red Brigades. We visited Peppino's house, which is a memorial dedicated to his life, and I could take pictures of the diary he was using as the radio schedule.⁶⁴

Lastly, we met a victim's relative: Mario Francese's brother. Francese was the first journalist killed by the Mafia in 1979. His brother Giulio received and showed us typescripts of his articles with corrections made by hand. I selected some of them, and I photographed them, but without any precise aesthetic. And in our first meeting, I realized how difficult it was working with a victim's relative of the Cosa Nostra. Relatives

⁶³ Bolzoni, Attilio, *Uomini soli. Pio La Torre e Carlo Alberto Dalla Chiesa, Giovanni Falcone e Paolo Borsellino*, Milano : Melampo, 2017

⁶⁴ Vitale, Salvatore (ed), *Radio Aut: materiali di un'esperienza di controinformazione*, Roma : Alegre, 2008

are usually asked by journalists to show pictures and souvenirs of their beloved, those pictures showing magistrates or investigators during their leisure time with friends and relatives had been shown in documentaries to touch spectators' feelings of empathy. My task when I met the relatives was to avoid that aesthetic: I was interested in the victim's work, any specific aspect of his/her devotion to the job. Therefore, I was listening to their encounters and picking what could be relevant to the concerns of my work. Even though, sometimes I found myself lost in the human interactions, because of the significant amount of anecdotes. For this reason, I started to develop a voice in the back of my mind to remind me what was necessary for the realization of the work, excluding the rest in order not to lose my focus. In spite of that, I became attached to some of these people, and their testimonies naturally became part of the descriptions of the objects I wrote for the publication. However, I will return to this point again later. To conclude with that first residency in Sicily, I can say that although relatively brief, it was very compelling to understand the entity of violence that occurred in Sicily from the 1970s to the beginning of the 1990s and to focus on the material I had to collect in a more extended visit. However, after that, the exhibition was first postponed and then cancelled because of a lack of funding. Connecting Cultures paid the costs of my journey, so the use of these photographs remained conditional on their involvement in any alternative show. Another opportunity did not occur until the opening of the Venice Biennale in 2017, while I met Anna Detheridge and Costanza Meli and I proposed they consider the new Italian Council funding as a financial source to stage and continue my project in Palermo. A few days after our casual meeting we started to find locations and partners and to work on that application, taking advantage of the fact that the next Manifesta would be staged in Palermo, the subject of my investigations. In mid-August of that year, the news arrived that my project - *Il Pensiero che non diventa Azione avvelena l'Anima (Words without Action poison the Soul)* - was the first of seven winning proposals selected by the Italian Ministry of Culture.

The title of the project came to me long before the funding results. One night in spring 2015, I watched a show at the Carignano Theatre in Turin. I did not like the show - it was a contemporary performance about feminism from the male perspective - however, I remember that the author of the text, and also the protagonist, speaking about his repressed male desire cried: *Il pensiero che non diventa azione avvelena l'anima*, which translated literally is "The thought that does not become action poisons the soul". In that precise moment, I wrote down that inspiring phrase, and I decided that was the perfect title for my project in Palermo, even though it was at that time uncom-

pleted and without any prospect of completion. For the funding application, we translated it into “*Words without Action poison the Soul.*”

Throughout this work, I can trace the sense of time in my personal and professional life, and the evolution of my practice, even though the core concept remained the same. My way of looking at photographs, my experience of producing three-dimensional installations and especially the way I am engaging the addresses of my works have been changing over the last four years. The best example might be my work *Lamine (Foils)* realized for my solo show in 2015. It is a structure 182 cm high, that stands in front of spectators, inviting them to pull out its vertical drawers, which contain paired printed images on each side of the drawer. The physical interaction of the visitor with the installation is a crucial part of the work. There is a challenging presence of the structure, which hides instead of showing the pictures, reversing the usual wall-mounted display of photographic works. The photography shows are mostly displayed with hung pictures on the wall, frozen and clearly visible, physically not accessible, because the visitor cannot touch them or turn them around. We can decide the printing size and establish a dialogue with space. For instance, Wolfgang Tillmans is one of the first practitioners who developed this idea of exchange between the printing sizes and the location: his photographic installations are site-specific installations. We have to bear in mind that images now surround us through the internet and digital devices. The installation views cannot replace the experience of visiting the show, however, because the haptic process, the selection and extraction of each drawer are manners of knowing. The movement of the visitor’s arm in touching and pulling one of the drawers creates an interaction and discovery the project within a specific time frame.

The idea of selection corresponds to the purpose of the work itself: I began to reflect on images stored in digital archives, hard-disks and online servers, how they remain hidden for years, forgotten; and I started to select some of them following some key themes of production, trying to bring them to a new “visibility”. The photographic process is connected to the idea of selection, but with digital technology, the production of images is increased, without an overall increase in control, and our digital memories are witnessing this overproduction. The act of selecting and elimination is becoming more and more a necessity that requires time.

As already mentioned, I was interested in developing a series of reflections on the display of my projects in order to involve people’s senses. How could I deal with their viewpoints and physicality? Of course, this recalls a more extensive discussion about what engaging with experience means. Do we intend to transmit an explicit

message or vague suggestion, or if we provoke a reaction from the visitor, for what purpose?

Giuliana Bruno describes the surface as “the site of expression of a new materiality (...) the surface is texturally reconfigured to hold different forms of material relation and convey their transformation.”⁶⁵ In her study, Bruno considers photographs, screens, mobile devices and video projections as forms of skin that enable new negotiation with the architectural space, and restructure “our sense of contact to the environment.”⁶⁶ She assumes that the image goes beyond its projection, canvas or frame, shifting from a visual to tangible, architectural and environmental matters. Visual and haptic materiality are created through the “superficial” nature of artworks: screen projections, photographs, and video-projections are “turning contact into the communicative interface of a public intimacy.”⁶⁷ Developing interest for unwritten or forgotten pages of history directed to re-balance the historical condition of a population, we necessarily dwell with archival material keeping a strong balance between their function as documents and their force as objects. But most importantly, all my efforts are focused on reaching the audience with the intimacy of my representations and the media adopted in my works.

The installation for the project “*Il Pensiero che non diventa Azione avvelena l’Anima*”, stemmed from all these considerations, especially because it needed to address people personally, or remind us of those facts the project was speaking about.

From September to December 2017, I dealt with the design of the installation inside the chosen location for the show in Palermo. There were specific fixed points: the photographic installation would have to contain a series of pictures, representing the selected documents, mainly handwritten documents made by victims of the Mafia; it should be interactive, and we should include the images in a subsequent publication. First, we had the location. When we applied for the Italian Council funding, we did not yet have a precise location in Palermo, but as soon we knew about the positive result of the selection, the Sicilian curator Costanza Meli started the negotiation with the city council Office of Culture to arrange the use of space. They were glad to include the project in the official programme of Palermo Capital of Culture, and they proposed to us a series of public locations and palaces. One of them was the Historical Municipal Archive of Palermo, whose position was central to all the likely places involved in the

⁶⁵ Bruno, Giuliana, Ibid. p.94

⁶⁶ Bruno, Giuliana, Ibid. p.94

⁶⁷ Bruno, Giuliana, Ibid. p.5

Manifesta programme. Besides, we chose the Almeyda room, designed by the architect Giuseppe Damiani Almeyda in the 19th century, because of its sense of sacred space: created by a 17.5-meter-high ceiling and four striking columns in the center of the room.

From the shape of the space, enclosed between the columns, I began to conceive my photographic installation and its dimensions. The idea was to use the same module designed for *Lamine (Foils)* and to join together six structures to create a more significant installation accessible from four sides. If there were modules of three or six structures, one attached to the other, visitors would have enough space to open the drawers on different sides; and more space meant more people around it. Besides, the idea of a box fitted perfectly with the concept of the archive; this solid solution balanced both idea and the aesthetics of the work. Then, I considered the shape and size of the “box” in the specific location of the Almeyda room at the Municipal Archive of Palermo; the incredible height, more than 17 meters, brought a sense of great space, but my installation, sited in the center of the four columns of the room risked being compressed: I needed to lift it from the floor. To do this I decided to place the installation on a 40 cm platform.

The first step was to design the platform, within the bounds of the floor at the center of those columns. That rectangular portion of the deck also corresponded to the square wooden roof, enclosed by the four columns and that correspondence would draw an invisible perimeter, like a protective barrier for my archival box. The features of the structure were starting to be defined: I had to produce a series of modules of the same structure from *Lamine (Foils)*, that contains four drawers, which meant eight framed pictures, representing a document of a victim from both sides; thus each composition would include four people’s files. Then, I considered how many structures I had to produce, how many cases to “bring” to the visitors’ attention. If I had chosen to build only four structures, there would have been only sixteen files, which did not seem a substantial number in the face of the many murders committed by the Cosa Nostra during the two “Mafia Wars”. I needed a more significant proportion. Therefore, I had to produce six modules, to create a box-appearance structure, and to bring more cases: six structures meant twenty-four cases, of which I had concluded just two. I had only nine months to find objects that could correspond to the concept, without knowing where to find them: presenting a challenging feat.

I was aware that there is no unique archive of the Mafia’s victims, where I might find the original documents, agendas, notebooks of some of the magistrates, journalists or police officers killed by the Sicilian Mafia. A key point of my project was to create a

source that did not yet exist, but I could not have imagined how many difficulties I would face in finding that material. Considering the frequent production of documentaries about Mafia attacks and the “Mafia Wars” in Sicily and the distance of time from those events, I was expecting that victims’ relatives were represented by associations, or were reachable through organizations. However, from the beginning, I realized that the only way to reach them was through private relationships. I had to conduct my research like a private investigator, mapping possible links to those who I needed to contact. I used phone calls, social media, and my friendships.

Neither the archive of the Central Police Station of Palermo, nor the archive of the State Commission against the Mafia that preserves documents of the investigations, replied to our repeated queries, so they were classified as inaccessible. Even when the project manager sent them official emails about the project, even though the Italian Ministry of Culture supported the project, the official representatives never replied to our requests to access the archives. The most effective way was to investigate private connections that could put me in contact with the relatives. I started with a Palermo-based journalist specializing in Mafia activities.⁶⁸ Salvo Palazzolo’s investigations have exposed many interests of the most recent families of Mafia, he participated in many events to keep alive the memories of its victims. For this reason, he suggested numerous people who would introduce me to a son or daughter of a victim.

Salvo also advised me to consider the delicate balance in the anti-Mafia world when I was mentioning the relatives’ families and partners of the project. Some of the foundations that organize annual memory events had argued and subsequently broken off relationships, so if my project were affiliated to a certain family, or foundation, another family might not take part. The only non-partisan organization that I could mention was “Addio Pizzo”, which was founded by the murdered entrepreneur Libero Grassi, and represented all those artisans and businesses which reported to the police attempts at extortion. In Sicily, if you want to refuse the Mafia businesses, you can decide to go to those shops that display at the entrance the Addio Pizzo’s sign; because those shops refused to pay any “protection money” to the Mafia.⁶⁹

Salvo’s advice made me reflect more on my strategy of engagement and introduction to possible partners in the show. The invisible wall that surrounds the relatives’ victims of Mafia was built because of high exposure to the media, and some negative experiences with those who manipulated the families to increase their own reputation,

⁶⁸ Palazzolo, Salvo, *I pezzi mancanti. Viaggio nei misteri della mafia*, Roma, Bari : Laterza, 2011

⁶⁹ <https://www.addiopizzo.org>

including politicians. Statements made by victims of the Mafia in Italy have a different resonance: they represent legality and are a symbol of justice. That is why they were manipulated sometimes by one party or another - especially during election times. Thus, I was aware that I was working on a slippery surface, between private and public, and I needed to be clear about the use of documents and what direction I wanted to take in designing an exhibition about the Mafia. The role of the curators was important in this negotiation; they were able to introduce my concept to other people and validate my interest even though I was not Sicilian, nor a historian, nor a victim's relative.

I started with those who had created a foundation in memory of a victim or victims. They were probably more inclined to open their private archives to strangers and to understand their use for a cultural initiative. We agreed with Laura Riva, the project manager of Connecting Cultures, that she should introduce me by official email to those foundations and also to public and police archives. I would have to call those private people who were able to put me in contact with the relatives' victims. After a brief investigation, we realized that these organizations and foundations added up to just five: Giovanni Falcone Foundation and Giuseppe Fava Foundation; the Museum Falcone and Borsellino at the Palace of Justice; the Sicilian Center Peppino Impastato, and, the Gramsci Archive in Palermo. The rest of the cases were found through private calls and people who helped me. That meant that I did not know yet how to reach more than eighteen cases, and it was only eight months before the exhibition. This thought pushed me to go beyond my personal reservations because finding the telephone numbers was easier than dialing them. I was a stranger bursting into the daily life of a daughter, son, brother, sister of a famous politician or journalist or magistrate to dig into their past, their private archives. And the numbers I found were mobile phone numbers. A typical call went like this:

- *Hello, my name is Eva Frapiccini, I was given your number by Mr / Mrs ... I am a researcher and teacher at the Fine Art Academy of Bologna [I needed an official and commonly recognized position] calling because I am preparing a publication and a show that would make visible the documents of those who were killed during the two wars of Mafia, because of their actions, and their excellent work against Cosa Nostra.*

- *Ok. But practically what are you looking for?*

- *I am looking for handwritten documents showing their daily duties, their thoughts... Also pictures, but with something written on the other side, because I am going to shoot both sides of the documents and print them in the same size of the original... no I am not looking for private pictures, family moments... no I would like to focus on their daily duties at work. Maybe pictures with colleagues, investigations, also official documents but with corrections made by hand.*

The people I called replied in different ways. If the victims were journalists, they said that there were many articles written by them, but typewritten, with a few corrections. If the victims were policemen or commissioners, most of the time I was told that their relative did not leave any writing, that they kept their families apart from their work.

After hours of phone calls along these lines, I fixed three appointments for my next trip to Palermo, over five days in October 2017.

That first visit set different points: the location and how to install inside it; where to produce the structure, and, how long I should stay in Palermo to find my cases and collect images of the selected documents. In fact, during that first journey I realized that if I had direct contact with the people who had the documents, they needed to meet me first to know more about my project and me before they would let me see the private documents.

Sometimes, that person was not able to help me, but he/she knew who could, but I had to wait a few days before I could meet them. For this reason, we had to move some extra money to the budget considered for my field visits: the availability of documents' owners mainly conditioned my use of time.

1.3.2. The shooting

While examining the many victims' biographies and chronicles, I decided to select those whose actions had contributed to hitting the Mafia organization at its most vital points. Why were they more effective than the others? Why were they so dangerous to Mafia activities? What skills did they use to stop the enemy forces in their tracks? On closer examination of their lives and work, I saw a few distinguishing elements: they were always followed by the awareness of being in danger while pursuing their actions, and thus could be said to possess great strength. Annual celebrations, public events, and memory monuments made them icons, like heroes. The same image of the two magistrates Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino is reproduced in murals, banners, and postcards. Every Italian teenager knows them. It should make them heroes, and this caused me some doubt: is it productive to raise them to superheroes? Mythologizing someone who acts within the legal system puts more distance between ordinary people and victims of the Mafia.

My project aimed to shift the attention from the tragedy of their deaths to the effectiveness of their actions, which is the reason why the Mafia decided to stop them. In so doing, I focused on those human features and attitudes that made one magistrate more efficient than another, and trying to trace these attributes through their leftover documents and handwriting. Selecting the victims' cases, I chose those that could represent the different categories of employment (journalists, activists, magistrates, entrepreneurs, advocates) that who decided to go against the Mafia's wishes or business interests were engaged in. While for the magistrate or police agent the fight against a criminal organization is part of the job, for a professional, it is a choice. Those businessmen who decided to denounce; those doctors who refused to manipulate their medical reports; those activists who publicly took a position were not paid for their decisions, and they proved that civilians could also disobey the Mafia. They had broken the people's unspoken consent with the Mafia, under which the criminals enjoyed protection, and with their deaths, the illegal businesses had been compromised: a murder meant more police activity and media attention.

Each of the twenty-four cases required dozens of calls and numerous failed attempts: I was working like a scientist, finding different ways to solve a problem. I had an Excel chart with the names of the victims, and three different colours signified the progress of the project: grey for any contact; orange for some contact, and upcoming appointments; yellow for case complete). For eight months, I managed to change the colours of that chart, line by line, and filled it with contact names, telephone numbers and email addresses. Besides, I was fixing in my mind features of the final installation and how every element should have to work inside it, and how to take a picture of those *objets trouvés*; imagining how the visitor would have moved each drawer of the installation, discovering both sides of the drawer. I decided to work in the actual size of the object photographed - respecting the original dimensions of each document would make each inscription readable, each note that the person left on that paper would be legible and open. Thus, I had to take a picture in a plain view and to shed light on the whole document. Unfortunately, I could not work in a studio, because most people would not allow me to move the victim's belongings from the place where they were kept. Therefore, the easiest way was to work with daylight, fixing appointments during the day. In this sense, I was helped by the fact that Palermo is in the south of Europe, and we were going towards the spring, when the days are longer. In each location, I positioned my tripod high enough to turn the camera plumb in relation to the document in a corner near the window or on the balcony of the house. This solution brought a variety of backgrounds which were included in my pictures - brown wooden floors,

near grey surfaces, and marble. Many surfaces signify many locations. Thus, the array of those backgrounds had witnessed the real fragmentation of this fictional archive, the unique opportunity for those objects to coexist. Copybooks, notes, Polaroid snapshots, agendas, address books were selected: these could give an idea of the significant amount of leftover work that existed and was inaccessible to the majority of people.

Having those fixed criteria for shooting helped to focus my attention on the selection of the material. In those cases, where I had the opportunity to choose from many documents, I picked those that recalled the peculiarity of that person, from my point of view. For example, Boris Giuliano, the head of the *Squadra Mobile* (translated Flying Squad) in Palermo at the beginning of the 1980s grasped the bond between Sicily and the United States. He was killed after having traced the transfer of drugs and money overseas.⁷⁰ Some years later, the magistrates Paolo Borsellino and Giovanni Falcone would start from his investigations to identify Mafia criminals and, thanks to the informer Tommaso Buscetta, the whole structure of the Cosa Nostra.⁷¹ His evidence to judge Giovanni Falcone paved the way for the trial of more than 400 Mafiosi in Palermo (the so-called Maxi Trial) and laid the foundations for subsequent victories in the Italian state's sometimes half-hearted battle against organised crime.

As an example of my work, I now turn to Giorgio Boris Giuliano. He had been one of the first Italian police agents to be trained in Quantico, Virginia, on the FBI agents' course, because he was one of the few agents to speak English. He learned English after university while working in London for some months as a waiter. I visited his wife Ines three times after having found her daughter's contact through Salvo Palazzolo. With the curator Costanza Meli, we visited her home, a beautiful 1970s apartment on the sixth floor of the most prestigious neighborhood in Palermo: Il Giardino Inglese. In the beginning, Ines was cautious with us: she said she did not own any paperwork of her husband's, because he never used to bring any home. In the meantime, she was asking us about my project, my activity, when and where the show would take

⁷⁰ Siragusa, Valeria M. P., *Follow the money. Sulle tracce di Boris Giuliano*, Palermo : La Zisa, 2018

⁷¹ Known as the "boss of two worlds" for a criminal career that spanned Europe and Latin America, Tommaso Buscetta never actually rose above the rank of simple Mafia soldier. He was the first major Mafia figure to pierce the veil of secrecy shrouding the inner workings of Cosa Nostra, in 1984. Buscetta was the first "repentant" (translate *pentito*) to reveal the existence and the inner workings of the Cupola, the Mafia commission that governed the organisation and ordered the elimination of its erring members. From 1980 to 1984, the Corleonesi's family broke the balance of the Mafia commission. While Buscetta was in Brazil, the Corleonesi's faction killed 11 members of his family, including a brother and two sons. Don Masino decided to turn state's evidence partly to save his life, but partly to seek revenge for his family. He often claimed to not consider himself a *pentito*, it was the modern Mafia to had drifted away from its traditional cultural and moral roots. See also: Lodato, Saverio, *La Mafia ha vinto*, Milano : Mondadori, 2007

place, about my life, Costanza's life, etc. Therefore, after that first meeting, I left her house without any pictures. Only two days later, Ines called me back to say she had something for me. A month later, she showed us some speeches typewritten by Boris (he wanted to be called just Boris) for a national conference dedicated to policing the Mafia; some family pictures, and, a picture with an FBI agent who Boris met during his training in Virginia. I opted immediately for the picture taken during the training in Virginia that had an inscription on the back saying "Which one of us is the burglar?". A joke between the two men of course, but also a frozen moment of Giuliano's progress during that specific experience, one that trained the young Sicilian agent's investigative abilities and therefore helped him to deliver a severe blow to the Cosa Nostra. While Costanza was speaking with her about different topics, I positioned my tripod in the corner of the living room, the clear daylight of the morning was coming from those windows exposed towards the English Garden, designed by Giovan Battista Basile, and an overlook of the city center of Palermo. I turned the camera towards the floor, where I placed the print of Boris Giuliano with the FBI agent, and I shot both sides of it, trying to maintain the same position. Then I noted its size in order to reproduce it at 1:1.

The compilation process allowed me to get to know different people and contexts, the conversations with brothers, sisters, sons, daughters and those who had been widowed enriched my knowledge of the Mafia phenomenon and were partially included in the biographies I compiled for the final publication. Thanks to the first-hand information given to me by the families, I could map out a realistically dense model of that historical context and its protagonists. Sadly, I have since realized there are social differences and political oppositions among them. But, more importantly, I have come to understand the differences in the treatment they received from the state government. For example, families of journalists and activists have never had their relatives' belongings returned, which were confiscated from their homes for the police investigations, while those owned by magistrates and police agents had been returned to their relatives. This was even when a case remained unsolved after 30 years, as happened for the journalist Mauro De Mauro, who had been kidnapped and disappeared in 1964; his body was never found, and neither were those materially responsible for his murder or its instigators.⁷² De Mauro's wife was sick at the beginning of my project and died a few weeks before the show in Palermo. I reached out to his daughter by phone in December, and she regretted not being able to help me in my research, because her family did not receive back any paperwork and diaries taken in 1964 by police agents. Fortu-

⁷² Lo Bianco, Giuseppe; Rizza, Sandra, *Profondo nero. Mattei, De Mauro, Pasolini Un'unica pista all'origine delle stragi di stato*, Milano : Chiarelettere, 2009

nately, I found an unpublished, signed, typewritten article by De Mauro in the Sicilian Gramsci Archive, its existence unknown to the archivist. In contrast, the son of the magistrate Scaglione is a military magistrate; his father was killed in the same period, and none of her father's documents had been returned. When I asked the reason for such discriminatory treatment, he said: "It is easier for us, men of the state, to know the way to get back our belongings."

Something similar happened for the activist Mauro Rostagno, whose daughter, Maddalena, has not received any documents of her father, and even a bullet had disappeared from the collection of evidence, between the first and second trial (there are three possible degrees of judgment for the Italian law, the third is the final sentence).⁷³ Only a few months ago, twenty years after her father's murder, the state government finally confirmed that the Mafia killed him. In the past, the cause of the killing was adduced to a crime of passion. Maddalena said she did not own anything else of her father's other than a copy of his mail correspondence with his former university companion Renato Curcio. Curcio was the founder of the leftist group Red Brigades and they met at the University of Trieste, but Rostagno chose not to enter into the armed movement because he was a pacifist.⁷⁴ Maddalena Rostagno lives in Turin, where her father was born, and she is still in contact with Renato Curcio, who after years in jail now lives a retired life in Piedmont. She asked if I could take a picture of one letter written to Curcio by Rostagno. In it, her father tells Curcio, who was in jail at that time, about the community of drug rehabilitation he founded in Trapani, helping to save youngsters from that path. Also, he describes his work as a journalist in a local TV chain, his denunciation of the drug businesses of the Cosa Nostra and the consequent threats he received. The connection between these two protagonists fascinated me, and in a way, it closed the circle between two Italian historical phenomena I have worked with during my artistic career: the Mafia, and the leftist terrorism during the 1970s and 1980s. It reminded me that everything was more connected than we usually imagine. I will come back later to highlight the differences between these two projects.

When I approached Alice Grassi, daughter of the businessman Libero Grassi, I had some issues about finding his handwriting. I could quickly reach Alice who is still working with the organization founded by her mother after Grassi's murderer: "Addio Pizzo". She confessed to me that her father was a graphomaniac, he was used to noting

⁷³ Rostagno, Maddalena; Gentile, Andrea, *Il suono di una sola mano. Storia di mio padre Mauro Rostagno*, Roma : Il Saggiatore, 2011

⁷⁴ Mascali, Antonella, *Lotta civile. Contro le mafie e l'illegalità*, Milano : Chiarelettere, 2009

down his thoughts and considerations on newspapers, blank papers, and small notes, but before dying her mother decided to sell her family house, so she threw most of them away.⁷⁵ Despite this, I found a newspaper article that Libero Grassi preserved and considered so important that he read it on “Samarcanda,” a programme broadcast on national television.⁷⁶ Libero Grassi was one of the first Sicilian businessmen to publicly voice his opposition to the practice of paying protection money to the Mafia; he owned a family clothing manufacturing company. In the newspaper, there was an interview with a judge, Luigi Russo, that in his verdict declared that “paying protection money to the bosses of organized crime is not an offence: so-called contiguity is not punishable when acting in a state of necessity.”⁷⁷ Libero Grassi’s indignation at this verdict was openly declared during the TV programme. I have found this article at the Impastato Study Centre, in a box of papers donated by his wife a long time ago. In the article, are barely readable notes handwritten by the businessman: “aiding and abetting is not a conspiracy” and, again “should no one pay up, extortionists would be blown into pieces.” Again, the archivist did not know about this article, he just stored it in a corner on a shelf, but I remembered what Alice Grassi said, “my mother made a selection and saved it somewhere, but I could not find it.” I called her afterwards, and she was glad to know that the documents had finally been found.

Lastly, I should mention one case where the conservation about a relative’s belongings and documents, in particular, corresponds to a strong sense of legacy and memory: Paolo Borsellino’s home studio. At the Palermo Palace of Justice, there is a small museum dedicated to Borsellino and Falcone. During the murder inquiry, prior to the so-called Maxi Trial (from 1986 to 1992) where more than 475 criminals were judged by the Antimafia pool of magistrates.⁷⁸ The former head of inquiries Rocco Chinnici, who created the pool, decided that magistrates should avoid any distracting or prejudicial information and thus moved their office to a bunker isolated from the rest of the Palace of Justice. Rocco Chinnici was one of the first magistrates to grasp that the Mafia was changing its strategy and the way it conducted business with the mas-

⁷⁵ Graphomaniac is a term used to label a compulsive writer, someone who urges and needs to write excessively, professionally or not.

⁷⁶ Grassi’s speech at Samarcanda is available on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kC7y-Arf7BI>

⁷⁷ Translation from the article “Catania, il teorema del giudice” published by La Repubblica, 6th April, 1992.

⁷⁸ Schneider, Jane T. & Peter T. Schneider, *Reversible Destiny: Mafia, Antimafia, and the Struggle for Palermo*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003. Chapter VI

sacre of Viale Lazio.⁷⁹ He was a key figure in raising awareness of the fact that drug trafficking was the most profitable business of the whole criminal enterprise, and highlighted the necessity of building a more efficient and cohesive group of work among magistrates, and of preserving a channel of information with the police.⁸⁰ He created the Antimafia Pool: a strict group of magistrates, composed of Paolo Borsellino and Giovanni Falcone, among others. From their work of investigation and collaboration with the police, would be billed the Maxi Trial, the most important trial against the Mafia. Chinnici would not see it; in 1983 a car bomb killed him, together with two officers and the superintendent of the building where he lived with his family.

The so-called “bunkerino” is today a museum, run by the only survivor of the car bomb attack that killed Rocco Chinnici: Giovanni Paparcuri.⁸¹ This former bodyguard is now dedicating his life to disseminating the importance of the Antimafia magistrates’ pool to students’ schools and other visitors. In the former offices of Borsellino and Falcone, Paparcuri placed documents, cheques and copies of legal sentences made by the two magistrates, illustrating episodes from past enquiries and their methods. Obviously, Giovanni embraced the aim of my project from the beginning, and he put me in contact with the sons of Rocco Chinnici and Paolo Borsellino. It is hard to get in contact with the Borsellino family. His sister Rita had been a politician after her brother’s murder by perpetrators still unknown. Paolo Borsellino was killed fifty-seven days after his childhood friend and colleague Giovanni Falcone. During that short period, he was aware he could be the next target, but he spent every moment in finding his friend’s killers, repeating to everyone that he knew he would not have much time. Thus, his family was prepared for his end, and when I met his son Manfredi I could see how strong his influence was on their three children. Manfredi Borsellino is a Carabinieri commissioner of Cefalù, when I reached him by phone he wanted to know everything about the project, and unlike the majority of victims’ relatives, he was not surprised by

⁷⁹ “The Viale Lazio massacre (Lazio Boulevard Massacre) on 10 December 1969 was a settling of accounts in the Sicilian Mafia. Mafia boss Michele Cavataio and three men were killed in the Viale Lazio in Palermo (Sicily) by a Mafia hit squad.” from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viale_Lazio_massacre

⁸⁰ “(Abbiamo capito che tutto era cambiato) dalla strage di Viale Lazio. Allora si è capito che la mafia aveva cambiato metodi (...) Dal 1970 comincia a commettere i reati più odiosi che possano esistere: nel Nord il sequestro di persona, da noi il traffico di droga.” (translated (we realized that everything had changed) from the massacre of Viale Lazio. Since there it was clear that the Mafia have modified methods (...) From 1970, it commits the most nasty crimes: the kidnapping of people in Northern Italy, and the traffic of drogue here.” in Chinnici, Rocco, *L’illegalità protetta. Le parole e le intuizioni del magistrato che credeva nei giovani*. Palermo: Glifo, 2017. The interview was also published in *Segno*, n. 10-11 (27), October - November 1981, Palermo.

⁸¹ “Bunkerino” is a friendly definition made to speak about the little bunker where the Antimafia pool worked in the Palace of Justice, in Palermo.

my request. He proposed meeting me at the former family home, where the original home study of his father is preserved.

When I entered Borsellino's office, a shiver ran down my spine; for the last twenty-six years, his family has been preserving every single folder and object as it was on the last day he was there. Even the desk calendar was stopped on his last day of life - the 19th July 1992. They decided to build a wall inside their family home, renting the rest of the apartment of their childhood to someone else, and keeping their father's office preserved as it was on that day. I had been waiting for Manfredi on the eighteenth floor of a favorite 1970s block of flats, sitting on the steps of the condominium. I had waited about one hour when a distinguished and discreet man in his forties arrived and apologized for his lateness. I was astonished by his modest manners from the outset; he was the son of one of the most important men and women in modern Italian history, a symbol for my generation. He asked me how old I was, I told him about my baby, and he said that his wife had her son at the same age. When he started to show me some folders, he was not sure what he would find there. I realized that he rarely touched these documents. Discovering the speech written by his father for Falcone's funeral, he said: "It had been essential for him this speech. Look he made five copies of it. Probably he was afraid of losing it." The light was disappearing, and it was raining, I shot the original version of that speech near the window, again another fantastic view of Palermo, but from a more suburban area. But my selected object was the small black diary that the magistrate kept on his travels and expenses. The last page was written on the 18th July 1992, the day before the bomb that killed him and his five bodyguards, among them agent Emanuela Loi. The handwritten notes recorded some appointments and the drawing of an aeroplane near the words "Fiumicino airport, Rome and Punta Raisi" (today the Falcone and Borsellino Airport of Palermo). Then when I asked to take a picture of this fantastic object, he started to take out of the desk those objects that he guessed were added by his mother, who had passed away a few years earlier. There is another notebook that disappeared on the day of the attack. The magistrate never forgot to bring with him his red planner that he used as a notebook, where he was in the habit of recording information and important elements of his investigations. Even though it was a Sunday, and Borsellino had to take his mother to the doctor on that day, he would have brought with him the red notebook. The family had confirmed it. After 26 years, Borsellino's notebook is still missing. Witnesses have revealed that they had seen it near his dead body after the car bomb blew up in "via D'Amelio," where he died with his five bodyguards. Thus, someone had stolen his planner a few hours after the massacre, taking advantage of the chaos caused by the

war scenario in the neighborhood.⁸² A few days before the attack, Borsellino released an interview with two French journalists of Channel+, where he mentioned the business partner of Berlusconi, Marcello Dell'Utri and his connection with a Mafia family. Borsellino was investigating the Mafia's interests in Milan, and in particular in the broadcasts owned by Berlusconi (his political rise commenced in 1994).⁸³

After the magistrate's death, the interview was hidden from the family, and manipulated. Borsellino's family entered into possession of the original tape, which proved that five minutes of the interview were cut from the version proposed to the public broadcast, only in eight years after the magistrate's murder. During those five minutes, Borsellino spoke about Marcello Dell'Utri and Berlusconi, who he did not accuse directly because the investigations were underway. Over the last twenty-six years, Agnese, his wife, and their three young children, had carried the burden of being relatives of the most famous magistrate in Italy, and they had been protecting themselves from media attention, arranging their communication with the outside world. For this reason, too, I felt honoured to have entered Borsellino's study. After seeing how they have preserved their father's folders and papers, his workspace, exactly how he left it that Sunday, I became convinced that they will probably keep that room in that condition, whilst their father's murderers remain unpunished.

Getting in touch and entering into many houses contributed to enriching my knowledge of the historical and social situation in Palermo in the 1970s and 1980s. Most of the magistrates, journalists and investigators were coming from highly educated classes, while police agents and bodyguards were from more modest families, apart from Pio La Torre and Paolo Borsellino in the first group, and Beppe Montana in the second. Rarely were the bodyguard and magistrate funerals conducted in the same ceremony, even though when they were murdered together. It did happen in two cases, for the magistrate Scaglione and his bodyguard Antonio Lorusso in 1971, and for the magistrate Cesare Terranova and his agent of custody Lenin Mancuso, in 1979. In both cases, the two families decided to celebrate in the same room the ritual of keeping vigil by the bedside of a dead person. Looking back to their lives, the relationships between those two magistrates with their agents of custody became more like friendships, rather than just a working collaboration. Also, those magistrates had been the best men at their guards' marriages. In both cases, the agents were personally assigned to those magistrates because the unit of bodyguards did not yet exist. Maybe, working for the

⁸² Lo Bianco, Giuseppe; Rizza, Sandra, *L'agenda rossa di Borsellino*, Roma: Chiarelettere, 2007

⁸³ Lo Bianco, G.; Rizza, S., *Ibidem*

same principles of legality would break down the barriers between conventional roles at that time. For instance, talking about the positioning of the highly educated class of Palermo, concerning the Mafia organisation, Ines Giuliano confessed to me that she often felt separated from her own class. Someone dared to blame her husband's investigations, saying that they invited the violent reaction from "some people." The old noble class, composed of landowners, had shared the same interests as the Cosa Nostra for a hundred years: the control of land, the conservation of the old social class status. That was until the *viddani* (translated from Sicilian, meaning "farmer" and "boorish") of Corleone dared to get the control of the most profitable business of the city (Palermo) - the drugs trade.⁸⁴

1.3.3. The publication

The repository of all the knowledge acquired along this long visit into the past, which embraces facts, family connections, political plots, and theories about unsolved cases, it is represented in the publication, which includes critical texts, my pictures, but in particular the appendix I created.

The work is introduced by two written prefaces, by Eliana Calandra, the director of the Municipal Archive of Palermo, and Andrea Cusumano, Councillor for Culture, Palermo Municipality. This is followed by two curatorial texts by the curators Anna Detheridge, and Costanza Meli; Laura Riva's text which resumes premises and ideas behind this initiative. The former journalist of the Sicilian newspaper L'Ora Antonio Calabro', who today is director of the Pirelli Foundation, wrote about that period because at that time he witnessed many murders. Calabro' is also the author of an extraordinary book that had been a point of reference for my project *I Mille morti di Palermo*. Anna Detheridge contacted him at my request, and he insisted on meeting the artist before agreeing to be involved. We met him in Milan at the extraordinary headquarters of the Pirelli Foundation, I gave him the publication of my previous work on Italian terrorism, and probably the fact that I had created work already about that tragic period of Italian history convinced him to contribute to my project on the Mafia, even though I am not Sicilian. The last text was written by the director of the Museum of

⁸⁴ Marino, Giuseppe Carlo, *Storia della Mafia*, Roma : Newton & Compton, 2012, p. 250

Photography of Senigallia, which acquired the work for its permanent collection. The book, published by Silvana Publishing, is also a sort of artist's book which introduces the general public to facts and protagonists that affected Italian history and makes accessible the victims' documents. I carefully curated three sections: the images, the concept map, and the descriptions of the pictures, which also included a brief introduction to the victims. Speaking about the photographs, I had been reflecting on how to solve the problem of photographic reproduction of materials in a paper format so as to escape the sense of historical documentation. I decided to enlarge as much I could the diaries or notes maintaining the proportion between A4 and small letters. I could not treat these pictures as just another set of images; I was trying to make them objects, so I decided to use the whole page of the publication, sometimes including a more significant part of the background than the printed pictures within the frame. Thus, during the images' post-production, I prepared two files of the same picture: one for the publication, which had to be sized 17 x 25 cm, and with a broader background around the document that was photographed; and a second file, destined to be printed for the installation in the 1:1 size of the paper. In the picture chosen for the publication, it was essential to keep those files with a more significant background around the document to have the same size of the book, but also to give an idea of many places where pictures were taken. For the installation prints, the size had to correspond to the original size of the note; I cut the rest of the background that was covered by the corresponding *passepertout*. In the installation, the pictures have different sizes, thus also different *passepertout* cuts. But I will say more in the paragraph dedicated to the production of the work.

Also, while I was working on the post-production of the files for the book, I studied the position of the written document in a way that its back and front corresponded, giving the physical aspect of a unique piece that the viewer can touch, turning the book's pages. Thus, I decided to maintain the systematic correspondence of front and back of each picture, and I had to work on this by overlapping sometimes the two images. Therefore, the book treats the images as objects: it makes them accessible and readable and at the same time embodies the physical features of handling a publication.

The concept map included in the book, indicates the protagonists and most pivotal attacks that marked Italian history between the 1970s and the 1990s, giving a national frame to the "Mafia Wars" and subsequent crimes. This map links events and people; investigations; the people investigated and the investigators; politicians, and cases that are still unsolved or had been solved after many years. In a way, it composes pieces of a long and tortuous history of Italy and the relationships between the Mafia

and politicians, the attacks, and the corruption of some public administrators, where they have been proven. This even includes the so-called ‘State-Mafia’ negotiation (in Italian *Trattativa Stato - Mafia*) that has been officially proven in a recent court decision (May 2018).⁸⁵

While I was preparing the biographies, I had a long conversation with Anna Detheridge and Costanza Meli about how to write them. We are not historians, journalists or writers, but in dealing with an artistic project our methodology was inscribed in the *grey area* of art practice. We decided to engage families in the revision of their relatives’ biographies, and I take personal responsibility as author for the appendix. Hence, there is a statement in the appendix: “It is worthwhile underlining that the said texts do not have any historical or scientific claim, nor a comprehensive account of the Cosa Nostra phenomenon and/or of the stories of the people involved. But they are rather a narration of the elements of brilliance within their work”. The descriptions explain the pictures: the reason for each selected object, describing their origins, or deciphering handwritten documents made illegible by the calligraphy of the author. In this way, the descriptions integrate with the pictures, and, as with the process of collection and the accounts of the relatives’ witnesses, they become an indispensable device for understanding the project.

1.3.4. The photographic installation

The conception and final design of the installation included the full cost of the forty-eight frames and final printings, the photographic post-production and the six modules of the structure in steel (the same prototype realized for my previous work *Lamine*). Thus, I asked for a series of quotes from those artisans of Turin with whom I had worked in the past. I had considered producing these elements in Palermo, but the production of images was so time-consuming that I decided not to and, in the end, the shipping cost was affordable.

When I had checked that the estimates were appropriate to each item of the quote established in our application funding, I had to calculate to start production. There was a short time-frame between the finishing of the twenty-four cases and the

⁸⁵ Lodato, Saverio; Di Matteo, Nino, *Il Patto Sporco*, Milano : Chiarelettere, 2018

last possible date for submitting the installation view of the work in the Palermo Archive. I first asked the editorial staff of Silvana for their deadline for receiving all the images, without having to postpone printing and to have the books ready for the opening (15th June 2018). They said that to create the layout, they could wait until the 28th of May. Besides, I knew that I could store neither the structure nor the crate with the pictures for a long time at the Municipal Archive of Palermo, as its director agreed to host the pieces for a maximum of four weeks. The large number of parts would have occupied a considerable space, especially at the frame maker's workshop, and I tried to reduce to the minimum this disturbance. Following all of these considerations, we fixed the setting up for the publication shoot for the week 21st – 25th May 2018. Hence, everything had to be produced and packed for the 15th May, and my deadline for collecting the overall twenty-four cases was the end of April. Even though I was working day and night in that direction, there were many unpredictable factors, especially the when, where and what of the things I could find for my shooting. Nonetheless, I tried to remain confident that the spirit of engagement of the relatives' victims would allow me to achieve more materials and options. While I felt I was shooting in the darkness, the collaboration with two secondary schools and the Fine Art Academy of Palermo supported me: I found their interest gratifying and their involvement enhanced my project.

In fact, since October 2017, I developed, in collaboration with Costanza Meli, a series of collaborative workshops with Lyceum Catalano and Ragusa-Kiyohara. An educational programme with schools was a requirement of the Italian Council funding, thus we opted for two schools where we could propose a practical workshop finalized to the production of the historical material (biographies and archival material about the victims included in my project) and those elements needed for the set up (the platform and bookstands, made in wood). The resulting material would be displayed in show cases in the room near the Sala Almeyda. Furthermore, the Lyceum Ragusa-Kiyohara had well-equipped carpentry laboratories that could be useful for the production of the platform. As part of the workshops programme, I had the chance to invite Antonello Marini, nowadays a trainer of magistrates' escorts in Palermo, and previously a bodyguard of important targets such as Giovanni Falcone. Marini survived the Falcone murder because he was assigned to escort another magistrate at the very last minute; the bodyguard who took his place died in the attack. His contribution was precious for the students because he gave consistency to historical events through his personal memories and feelings. His memory of the Falcone and Borsellino attacks, and the sub-

sequent reactions of the citizens of Palermo, projected for the students something of the atmosphere that enveloped Palermo in the 1990s.

As part of the monthly visits that I made to Sicily, Costanza Meli organized each time a series of meetings, or talks, in collaboration with the teachers of the two secondary schools, and Emilia Valenza, the head of the Educational Department of the Fine Art Academy of Palermo. These meetings shared the details of the project with students, teachers, and art professionals that were working in various ways as part of the artistic proposals for the Manifesta opening. In some cases, I felt that my project had provoked envy and criticism, because I was a non-Sicilian artist dealing with the history of Palermo and telling about the Mafia during an international art event, and that it was supposed to promote the city, rather than showing its dark past.

Furthermore, my project was awarded and financially supported by the most important artistic funding in Italy. That was enough to separate my work from competitors and curators. But, in the meantime, I had been helped by the fact that the release of the Manifesta programme and the list of artists invited arrived only at the end of May. Thus, I could spread effective communication about the process and contents of my project through a weekly section on the website of our media partner *Exibart*, and the Collecting Cultures social network channels (Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter). The *Exibart* website published every week a picture of the project dedicated to a victim of the Mafia with his/her biography written by the students of the two secondary schools. We assigned a unique hashtag to the project, and all the students were invited to post their images realized during the meetings and the setup. In so doing, criticisms could not spoil the exhibition before the opening. For the first time, I had to build a communication strategy: planning what and when to disseminate images of the work, avoiding any potential spoiler of the project. I do not know yet if it happened because of the funding or because of the high expectations for Manifesta. According to Costanza Meli, who was born in Palermo, the creeping suspicion that seemed to show behind smiles and surprised greetings is an intrinsic attitude of art professionals of the Sicilian capital. I experienced it among those who were not working in the main programme of Manifesta, but I also have to say that I been welcomed by those who have lived abroad and see in the biennial a way to overcome that provincial attitude.

During the eight months, the Excel document I created had been measuring my progress, and the closer the submission date for publication was approaching, the more I desired to see the colours of the victims' names turn to yellow, which meant "case done". I had been feeling intense stress throughout the production process, except for grateful moments with victims' relatives and archivists. Then it came, the day of print-

ing the pictures. I worked two days side by side with a post-production technician, dealing with the 1:1 sized print for the installation as well as the re-designed pictures for the publication. And at last, I saw the overall work on the table. Looking at each printed diary and notebook, which occupied three desks, I felt proud and tired at the same time. At that moment, I realized the number of difficulties that had been overcome and the solutions that had been devised to reach each of those twenty-four cases, and finally, I could relax a little at the end of that long pathway. That vision gave me new energy to follow the next and final phases of production: the shipping and the set up in Palermo, the documentation of which was planned for the publication. The frame maker, Silvio Zamorani, is an Egypt-born man who moved to Turin in 1957; his father was born in Ferrara, and his mother was Greek. Being Jewish, his family had to leave Cairo because of the Suez conflict. He was separated from his parents and grew up in an orphanage. Before opening his laboratory, he worked as a proofreader and book designer at the Einaudi publishing company in Turin. He speaks French, Arabic, Italian, English, and Hebrew. He is one of the most open-minded, gifted and best storytellers I know.

Silvio's frames are pieces of art, and are very elegant. Every time I work with him, he conceives a specific design that addresses the concept of the work. It is very rare to find an artisan who can deal with the viewer's perception whilst respecting the artist's vision. Being someone who had seen many situations, he can weigh people up in a first glance, and even though he is a businessman who works with prestigious galleries in Europe, he dedicates the same time and attention to each artist, especially those who deal with themes of memory. Silvio proposed two solutions for the frames. The prints could be presented together in a unique piece with two faces, or separately. In each case, the single or double frames had to be set between the two drawers, above and under each image; thus, the thickness of those drawers should correspond to that of the single or double frames, at seven centimeters. I liked the idea of a single piece, but the production cost was too high for my fixed quote; thus, I decided to go ahead with two frames of a thickness of 3.5 centimeters each. That meant that he had to produce forty-eight frames with only one face, instead of twenty-four with two faces. The pictures sizes were different, so he had to realize different sizes of *passepertout*, respecting the pairing format. He also produced a custom shipping crate for all forty-eight. Thus, the carrier collected the structures from the metalworker's workshop and the box from Silvio's address. I could not see the finished work, but Silvio called me surprised, which is something unusual, to tell me that there was not a single space available when he finished his work. The forty-eight pieces covered every horizontal surface in his workshop,

and he concluded: “Now, you should grant yourself some pride. It is an intense work for its rigor.”

Meanwhile, Claudio Rizzolo, the metalworker, completed the structures. Claudio started from the *Lamine (Foils)* prototype: each steel box had four extendible tracks placed above and under the frames. The sliding drawers exit when the viewer pulls them out. The double frames’ weight should push down the drawer above them, but there is a hooked shaft that keeps the two parallel drawers connected to the structure. Claudio dealt with their stability, in case someone should pull all four tracks at the same time. He conceived a system of grapples to anchor the six structures between them and created a series of corresponding holes on the back to insert a set of screws. While I visited his workshop to check the production, we positioned the six structures together, three on one side, three on the other, so we checked that each track was moving smoothly and how the whole installation worked. Its size was 165 by 110 centimeters. We consider the option of doing a single thin metal slab to cover the top, but its shipping would have been difficult without a crate, as it could be easily damaged. Thus we prefer six thin slab pieces as covers, much more comfortable for the carrier. Finally, Claudio packed each metal structure with furnished screws and a sketch that showed me where and how to set grapples and screws during the setup.

1.3.5 A collateral reflection: working the past, collisions and differences with *Muri di Piombo (Lead Walls)*

While I was discovering the history of the “Mafia Wars”, I ran into a series of names (such as Renato Curcio, Giulio Andreotti, Aldo Moro) and facts that I had previously encountered working on the phenomenon of the “Anni di Piombo”.⁸⁶ From 2004 to 2007, I worked on *Muri di Piombo (Lead Walls)*, a series of fifty texts and fifty photographs taken at scenes of the left-wing terrorist attacks that happened between the end of the 1970s until the beginning of 1980s. In this section, I will open a collat-

⁸⁶ “Anni di Piombo” (transl. Years of Lead) is a term used for a period of social and political turmoil in Italy that lasted from the late 1960s until the late 1980s, marked by a wave of both left-wing and right-wing incidents of political terrorism.

eral reflection on similarities and differences existing between this project and *Il Pensiero che non diventa Azione avvelena l'Anima (Words without Action poison the Soul)*.

Speaking about points of collision in these contents, there are people that have played a part in the histories of both the Mafia and leftist terrorism in Italy. The President of the Sicily Region Piersanti Mattarella, killed by the Cosa Nostra, but also the representative of Aldo Moro's group within the Democratic Christian Party; as mentioned before Renato Curcio, theorist and founder of the Red Brigades, was a close friend of Mauro Rostagno, who was killed by the Mafia. The correspondence that I included in my photographic project is clear evidence of this connection. This proves the existence of relationships between intellectuals and activists that were facing those issues that troubled the socio-political context of Italian history.⁸⁷ In fact, the city where Rostagno was born, Turin, was the scenario of significant workers' struggles between the 1960s and 1970s, and one of the four cities that experienced massive migration from Southern Italy. The struggle for improved conditions and trade union representation erupted in the Italian industrial cities. Workers were asking for a national contract of 40 hours a week, equal wage increases for all, the right of trade unions to organise assemblies during the workday, and increased pay for apprentices. The workers' struggles not only obtained their intended objective, but facilitated the process of acceptance of the southern workers (*meridionali*). As Enrica Capussotti argues "during the 1960s and 1970s, the workers' struggles were a vital moment of inclusion for the workers from the south in the social and political fabric of Turin, and by extension, in rights at a national level."⁸⁸

Returning to existing correlations between terrorism and the Mafia's history, there are chronological coincidences: the dead body of Prime Minister Aldo Moro was found on the 9th May 1978, the same day the activist Peppino Impastato was kidnapped and killed. In that specific case, the coincidence of time between the two murders had af-

⁸⁷ The cities of northern Italy (Milan, Turin, Genoa) attracted more than 2 million people from Italy's south, during the two decades after the WW2. Poor conditions of life and increasing opportunities in the north convinced workers and their families to move from mountain and rural areas to industrial cities.

⁸⁸ Capussotti, Enrica, "Nordisti contro Sudisti Internal Migration and Racism in Turin, Europe: 1950s and 1960s", in *Italian Culture*, No. 28 (September 2010) pp. 2 - 24. See also for the Italian historical and socio - political context from 1968 to the beginning of 1980s see Galli, Giorgio, *L'Italia sotterranea. Storia, politica e scandali*, Roma, Bari : Laterza, 1983

fected the news of the Sicilian activist's death in the national media.⁸⁹ For many Italians, the image of Moro's dead body, found in a Renault car in the center of Rome, ratified the shocking conclusive episode of a three-month search for the politician, who was kidnapped by the Red Brigades. The whole sequence of events left a mark on Italian society in the following decades.⁹⁰

On the other hand, there are important leads that touched marginally on the protagonists of the Mafia's history: I have never treated in my works (or have not yet) Enrico Mattei's assassination. Mattei was the President of Eni, the Italian Energy Company, founded in Italy, but with a worldwide presence. In 1962, after taking off from the airport of Catania, his plane crashed near Milan, claiming the lives of Mattei, his pilot Irnerio Bertuzzi and the American journalist William McHale. In 1970, the Sicilian journalist Mauro De Mauro investigated the last hours of Mattei's life in Sicily for the film director Francesco Rosi, who was preparing the movie *Il Caso Mattei* (*The Mattei*

⁸⁹ "Il Tg1 delle 13.30, lo stesso nel quale qualche minuto dopo sarà drammaticamente annunciato in diretta il rinvenimento del corpo dello statista democristiano, dedica alla morte del giornalista di Cinisi un servizio di cinquanta secondi che parla di un fallito attentato o di un probabile suicidio perché da una perquisizione in casa della madre sarebbe spuntato fuori un biglietto in cui il giovane avrebbe manifestato l'intenzione di togliersi la vita (in realtà si trattava solo dello sfogo, scritto mesi prima, di un uomo depresso che voleva curarsi e rilassarsi dopo tante battaglie perse)." (Transl. The Rai broadcast television Tv news at 13.30, the same edition that in a few minutes will comment with dramatic words the breaking news of the discovery of the Christian Democratic leader's dead body, it dedicates to the death of the journalist of Cinisi a 50 seconds report that tells about a failed attack or a probable suicide because police had found a handwritten note of the young man, where he manifested his intention to quit his life (in fact, it was only a confession, written months before, by a man deprived of losing many battles). From *Avvenire*: from <https://www.avvenire.it/attualita/pagine/impastato-saltato-in-aria-nel-silenzio>

⁹⁰ There are hundreds of books, dozens of cinema and TV movies addressing the Moro's case, produced in the last 40 years. Both the sense of a collective mourning, and mysterious circumstances of his kidnapping has fed the interest on this event for decades. The hypothesis of the predominant role of the deviated Secret Services, in collaboration with the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the disappearance of his last letters draw an incomplete puzzle on the Moro's case. The leader of Democratic Christian Party was inclined to a collaboration with Enrico Berlinguer, leader of the Italian Communist Party (PCI - Partito Comunista Italiano). The PCI was the most popular political force at the end of the 1970s in Italy, its diffusion and possible raise to the Italian government concerned Americans in the post - Cold War balance in Europe, as proved by many official reports by CIA. See for example: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/mar/26/terrorism>. See also Hof, Tobias, "The Moro Affair - Left-Wing Terrorism and Conspiracy in Italy in the Late 1970s" in *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (143), Security and Conspiracy in History, 16th to 21st Century (2013), pp. 232-256

Affair).⁹¹ De Mauro might have found some important information on Mattei's homicide, because he himself was kidnapped and disappeared without trace. In 1994, the informer Tommaso Buscetta confirmed that Mattei was killed by a bomb in the plane organized by the Cosa Nostra "as a favour to its friends in the US business community."⁹² In this regard, we should mention the connection between the deaths of Pierpaolo Pasolini and Enrico Mattei. Pasolini, in his controversial book *Petrolio*, elaborated a clear hypothesis which accused Eugenio Cefis, the man who succeeded Mattei as Director of Eni. In fact, after the Pasolini's murder, a theory of investigation was formulated that aimed to identify possible instigators coming from the financial area, but nothing concrete had been proved.⁹³

Taking an overview of the structure, methodology, and aesthetic approach adopted in my two works, the comparisons show both affinities and diversities. Both projects embrace a multiplicity of cases, respecting their complexity and variety; they represent structured panoramas of two historical phenomena that are often presented as fragmented events. This encyclopedic spirit is present in both works. Methodologically, it implies the identification of a single criterion behind the selection of the 22 episodes of the Antimafia struggle, and the 50 terrorist attacks of the Leftist armed groups. In the first case, the unique common identifier is the handwritten documents which inform us of the daily dedication against organized crime; in the second example, the guiding thread is the place of the attack, which entails the memory of violent deaths.

Another point of connection between them is the practice of collecting data through many research fields and visits. To produce *Muri di Piombo (Lead Walls)*, I selected and personally visited 50 locations touched by the attacks. I travelled for two years between Milan, Rome, Genoa, and Turin to take pictures of those nameless locations, waiting for the same month and time of the original attack (sometimes the same day).

⁹¹ It is a 1972 film directed by Francesco Rosi. It depicts the life and mysterious death of Enrico Mattei, an Italian businessman who in the aftermath of World War II managed to avoid the sale of the nascent Italian oil and hydrocarbon industry to US companies and developed them in the Eni, a state-owned oil company which rivaled the "seven sisters" for oil and gas deals in northern African and Middle Eastern countries. The film is interspersed with footage of the director trying to find his friend, the investigative journalist Mauro De Mauro, who disappeared while doing research for the film.

⁹² <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/autopsy-may-solve-deadly-mystery-of-the-mattei-affair-1247785.html>

⁹³ See for the connection existing between the murders of Pasolini, De Mauro and Mattei Lo Bianco, Giuseppe; Rizza, Sandra, *Profondo nero. Mattei, De Mauro, Pasolini Un'unica pista all'origine delle stragi di stato*, Milano : Chiarelettere, 2009

In so doing, I could enhance the ability of photography to capture an instant. Details of a street corner, a coffee bar, or a lobby that witnessed the murder of people (whether as victims of terrorists, or the terrorists themselves). Meanwhile, to realize the collection of handwritten documents of the Antimafia struggle, I paid a visit to 22 relatives of the victims in Sicily and other Italian cities in order to access their private archives (in some cases, I had to come back many times before the shooting). The selection of the document followed long conversations that provided me with first-hand information and a sort of guidance on the identification of personal skills, and work methods of the author. Interviews were used to report recurring topics in their relatives' speeches, sometimes intuitions ahead of their time in the struggle against the Mafia. These conversations had been useful tools for my research and enabled me to give consistency to the historical and official reports of those people. Hence, although the collection of data in both works (pictures of places, and documents) resulted from an itinerant process, there is a slight difference in their respective work conditions. In *Muri di Piombo (Lead Walls)*, I operated in a state of solitude: the production process required me to reach the right place and moment, only accompanied by my medium-format camera. In contrast, the procedure for *Il Pensiero che non diventa Azione avvelena l'Anima (Words without Action poison the Soul)* always relied on a previous negotiation with the owners of the victims' archives; thus it was conditional on their acknowledgement to be involved in an artistic activity.

Dealing with the differences between these two artworks, I should mention that my approach to the decades between the 1970s and 1990s had changed: I am considering protagonists and events as if they were numerous tiles of the same mosaic, and where connections are too frequent to be always no more than simple coincidences. I tried to materialize this larger viewing on the concept map realized for the exhibition in Palermo, and included in the publication, but I kept focused on historical facts strictly linked to the Mafia. Secondly, my aesthetic focus has shifted from the performative process of production to the performative engagement of spectators. As I said before, *Muri di Piombo (Lead Walls)* is a photographic series composed of 50 images and 50 newspaper articles. Both images and journalistic reports take the viewer / reader to the place and moment of the terrorist attack, leaving it to his / her imagination to draw out the dynamics.

Whilst the shooting phase was an immersive investigative route through 50 nameless sites, the same level of engagement does not return in the study of the display. In fact, the final form of the project is a multiplicity of pictures and texts hung on the wall, and they interact with viewers only through their act of seeing, even though the articles require reading, and remind us of the specific journalistic language used in the 1970s.⁹⁴ I realized the work on the Antimafia struggle after a 14 year-long experience in exhibiting, receiving inputs and testing the outcomes of my shows.

My recent interest in the physical engagement of viewers is conceived as a strategy to direct the viewers' political perspective and invite them to take responsibility for the content. Likewise, when looking at *Muri di Piombo (Lead Walls)*, visitors were guided to discover places in their cities with a new perspective. I tried to transmit the high sense of legal responsibility of the Antimafia victims and their dedication to their work. In this last case, they are invested with a greater sense of participation; they activate a *dispositif* that otherwise would be a sealed box. The physical interaction plays as an activation of awareness, and thus as the very opposite to a simple passing and passive gaze.

In conclusion, if I compare my historical and artistic approaches towards the Italian history from 1970s to the 1990s, there is a substantial maturation of the display and the critical interpretation of history. After 14 years, I developed a different way of sharing my memory research with viewers, shifting my interest from the production process to the study of the display, to address a more participatory spectatorship.

⁹⁴ The writing style in the Italian newspaper was often very detailed and “dry”, similar to a film screenplay with its chronological list of actions.

2. Working the present: between reality and representation

In the introduction to their book *The Life and Death of Images*, Diarmuid Costello and Dominic Willsdon offer a definition of “engaged art” as one of the most predominant tendencies of the last few decades in contemporary art. They argue that the concurrent globalisation of social, political and economic conflict post-Cold War and that of the artworld (art practices, exhibitions) created the conditions for the artist to navigate “contemporary political tensions worldwide”.⁹⁵ They outline a predominant practice inscribed in the political use of digital imagery and images (such as broadcast media, mainstream film and photographic representations), for which the primary aim is the “possibility of representations and counter-representations of points of political fracture”.⁹⁶ Analysing the works presented at Documenta 11, curated by Okwui Enwezor, Costello and Willsdon analyse aesthetic methods adopted by Mona Hatoum, Doris Salcedo, Gonzalez-Torres, and Luc Tuymans. They underline “a concern with *how* the mode or manner in which the work treats its content, and the point of view from which it is addressed, disposes its viewers to see the world.”⁹⁷ The aesthetic solution of such work is not merely rhetorical but “is the way in which it presents what it presents.”⁹⁸ There is, then, a coexistence of ethical and aesthetic tensions, where the content and the way it is handled are inseparable. Costello and Willsdon distinguish the perspective chosen by the artist who situates the viewer’s political outlook. Thus, the art of engagement is a potentially “counter-representation”, where the use of image accounts for the dualistic and ambiguous relationship between representation and reality.⁹⁹

These reflections lead me to the theme of this chapter, the persistent war between reality and conceptualization in those artistic practices informed by political or social events. The matter, form, and content, as well as their balance in artworks, are persistent themes throughout my practice. The concern with *how*, specifically the way in which the artwork can act as a threat to the content, and the point of view from which

⁹⁵ Costello, Diarmuid; Willsdon, Dominic (ed.), *The Life and Death of Images: ethics and aesthetics*, London : Tate, 2008 p.12

⁹⁶ Costello, D.; Willsdon, D., *Ibidem*, p. 13

⁹⁷ Costello, D.; Willsdon, D., *Ibidem*, p.13

⁹⁸ To understand the meaning of aesthetic dimension of works of art as rhetorical here see Arthur C. Danto, *The Abuse of Beauty*, Chapter IV.

⁹⁹ Costello, D.; Willsdon, D., *Ibidem*. p.14

it is addressed, is mutually included in a balanced relationship between ethical and aesthetic considerations. The work involves following negotiations among visitors' aesthetic perceptions and the artist's perspective on the content embodied form actively chosen to produce the work.

My practice is based on research into places, spaces, and moments where social, political, and cultural structures take on visible and tangible forms. Looking for a particular link between places, memory and emotions, and for resilient stories that survive time and rational re-elaboration. Personal involvement in social and political issues is engaged through an empathic method used to cover the distance between societies and cultures far from my own background. I am interested in understanding both how we reconstruct the past in the present, and how we construct the present for the future, through shifting private and public narratives. During the last five years, I developed a series of key questions that assist in finding a direction across definitions of a cohesive relationship between the *how* and *what*. I ask myself *What do I want to say? What emotion do I want to transmit to the imaginary spectator of my show?* These two simple questions create a system of responses that bring me to visualize the formal body of the artwork (i.e. material, shape, dimension and physical consistency in itself, in relation to the space, and to the viewer).

I will return to this staging of the processes with three projects in which I had to deal with the photographic medium and socio/political events. I attempt to go beyond the dichotomy between reality and emotivity through the aesthetic perception of the work. Through the sensory involvement and the physical approach to the piece, I try to engage visitors in the encounter. *Golden Jail | Discovering Subjection, Fortepiano | Soundtrack under Tabrir Square* and *The Spirit of Resistance* allow me to examine the existing relationship between reality, recording and representation from an aesthetic point of view.

Additionally, and simultaneously, this chapter delves into collateral issues related to the limits and possibilities of images as cultural objects and Barthesian "myths". The two projects on the "Arab Spring" in Cairo and Bahrain will address the legitimacy of working on political and pivotal changes witnessed in a foreign geography, and, on a geological tragedy in a familiar territory, specifically the earthquake in the center of Italy. In detail, *Golden Jail | Discovering Subjection* and *Fortepiano | Soundtrack under Tabrir Square* take in a consideration of the raising of issues while living historical events in foreign contexts. I will address this topic with a series of questions:

- Can field studies, or temporary stays in foreign territories, be sufficient conditions to serve as an authority to speak on regional political/social changes happening?

- Are artists immune from post-colonial views?
- Can photography work beyond citizenship and speak on behalf of the whole of humanity?

Furthermore, *The Spirit of Resistance* will permit me to discuss the photographic representation of traumatic events and ethical issues while dealing with people's personal stories.

Lastly, I will define in this chapter the possibility of capturing visitors' attention, and the difference between spectator and viewer.

- What are the parameters that influence the visitor visit?
- Can personal, physical, or occasional factors be excluded in the conception of an artwork focused to transmit a political viewing, or raising critical thoughts on specific issues?

2.1. *Golden Jail | Discovering Subjection*

Beginning in 2012, I explored the collective phenomenon of the “Arab Spring” in Egypt and Bahrain (*Golden Jail | Discovering Subjection* and *FORTEPLANO | Soundtrack under Tabrir Square*), even though I was experiencing it through the long wave of testimonies, by those impacted by remaining in those countries that I visited during my past residency programs in Cairo and Manama.¹⁰⁰

The “Arab Spring” involved a series of countries (Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, among others) in the Middle East where uprisings, and/or popular rebellions against the government occurred in response to oppressive regimes and poor living conditions.

Golden Jail | Discovering Subjection is a photographic series beginning in 2015, addressing two different reactions of the governments of Egypt and Bahrain to the “Arab Spring”. The photographs taken in 2012 and 2014 were successively printed on cotton paper, enrolled and superimposed. This manual intervention on the prints suggests a process of cancellation and camouflage operated by the power of specific referential self-preservation.

This aesthetic restitution aims to evoke two different aspects of the post-revolution period: how the protests were suffocated with any form of memory removed by authorities in Bahrain; and how the dissent and the spirit of revolution had been disregarded in Egypt. “Erasure” in Bahrain is omnipresent: the oldest and most rural areas are destroyed; written protests on the walls are systematically blotted out with black paint; opponents of the dictatorship disappear, and in 2011 the medical staff that dared to treat injured agitators were sentenced to prison. The Bahraini uprising was comprised of a series of non-violent demonstrations aimed at achieving greater political freedom and equality for the majority Shia population and calling for the end of the Al Khalifa family monarchy. On 17 February 2011, hundreds of demonstrators camped for days at the Pearl Roundabout in Manama, and were killed by five hundred troops sent by the Gulf Cooperation Council. Three months later, there was a declaration of martial law. The brutal police responses towards unarmed protesters, doctors and bloggers suffocated any dissent, and even medical care, in Shia neighborhoods. Amnesty International denounced the use of systematic torture and other forms of physical and

¹⁰⁰ The project was realized after the residency at the Townhouse Gallery (2012), as one of the artists selected for the RESO program - International Network for Artist residency and Educational Programmes / Fondazione per l'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea-Crt; and in 2014, during the artist residence at Al Riwaq Art Space, under the invitation of Alexandra Stock, curator of the Festival Foundations Alwan 338.

psychological abuse on detainees, abuses, and the army itself for human rights violations.¹⁰¹

When I visited Bahrain, the Pearl Monument did not exist anymore. It was destroyed only one month after the so-called “Bloody Thursday”, because “part of city planning ideated to revert central Manama to life.”¹⁰² However, when I stopped the car on the bridge in front of the roundabout, the military soldiers of the checkpoint encouraged me to not take pictures of the square. I was surprised to notice that after three years the government was feeling endangered by capturing images of that roundabout. Again erasure, censorship. This reminded me of what Pierre Nora said about *lieux de mémoire* “where memory crystallizes and secretes itself has occurred at a particular historical moment, a turning point where consciousness of a break with the past is bound up with the sense that memory has been torn - but torn in such a way as to pose the problem of the embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists.”¹⁰³ I, then, asked my guide for more traces of the movement that had contested the sovereign power. The most visible evidence was the series of walls showing inscriptions covered by black paint, all around the kingdom. Some were not hidden, yet displayed missing militants’ names or declarations of freedom. These writings are constantly obscured with black paint by armies and policemen, and it is forbidden to take pictures of them. Hanno Hardt defines “Photography as an appropriation of reality, in order to aid the invention of a particular truth.”¹⁰⁴ Similarly, I was looking for a way to draw attention towards the disappearance of dissent voices in Bahrain.

In my piece, I rolled up the material to obscure the picture, emphasizing the lack of freedom of expression that I experienced there, with one exception, for the image of the Pearl Roundabout. Here, two pictures, one taken before and the other after the destruction of the monument, are overlapped to underline the absence of the object. Before being warned by those soldiers, I was able to shoot, taking as reference another viewing I collected on the internet, with the Pearl Monument intact. An anonymous

¹⁰¹ "Bahrain Mourners Call for an End to Monarchy – Mood of Defiance Against Entire Ruling System After Brutal Attack on Pearl Square Protest Camp That Left at Least Five Dead". London: Associated Press (via The Guardian). Archived from the original on 18 February 2011. Retrieved 31 March 2011.

¹⁰² The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/mar/18/bahrain-destroys-pearl-roundabout>

¹⁰³ Nora, Pierre, “Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*” in *Representations*, No. 26, Special Issue: *Memory and Counter-Memory*. University California Press, Spring, 1989, pp. 7-24. Here p. 7

¹⁰⁴ Hardt, Hanno, “Constructing Photography: Fiction as Cultural Evidence” in *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, Vol. 24, No 5 (December 2007) pp. 476-480 (London: Routledge Ltd)

photographer uploaded the picture online in high definition. Here, a fundamental question continues to persist: concerning the relationship between temporality and the image, or rather, the object and its past. The picture that represents the removed monument evidences both its existence and subsequent demolition. Thus, it has become an important document. In so doing, not only Foucault's idea that "history transforms documents into monuments" is confirmed, but also acquires more significant meanings: it reveals how awkward is the attempt of erasing memory in the era of the internet.¹⁰⁵ As the destruction of a memorial reinforces its symbolisation, likewise its image spreads and has been conserved on the internet. This action has converted that image into an eternal monument of the lack of freedom.

Occurring in parallel, the photographs that related to the development of the "Arab Spring" in Egypt allude to transformation as a political strategy to not change the power settlement: the overturning of court judgments, the change of governments, the use of Tahrir Square that stripped it of any kind of sense, all reveal the unchanged identity of social classes in power before and after the revolution. The superimposed prints represent two opposite faces of this country, in its dichotomy of a magnificent past and a precarious present. This is described by the harmonious architecture of the Art Nouveau Champollion's Art house, realized by the French architect Raoul Brandon in 1909, contrasting with the daily traffic jam on the 6th of October Bridge in Cairo. Sculptures of lions posing like sphinxes are overlapped on pictures representing multi-layered billboards of American Hollywood movies consumed by time.

During the conception of *Golden Jail*, in the constant erasure and camouflage of truth, I have found the message I wanted to transmit, while the sense of mutability or an alteration of reality was the emotional charge. In the display, visitors can see the pictures hanging on the wall, but instead of perceiving a unique or entire image, they can discern only a fragment, thus their viewing and knowing are only partially satisfied. The roll hides part of the print leaving an empty space or represents the point of conjunction with another image that appears below it. Then, the visitor is led to question the reasons for this manipulation. "Why is the print rolled, why is it disappearing? Why is it taking place to another?". It may not work in this way for everyone, because the reading of a display is a constant negotiation with the knowledge and cultural background of the public. However, certainly, anybody can register the three-dimensional aspect of the picture. In acquiring the third dimension of a physical object, the printed photograph simulates the movement of the rolling, in front of a viewer who predicts the aftermath.

¹⁰⁵ Foucault, Michel, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Routledge classics: London: Routledge, 2002, p. 7

Lastly, the aesthetic form of *Golden Jail* embodies the inconstant nature of photographs. As previously mentioned, while reading images, we should consider the chronological discrepancy between the time of shooting and the time of viewing. The photographic image is a subjective copy of a reality that does not exist anymore in that form. Roland Barthes reinforces this point when, in his *Camera Lucida*, he suggests that if “the photograph possesses an evidential force,” its testimony “bears not on the object but on time”.¹⁰⁶ The processes behind the production of both projects have seen a significant time of gestation. I have been able to find an aesthetic form for *Fortepiano* and *Golden Jail* only three to four years after my residency programme in Egypt, and one year on from my stay in Bahrain (*Golden Jail* was produced in 2015, thus three years later, and *Fortepiano* in 2016, four years later). During this time frame, while consulting all the material collected there, I was puzzled. I reflected on my potential perspective as a foreigner, an artist dealing with the perception of a reality to which I did not belong. However, the strength of images and the relevance of that historical moment impacted me so greatly that I felt it necessary to funnel that material towards artwork. As Liz Wells reminds us “photography validated our experience of being there, which is not merely one of visiting an unfamiliar place but of capturing the authentic experience of a strange place.”¹⁰⁷

Working on representation and symbolisation implies taking critical distance from facts, and reflecting on their aftermath. In practice, the greater span between my personal experience and the visual material collected in that specific period helped me in developing an *aesthetic strategy* to deal with the recording of that experience. Considering the changing scenario and the unpredictable events following those four years, I could trace among my materials those aspects that were disclosed in the aftermath of the “Arab Spring” in Egypt. This gave me a historical perspective that I could not have in 2012. Secondly, I did not want to produce a superficial representation of the events, and this theme entered into the conversation with another artist in residence in Cairo, the Lebanese and Rotterdam-based artist Rana Hamadeh. During my stays in Cairo and Bahrain, I tried to record, as much as I could, the atmosphere and the feelings of people who surrounded me. In Cairo, every day for a couple of weeks, we experienced protests taking place in the streets from the afternoon until midnight. Cairo has a popu-

¹⁰⁶ Barthes, Roland, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1981), pp. 88-89.

¹⁰⁷ Wells, Liz, *Photography: A critical introduction*, Routledge, 2015 (Fifth edition), p. 19

lation density of almost twenty-thousands people per square kilometer.¹⁰⁸ Hence those mass meetings involved thousands of people every day, and they ended in Tahrir square. The distance from the specificity of a place and time permitted me to point out the feeling of being a community in the public space. Being in the middle of the square allowed me to perceive the boundary between personal and collective experience, from a broader perspective. Until the residency organization encouraged me to stay home until the result of the vote, and to make provisions in case the military party had won, the outcomes were unpredictable. Even a civil war could take place. I had the chance to discuss with Rana, gaining her point of view on the surrounding events. Protesters were inundating the streets almost every day, especially the week before the vote. Men and women were often engaged in long political debates in shops and shisha bars. We could only attend cafés that allowed women; thus, we were not able to listen to all the conversations. I often asked her help to collect opinions, with her translations from Arabic. Rana's work is informed by political tensions and unbalanced relationships between the individual and institutionalised powers. Thus, I listened to her commentary while dealing with artistic practice and history. I spent several days in long conversations on aesthetic developments and political perspective. I then asked her if she would be able to work on the actual events in Cairo. Her opinion was that being there for such a short time did not allow us to give a consistent interpretation of reality - not because we could not understand social and political issues, or facts and events, but rather because any conceptual development in art needs an identitarian membership, a sense of belonging.

Nevertheless, documentary photography has often operated without this condition: photographers are professionals authorized to report facts through their sensibility and ability even though they do not belong to the places of the subject. Ariella Azoulay shifts the legitimization of photography from authorship to spectatorship while saying that there is an "encounter between the photographer and photographed, and an external eye, the eye of the spectator." The presence of the viewer empowers the photograph to overtake any citizenship, transforming it into a social-cultural tool of power. Azoulay brings as examples all those pictures of the Palestinian occupation to explain the concept of "deterritorialization". She says that "the Palestinians became citizens of the citizenry of photography long before there was any possibility of their becoming citizens in the original meaning of the word (...). The citizenry of photography is a

¹⁰⁸ <http://worldpopulationreview.com/world-cities/cairo-population/>

global form of relationship that is not subject to national regimes”, or, national borders.¹⁰⁹

In her book *The Civil Contract of Photography*, Azoulay, a native Israeli author, defines photography as “an apparatus of power that cannot be reduced to any of its components: a camera, a photographer, a photographed environment, object, person, or spectator. ‘Photography’ is a term that designates an ensemble of diverse actions that contain the production, distribution, exchange, and consumption of the photographic image.”¹¹⁰ Nowadays, the very ubiquity of digital cameras and the ease with which images can be circulated has meant that those who were subjects of photographs are all photographers: soldiers can record their war, victims of crimes their stories... and swap images among themselves, share on social media sites, or email them around the globe. If technological advancement has made it possible for everyone to express through photography, who is entitled to tell stories? Susan Buck-Morss states that there are no limits to the universality of history. It is exactly when past events are “separated from a direct lineage of inheritance” that they can provide a key to understanding the present. The American theoretician says, “there is nothing in human history that is foreign to us.”¹¹¹ Although official memory is mainly focused in consolidating the “orthodoxy” of the present, rather than preserving truth, “fragments of history are conserved in images. They retain the nearness of original experience, and with it, ambiguity. Their meaning is released *only* in a ‘constellation’ with the present.”¹¹²

Similarly, many artists and curators have been looking for the truth in the systematic composition of fragmentary images. For instance, André Malraux's *Museum without Walls* (originally *Le Musée Imaginaire*), published in 1947, was composed of hundreds of images of physical art objects by means of photographic reproduction. Over the last forty years of his life, Malraux assembled, disassembled, and reassembled montages of photographic reproductions to create *Le Musée Imaginaire*, which ranks as one of the twentieth century's seminal manifestations of the archive, along with Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas*, Hanne Darboven's *Cultural History 1980–1983*, and Gerhard Richter's

¹⁰⁹ Azoulay, Ariella, “Citizenship Beyond Sovereignty: Towards an Ethics of the Spectator”, 2008 in *Documents*. Cambridge: the MIT Press, 2013, edited by Julian Stallabrass

¹¹⁰ Azoulay, Ariella, *The Civil Contract of Photography*. New York: Zone Books, 2008, p. 85

¹¹¹ Jacir Emily, Morss, Susan Buck, *Emily Jacir & Susan Buck-Morss*. No 004, Series: DOCUMENTA (13), Hatje Cantz, 2011, p. 43

¹¹² Jacir E., Morss, S. B., *Ibidem*, p. 43

ongoing *Atlas* project.¹¹³ In Malraux's museum, all works of art - whatever their origin - are available to be appreciated for their formal qualities, independently of whatever they originally signified. These examples can be seen as a prescient manifesto of the digital age that enacts the displacement of the physical art object.

As a practitioner, I think that the search for truth should be balanced with the visitor's perception of the artwork: through the study of the exhibition space and the physical approach to the artwork. As mentioned before, in the final conception, I tried to overcome the passivity of people in front of these contemporary images, conceiving artworks where the content and the form are balanced. Thus, I need to develop a political opinion about events conveyed about a territory. This sometimes requires a longer gestation, especially when taking into account a historical perspective of said events. The photographic selections or installations lead viewers towards the perception of a "particular truth", even though this consists of the inability of understanding facts in their progression.

¹¹³ See for an extensive study of these cases Baldacci, Cristina, *Archivi impossibili. Un'ossessione dell'arte contemporanea*, Milano : Johan & Levi, 2016

2.2. FORTEPIANO | *Soundtrack under Tahrir Square*

In a visual culture, pictures assume an essential role in people's lives. They allow us to discover, tell, and record our perception of reality. Authorship, interpretation and their ontological nature are questionable. The idea that every photograph tells a story refers to the fact that pictures rely on a particular truth, although they are often the cultural background of the photographer. Besides its significance during the processes of social communication it is measured differently among people who will be captured by said image. This is informed by the recognition of a full identitarian code, shared by the author and audience. The empathic link is created through the "seeing," and it embodies a series of signs and meanings culturally encoded during the transmission. Photography contributes to cultural theory and visual communication through its daily encounter with reality and imagination, and the thin boundary between fiction and reality.

However, reality has multiple faces; thus, the same documentary picture can be read in numerous ways. An image's uses change the meaning of seeing. Jacques Rancière describes them with three different categories: "Naked", "Ostensive" and "Metaphorical" images, based on their author's intention: "Three ways of coupling or uncoupling the power of showing and the power of signifying, the attestation of presence and the testimony of history. Naked are those photographs that show reality exactly how it appears to the photographer, without any attempt of dissemblance, but with the primary criterion of documenting and proving the existence of absolute reality."¹¹⁴

The Ostensive image is defined by the urgency of presence in a more complex correlation with the author and the system of power she/he supports. Images of sculptures, exhibitions, performances find their iconographic role in declaring themselves contemporary without signification. For instance, the picture showing Duchamp's urinal realized by Alfred Stieglitz works in this assertive presence of people and the object. Lastly, the Metaphorical or Metamorphic Image plays on rearrangements of images, extending from their original contexts to criticize or reflect on the role of images in the production of power, and consent. Thus, the action of playing with forms of imagery and denouncing their mystification are activities inscribed into what Rancière calls Metaphorical Image.

¹¹⁴ Rancière, Jacques, *The future of the image*, London and New York: Verso, 2007, pp. 22-31

This last definition allows me to consider different aspects of the relationship artist-document-viewer. In fact, the French philosopher argues that the author of the Metaphorical Image becomes “a collector, archivist or window-dresser, placing before the visitor’s eyes not so much a critical clash of heterogeneous elements as a set of testimonies about a shared history and world.”¹¹⁵ In this process of reenacting, appropriation and re-staging of images, the artist focuses and leverages its cultural and historical significance to engage the visitor in a qualitative dialectic. In so doing, the first effect is to interrupt the media flow and stimulate people’s imagery around the shared history represented by artworks. The display, the installation, re-activates the unstable nature of images; namely their objectivity and arbitrary essence. The whole process is made possible by the aura that surrounds the art space, which entails more than a physical aspect. It assumes the cipher of a specific cultural code belonging to the art domain. When stepping inside a conventional space where an art show takes place, contemporary visitors are challenged to a re-thinking of the world through the artist’s eyes. In a luminous definition of photographs, Hanno Hardt says that they are “vessels of elusive truths,” and they “mirror the complex interior life of individuals, reading them requires cultural contexts, historical or biographical knowledge.”¹¹⁶

The sense of temporality is an important factor to consider: it informs the signification of an image and their subsequent uses in the production of the artwork. First of all, we should remember that working in *a posteriori* state is a necessary condition of photography. In fact, the suspension between the collection of material and the production of the artwork represents the time needed to mature an opinion from the event to its aftermath. However, the photographic medium is in itself intertwined with a dualistic dimension of time. In the catalogue of the show *Archive Fever* at the ICI of New York, Okwui Enwezor has written:

“The disjunction between the instant in which the image is recorded and the moment it is finally printed produces two instances of the archive: first, the archival time of the image, and second, the archival register of its reproduction.”¹¹⁷

There is an ontological distance of time of the shooting, the time of printing, and the engagement of the audience through the exhibition. If every image result from past experiences narrated by the photographer, they are “also a self-portrait of its cre-

¹¹⁵ Rancière, Jacques, *Ibidem*

¹¹⁶ Hardt, Hanno, *Ibidem*

¹¹⁷ Okwui, Enwezor, *Archival Fever, Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art*, New York: Steidl, p.24

ator.”¹¹⁸ This is regardless of how pictures are *selected* rather *taken* by the artist. In fact, while capturing an instant, each image is subjected to the contingency of reality, the author’s point of view, and further changes of these factors over the time. Thus, temporality enters as a protagonist in the process of production, selection and exposition influencing facts and personal perception of reality. The photographic images are processed through re-appropriation, activation and rehabilitation over time, in accordance with the author’s perception of reality. The distance of time from the shooting to the selection informs the way in which the picture can be manipulated and turned to different significations in the exhibition space. These considerations are particularly relevant in my work *Fortepiano | Soundtrack under Tabrir Square*, where the sense of temporality influenced the production of the photographic installation. In 2016, only four years later, I decided to realize this photographic installation for a solo show at the BOZAR in Brussels. *Fortepiano | Soundtrack under Tabrir Square* is an installation composed of a concertina-postcards with 30 shots of myself every day from my terrace in Cairo. Each self-portrait was realized from the same point of view. The camera was positioned to have a complete overview of my terrace and my body turned against it. In so doing, the viewer would have focused on what my eyes were turning towards on the terrace. These pictures were taken during the demonstrations that were occurring below my building, followed by a recording of the noise that surrounded my flat, in 2012.

The skyline of the concertina postcard is suspended under three pedestals in iron, representing the diagram of the soundtrack of the protest. In so doing, there is both a reference to my experience of being there with the self-portraits, and to the process of elaboration of a memory, recalling the soundtrack diagram visible only with digital software. I tried many times to use those images in an artwork, but I had to wait four years after my residency programme in Cairo. In 2016, looking at those pictures’ aftermath, I finally admitted my inability to read political changes in their occurrence. In fact, *Fortepiano* focuses this feeling of inadequacy, shifting the attention to my state of inaction while surrounded by political protests. The audio-track proposed in the exhibition is one of the daily recordings I made about the protests surrounding outside my apartment. Thus, the project addresses the personal perception of historical events.

I shifted my interest from the political relevance of the Egyptian protest to a more general understanding of the relationship between personal and collective during political tests or changes. For instance, the ritual of taking daily pictures of myself on the terrace of my apartment in Cairo was a way to exorcise my fear of exiting and wal-

¹¹⁸ Hardt, Hanno, *Ibidem*.

king in the streets of Cairo, being pointed at, and followed by Egyptian men. In fact, at that time, I was experiencing the life of a Western woman constrained to a private space and with limited space in public. On my terrace, I was often encircled by the crowd's chorus and cries, which were arriving from the street. Additionally, my apartment was a few meters from Tahrir Square, just in front of Mubarak's burnt government building. These two features have found an outcome into the artwork *Fortepiano*, the concertina postcards installation. The shape of this artwork is directly inspired by the digital skyline produced by the audio recordings of demonstrations realised on that terrace.

Golden Jail and *Fortepiano* embody a constant desire to actualize my vision and perception of reality taking into account the changes operated over time. In my practice, as mentioned before, I take in consideration also how temporality influences personal and external developments. In fact, mutations happened over time and they dialogue with the temporalities of the photographic image: the process of collecting, selecting and exposing. The intersection that can take place between those mutations over time enrich the artwork, and enable it to comprehend multiple significations of our time.

Looking for artists who are interested in those themes and whose work is suspended on the dichotomy between personal and politics, I realize that many of them work with archives and testimonials. I have recently considered the limit of the archive, as it often retains only the shadow of the history. Susan Buck-Morss says that "Orthodox remembrance is capable of performing murder on the material world - not only what has been in history, but exists today. Collective memory becomes conformism. Anyone who remembers differently is suspect."¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Jacir E., Morss, S.B., *Ibidem*, p. 44

2.3 The Spirit of Resistance

The Spirit of Resistance is a photographic work realised during the summer of 2017, a year after the earthquake that affected central Italy, the Marche and Umbria regions. On 24 August 2017, an earthquake measuring 6.2 on the Richter scale hit central Italy, with the epicentre in Accumuli, near Perugia. It was felt across the whole cities and small villages of central Italy (from Rimini to Naples), including Rome, Florence, and Bologna. It was the largest tremor since 2009, when the city of L'Aquila in the Abruzzo region was destroyed, killing over 300 people.

During the night of 24 August 2016, I was sleeping at my family home in the Marche region. I was woken up by an imprecise and rising noise, similar to a train approaching. Everyone started to run outside the house, and after one long minute of trembling, the earth stopped moving. I was in the fourth month of my pregnancy, and I was suddenly affected by stomach pain, due to the fear. It stopped only six hours later. As a result, I decided to leave that territory, and I moved with my husband to visit his family in the north of Italy. The following months, the area was shaken continuously by trembles, resulting in people having to live with the fear, something difficult to bear for a long time. Encounters with victims were published, reporting collapsed buildings, high floors crashed to the lowers, and people who found themselves blocked under the ruins. Money and belongings gained over a lifetime were lost in a moment. With its disruptive impact, every memory was shaken up and order changed by the earthquake. Many places have lost their identity.

My family was saved. Firstly, because they were 30 km away from the worst-affected villages, and secondly, because my family home was built in the late Seventies by an old friend of my father, who made him an earthquake-proof house for the same price as a regular one. However, for the rest of my pregnancy, I never returned to visit my family. Also, this is why, while my child was born healthily, and the trembling ceased, I felt a responsibility to visit those places that were most affected by the earthquake in central Italy. That happened only in August 2017.

While I was touring the areas of the earthquake, I had in my mind the memory of those shops and small squares that today are abandoned, and the touristic and flourishing places that I had visited many times with my family. I tried to track reference points of my childhood trips in that area, in the villages on the Apennines in the Marche region. Most of those villages were full of inhabitants during holidays, old people and tourists coming to enjoy healthy food and refreshing walks/hikes. During my visit, I barely came across cars in the street. Every single entrance was sealed by red

tape. Slowly, a nostalgic feeling trapped me, and I started to think about those inhabitants unable to return to their houses, and who for security reasons were obliged to move to the coast. The farmers and breeders were particularly affected, living in the most difficult situations, financially they survive thanks to their fields and animals, but they are obliged to leave them for weeks. I have met some of them who decided to sleep in caravans near their damaged homes. After one year, they were still waiting for state financial support to rebuild their houses or even for temporary accommodation. The stress caused by these forced desertions and the fear of losing their primary source of profit had obliged them to lose their past lives, and habits. Therefore, some of them decided to not follow the authority warnings regarding living in a seismic territory, prioritising instead their economic interests. I had the chance to meet the Mayor of Visso, one of the most devastated villages. I convinced him to allow me to enter the center of the city, accompanied by a fireman. The mayor did not abide by the authority guidelines when he allowed citizens to live in self-organized camp inside containers. Even though he was denounced for it, he knew those people would have occupied those areas in any case. Thus, he preferred to side with the villagers. Inhabitants of the mountain areas can be hard to convince otherwise.

The Spirit of Resistance stems from similar encounters, collected during my visits to Visso, Ussita, and other small villages. However, I used witnesses only to compose my understanding of the communities' conditions after the earthquake. The work is a negotiation between their experiences and the documentation of that territory. I decided to avoid two main effects: the exposition of victims, and the fascination for ruins. I was interested in focusing the required strength to resist in this state of indeterminacy. In the pictures, a figure stands motionless in between ruins and debris. The character wears a gas mask, which hides facial features and the expression of any feeling. Its presence is a metaphor of a dark and melancholic circumstance but at the same time, an expression of belligerence and resilience. Collapsed facades reveal a glimpse of the interiors of apartments that, over the years, keep on showing their past lives. Their history comes to the surface through the architectonic elements and the furniture, still intact. Through gaping wounds, scratched onto the skin of surface, it is possible to catch the intimacy of personal remembrances and of the collective memory of a community. I considered the state of suspension in which inhabitants of the so-called "*cratere*" are

living, and how to transmit a similar feeling through the display.¹²⁰ I thought of materials and metaphors of incompleteness, as a promise of old time.

Thus, printed on perforated PVC, which is normally used to cover buildings during their restoration, the pictures are a metaphorical reminder of renovation. I thought of coverings that wrap the facade of palaces acting as a disguise, but also transforming their appearance. Likewise, the semblance of a building changes the skyline of a city completely. The physiognomy of those villages would never be like they were before the earthquake. The result is hung printed images on perforated PVC, that give both lightness and consistency to the picture. They allow and invite the gaze of visitors to go through them as if trying to see what it is beyond them. However, the figure with the mask and every fragment seems to fix a memory that tries to resist oblivion.

¹²⁰ Translation: crater. The earthquake crater is the definition given to areas interested by seismic phenomenon. The term does not come from geology or scientific uses, it seems coming from the graphics describing the epicentres of earthquakes and surrounded areas affected.
(<http://blog.terminologiaetc.it/2016/10/27/origine-significato-crattere-sismico/>)

2.4 Spectator vs Observer

From the 1960s, Conceptual Art has challenged the canonic model of exhibition, stretching its basic parameters: from the disappearance of the performer (e.g. Vito Acconci), through the invisibility of the work (e.g. Walter De Maria), to the treatment of visitors as participants in the creation of the artwork (e.g. Franco Vaccari).¹²¹ As all of these and many other experiments show, spectatorship is a pivotal matter to consider: the artistic display presupposes a viewer. For this very reason, there is an increasing interest in capturing visitors' attention through the design of the artwork or the exhibition. How can we define spectatorship through different artistic approaches? Does it change the spectator act in relation to the artefacts?

Ariella Azoulay defines the difference between observer and spectator. The latter is not typically employed in relation to photographic images: "Spectator is much used to the sphere of art, to movie screenings or other modes of entertainment."¹²² While using images, we should consider the fact that a photograph is always a "stationary object accessible to immediate and exhaustive viewing". It assumes the immediate identification of an image with its original context, thus its indexicality. Azoulay defines two important concepts: the process of "becoming a citizen of the citizenry of photography" and the "civil contract of photography". She argues that "remembering that the photographic image is the product of being together through photography" allows the observer to rehabilitate "the relation between the photo and the photography, between the printed image and the photographic event - that is, the event that took place in front of the camera".¹²³ Azoulay underlines the need for a participatory observation of the image, that enables the observer to imagine the encounter between the photographer's eye and the reality he/she has witnessed. Visitors focus their interest and start to activate what Azoulay defines as "prolonged viewing", in which "the observer as spectator has the power to turn a still photograph into a theater stage on which what has been frozen in the photograph comes to life."

Thus, the observer can also become spectator whilst looking at photographs, and remembering the meeting between the photographer and photographed. In this definition, there is a potential shifting of the "addressee's position" into the "addresser's po-

¹²¹ See: Fameli, Pasquale, "Vito Acconci and the disappearance of the ego" in *Figure n. 2* (2014); McFadden, Jane, *Walter De Maria: Meaningless Work*. London: Reaktion Books, 2016; Vaccari, Franco; Valtorta, Roberta, *Fotografia e inconscio tecnologico*, Turin, Paperback, Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi, 2011

¹²² Azoulay, Ariella, *The civil contract of photography*. New York: Zone Books, 2008, p. 168-169

¹²³ Azoulay, A., *Ibidem*, p. 166-167

sition”, while the pictures are raising awareness of a “state of emergency”.¹²⁴ Thus, observers are taking responsibility for the content, they “can transform signals of warning... into emergency claims.”¹²⁵ The Israeli art curator and critic has based her argument on the reliability of photography in accurately showing a consistent something of the external world -but it is only a world as it is captured and recorded in photographs. Any image can be exported from its context and used to demonstrate others’ statements, to build fake information.¹²⁶ In addition, Azoulay assumes the viewer’s faculty of visualizing beyond the perception of the artefact, and its physical appearance. This argument is subjected to changeable factors such as the people’s interest in and empathy for the content of the image, their inclination to take responsibility for what they are seeing, to sign “the civil contract of photography”.¹²⁷ Is it possible to guide visitors’ attention towards the state of engagement in the digital era? And can this be done even though attention is continuously distracted and stimulated by an endless flow of images?

The cognitive psychologist Stephen Bitgood has dedicated his research to defining visitor engagement as “a group of psychological and physiological processes that involve a continuum of three-stages (capture, focus, and engage) with each stage sensitive to a unique combination of independent variables.”¹²⁸ All of these actions derive from the interplay of “personal factors (such as personal values, interests, past experiences, etc.), psychological-physiological factors (perceptual, cognitive, affective, decision-making, fatigue), and environmental factors (social influence, architectural and exhibit design).”¹²⁹ Those variables of attention also include “approaching an object, stopping, viewing time, reading, talking with others about, thinking about, tests of learning and memory, rating scales, and the like...”.¹³⁰ I would add to this list the act of

¹²⁴ In Azoulay’s argument this expression is used to address scenarios of war, conflicts, violation of human rights. However, here it might be considered in a broader sense, while photographs are encountering conditions of poverty, censorship, and other disadvantages that are underrepresented.

¹²⁵ Azoulay, Ariella, *Ibidem*, p. 166

¹²⁶ See for this argument Griselda Pollock’s text in Costello, Diarmuid; Willsdon, Dominic (ed.), *The Life and Death of Images: ethics and aesthetics*, London : Tate, 2008

¹²⁷ Azoulay, Ariella, *Ibid.*, p. 167

¹²⁸ Bitgood, Stephen, *Attention and Value: Keys to Understanding Museum Visitors*, Walnut Creek, Left Coast Press, 2013

¹²⁹ Bitgood, S., *Ibidem*

¹³⁰ Bitgood, Stephen, *Attention and Value: Keys to Understanding Museum Visitors*, Walnut Creek, Left Coast Press, 2013

taking pictures with a smartphone, and sharing these images on a social network. This last reaction is becoming an automatic gesture among visitors, one that triggers viral disseminations of exhibitions, emotional feedback, and potentially instigates non-visitors to come to see the show.

Additionally, the psychologists John Falk and Lynn Dierking define three main parameters conditioning the visitor experience in a museum: the personal, social and physical context.¹³¹ The personal context is “unique; it incorporates a variety of experiences and knowledge”, including the familiarity of the visitor with the content and the environment of the museum.¹³² The social context can change on the basis of those people who are undertaking the visit at the same time (a group visit differs from a family visit, or a visit of an empty museum). The physical context includes the architecture of the museum as well as the artefacts included in it. “How visitors behave, what they observe, and what they remember are strongly influenced by the physical context... The art museum provides different experiences than a science museum, or a historic home and an aquarium...”¹³³ Falk and Dierking argue that the evaluation of the museum experience is given by the interaction between these three factors, and it can be broadly directed by museum operators.¹³⁴ Sensorial elements, such as a loud noise or flash of lights can capture the viewer’s attention, but if they are perceived to be of low potential value the visitors may look for other elements. When their value is found to be sufficiently high, spectators are engaged in the discovery of a new lexicon, a new perspective proposed by the artist. Using images defining their provenance mean both raising awareness about the role of pictures in social communication, and prevents manipulation by those who are in power.

All these arguments fit particularly for the photographic projects I addressed in this chapter, where the haptic dimension is not directly involved (*Golden Jail*, *Fortepiano*, and *The Spirit of Resistance*), but is indicated through installative solutions of printed photographs. In my practice, the photographic material collected is often printed and used to shift towards sculptural uses. The flatness of the printing is challenged through its manipulations, or compositions, that assume a three-dimensional form. In so doing, viewers are invited to move around the photographic installation, looking down, across and through things as well as just *at* them. Hence, images take a new form, a new func-

¹³¹ Falk, John H., & Dierking, L. D. *The museum experience*. Washington, D.C: Whalesback Books, 1992

¹³² Falk, John H., & Dierking, L. D. *Ibidem*, p. 1-5

¹³³ Falk, J.H., & Dierking, L. D., *Ibidem*

¹³⁴ Falk, J.H., & Dierking, L. D., *Ibidem*

tion of the physical interaction not only with the gaze, but also with the body of the visitor. They might lose their visual impact, or their role of documentation of the past, but their presence as objects can negotiate potential new balances between form and content. The reactivation of spectatorship is even more stimulated through the display, which tries to firstly capture visitors' attention, through the sensorial perception, then it focuses and engages their interest through the discovery of the content. It proposes to spectators an aesthetic journey, where the form embodies the content, and the visit becomes the opportunity to test the appropriation of critical perspectives by spectators. We cannot underestimate the importance of *being* in a show, especially in the digital era, where the interactive tension and the engaged state are incredibly divergent in visitors' experiences.

3. Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have delved into the possibility of creating archives as an artistic practice, in a way that enables the viewer to question existing cultural structures and to discover erased chapters in the construction of history and knowledge. The collecting process is a common identifier of the archival practice, and of the photographic medium, which role is collecting artist's perception of reality.

I assume that the ownership and sponsorship of archives, databases and cultural institutions, in general, create unbalanced internal relationships, based on gender, social class and racial gaps in the construction of history. In this sense, archival methodologies enable us to anticipate forthcoming mutations of power and political scenarios (i.e. state surveillance created in the era of digital, and artificial, intelligence). Furthermore, the rhizomatic nature of the archival practice helps to connect new sources of knowledge, and it operates beyond centralised forms of power.

Through my practice, I have focused on archival practices as alternative vehicles of the content embodied in interactive installations that through the haptic can contrast people's uncritical and passive approach to reality. The relevance of spectatorship and exhibition space can be the counterbalance to the increasing individualism and superficiality of modern communication. Considering the three main features of digital communication, and how people's behaviours and emotions are increasingly filtered through flat surfaces like smartphones or tablets, I proposed the exhibition as an opportunity to engage people's thoughts into a more critical debate. In fact, compared to pre-digital societies, nowadays there are fewer opportunities for being personally engaged with new perceptive experiences. Social networks become the main arenas of discussion, but as mentioned before, users express hate and rage behind their screens. In this sense, my own multi-layered projects use the exhibition space as an unusual context that necessitates the physical presence of the spectator: they are conceived to facilitate the spectator's *con-tact* with a specific content. The sense of space, the haptic and the physical involvement engage the spectators' perception stimulating a greater responsibility towards the content of the show.

On the other hand, I have reflected on the physical appearance of printed images and how they are not able to engage spectator's participation. In fact, the haptic perception of pictures through installations represent in my practice an instrument to engage people's interaction. The design conception of photographic installations responds to the need of giving a three-dimensional presence to photographs. These displays try to escape from the traditional presentation of pictures, as framed flat images that invite a

passive seeing of the photographed. This theme is also related to the ambiguous identification of images with reality, which is not automatic: pictures are powerful documents, that have to be inserted into a context, rehabilitating the relationship between the photographer and photographed.

In this sense, the flatness of prints reminds us of the flatness of those digital surfaces that surround us and have become filtered realities. For this reason, in my works, I try to challenge visitors' perceptions of images to consider differently the content through a different appearance of the image and at the same time inviting the visitor to have an experience: through the haptic interaction, and the physical movement. In fact, during the show, spectators are invited to enter or touch the installation in order to take responsibility for the content, to come together (*con-venir*) to new statements of truth.

This process is a way to stimulate their interest and, at the same time, convey a conceptual impression of the artwork. The aesthetic impression of an artwork comes through the choice of a specific size scale, the offered opportunity of selecting a drawer with inserted images. All of these design decisions provide physical and emotional impressions to the spectator who is able to discover the work physically and intellectually. In this way, there is a coming together of the design conception and the conceptual content of the artwork. For instance, the physical extraction of the pictures in *Lamine (Foils)* and in *Il Pensiero che non diventa Azione avvelena l'Anima (Words Without Action poison the Soul)*, or the narrow entrance of the *Dreams' Time Capsule* were conceived to invite spectators to specific aesthetic experiences: in the first case, by pulling out the drawers, they enact their own intellectual selection of images, while in the second example, entering the capsule, visitors renovate their will to participate in the project and enforce their awareness of being inside an intimate space, accessible to only one person at time. Engaging spectators' physicality means activating a different kind of interaction, neglected in the digital communication, and accessible to everyone, regardless of personal digital abilities or language skills. Lastly, this kind of engagement allows multiple interpretations and it invites spectators to elaborate their critical thought beyond the influence of algorithms. The aim is to develop the exhibition space as the best scenario to test awareness of contemporary issues, as well as the dynamic evolution of citizenship and privacy in the digital era.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Works

Dreams' Time Capsule, 2011 - ongoing

Participatory project, audio archive, installation, 2 ventilators

Part of the following major exhibition projects during PhD research:

Maraya Art Center, Sharjah; Sikka Art Fair, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 2016;

Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield, United Kingdom, 2016;

Contemporary Locus, Carmine Monastery, Bergamo, Italy, 2016.

Lamine (Foils)#01 and Lamine (Foils)#02, 2015 - 2017

Two structures in iron, 8 photographs with frames, prints on Hahnemuhle paper

Part of the following major exhibition projects during PhD research:

Artissima Art Fair, Turin, Italy, 2015; MA*GA Modern Museum of Gallarate, Italy December 2017 – April 2018

Il Pensiero che non diventa Azione avvelena l'Anima (Thoughts Without Actions poison the Soul), 2018

Photographic installation composed of six structures in iron, 44 photographs with frames, prints on Hahnemuhle matt fiber paper

Part of the following major exhibition projects during PhD research:

Project Space, University of Leeds, 2019; City Museum of Livorno, Italy, 2019; MUS-INF, Museum of Information and Photography, Senigallia, Italy, September 2018 - February 2019; Italian Cultural Institute, Brussels, Belgium, 2018; Municipal Historical Archive, Palermo, Italy, 2018.

Golden Jail | Discovering Subjection, 2014 - 15

Pigment print on Hahnemuhle cotton paper

Part of the following major exhibition projects during PhD research:

Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, Italy, 2018; Triennale di Milano, Milan, Italy, 2016;

BOZAR – Palais des Beaux-Arts, Bruxelles, 2016; Contemporary Locus 11, Carmine

Monastery, Bergamo, Italy, 2016; Alberto Peola Arte Contemporanea, Turin, Italy, 2016;
Museum Canonica, Rome, Italy, 2015

FORTEPLANO | Soundtrack under Tahrir Square, 2016

Concertina postcard composed of 30 self-portraits, 3 pedestals in iron
Part of the following major exhibition projects during PhD research:
BOZAR – Palais des Beaux-Arts, Bruxelles, 2016

The Spirit of Resistance, 2018

C-prints on perforated PVC

Part of the following major exhibition projects during PhD research:
Italian Cultural Institute, London, The United Kingdom, 2018

Nema Problema (No Problem), 2007-2009

series of photographs and texts with interviews
C-print on photographic paper
dimensions: 70×100 cm; 35×35 cm

Muri di Piombo (Lead Walls), 2005-07

photographs and articles selected from the newspapers
Chromogenic prints; c-prints on photographic paper
dimensions: 44×44 cm/20×44 cm

Appendix B

Exhibitions

Eva Frapiccini | The Art of Memory

Project Space, School of Fine Art, History of Art & Cultural Studies

University of Leeds, Leeds, United Kingdom

05.09.2019 - 18.09.2019

Dietro l'obiettivo. Fotografe italiane 1965-2018, dalla collezione Donata Pizzi

curated by Alessandra Capodacqua

Santa Giulia Museum, Brescia, Italy

15.06. - 08.09.2019

Inciampo#01. Eva Frapiccini

curated by Paola Tognon

City Museum of Contemporary Art, Livorno, Italy

14.03.2019 - 22.07.2019

Il Pensiero che non diventa Azione avvelena l'Anima / Words without Action poison the Soul

curated by Anna Detheridge (Connecting Cultures) and Costanza Meli (Isole Palermo)

MUSINF - Museum of Photography and Information, Senigallia, Italy

12.11.2018 - 02.03.2019

Il Pensiero che non diventa Azione avvelena l'Anima / Words without Action poison the Soul

curated by Anna Detheridge (Connecting Cultures) and Costanza Meli (Isole Palermo)

Cultural Italian Institute in Brussels, Brussels, Belgium

08.11 - 24.11.2018

Il Pensiero che non diventa Azione avvelena l'Anima / Words without Action poison the Soul

curated by Anna Detheridge (Connecting Cultures) and Costanza Meli (Isole Palermo)
Municipal Historical Archive, Palermo, Italy

15.06 - 30.08.2018

L'altro Sguardo. Fotografie Italiane 1965 - 2018

curated by Raffaella Perna
Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, Italy

08.06. - 02.09.2018

Scratched Surfaces

Cultural Italian Institute of London, United Kingdom
Text by Anna Musini

09.02.2018 - 02.03.2018

Dancing in the Memory Palace

MA*GA Modern Museum of Gallarate, Gallarate, Italy
03.12.2017 - 22.04.2018

Deposito d'Arte Italiana Presente

curated by Ilaria Bonacossa and Vittoria Martini
Artissima Art Fair, Turin, Italy

02.11. - 05.11.2017

L'altro Sguardo. Fotografe Italiane 1965 - 2015

curated by Raffaella Perna

Triennale di Milano, Milan, Italy

05.10.2016 - 08.01.2017

Che valore ha un sogno?

curated by Elisa Del Prete

Nosadella.due, Bologna, Italy

05.10.2016 - 08.10.2016

Contemporary Locus XI. Eva Frapiccini

curated by Paola Tognon

Carmine Monastery, Bergamo, Italy

09.09. - 18.09.2016

La fotografia addosso. Marco Pesaresi e i 15 anni del premio

curated by Silvia Camporesi

SiFest Savignano Immagini Festival, Savignano sul Rubicone, Italy

09.09.2016 - 27.09.2016

Dreams' Time Capsule project

curated by Damon Waldock

Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield, United Kingdom

21.07.2016 - 31.07.2016

Eva Frapiccini, Golden Jail | Discovering Subjection / Pasqua Vorgia, Traces

BOZAR, Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels, Belgium

17.06 - 04.09.2016

Dreams' Time Capsule project

curated by Alexandra Helen MacGilp

Sikka Art Fair, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

13.03 - 24.03.2016

Dreams' Time Capsule project

curated by Alexandra Helen MacGilp

Maraya Art Center, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

22.03 - 24.03.2016

A Trilogy

curated by Francesca Comisso

Alberto Peola Arte Contemporanea

05.02 - 25.03.2016

Talent Prize / Inside Art

Museo Pietro Canonica, Roma

15.11 - 29.11.2015

RESEARCH VISITS & RESIDENCY PROGRAMS

From October 2017 to June 2018. Field Visit in Palermo, in collaboration with Connecting Cultures organization (funding Italian Council)

March 2016. Field Visit in Dubai and Sharjah, invited by Maraya Art Centre, Sharjah, UAE, Sharjah,(UAE) / Artist in residence, in collaboration with the organization FARE, Milan.

Appendix C

Publications

Monographs

Eva Frapiccini. Il Pensiero che non diventa Azione avvelena l'Anima (Words without Action poison the Soul). Texts by Carlo Emanuele Bugatti, Antonio Calabrò, Eliana Calandra, Andrea Cusumano, Anna Detheridge, Eva Frapiccini, Costanza Meli, Laura Riva. Milan : Silvana Editoriale, 2018

Eva Frapiccini. Muri di piombo. Texts by Pino Corrias, Eva Frapiccini, Walter Guadagnini, Alessandro Profumo. Milan : Skira Editions, 2008

Book chapters

“Eva Frapiccini at the Townhouse Gallery, Cairo”, in *Working Geographies, RESÒ International Art Exchange Residency Program*, Milan : Mousse Publishing, 2015

Articles

Frapiccini, Eva, Contribution to “Eva Frapiccini a Senigallia” with Cesare Biasini Selvaggi, Laura Riva, in *Exibart online*, 18th December 2018

Frapiccini, Eva. Contribution to “Il Pensiero che non diventa Azione avvelena l'Anima”, with Elena Inchingolo, *Espoarte*, October 2018

Frapiccini, Eva, Contribution to “La Storia che rimane” with Mario Francesco Simeone, in *Exibart*, no. 101, June 2018

Frapiccini, Eva, Contribution to “La Storia, frame by frame” with Cesare Biasini Selvaggi, Laura Riva, in *Exibart online*, 26th April 2018

Frapiccini, Eva, Contribution to “La Storia. frame by frame” with Antonio Bianco in *Juliet Art Magazine*, Juliet Publishing; Muggia, June 2017

Frapiccini, Eva, Contribution to Manipolare il ricordo per creare infinite soluzioni di realtà / Manipulation of memories generates endless solutions for reality”, with Alessandra Caldarelli, *Inside Art*, n. 108, 2015

Frapiccini, Eva, Contribution to “Dialoghi di Estetica. Parola ad Eva Frapiccini”, edited by Davide Dal Sasso, *Artribune*, May 2015

Frapiccini, Eva, contribution to “A conversation about dreams, time, and more” with Federica Tattoli in *Fruit of the Forest*, October 2016

Frapiccini, Eva, in conversation with Prof. Alfredo Paternoster, “Modelli di Organizzazione funzionale della memoria”, in *MOPCAP*, 2015

Appendix D

Lectures / Seminars

Il Pensiero che non diventa Azione avvelena l'Anima (Words without Action poison the Soul) / under the support of the Sadler Seminar Funding, LHRI, University of Leeds

Guest Speakers: Dr. Gigliola Sulis (Professor, Italian Studies, University of Leeds); Anna Detheridge (Connecting Cultures, Milan); Dr. Camilo Tamayo Gomez, (Research Fellow, School of Law, University of Leeds); Roberto Musotto (Research Fellow, School of Law, University of Leeds)

School of Fine Art, History of Art & Cultural Studies

16.09.2019

“Visiting Artist: Eva Frapiccini”,

Turin Politecnico, Turin, Italy

05.06.2019

Eva Frapiccini. Artist's talk

City Museum of Contemporary Art, Livorno, Italy

12.03.2019

Eva Frapiccini. Il Pensiero che non diventa Azione avvelena l'Anima (Words without Action poison the Soul), Lecture and book launch, Artissima Art Fair, Turin, Italy

04.11.2018

Annual Seminar *Forum dell'Arte Contemporanea*, MAMbo, Modern Museum of Art

Promoter and organizer with Cesare Pietroiusti of the round table on “Practice as Research”

Guest Speakers: Dr. Aria Spinelli (Ph.D. Candidate at the Loughborough University);

Dr. Giovanna Cassese (Fine Art Academy of Napoli, President of the ISIA Faenza);

Marinella Paderni (Director of the ISIA Faenza); Sergia Avveduti (Lecturer at the Fine

Art Academy of Bologna); Enrico Fornaroli (Director of the Fine Art Academy Bologna).

Contributors: Dr. Rosa Barba (artist, researcher at the Malmo Art Academy, Lund University); Dr. Fiamma Montezemolo (Senior Lecturer, UC Davis, California)

10.11.2018

Il Pensiero che non diventa Azione avvelena l'Anima (Words without Action poison the Soul)

Guest Speakers: Eliana Calandra, Director, Archivio Storico Comunale in Palermo; Federica Galloni (Director, Directorate General for Contemporary Art and Architecture and Urban Peripheries, Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Tourism); Anna Detheridge (President, Connecting Cultures); Costanza Meli (Curator and President, Associazione Isole); Eva Frapiccini (artist); Carlo Bugatti (Director, MUSINF – Museum of Modern Art, Information and Photography); Antonio Calabrò (writer, Director, Fondazione Pirelli and Vice President, Assolombarda); Pasquale Scimeca (Filmmaker and Education Director, Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Palermo); Marco Rizzo (journalist, and writer); Fabrizio De Pascale (Filmmaker)

Conference and Public Forum, Public Library of Palermo, Italy

15.06.2018

FRUIT Festival of Independent Publishing, Palazzo Re Enzo, Bologna, Italy

Promoter and organizer of a series of conferences on “Photography as Contemporary Art”. Invited speakers: Zhenia Sveshinski (Dummy Art Book, Amsterdam); Ilaria Campioli (Festival Fotografia Reggio Emilia), Francesco Carone (artist), Elisa Del Prete (Nosadella.due, Bologna), Marinella Paderni (art curator), Daria Scolamacchia (Fabrica, Treviso), Giovanna Silva (Humboldt publishing), Silvia Camporesi (artist photographer), Donata Pizzi (collector), Francesca Ceccherini (art curator, Contemporary Locus, Bergamo).

Palazzo Re Enzo, Bologna, Italy

28 - 29.01.2017

Pricing the Priceless, Contemporary Art and the art market

Guest speakers: Eva Frapiccini (University of Leeds); Dr. Marta Herrero (University

of Sheffield); Dr. Emma Waring (University of York); Professor David Jackson (University of Leeds); Dr. Mark Westgarth (University of Leeds)

School of Fine Art, History of Art & Cultural Studies, University of Leeds, The United Kingdom.

25.10.2017

Women in collection, Leeds Art Gallery, Leeds, UK

Symposium organized by Arts Collector Society and Leeds Art Gallery. Guest speakers: Eva Frapiccini, University of Leeds; Anne Hardy, visual artist; Romni Smith, University of Leeds; Dr. Nigel Walsh, Leeds Art Gallery
Leeds Art Gallery, Leeds, United Kingdom

19.10.2017

Eva Frapiccini Artist's Talk, Carmine Monastery, Bergamo, Italy.

Guest Speakers: Dr. Alessandro Oldani (Neuroscientist, Policlinico of Milan), Sonia Giorgi (Psychologist); Eva Frapiccini (artist and researcher); Paola Tognon (art curator).
Carmine Monastery, Bergamo, Italy

09.09.2016

Public spaces as social glue, BOZAR, Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels, Belgium.

Symposium organized by Marleen Wynants, Director CROSSTALKS VUB (Vrije University Brussels)

Guest Speakers: Eva Frapiccini (artist and researcher); David Bravo (European Prize for Urban Public Space & editor of publicspace.org); Tobias Zielony (photographer); Dr. Els Vervloesem (Architecture Workroom Brussels), moderated by Jan de Zutter (journalist).

BOZAR, Museum of Fine Art, Brussels, Belgium

16.06.2016

Practice-led Ph.D. symposium

Guest speakers: Filippa Dobson, Jade French & Carly Stubbs, Eva Frapiccini, Sarah Kate Wilson, John McDowall, Jo McGonigal, John Rooney, Alaena Turner.

Organised by Judith Tucker and Catherine Ferguson.
School of Design, University of Leeds, Leeds, United Kingdom
27.04.2016

Eva Frapiccini. Artist's talk : Dreams and systems of memory

Guest speakers: Dr. Janet Bellotto (Lecturer, College of Arts and Creative Enterprises);
Zayed University; Dr. Alexandra Helen MacGilp (chief curator at the Maraya Art Center,
Sharjah)

Maraya Art Center, Sharjah, The United Arab Emirates
21.03.2016

Women's Paths Research Group

Guest speakers: Rachel Randall, Eva Frapiccini, moderated by Dr. Clara Stella
Leeds Humanities Research Institute, University of Leeds, Leeds, The United Kingdom
05.02.2016

Collecting People | L'arte di pensare, Diogene Bivacco Urbano, Turin, Italy.

Guest Speaker with Alfredo Paternoster (University of Turin), Clara Madaro (art curator
and researcher, University of Turin)

Diogene Progetto Urbano, Turin, Italy
23.04.2015