



REGENERATION AND CULTURAL PARTICIPATION

THE URBAN
REGENERATION MIX
EUROPEAN PROJECT



EUROPEAN UNION
European Regional
Development Fund

edited by
Marino Cavallo
Daniele Cencioni

Bononia
University Press

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SUMMARY

PREFACE	5
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1ST PART

PROJECT AND IDEAS

> The DAMSLab: the University between participation and cultural citizenship Roberta Paltrinieri	12
> The URBACT European Programme and the Urban Regeneration Mix Project Marino Cavallo	21
> Key knowledge transfers of the Urban Regeneration Mix project Daniele Cencioni, Valentina Stefano	30
> Culture, regeneration and engagement: the local Urban Regeneration Mix pathway Giulia Allegrini	38

2ND PART

THE STAKEHOLDER NETWORK, PROJECT PARTICIPATION AND REFLECTIONS EMERGED

> The research and production path “ArchInProcess” Jannik Pra Levis, Costanza Rosa	48
> The Urban Regeneration Mix Project’s experience of “job shadowing” in the city of Braga Giulia Alonzo	54
> The Cassero LGBTI+ Center Giuseppe Seminario, Andrea Berna, Mauro Meneghelli	60
> The BAM! Strategie Culturali cooperative society Rosanna Spanò, Federico Borreani	66

> The Mercato Ritrovato farmer market Giorgio Pirazzoli	76
> The Cantieri Meticci cultural association and theater company Pietro Floridia, Angela Sciavilla	78
> The Cantieri Meticci theatre workshop participation experience Erika Capasso	87
> The DAS - Dispositivo Arti Sperimentali cultural center Tommaso Giordani, Mianù Catenaro	93
> Porto15, who we are and our role in the Manifattura delle Arti area Federico Palmas	101

Marino Cavallo
Daniele Cencioni

This book brings together selected papers from the work experience of the European project Urban Regeneration Mix, an experience of study, exchange and co-operation between cities in Spain, the United Kingdom, Croatia, Portugal, France, Poland and Italy. The project was co-ordinated by the Polish city of Łódź and aimed to transfer good practices in the designing and regeneration of cities, neighbourhoods and territories. The idea that inspired the promoters and participants of Urban Regeneration Mix was to enhance a collaborative and participatory model of urban development, based on the ability to involve “con brio” the vibrancy of stakeholders and urban design energies, especially in less favoured city areas and zones, which are more problematic but no less full of possibilities, innovation and change. We would like to quote here a clever definition by the American scholar Richard Sennett on the qualities that distinguish the city: it is “crooked”, “open”, and “moderate”¹. The city is crooked because of difficulties in programming and planning in advance its functions, its development, the way in which its spaces are used. People take over places, adapt them, often transform their ends and objectives. This is because urban space is *open*, i.e. it must have the capacity to let itself be crossed and shaped by the needs and desiderata of people, communities and social groups. It ought be able to meet their demands by adapting the urban landscape to the cultural and social backgrounds of its inhabitants. The city should then be *moderate*, not abstract design of one or more architects and strategic decision makers, but dynamic project, capable of capturing the surrounding environment and external stimuli. The city and its elements are made up of corners, crossovers, relationships, sentiments and plural identities. Moderate planning succeeds in listening to these ener-

¹ Sennet R., 2018. *Costruire e abitare. Etica per la città*. Milano: Feltrinelli.

gies and incorporating them into the development and evolution trajectories of urban areas. At stake is the *preservation of the locality*, now more than ever threatened by globalization, by the defining categories of centralist level, by the disjunction between territory and social movements, by collective relations mediated and adapted to the logics and patterns of digitalization². The choice of Urban Regeneration Mix, especially in its path of transfer into the “Porto Culture” area, was to take *cultural complexity* as the cornerstone for the declensioning and defining a regeneration project for an area of the city. The articles and essays collected in this book represent the contribution of the different social and cultural actors to enrich, weave, connect the tiles and fragments of a cultural project that is synthesized and hosted from a place – the Porto neighbourhood in Bologna – and a multifunctional and *iper-cultural* container, the DAMSLab, in the neighborhood, in the heart of the historic center, and in constant dialogue with the city and its territory.

The first chapter, by Roberta Paltrinieri, presents the DAMSLab, its history, its evolution and the project that characterises it, aimed at bringing together different cultures and sensibilities with the aim of making this place a true laboratory for the urban cultural enhancement of the city. The figures on the DAMSLab’s partnerships and participants in the initiatives show the positive results achieved by this structure and its ability to dialogue with the territory and the city.

The second chapter, by Marino Cavallo, contextualises the project within the European Urbact programme, highlights its networking elements and its capacity to generate exchanges to socialise good practices and be reflected in similar experiences at European level. In order to achieve a global vision of the innovation and the local roots for projects and players it is essential to anchor experience in the most innovative strategies for urban regeneration in the policies promoted by the European Union in recent years in these fields, and, last but not least, to enhance the contribution of social groups, inhabitants and local communities, which represent the living part of urban places and spaces³.

² Appadurai A., 2001. *Modernità in polvere*. Roma: Meltemi.

³ Bria F., Morozov E., 2018. *Ripensare la Smart City*. Torino: Codice Edizioni.

The third chapter, by Daniele Cencioni and Valentina Stefano, presents in detail the Urban Regeneration Mix Project, and focuses on the key mechanism of this initiative: the process of transferring experiences and knowledge. The chances to find analogies and parallel paths between the former Bologna's slaughterhouse, from which the DAMSLab takes shape, and the industrial factories of the city of Łódź, transformed into cultural containers, spaces for aggregation, places for creativity and meeting within the city is truly evocative.

The fourth chapter, by Giulia Allegrini, accompanies readers on the journey that saw the participants in the Urban Regeneration Mix experience visit the spaces, laboratories and workshops of the organisations, associations and structures that make up the Manifattura delle Arti, Porto Culture and DAMSLab. Very important was, according to Giulia Allegrini, the ability of the project to hold together regeneration and participation. In this way, the perspective of culture as a *form of citizenship expression* can be realised, which is undoubtedly an intriguing suggestion for the reallocation and reshaping the meaning of urban regeneration and participation.

The second part of the book focuses on the actors of Porto Culture, the city's stakeholders, the protagonists of the network of cultures that inhabit the neighbourhood and enrich the many different subjects that are involved in this dense cultural part of the city. This part of the book is a kind of catalog, *repertoire* and archive, where we find both organizations and documentation and reportage of experiences. The first mention is of the "ArchInProcess" research and production pathway, where DAMS students, led by Anna Rosellini, head of the DAMS contemporary architecture workshop, reflect on the importance of spaces and architecture in their multidimensional meanings, involving constructions, buildings, but also social relations and symbolic meanings. Continuing in our *repertoire of cultures*, Giulia Alonzo reports on her experience of "job shadowing", a mode of interaction between different projects in the Urban Regeneration Mix network. In this report, Giulia Alonzo was the protagonist of an *full immersion* period in the Portuguese city of Braga, an example of cultural reconversion of an urban context that has had to reinvent itself in order to combat the economic crisis and the gradual abandonment of the historic centre by its inhabitants. An emblematic example of this

regeneration was the Gnaration Building, a former police station transformed by the architect Carvalho Araújo into a space for artistic creation and performance. But there are many other places and spaces that are reshaping Braga's urban cultural strategies and which are thoroughly documented in the report.

The presentation of the Porto Culture stakeholder network starts with Cassero LGBTI+, the historical seat of Arcigay, one of the most active associations in Italy for the development of the rights and welfare of the community of gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans and intersex people. The association has provided a steady participation at the project full of ideas and contributions. In the context of association many initiatives have been undertaken, between these the "Gender Bender" festival is very innovative and has become a benchmark in the city's cultural scene, with collaborations and synergies between festivals and associations.

Follow in the book the presentation of BAM! Strategie culturali, a cooperative society founded by a group of the University of Bologna Master's degree in innovation and organization of culture and the arts students. There are many projects promoted by this cooperative, some of the most interesting being Open Vicoli, an experience of *cultural regeneration* in the City of Genova backstreets, and, closer to our territory, the project for the *participatory reuse* of the former church of Carmine in Medicina, near Bologna.

The contributions in the second part of the book also include the experience of the Mercato Ritrovato, a remarkable example of interaction between culture and sustainability, material civilisation and creativity. For more than ten years, the DAMSLab has been the venue for a regular market of local specialities – quality agricultural products – attended by almost twenty local companies using ecological production and cultivation techniques and methods.

In the field of Performing Arts, the experience of Cantieri Meticci has been particularly evocative for Urban Regeneration Mix. The artists and the actors created a workshop course specially adapted to the needs of the project and its members, transforming the study visit and the exchanges between the project's international partners into an opportunity to enter the stage directly, thus becoming part of a stage project whose underlying theme was reflection on social inclusion, on the relationship

with differences and on the ability to represent them. The reflection that accompanies the presentation of the show and the company, which highlights the role of *witnesses* as well as spectators of those involved in the show and in the workshops, is also worthwhile in order to critically consider all the elements at stake.

In the context of reflection on cultural containers and the ability to design flexible, open and multifunctional spaces, we find the presentation of DAS - Dispositivo Arti Sperimentali, a cultural centre self-described as *very young*, and which represent a successful mix of ideas and hybrid functions, capable of acting on the contemporary, proposing spaces for performances, educational and training projects, cultural production and promotion.

Finally Porto 15, a street name and number in the Manifattura delle Arti, a new way of conceiving living and the relationship between home, community, socialization. It is one of the first examples of fully publicly-owned cohousing, with common spaces and a community of residents structured to *share the inhabitation*. A pilot experience, promoted by the Municipality of Bologna's Department of Housing and implemented by "ASP Città di Bologna" (Public Company for Services to the person), in partnership with ACER Bologna - Azienda Casa Emilia-Romagna (public body that engages in economic activities for the management of public and private real estate assets), with the technical assistance of the Su Misura Cooperative of Turin, which received funding from the Italian Presidency Council of Ministers' Department for Youth.

This interweaving of urban functions, social relations and cultural sensitivities concludes the book. The many different souls that inhabit, live, nurture and narrate the Manifattura delle Arti are the best evidence of the idea behind Porto Culture: it is possible to regenerate the city by leveraging culture, calling on the lively energies that inhabit urban places and spaces.

1ST PART

PROJECT AND IDEAS

THE DAMSLAB:

THE UNIVERSITY BETWEEN PARTICIPATION AND CULTURAL CITIZENSHIP

Roberta Paltrinieri

Full Professor of Sociology
of Culture, University of
Bologna, and Scientific
Director of DAMSLab

DAMSLab is a social innovation project of Department of the Arts - DAR, in the University of Bologna. The DAMSLab is placed in the Manifattura delle Arti area, one of the three main cultural districts of the Municipality of Bologna. It is a citadel of culture where find their place: the MAMbo, Museum of Modern Art in Bologna; the Cineteca di Bologna Foundation; the Cassero seat

of the Arci Gay association; several seat of the University of Bologna. The DAMSLab is hosted in a historic building, the former public slaughterhouse, which was the target of an urban regeneration project in the 1990s, designed by the architect Aldo Rossi and granted by the Municipality to the University of Bologna for 99 years free of charge, starting in 1999.

DAMSLab: entrance
seen from the inside.



For about twenty years, the former slaughterhouse was the workshop space of the DSM Department of Music and Performing Arts.

In 2018, as a project of excellence of the Department of Arts, funded by Miur [Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research] and affiliated with the Municipality of Bologna and the Emilia Romagna Region, is born the DAMSLab.

In the framework of social innovation, this project has modified its governance model and organisational procedures. A scientific committee, in charge of programming, has been set up, half of which is made up of University of Bologna professors and half of subjects from the institutions, the Municipality of Bologna and the Emilia-Romagna Region, in order to promote *public engagement*, *social engagement* and *civic engagement* activities.

DAMSLab fulfills the Department of the Arts third mission. In fact, universities are not only responsible for research and teaching, but also for public reporting of their activities. In the context of *public engagement*, DAMSLab works in concert with La Soffitta, a research centre within DAR whose aim is to integrate the research activities of the Department and the three-year and master's degree courses in projects to promote practices and forms of expression featured in the current artistic studies. Given its commitment to social innovation, DAMSLab does not limit its action to *accountability* or *public engagement*, the focus of DAMSLab's action is on *social engagement*, even civic engagement, which in the mission of the study of the arts and performance coincides with the design of *audience development* paths, in the meaning promoted by the European Union, which does not finalize the theme to the creation of public tout court, but rather moves from the perspective of cultural welfare.

As the Treccani Italian encyclopaedia states, the expression "cultural welfare" indicates a new integrated model for promoting the well-being and health of individuals and communities through practices based on the visual and performing arts and cultural heritage. DAMSLab is, in fact, a laboratory of urban cultural valorization that aims to promote projects and promote synergies that identify in the production and in the cultural and artistic participation a key factor of territorial growth and a present and future citizenship relevant asset.

It is a place open to the territory, enabling dialogue between different areas of knowledge. It activates and favours synergies and collaborations with other University departments and with the cultural institutions, foundations, companies, museums and associations of the city, fostering social impacts raising awareness, participation and cultural mobilisation of the urban fabric.

Moreover, in the framework of social innovation, the DAMSLab adopts a collaborative and participatory method based on networking and co-design to develop original ideas and projects that enhance the multiplicity of languages and formats of cultural and artistic production. Important pillars are the interdisciplinary approach, the direct connection with the teaching, research and project activities of the Department of the Arts, but above all the attitude to collaboration with the surrounding territory, in order to encourage an openness in listening the context in which they operate, for the virtuous creation of partnerships with relevant subjects in the territory.

The main objective is continuous dialogue with the wider university and city community, with public institutions, with other actors in the Manifattura delle Arti area, with the artistic field and the cultural and creative industries and with the different civil society bodies and associations.

The activities of the DAMSLab aim to facilitate the circulation of cultural and social capital and develop the idea of cultural, active, creative and reflective citizenship, based on the confrontation and the construction of a shared sense of belonging to a culturally dynamic, open and cohesive community. The conceptual reference model is that of shared social responsibility, in which the university, like other actors, is a *community holder* element.

In this perspective, the DAMSLab collaborates with the Urban Regeneration Mix project, sharing the assumptions of a wide meaning of urban regeneration, defined as liquid, in which the theme of spaces is combined with that of the community, according to a contemporary meaning of space crossed by flows and promoter of inclusive confrontation.

It is a liquid regeneration because it responds to the mistrust and fears of the liquid society in which we live and to the growing need for sociality. In the relationship with the Metropolitan City and the other partners of the URBACT project, the University, as an institution and differently from the past, is involved in a progressive process of horizontalisation, in the



DAMSLab: an event held in the main hall.

processes of listening to its publics, which are the citizens, publics that become proactive subjects of the transformation not only physical, but also symbolic of their city.

In fact, we are not talking about a mere urban regeneration that only takes into account environmental sustainability, but about the multiple dimensions of sustainability: economic, social, cultural and administrative, as well as environmental.

Cultural citizenship which promotes liquid regeneration is a process and a practice, certainly not a product.

It is in this perspective that the space becomes a project in itself, the DAMSLab space becomes a device where the succession of events has as its fil rouge not so much and not only a cultural programme, which is often looked at in a limited way.

Being a promoter of citizenship with a strong focus on ongoing societal issues is the fil rouge that is woven throughout all that happens at DAMSLab. Festival formats, Sustainability Events, relations with local associations, thanks to Urban Regeneration Mix and URBACT have found a wider institutional context and an increasing promotion in Europe, increasingly focusing on creativity and cultural participation.

For the first year of work (2019), the following figures can be reported about DAMSLab:

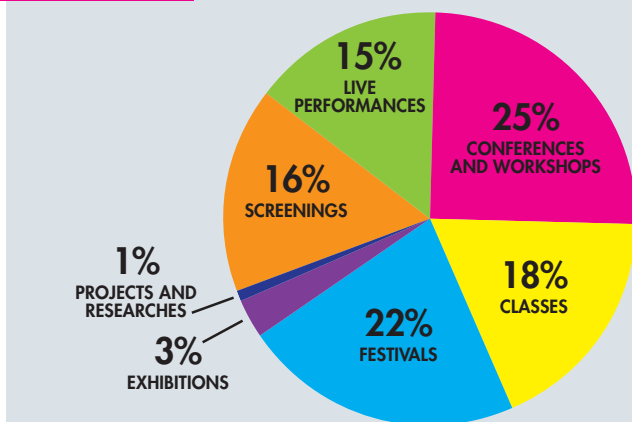
29 partnerships (see table) established with local and non-local realities that in 2019 have believed in the centrality of DAMSLab as a cultural hub of the city, including the primary and renewed partnership with the centre of the Department of Arts **La Soffitta**, which for years has realised a significant part of its events calendar in DAMSLab spaces, the numbers of which are beyond the scope of this report.

In more detail, in 2019 DAMSLab organised and/or hosted: **20 conferences and seminars** – for a total of **2,643 participants** – in collaboration with leading scientific, cultural and social organisations, including **ArtCity**, with the event “Incontro con Orlan” (Meeting Orlan); **National**

PARTNERSHIP

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Apun - Associazione Psicologia umanistica e delle narrazioni | 15 Federculture |
| 2 Art City Bologna | 16 Festival Danza Urbana |
| 3 Associazione Scenario | 17 Fondazione Innovazione Urbana |
| 4 Associazione UBU | 18 Fondazione Unipolis |
| 5 BAM | 19 Il Cassero LGBTI+ Center |
| 6 Bottega Finzioni | 20 Impronta Etica e SCS Consulting |
| 7 Cantieri Meticci | 21 Libera Bologna |
| 8 Centro La Soffitta del Dipartimento delle Arti | 22 Marconi Radio Days |
| 9 Cineteca di Bologna | 23 Mercato Ritrovato |
| 10 Città Metropolitana di Bologna | 24 National Geographic |
| 11 Comune di Bologna | 25 Piazza Verdi Village |
| 12 DES | 26 Regione Emilia-Romagna |
| 13 Emilia Romagna Film Commission | 27 Teatro Ridotto |
| 14 ERT - Emilia Romagna Teatro Fondazione | 28 Young About |
| | 29 Zed Festival |

TYPE OF EVENTS



Geographic with the conference entitled “Esploratori si diventa” (Becomes explorer); and **Impronta Etica**, which for the first time brought the CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) Exhibition on Social Innovation to DAMSLab Bologna.

12 screenings – for a total of **1,116 participants**. Among these, special interest was aroused by the “Il Nastro Verde” (Green ribbon) festival, dedicated to sustainable cinema, with 4 titles in the programme and 712 participants.

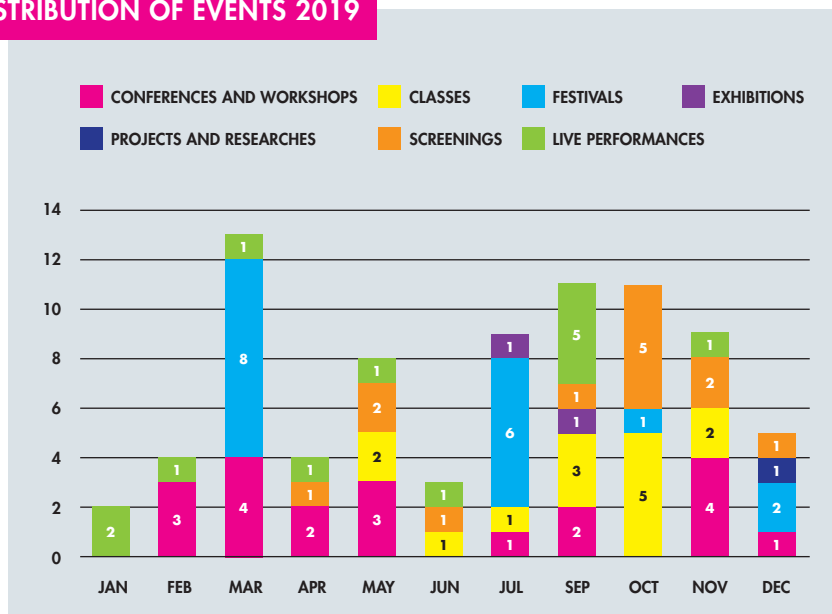
26 live performances – for a total of **4,557 spectators (including festival spectators)** – including dance, music, theatre and performance: in particular, as part of its collaboration with the Municipality of Bologna, it took part in the “Bologna Estate” summer festival, organising three evenings in Piazza Verdi: on 24 July with an evening dedicated to the history of the Bologna Football Club, on 7 September “Dance Music of the Romani Diaspora” and on 15 September “Cinema at Unibo”. The DAMSLab was also a partner in the project “**Parole, ritmo e musica**” (Words, rhythm and music), carried out **in collaboration with the Foundation for Urban Innovation**, which featured the latest Italian rap and trap music, with a wide participation of young people under 25.

Among the events to be reported in 2019, “**Little UBU Palace**”, realised in collaboration with the UBU Association, during which the finalists of

the 2019 Ubu Prize were announced. **9 performances** were staged **as part of the “Atlas of Transitions Biennale” festival from 1 to 10 March**, **four as part of the “Scenario Festival”**, a project of the Associazione Scenario carried out together with DAMSLab and other partners, and **4 as part of the “Gender Bender” events**, festivals organised with national and international artists and institutions, which present to the Italian audiences the imagery produced by contemporary culture linked to new technologies and new representations of the body, in a logic of inclusive enhancement of gender identities and cultural differences.

2 exhibitions opened in the DAMSLab spaces and **were visited by 362 people: “Check Point 90s”**, curated by the Master in Design and Technology for Fashion Communication of the University of Bologna; and **“ArchInProcess”**, realised by the students of History of Architecture in collaboration with the Metropolitan City of Bologna and the Urban Regeneration Mix project, which metaphorically inaugurated the 2019-2020

DISTRIBUTION OF EVENTS 2019



season of “Porto Culture”, an initiative, the latter, born in 2019 from the collaboration between different realities that inhabit and animate the Bologna cultural district of the Manifattura delle Arti.

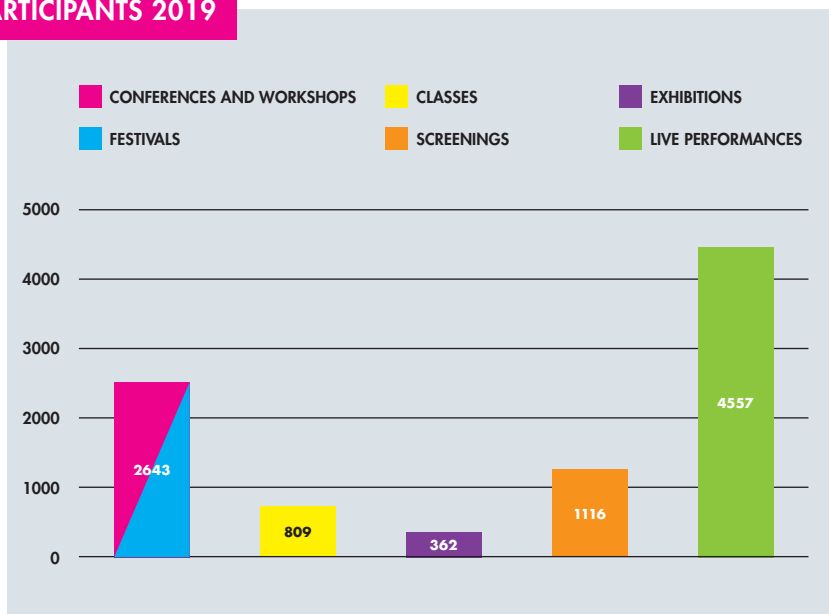
6 festivals – including particularly, in addition to the already mentioned “Atlas of Transitions”, “Scenario Festival” and “Gender Bender”, the “Dancing Bo”, “ZED Festival”, and “FILI - Festival dell’Informazione Libera e dell’Impegno” (WIRE - Festival of the Free Information and Commitment), organised by the Libera association.

3 training initiatives, with a total of **14 days dedicated to cultural and community welfare**.

2 lectiones magistrales by Bottega Finzioni, organised in collaboration with DAMSLab on the concept of state change.

7 meetings dedicated to social media and social street as part of the initiatives of the “Achille Ardigò” School on community welfare and citizens’ rights, organised by the Municipality of Bologna in collaboration with the University of Bologna, the Urban Innovation Foundation, the University of

PARTICIPANTS 2019



Urbino “Carlo Bo” and the Institution for Social and Community Inclusion. **4 meetings organised by the Salus Space Think Tank**, the working group set up as part of the project itself, which reflects on social innovation and the idea of community, but also seeks to build possible and innovative reception and hospitality solutions based on the model of active social inclusion. The Think Tank is managed by the Institution for Social and Community Inclusion “Achille Ardigò and Don Paolo Serra Zanetti” of the Municipality of Bologna and the University of Bologna.

Overall, the DAMSLab had 9,487 visitors who walked through the space and participated in the project.

DAMSLab, in addition to the Urban Rigenation Mix project, is also an active partner in three multi-year European projects focusing on urban regeneration and cultural welfare for the participation of local communities in social innovation processes:

- “Performing Gender - Dancing in Your Shoes”, Creative Europe programme, 2020-2023;
- “Atlas of Transitions”, Creative Europe programme, 2017-2020;
- “Salus Space”, UIA (Urban Innovation Action) programme, 2018-2021.

THE URBACT EUROPEAN PROGRAMME AND THE URBAN REGENERATION MIX PROJECT

Marino Cavallo

Research, Innovation
and Management of EU
Projects Head of Office
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of Bologna

In every member states since the early 1990s, one of the European policies that has had the greatest influence on their local development agendas has been “urban regeneration”¹. In this field, the choice has been made not to crystallise roles and functions in order to be able to better intercept all development opportunities arising from the continuous evolution of

the common European scenarios. To this end, “smart” structures such as that of the URBACT programme were created in which, thanks to the “capacity building, action learning and exchange of experiences” tools represented by European projects, each participating city was able to create its own Local Support Group and, applying the principles of the “Urban Acquis” (the European “methodology” of sustainable urban regeneration), prepare a Local Action Plan (LAP) on individual missions or problems. Over the years, in all the European cities involved in URBACT projects, Local Support Groups have brought together different community representatives, stakeholders, and public and private partners of public administrations, and, thanks to the exchange of experiences (both within the individual local realities and between the different European countries involved), have allowed the establishment of this proactive tool, encouraging cities to carry out inclusive actions within “urban regeneration” processes. Today, “urban regeneration” continues to be at the heart of European planning for the sustainable development and economic growth of cities. Whereas in the past it was mainly a response to the processes of de-industrialisation which – since the 1970s – have led to a significant restructuring

¹ Atkinson R., 2014. *The Urban Dimension in Cohesion Policy: Past developments and future prospects*. Paper presented at a RSA workshop on ‘The New Cycle of the Cohesion Policy in 2014-2020’. Bruxelles: Institute for European Studies, Vrije Universiteit.

of urban economies in all the Member States, and which has had as its corollary a huge loss of jobs and growing economic and social exclusion, in the economic and financial framework of the Union budget that will end this year (2014-2020) and in the one still being defined (2021-2027), it has undergone a major change. In addition to its traditional interventions for building and infrastructure renovations, and for the strengthening of local social networks for the various types of fragility, specific actions have been taken to use 'culture' as an engine for the development of both city centres and their surroundings².

Actions which, besides having had as a field of application interventions on the so-called "Tangible cultural heritage"³, have incrementally foreseen the development of project ideas for the exploitation of the "Intangible cultural heritage"⁴ potentialities, and, more generally, of the business opportunities in the so-called "orange economy" for Cultural and Creative Industries⁵. Urban regeneration' is thus becoming increasingly linked to the process of Europeanisation itself⁶, becoming one of the most concrete and widely perceived elements of EU policies for economic, social and territorial cohesion. This gradual correction of the main imbalances that exist at continental level is made possible by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and, in particular, through the resources of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), in other words, the funds that have had the largest share of the European budget in recent years, and which have the most prominent co-financing shares for all the Member States and their regions. In accordance with the definition provided in 2013 by scholars such as

² URBACT, 2020. *TNM in Bologna: Culture as a perspective of regeneration*. <https://urbact.eu/urban-regeneration-mix>.

³ European Commission, 2018. *Capitalising on cultural heritage in historic city centres*. Research and Innovation.

⁴ Blake J., 2001. *Introduction to the Draft Preliminary Study on the Advisability of Developing a Standard-Setting Instrument for the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage*. UNESCO International Round Table "Intangible Cultural Heritage" – Working definitions.

⁵ ERVET, 2018. *Economia Arancione in Emilia-Romagna*. Cultura, Creatività, Industria.

⁶ Carpenter J., 2013. Sustainable Urban Regeneration within the European Union: A case of 'Europeanization'? In: Leary M.E., John McCarthy J. (eds.). *The Routledge Companion to Urban Regeneration*. London, New York: Routledge.



DAMSLab: university lesson in one of the many classrooms.

Michael E. Leary and John McCarthy⁷, we can define “urban regeneration” as an “area-based intervention which is public sector initiated, funded, supported, or inspired, aimed at producing significant sustainable improvements in the conditions of local people, communities and places suffering from aspects of deprivation, often multiple in nature”⁸. As already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, one of the main vectors of this European policy is the dissemination and replication of good regeneration practices through the URBAN Community Initiative and the URBACT network of cities. In the last thirty years, the critical mass of initiatives achieved and the cross-fertilisation between the different disciplines involved has led to the emergence of a specific methodological approach, defined in the 2005 European Conference “URBAN Future” within the *Common Declaration of URBAN cities and players* as the “Urban Acquis”⁹.

⁷ Leary M.E., John McCarthy J. (eds.), 2013. *The Routledge Companion to Urban Regeneration*. London, New York: Routledge.

⁸ *Ivi*, p. 9.

⁹ URBAN FUTURE, 2005. *The “Acquis URBAN”. Using Cities’ Best Practises for European Cohesion Policy*. Common Declaration of URBAN cities and players at the European Conference “URBAN Future” on June 8th and 9th, 2005 in Saarbrücken (Germany).

The Urban Acquis represents an integrated approach to regeneration, involving physical, economic, social and environmental initiatives, integrating local residents into inclusive governance and decision-making processes¹⁰, and was placed as a fundamental prerequisite for the effective implementation of the 'urban dimension' in all major European funding programmes and as a key mechanism for the transfer of ideas between cities on how best to address urban challenges. The Metropolitan City of Bologna has embraced this tradition by taking an active part in the European project URBACT III, called Urban Regeneration Mix.

Participation that became concrete in the support to the urban regeneration of the Manifattura delle Arti cultural area in Bologna, realised thanks to the collaboration with DAMSLab and the local support group identified. During these two years of the project, the ambition of the authority has been to align itself also in this field with its Sustainable Development Agenda, applying an integrated approach, in which interdependent aspects, usually treated separately from strategic planning activities, are combined into a single model of regenerative urban economy; vision capable of creating value from mutual interdependencies.

We can define the added value obtained in this way as "cognitive": the exchange and comparison of good practices presented by the European cities involved (Łódź, Baena, Birmingham, Zagreb, Braga, Bologna, Toulouse), has in fact enabled us to acquire a new learning system. A method based on the socialisation of norms and paradigms achieved through the horizontal, circular and bottom-up dissemination and transfer of local policies.

But more than the results obtained, it is the awareness of having preserved the richness of its roots, using them through the local "cultural vibrancy", i.e. its cultural and creative vitality¹¹, as a guide for the future, that makes us convinced of the value of the actions undertaken.

¹⁰ Carpenter J., 2013, cit., p. 138.

¹¹ Campagna D., Caperna G., Montalto V., 2020. Does Culture Make a Better Citizen? Exploring the Relationship Between Cultural and Civic Participation in Italy. *Social Indicators Research*, 149:657-686.

Culture as an engine for urban regeneration: a smart mix

We owe to Richard Sennett the enlightening distinction between *cit * and *ville*¹². The first is structured and defined by the buildings, the streets, the connections between the different neighborhoods. The second is created by its inhabitants, it is nourished by the relationships between people and heterogeneous social groups that shape and transform it incessantly. The result of this complexity is that, in order to be able to plan city the functions, mechanically replicating pre-established formulas adattabile for each context is not enough. As a matter of fact, cities have a deeper and relational meaning, which is impossible to bring out by resorting only to functional reductionism. A sharp simplification that is bound to be increasingly accentuated by the new "smart technologies". Simplification that could be counterbalanced in a useful way thanks to the values of shared urban design and listening to the energies that cross the living spaces of people. Another idea of a city is possible, closer to the relational city of Sennett than to the business focused approach of IBM, CISCO, Amazon, and other software and ICT giants who immediately pledged to provide digital solutions for cities and urban areas. There is an alternative Smart city model, which is laboriously shaping up. It is supported by experiences of participation of the population, urban regeneration processes, and paths of citizen involvement in local development choices, creative use of technologies to support community processes of activation of new services¹³.

Bologna as "Creative city"

Bologna, are trying in these years to critically rethink the concept of "creative city" proposed by Richard Florida¹⁴. Cities that support the local youth cultural production rather than simple pre-packaged business models. This is why the city can be defined as an "enabling platform" and a "port of entry". With more than 1 millions of inhabitants, its metropolitan area represents: a strategic hub for freight and human

¹² Sennett R., 2018. *Costruire e abitare. Etica per la citt *. Milano: Feltrinelli.

¹³ Bria F., Morozov E., 2018. *Ripensare la smart city*. Torino: Codice.

¹⁴ Florida R., 2014. *The Rise of the Creative Class – Revisited*. New York: Basic Books.

flows; a global reference for the cooperative movement and civic engagement; a business ecosystem with highly-competitive enterprises and international-wide research institutes; a cultural centre of excellence thanks to the presence of one of the most ancient and prestigious universities in Europe. The combination of these factors has created the conditions for the development of its potential and for its configuration as a “creative city”. Bologna as “creative city” can count on the immense contribution represented by its “roots” (the “cultural heritage”) and “cultural vibrancy” (the “cultural and creative vitality”) as a lever for development and urban regeneration. Thereby the City is trying to critically rethink the concept of “creative city” boosting the concept of “creative atmosphere”. As a matter of fact, it is now clear to decision makers that attracting talent and encouraging creative classes is a privileged way to make urban areas alive, seductive, and competitive. Places full of energy and ideas capable of depowering all those phenomena of gentrification of neighborhoods, which progressively – but inexorably – marginalize the settled social systems, the residents of the first hour, the native innovators. The same technologies that in the near future can allow the overcome of our societal challenges are only a tools and not a result to aim at. Without sensible cultural policies technologies will remain merely techniques. The way in which the different parties perceive each other is a key point and an urban regeneration processes shall foresee: paths of citizen involvement in local development choices; support community processes of new services (conceived by the users themselves) activation; different approaches for the construction of urban cultural areas. These are the projects that go in the earlier direction of the cooperative and open smart city, outlined by Sennett as an alternative to the closed and self-referential smart city¹⁵. Sustainable, dialogic, interactive Smart Cities, capable of fostering and encouraging participation and learning from the energies and spontaneous and informal life practices of its inhabitants.

¹⁵ Sennett R., 2018, cit.

The Urban Regeneration Mix European project and the S3 Strategy of Emilia Romagna region

A project that seeks to disseminate such an approach is Urban Regeneration Mix. The Metropolitan City of Bologna is participating in its consortium with the aim of improving the social dimension in process of urban regeneration. The good practices developed within will be transferred in a network of six European cities fostering their equal involvement and strengthening the relations between the main stakeholders of the urban regeneration processes. Concerning Bologna, project's interventions mainly focuses on spaces within the "Manifattura delle Arti" area for its culture-based regeneration (Bologna DAMSLab area). In project's interventions culture has been used as an engine for growth to address these challenges: making the area more attractive for new inhabitants; increasing cultural and creative opportunities; working on spaces and potential capital; stimulate greater collaboration between cultural institutions, the public-private, young people, students, the city centre inhabitants; promoting entrepreneurship and creative work; develop greater opportunities in terms of social inclu-



DAMSLab: the Theater.

sion and innovation; reduce the distances between citizens, city users, inhabitants, students, associations and neighbourhood associations. In this activity the main aspect of the Urban Regeneration Mix project could be found in its actions for providing researchers and practitioners with information about the presence and role of arts and culture in communities and how arts and culture affect neighbourly conditions and community dynamics. Information that can be synthesized into four variables: (i) the presence of opportunities to participate; (ii) participation in its multiple dimensions; (iii) existing support systems for cultural participation; (iv) societal impacts of arts and culture.

The tasks described are also aimed at achieving concrete synergies with important guidelines issued by the Government of the Emilia-Romagna region. Our ambition is promote a pathway from projects to new policies based on culture: as a perspective of regeneration; as contribute to a better living environment; as a lever for tackle inequality and gentrification. This governance for urban regeneration through the culture wants overcoming of the apparent dichotomy between culture and economy leading a culture-driven urban regeneration balanced with inclusive measures aimed at safeguarding the socio-economic diversity of the renovated neighbourhoods. In this way, we hopefully demonstrate that intrinsic values (culture) and instrumental values (economy) are not separated. The "arena" where we're going to play this game is the "Orange Economy".

This is the definition of "Cultural economy" provided by Smart Specializations Strategy of Emilia-Romagna region (S3 Strategy). "S3 Strategy" uses research and innovation to connect the production system and the knowledge system. Thanks to its potential in social innovation, one of the emerging areas with high potential for expansion identified was the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs). "S3 Strategy" defines this "Orange Economy" that includes: i) the core businesses creative and cultural industries (cultural heritage, multimedia, performing arts...); ii) the traditional enterprises «culture driven»; iii) cultural and sustainable tourism. So far, an important direct support has been granted to the CCIs for the implementation of "S3 Strategy". Today, our biggest commitment is that this support continues to address un-

solved problems and key issues: i) the impact of the crisis and the effects of the corona virus on the cultural products consumptions; ii) alternative way to finance the cultural and creative industries; iii) a stronger role of the crowd funding and innovative use of alternative finance and fundraising. The challenges ahead of us are very difficult but the stakes are too important for us: the possibility of being able to keep on saying “Bologna, ma belle ville!”.

KEY KNOWLEDGE TRANSFERS OF THE URBAN REGENERATION MIX PROJECT

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UURBACT is an European programme co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and by the member states, who was born with the aim of promoting sustainable urban development through the exchange of experiences and the dissemination of knowledge between european cities.

29 countries participate in the programme: the 27 EU member states and also Switzerland and Norway.

During the 2014-2020 funding period, the programme is established as URBACT III. The projects funded by URBACT III address four main objectives:

- improving the capacity of cities to implement sustainable urban policies;
- improve the design of urban policies;
- improving policy implementation in cities;
- develop and share knowledge.

The budget of the programme amounts to more than EUR 96.3 million, and in the funding period 2014-2020 received a significant increase over the previous.

To achieve its objectives, URBACT III develops 3 types of interventions:

- transnational networking;
- capacity-building activities;
- capitalisation and dissemination.

URBACT involves 550 cities, 30 countries and 7,000 local stakeholders

The Urban Regeneration Mix Project

The Urban Regeneration Mix project focuses on urban regeneration and in particularly on sharing, understanding, adapting and re-using methods



DAMSLab: inside auditorium.

and tools from the good practice of Łódź (Poland). Six European cities (Bologna, Toulouse in France, Baena in Spain, Birmingham in England, Zagreb in Croatia and Braga in Portugal) had the opportunity to confront Łódź to learn, adapt and apply polish good practice in their respective realities. In Łódź, the “Priest’s Mill” project (Księży Młyn in Polish), literally “Mulino del Sarcedote” in accordance with the name of the area, has made it possible to regenerate a largely abandoned industrial site, inhabited by over 300 families, by transforming it into a more dynamic, high-quality residential area with diversified economic and cultural activities. The social fabric of the area was maintained through intensive contacts and relationships with the inhabitants that accompanied the infrastructural changes, through a process of wise mediation and community leadership.

Key knowledge transfers of the Urban Regeneration Mix project

“For me the educated man is not the one who knows when Napoleon was born, but the one who knows where to go to look for information in

the only moment of his life when he needs it, and in two minutes”¹. Starting from the ideas of Umberto Eco, we reflected on how, around this “educated man”, tools and ways of reaching “culture” must be present and made available, particularly where culture struggles to take root. Culture can be a powerful vehicle for activating communities and a soft tool for social and community regeneration. The new features and opportunities offered by cultural activism practices can certainly be a driving force for the economic and social development of an area, with a positive impact also from the point of view of sustainability. It is important to explore and discover the effectiveness of this leverage and the opportunities that can potentially be experienced by every location and social formation.

Culture as a key tool for urban regeneration is the protagonist of this history of knowledge transfer between two European cities rich in history and traditions: Łódź in Poland and Bologna in Italy.

The Metropolitan City of Bologna’s strong belief in culture as a fundamental impulse for social development and urban regeneration was starting point; the opportunity was provided by the Urban Regeneration Mix (URBACT REMIX) project. The project made it possible to support the sharing of ideas between the subjects of the Manifattura delle Arti area through the support of social processes based on cultural development and growth. The area of intervention was the DAMSLab – a laboratory for urban cultural enhancement, activated and managed by the University of Bologna Department of the Arts – DAR inside the Manifattura delle Arti area – which represents an area already under structural renovation but particularly fragile from a social point of view. The Manifattura delle Arti is an area of approximately 100,000 m² in the heart of Bologna’s historic centre.

The neighbourhood originally included the city’s inland port area from the Renaissance until the 19th century; together with its proto-industrial hinterland (Reno canal, Navile, Moline, Aposa), it was the mercantile and manufacturing heart of the Bolognese economy at least until the end of the 17th century.

¹ From “If all knowledge is a playful journey”, Stefano Bartezzaghi in conversation with Umberto Eco, published on *la Repubblica* on September 1, 2003.

Inside the Manifattura delle Arti, the current spaces of the DAMSLab were first designed in 1883 by the architects Priori and Buriani and, following demolition under the municipal plans of 1889 and 1937 and bombing during the Second World War, been subjected to a redevelopment projects designed by the architect Aldo Rossi from 1996 to 2003, thanks to the joint efforts of the Municipality and the University of Bologna.

The area has, among other places, many sites of interest to the community, such as the seat of the Bologna film/multimedia library and archive (in the former Manifattura Tabacchi), the University of Bologna Department of Philosophy and Communication (in the former Mulino Tamburi paper mill), the MAMbo Modern Art Gallery in the former city bread oven, the Salara exhibition structure, the portal of the former outer medieval walls of the city of Bologna Porta Lama, the Cavaticcio Park and the DAMSLab (located in the former Slaughterhouse).

The key elements of the transfer lie in the multidimensional regeneration experience known and learned through the partnership with the Polish city of Łódź. In this city the area under intervention concerned a larger space but with some similar characteristics to Manifattura delle Arti area. The regeneration of the "Priest's Mill" area consisted of a complete renovation of a historic site covering 6.5 hectares, including 25 apartment buildings, all built in the 1870s-1880s by the industrialist Karol Scheibler for workers and their families. In the close surroundings there was a textile factory where the inhabitants worked. A shop selling the factory's products and a school for the workers and their children had been built within the residential compound.

Until the end of the 1940s, over 2,000 people lived in Priest's Mill (Księży Młyn). In the nineties the factory went bankrupt.

The regeneration project exemplifies how a community's potential and "culture of living" can influence the behaviour patterns of individuals and families with social problems. Among the main objectives of the project were the development of a culture and creative capital that contribute to the attractiveness of the city of Łódź.

The key elements for success focused on introducing a new mindset and the ability to change. The key words for doing this were mediation, integration and the idea of working on a clear and shared identity.

We were also impressed by the role of the mediators and their work in the regeneration process and during the transnational project meetings in Łódź we were able to take advantage of their presence to learn more directly about their work and their sensitive role. Together with the stakeholders we had the opportunity to work together with the entire team of Lighthouse Keepers and Area Hosts who are engaged with the residents of Łódź and learnt what knowledge and skills are needed to work as a mediator, e.g. developing an open and empathetic mindset, and what their responsibilities are on the job. Motivation is certainly a key skill for working in direct contact with residents from different social backgrounds, with their respective aims and reflections underlying the different positions. Bologna has assimilated what has been achieved in Łódź and has tried to transfer methods and tools as much as possible, applying them to its reality.

In Bologna, the Manifattura delle Arti area is located in a neighbourhood with approximately 70,000 inhabitants, and where the pressure of the real estate market is high: older and retired people often experience economic difficulties due to their low income, while younger people experience economic difficulties due to the fact that rents are often too expensive.



The Municipality wants to commit itself to solving these economic and social problems finding a long-term solutions. However, there is a clear need to integrate more these social groups, not least in order to maintain a stable balance and social environment in the city centre, and to protect it from the growth of the tourist industry, which on the other hand, the city is also stimulating.

In this framework, the aim of DAMSLab is to enhance projects and foster synergies that find in cultural and artistic production and participation the key element for territorial growth and a fundamental factor for the citizens of today and tomorrow. According to this vision, the space represents a place open to the territory, which connects and creates dialogue between different areas of knowledge. As already mentioned by Professor Paltrinieri in this book, the DAMSLab activates and encourages synergies and collaboration with other university of Bologna departments and with the City, its cultural institutions, foundations, companies, museums and associations, fostering social outcomes in terms of awareness, participation and cultural mobilisation of the urban fabric. Inside the Urban Regeneration mix project's partnership the Bologna challenge, through DAMSLab, is to stimulate dialogue with the city, public institutions, other actors in the Manifattura delle Arti area, cultural and creative industries and civil society associations. The DAMSLab has indeed adopted a collaborative and participatory method, based on networking and co-design in order to develop original ideas and projects that enhance the full variety of languages and forms of cultural and artistic production. The activities and events proposed aim to facilitate the circulation of cultural and social capital and the development of an idea of active, creative, reflective and cultural citizenship, based on dialogue and a shared sense of belonging to a culturally dynamic, open and cohesive context.

This constant dialogue was made possible thanks to an already existing network that was deepened with the Urban Regeneration Mix project, which with its local working group has gradually strengthened an operational network between the DAMSLab and other stakeholders: "Porto Culture".

The REMIX project provided opportunities for the members of the "Porto Culture" operational network to meet periodically and to establish a dialogue aimed at collaborating on activities. The design was both facilitat-

ed and led by the URBACT method based on periodic meetings (URBACT Local Group), thanks to which DAMSLab was able to involve different territory operators to create the “Porto Culture” operational network.

Some representatives of these operators have also actively participated in international meetings, being able to acquire information and knowledge useful for their daily work.

The key moments of these changes were the open discussion between the various stakeholders, who in some cases knew each other little, even though they operated in the same area.

From Łódź, the metropolitan City of Bologna learned mainly about the tools of mediation and attention to all the components of society and the territory, useful for more responsible and shared choices.

The real challenge for the future is to maintain the relationships created during the work of the REMIX project in order to continue to co-organise and co-manage activities and events with a common identity externally recognisable to citizens and institutions alike. In this respect, the URBACT network can be useful to maintain active collaborations, especially with foreign partners and with other similar URBACT projects active in Italy. In the future, the experience gained during the project will remain in the daily work of the stakeholders who will meet periodically to decide together and in a shared way the cultural activities of the area. This method of regular meetings will strengthen the interrelationships between organisations and people, in order to better organise new and involving cultural projects for the territory, but which can also serve as an example for the whole city of Bologna in terms of collaboration and involvement of citizens.

Today, and even more so in the future, DAMSLab’s activities aim to facilitate the circulation of cultural and social capital and the development of an idea of active, creative, reflective cultural citizenship, based on dialogue and the construction of a shared sense of belonging to a culturally dynamic, open and cohesive community. The lessons learnt from the REMIX project will be even more useful in the context of the economic and social crisis that will inevitably affect Italy and Europe following the coronavirus pandemic. It is difficult to predict the future, but culture must and will be the lighthouse that illuminates the path to recovery and the

renewal of our territories. Only with the sense of community, mutual aid, co-decision-making and co-organisation learned during the work of the REMIX project can our local communities begin to march towards a more cohesive, sustainable and opportunity-filled society for all its citizens.

The “Porto Culture” network is based on:

The Cassero LGBTI+ Center. One of the most important institutions for the Italian LGBT movement and history. Founded in 1982, it works to improve the quality of life of the LGBTIQ community by raising awareness of the need for social and political rights and countering discrimination at national and international levels.

The Mercato Ritrovato farmer market. Farmer’s market that takes place every Saturday morning from 9:00 to 14:00 (every Monday evening from 17:30 to 21:30 during the summer season). At Mercato Ritrovato you can buy the products of the farmers, taste their street food and participate in cooking classes, live concerts and many other initiatives. There is also a children’s playground.

The Cantieri Meticci cultural association and theater company. A collective of artists from over 20 countries around the world. For years it has been running workshops that mix very different arts and people.

The BAM! Strategie Culturali cooperative society. A cooperative society working in Italy and Europe with museums, festivals, theatres, cultural districts, local authorities, universities, foundations, associations and private social entities on cultural management and management issues.

The Porto15 cohousing. The first entirely public cohousing initiative in Italy; it consists of the renovation of 18 dwellings in a building near the Manifattura delle Arti area.

The DAS - Dispositivo Arti Sperimentali cultural center. Bologna space for artistic production located in Porto 11/2 street. It was designed and structured to bring together the heterogeneity of the contemporary art scene and to break down the boundaries between disciplines.

CULTURE, REGENERATION AND ENGAGEMENT:

THE LOCAL URBAN REGENERATION MIX PATHWAY

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Foreword

The DAMSLab can be understood as an ‘urban cultural laboratory’ that aims to bring together cultural production, participation and the promotion of citizenship through a collaborative approach between different actors in the area¹.

As part of this experience, and taking the Manifattura delle Arti area as its base, the URM project, promoted by the Metropolitan City of Bologna, was configured as a process aimed at generating reflexivity and possible new learning, starting from a planning process that had already begun and according to a “placed-based” approach. In particular, in this paper, after a brief presentation of the local pathway carried out in the framework of the project, in which the writer of this paper took part and observed the process, we want to focus on the relationship between regeneration, culture and participation, which has been the focus of reflection during the pathway and which we believe should also be critically “questioned”.

The URM project local pathway

As already highlighted in Paltrinieri’s contribution in this book, the DAMSLab focuses on the promotion of horizontal partnerships, based on the sharing of resources (material, cognitive, symbolic), on networking, and on the combination of teaching activities, artistic practices and research.

The local pathway of the URM project is part of this framework. It has been developed along two main actions, which the various contributions collected in this book, from different perspectives, account for.

¹ See Prof Paltrinieri’s contribution in this book for an in-depth presentation of the DAMSLab.



DAMSLab: Conference in the Auditorium.

The first action corresponds to transnational networking with *partner cities*. This action allowed a valuable comparison with different paths in place in the European cities involved in the project, according to the logic already explained in this book, of practices transfer and mutual learning. It is in this frame that some students and PhD students have had the opportunity to get to know these paths closely, as told in some contributions collected here.

The second corresponds to the setting up of an Urban Local Group (ULG)² as a forum for discussion and co-design of activities to be carried out during the project.

The first of these was “Porto Culture”, a roadshow cultural initiative between different places in the Manifattura delle Arti area and the DAMSLab, during which the exhibition “ArchInProcess” was opened in the DAMSLab hall. The exhibition was curated by the students (LAB -

² With a distinction between a) Local “restricted” group: Metropolitan City of Bologna, DAMSLab and University of Bologna Department of the Arts; b) Local “extended” group: Mercato Ritrovato farmer market, BAM! Strategie Culturali cooperative society, Cassero LGBTI+ Center, Cantieri Meticci cultural association and theater company, Museum of Modern Art in Bologna MAMbo, DAS - Dispositivo Arti Sperimentali cultural center.

"La Fabbrica dell'Immagine")³ who also guided the citizens through its stand. During that day it was also possible to take part in an exhibition and workshop in the square in front of the DAMSLab on the theme of traditions and memories linked to food, promoted by Mercato Ritrovato farmer market in connection with the "RAGU Reti e Archivi del Gusto" (RAGU Networks and Archives of taste) project. The initiative was also an opportunity to attend a dance performance "Queer Tango" promoted by the LGBTI Cassero association, in one of the outdoor spaces of the DAMSLab – "il Cortile dei Camini" (the courtyard of the chimneys) – and it was possible to take part in a short "urban trek" in the Manifattura delle Arti area, always curated by the Cassero association.

Finally, a workshop on the theme of "nets" was set up in the entrance way to the DAMSLab, organised by Cantieri Meticci cultural association and theater company and the Museum of Modern Art in Bologna MAMbo Education Department, in connection with the "Bologna Portici Aperti" (Bologna Open Porticoes) project, aimed at experimenting with a new form of exchange between old and new citizens, who discover their own "knots" and common ties by sitting around a large fishing net which, thanks to the mediation of the Cantieri Meticci artists, is transformed into a mosaic of testimonies, narrations and artistic objects linked to the theme of welcoming. A further opportunity for exchange between the members of the "local group" was the field visit of the URM project international partners to DASMLab. A workshop was organised with the entire ULG and international partners to reflect on the case of DAMSLab; a walking tour was organised to visit the area and in particular some of the realities that breathe life into it (the DAS space, the Porto 15 cohousing, the Cassero LGBTI+ association center).

Finally, Cantieri Meticci organised two workshops in the DAMSLab, one for students from the Department of Sociology, the Department of the Arts and the Department of Educational Sciences, and one for the project partners, who watched the show "Il negro del Narciso" (The Nigger of the "Narcissus": A Tale of the Forecastle) at the end of the workshop⁴.

³ See related contribution in this book.

⁴ See Erika Capasso's contribution in this book.

Overall, the various activities briefly mentioned here are therefore in continuity with the “mission” of DAMSLab as an “urban cultural laboratory” open to the city.

At the same time, it was a dialogue between languages and visions from the different fields of experience of those involved in the project. Several themes and dimensions have been discussed – space, place, network, identity and territory, commons development – but it is in particular the relationship between culture, regeneration and participation that is considered to be a central issue that emerged from the project.

Beyond urban regeneration? Culture, participation and citizenship

URM project focuses on two main themes, urban regeneration and citizen engagement.

In the ‘local’ context of the city of Bologna, starting from the experience of the DAMSLab, an attempt was made to question what role culture plays in these processes, what new lenses can be adopted by reflecting on the connection between culture, participation and regeneration.

Specifically since the 1990s, also thanks to the impulse given by European programmes, an idea of “integrated”⁵ regeneration has progressively asserted itself, with a shift from large-scale redevelopment plans to the regeneration of areas with a strong focus on the social and community dimension. Above all, an integrated approach aimed at developing networks takes shape. Networks that for this approach should be developed at the territorial level and achieve scale interventions based on singular thematic and policy. At the heart of this approach is a multidimensional conception of development, the creation of alliances and partnerships between local actors as a response to social needs, a place-based policy approach aimed at supporting the capacities of territories and inhabitants and recognising the importance of the territorial dimension of social

⁵ Moulaert F., Nussbaumer J., 2008. *La logique spatiale du développement territorial*. Sainte-Foye: Presses Universitaires du Québec; Moulaert F., MacCallum D., Mehmood A., Hamdouch A. (eds.), 2013. *The International Handbook on Social Innovation: Collective Action, Social Learning and Transdisciplinary Research*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

issues. Finally, an important part of this approach is the participatory dimension, which enhances the plurality of knowledge⁶.

Over time, therefore, (urban) regeneration processes have increasingly been defined as a field of intervention that does not end with the physical dimension of redevelopment, but, on the contrary, involves an integrated action that incorporates social innovation processes: "Regenerating means giving new life to the city, regenerating the city means restoring its urbanity, i.e. the quality of urban life and the social relations that define the city as a cohesive physical and social entity and that need to be rebuilt, since they are now worn out and impoverished [...] the starting point is the assumption that city regeneration cannot take place without actions and policies that recognise the basic rights of all citizens to the satisfaction of their fundamental needs: work, education, health, housing, participation in the public sphere, recognition of different cultural identities"⁷.

The European programme URBACT, within which the Urban Regeneration Mix project is set, is an example of this approach. But what place does culture have in this approach?

Several 'models' can be found in the literature which in fact attribute a different role to culture in the context of urban regeneration processes⁸. In particular, one can identify an approach defined as "Culture-led Regeneration" which follows the logic of the "cultural container" and entrusts culture with the function of creating or rediscovering the unique and distinct character of the place through which to facilitate the mobilisation of resources useful for regeneration. A second model is the "Cultural Regeneration" model, which moves from the container to the content, thus focusing on cultural production rather than consumption, on the enhancement of local artistic communities and on the development of creativity. While culture undoubtedly assumes a central character in this perspective, it should be noted that frequently associated with this model

⁶ For a more extensive examination of this issue, with particular reference to the city of Bologna, see Paltrinieri R., Allegrini G., 2020. *Partecipazione, processi di immaginazione civica e sfera pubblica. I Laboratori di Quartiere e il Bilancio Partecipativo a Bologna*. Milano: Franco Angeli.

⁷ Vicari Haddock S., Moulaert F., 2009. *Rigenerare la città. Pratiche di innovazione sociale nelle città europee*. Bologna: Il Mulino, p. 7.

⁸ Evans G.L., 2005. Measure for Measure: Evaluating the Evidence of Culture's Contribution to Regeneration. *Urban Studies*, 42(5/6): 959-983; cfr. Vicari Haddock S., Moulaert F., 2009 cit.



Space in front of the DAMSLab entrance.

is the idea of the creative city theorised by Landry and Florida⁹, which has been increasingly criticised over time for the gentrification effects that such an approach can generate.

Finally, a “Culture and Regeneration” approach can be mentioned: cultural policy is not integrated into the strategic planning of the city and there is no specific recognition of its role. It is, by extension, “added on” to other interventions.

However, innovative potential can emerge thanks to autonomous initiatives often promoted by non-institutional actors, and smaller-scale cultural projects on a neighbourhood scale with a focus on improving the quality of everyday living environments can flourish.

If, therefore, the “positioning” of culture with respect to regeneration processes can be different, so can the roles assigned to it, in recognising it as a lever of regeneration.

First, according to a perspective strongly centered on an integration between economic and cultural dimension, culture can be seen “as rele-

⁹ Landry C., 2000. *The Creative City-A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*. London: Earthscan; Florida C., 2002. *The rise of the creative class*. New York: Basic Books.

vant economic fact" and cities as "creative fields"¹⁰ able to attract new resources. Or culture can be emphasized from the point of view of the relationship between cultural consumption and urban tourism.

Also, it can be emphasized the role that culture can play in the construction of an image of the city, as are, in this sense, the new cultural centers in abandoned industrial areas, such as "anchors" of the process of urban regeneration, and, at a larger scale, are the "cultural districts", in which the culture assumes the role of a "catalyst" of a "virtuous circle of development" that get to have the benefit of an entire local community¹¹. Finally, culture is seen as a lever for generating processes of mutual recognition at the spheres of identities and cultures, and promoting the development of a shared sense of belonging to places.

In the context of the URM project, these different perspectives on culture and on the link between culture and regeneration have been discussed, thanks to the different activities reported in this volume – from *field visits* and *job shadowing* – carried out in some partner countries, and to local group meetings held periodically.

At the same time, we tried to focus, starting from the experience of the DAMSLab, two different and peculiar "placements" of culture. The first was synthesised in the terms of "culture as a perspective", indicating that it is not a "residual" dimension compared to others, but the reading glasses guiding the various processes at play.

The second involves a shift in focus: no longer, or not only, on the link between culture and regeneration, but on the possible link between culture, participation and citizenship generation.

This point of view implies the focus on an important dimension that coincides with the development of cultural capacities defined as the capacity to aspire¹², which involves the possibility of prefiguring and representing the future in our daily lives. They are cultural resources that enable people to "feel" like citizens with the power to influence the production of social change.

¹⁰ See, Scott A.J., 2000. *The Cultural Economy of Cities*. London: Sage.

¹¹ See, Sacco P.L., 2003. *Il distretto culturale: un nuovo modello di sviluppo locale?* In: *Ottavo Rapporto sulle Fondazioni Bancarie*. Roma: ACRI, pp. 167-216.

¹² Appadurai A., 2011. *Le aspirazioni nutrono la democrazia*. Milano: Et Al. Edizioni.

In this perspective, culture becomes a “form of citizenship” that is acted upon, generated and regenerated through participation in the production of new meanings and representations.

Culture in this perspective also becomes a field of action in which the production of the public sphere, visibility and inter-visibility between subjects is at stake¹³. Access to culture thus becomes access to a space that ‘becomes public’ through a collective process of imagination.

It is therefore crucial to explore possible ways of combining cultural capacity building, access and participation in cultural co-production.

Overall, the discussion process initiated within the URM project, in dialogue with the experience and planning of DAMSLab, has focused on the various themes outlined here, questioning the role of culture in shaping a “plural” city, and placing the issue of participation and citizenship at the centre of the debate.

This is a field of reflection that we consider crucial, in the awareness that every policy for the transformation of the city, as well as every cultural policy, constitutes, today more than ever, a complex field of tensions between interests and needs, both material and symbolic and cognitive, calling into question the relationship between culture, politics and the city.

¹³ Allegrini G., 2020. Artistic practices and the constitution of public sphere: an explorative inquiry. In: Paltrinieri R., Parmiggiani P., Musarò M., Moralli M., *Right to the city. Art and Migration*. Milano: Franco Angeli.

2ND PART

THE STAKEHOLDER NETWORK

PROJECT PARTICIPATION
AND REFLECTIONS
EMERGED

THE RESEARCH AND PRODUCTION PATH “ArchInProcess”

Jannik Pra Levis
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Department of the Arts,
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As students of the DAR - Department of Arts of the University of Bologna, we participated in Urban Regeneration Mix, a project within the URBACT programme supported by the European Union, developing an exhibition, a synthesis of the reflections born within “La fabbrica dell’immagine”, a contemporary architecture workshop held by Anna Rosellini (associate professor, University

of Bologna) in collaboration with Stefano Setti (PhD student, University Cattolica del Sacro Cuore) and Edoardo Traversa (tutor, University of Bologna). “ArchInProcess”, the title chosen for the exhibition, explores the experiments and analyses of some of the leading figures in the architectural debate of recent decades. The idea stems from the desire to reflect on the importance of space, understood in its complexity as a built environment and as a possibility of aggregation and social significance. “ArchInProcess” was the result of a nine-month collaboration involving a group of 50 people working at different levels. The exhibition was a concrete opportunity for us to put into practice the dynamics of organising and coordinating a large and complex project. After the first meetings and the discussion of the general themes at the base of the project, it emerged the need to draw up a “manifesto” [published declaration] that established the points at the foundation of the exhibition.

Therefore, we structured the work in groups according to ten research topics: eight groups dedicated themselves to the review of the theoretical and practical work of some of the main architects currently active in the world, ranging from the most well-known and established cases, such as Rem Koolhaas (Elisabetta Scaccia, Claudia Piga, Valeria Barnabei, Iris Merlino), Jean Nouvel (Mario De Angelis) and Herzog&De Meuron (Ilaria Sola, Costanza Rosa, Arianna Bettarelli), and architects involved in the most recent theoretical avant-garde movements, such as Laca-



Exhibition in the
DAMSLab building.

ton&Vassal (Claudia Troisi, Ilaria DI Felice, Silvia Michelotto, Damiano Stivala), SANAA (Greta Bernardi, Sibilla Mainetti, Anna Ugolini, Alice Vigogna, Jessica Rucellai, Leonardo Lodi), Sam Jacob (Pedro Ambrosoli, Alessandro Della Santa, Stefania Pasini), DOGMA (Francesca Musiari, Beatrice Ricci, Nicola Manzoni, Ottilia Moretto, Jannik Pra Levis), Baukuh (Lorenza Carannate, Laura Frigerio, Giuseppe Andolina, Sabrina Riso, Salvatore Moccia, Roberta Venditti), while two other groups investigated photomontage (Chiara Stefanini, Mauro Mosca, Bianca Penniello, Roberta Angalone, Giulia Sinisi, Caterina Picciafuoco, Davide Visintainer) and the archive (Daniele Meglioli, Martina Todero Vittoria Majorana, Damiano, Pellegrino, Chiara Gasparetto, Francesca Vitali) as themes embedded in architectural practice.

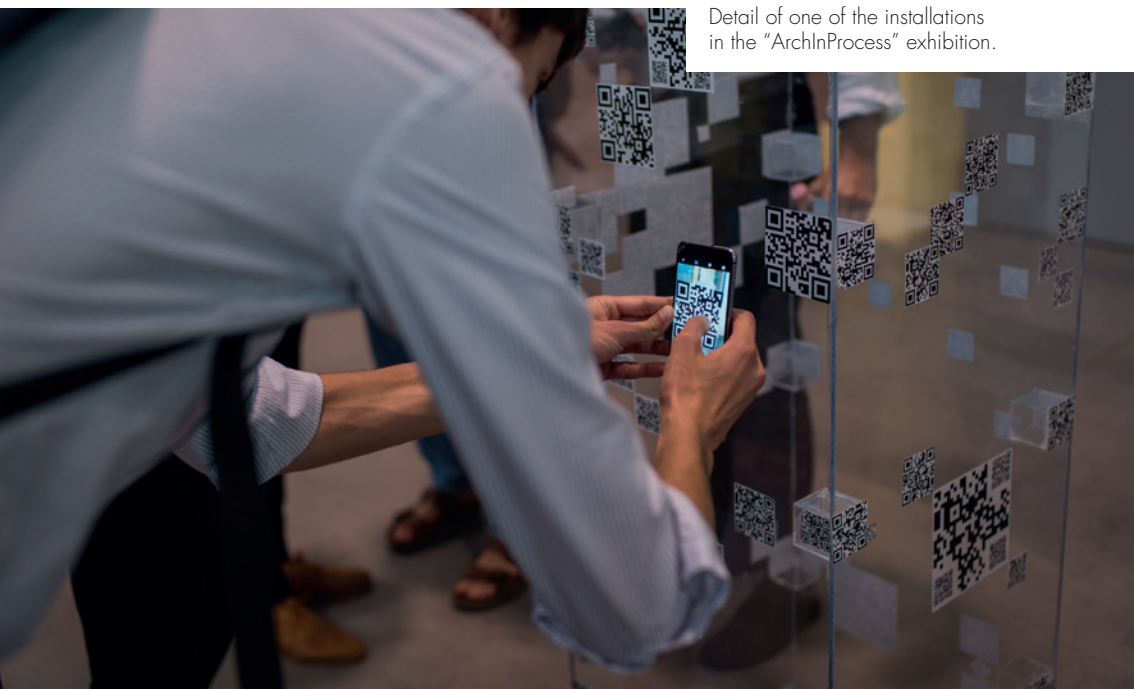
It was soon realised that in order to navigate such a broad spectrum of issues, forms of internal co-ordination had to be put in place to enable a cross-cutting, co-constructed dialogue between all those involved. In order to achieve this, we applied a strategy of dividing the overall programme into three macro-sections: the first analysed the dynamics of interaction of the visitors while enjoying the exhibition both digitally and in presence (Antispazio - Antispace), the second included reflections on

the memory of the place hosting the exhibition and on the architectural pre-existences (Superluogo - Superlocation), and the third was dedicated to the documentation of the research in progress, which was gathered in an open archive freely available to visitors (Making of).

We have thus managed to combine ten different themes into a single, homogeneous project.

Another fundamental reason for the cohesion of the topics dealt with in the exhibition was the exhibition context. The spaces of the DAMSLab were not only the location for the exhibition but also became the subject of the project's investigation. The building was in fact the focus of extensive historiographical research, carried out also thanks to various study sessions of archive material that led to such decisive discoveries as to modify the realisation of the final plan.

The research phase revealed that the DAMSLab building, together with some adjacent spaces belonging to the "Cineteca di Bologna", originally constituted Bologna's public slaughterhouse. Since the 15th century, the area where these two institutions now stand has been used as the city's manufacturing and mercantile centre, being fed by the main proto-industrial river channels, now buried. This explains the name of the neighbourhood: Navile



Detail of one of the installations in the "ArchInProcess" exhibition.

Port. Each building had a precise function within the city's economic system: in addition to the "Macello" [Slaughterhouse], the Forno del Pane [Bread Oven] (now MAMbo), the Manifattura Tabacchi [Tobacco Manufacturing] (Cineteca), the Mulino [Mill] (Department of Philosophy and Communication) and the Salara [Salt Deposits] (Cassero LGBTI+ Center)

The current name Manifattura delle Arti [Manufacture of Arts] therefore evokes the area's economic past, which still persists in some visible traces in the structures of the buildings, but at the same time acquires a new meaning: from an economic production centre to a cultural production centre.

The buildings we use today are also the result of a process of urban regeneration begun in the 1980s, the implementation phase of which began in 1983 with the publication of a competition that was avant-garde for the time. Among the possible developments of the several projects presented, we focused in particular on the plan of the architect Aldo Rossi, who strongly inspired the final realisation of the transformation programme, and on a proposal to use the spaces of the DAMSLab as a museum of contemporary architecture. "ArchInProcess" could also be interpreted as an answer, a future development of this distant possibility found among the archival materials.

The extensive historiographical documentation in the municipal collections relating to the site under study also inspired the idea of creating a story in images consisting of five panels which, by fixing a number of significant moments, hybridising past and present, would ultimately project the user into the future. The photomontage was chosen to give voice only to the architecture, letting the images speak and tell the story of the evolution of the spaces. The panels displayed on the opening day of the exhibition are still present as an integral part of the DAMSLab, as a memory that lives and dialogues with the present.

The cultural production practices of our project, in addition to the design of the installations and panels, also included the use of communication tools. The communication plan for the social channels and the study of the overall graphic design were conceived well before the opening of the exhibition to allow the Internet community to enter virtually into the knowledge processes that led to the realisation of the exhibition. The use of the media was conceived not as a simple promotion of the exhibition, but rather to

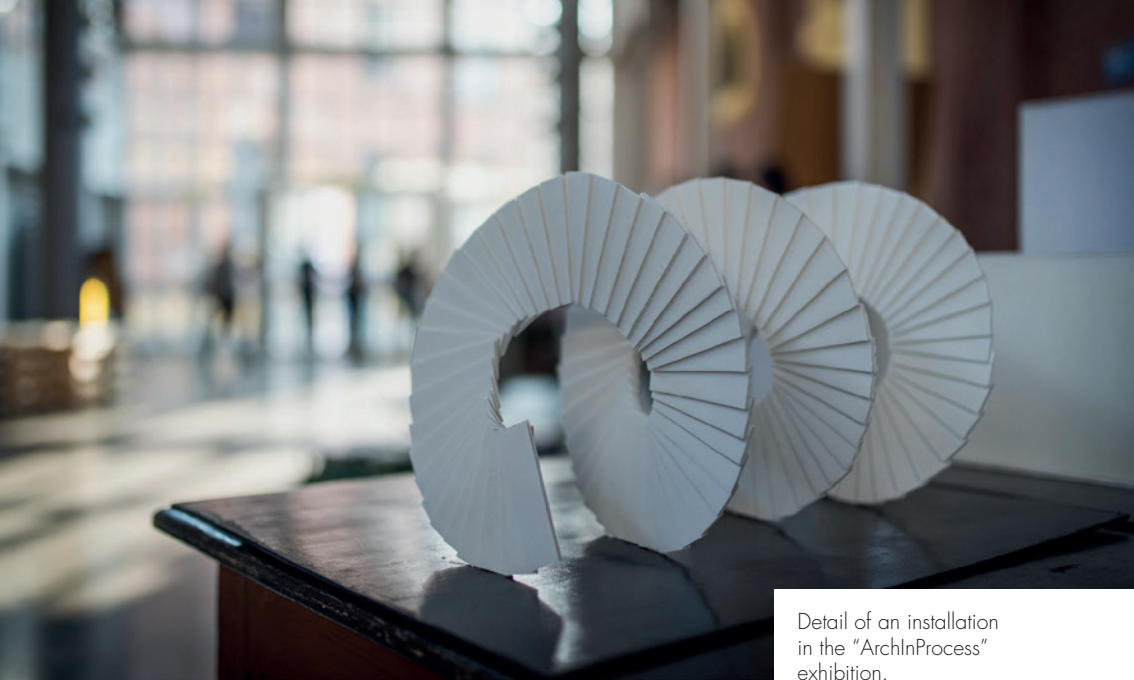
gradually bring the public closer to the themes dealt with through the dissemination on social channels of tools and keys to interpretation, starting a year before the opening of the exhibition. The graphic line, on the other hand, is the result of a complex process of choice, collectively discussed, based on the proposals made by us students and which emerged from the graphic design workshop conducted by Edoardo Traversa.

The aim of the workshop was an introduction to the fundamentals of digital graphics programmes. This series of lessons culminated in the design of a poster for "ArchInProcess", an activity that allowed us to understand the complexity of finding the most appropriate image to communicate a cultural event. After a whole year of work, we finally reached the climax of the project: the exhibition. As documented in the photos taken by Stefano Di Luccia accompanying this paper, the final phase involved the practical realisation of the installations. Shaping our ideas, we really took possession of the environments of the DAMSLab, interacting with them and modifying them with our bodies and our decisions, the re-signification of space was thus complete.

It was gratifying to see that our choices to operate in the space, however strong, proved to be effective. We were particularly pleased that the public appreciated our constant efforts to mediate the installations, in the form of a real face-to-face dialogue with the visitors, and our desire to root the exhibition in the memory of the place, returning it to the entire community of active users of the DAMSLab spaces.

"ArchInProcess" was inaugurated on 28 September 2019 as part of the day entitled "Porto Culture", an initiative born from the collaboration between the different realities that inhabit and animate the cultural district of Manifattura delle Arti: Cassero LGBTI+ Center, DAMSLab / La Soffitta - University of Bologna, MAMbo - Museum of Modern Art of Bologna, Mercato Ritrovato farmer market and Cantieri Meticci cultural association and theater company.

An important moment to present the whole project to the audience was the meeting organised on the occasion of the opening, with institutional greetings from the Director of the Department of the Arts Giacomo Manzoli, chaired by Professor Roberta Paltrinieri and Professor Anna Rosellini, with the participation of Stefano Setti and Edoardo Traversa and as representatives of the team curators Arianna Bettarelli, Nicola Manzoni,



Detail of an installation
in the "ArchInProcess"
exhibition.

Jannik Pra Levis, Costanza Rosa and Roberta Venditti and the coordinators Francesca Bertinato and Roberto Paolo Malaspina.

The exhibition immediately proved to be a catalyst for public attention, confirming the efficiency of multimedia communication and demonstrating the keen interest of the institutions. In the following weeks, several groups of people visited the exhibition again and were guided by the curatorial team on a journey exploring the possibilities of contemporary architecture. The feedback is a reliable basis for analysing the use of the new DAMSLab and the possibilities it offers to the student community.

Thanks to the participation of "ArchInProcess" in the Urban Regeneration Mix project, sponsored by the URBACT programme, we had the opportunity to present the exhibition to the other European partners involved. This highly formative experience managed to take our understanding of what it means to work in urban regeneration to another level. We understood that everything we had experienced in the field of curating an exhibition for the renovation of a cultural space is only one of the many possibilities of intervention.

The exchange with other European realities has helped to reveal even more strongly the dual role of urban regeneration, reminding us that intervention in the social sphere is always closely linked to intervention in the cultural sphere.

THE URBAN REGENERATION MIX PROJECT'S EXPERIENCE OF "JOB SHADOWING" IN THE CITY OF BRAGA

Giulia Alonzo

PhD student in Sociology
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Within the Urban Regeneration Mix project of the URBACT European programme, I was invited as a representative of the University of Bologna to participate in the job shadowing organised by the city of Braga, the Portuguese project partner. Three days full of events and meetings, including workshops for young people and visits to Braga's cultural centres, where I had the opportunity to interview the artistic

directors and organisers. I have observed that the city's cultural policies, with actions at different levels, from the regeneration of buildings into cultural spaces to the implementation of programmes to bring young people closer to art, are combined with the transformation of Braga as a cultural destination. After the crisis of 2008, Braga had to reinvent itself. With 170,000 inhabitants, Braga is the second largest city in northern Portugal, and fourth nationwide.

Generation Building
in Braga (Portugal).



But the crisis and the consequent abandonment of the historic centre, where it is possible to admire the architectural stratifications that have shaped it, have led the administration to rethink the city as a tourist and cultural destination. Although it is the rainiest city in Portugal, many festivals enliven its cobbled streets, from historical re-enactments to folk music and children's events. But the peculiarity that is also distinguishing Braga at international level is its focus on the blend of culture and digital media, so much so that it was elected UNESCO Creative City for Media Arts. My job shadowing, aimed at finding out more about the relationship between cultural identity and innovation that took place in February 2020, starts with a visit to the Gnracion Building.

Gnracion Building: making space for culture

The building is a former police station. In 2012, renowned Portuguese architect Carvalho Araújo renovated the building, transforming it into an iconic symbol of Braga with its interior façades covered in vertical pots originally designed to house plants but now housing lamps that colour the building. Realised thanks to the "Braga 2012 European Youth Capital" programme, Gnracion is a space for artistic creation and performance, specialising in the fields of contemporary music and the relationship between art and technology. Through a strategy of openness to the local community, the Gnracion Building aims to become a hub, a unifying centre for the cultural and creative vitality not only of the city, but is laying the foundations for collaborations at national level. A dynamic space oriented towards the training of creative professions and the creation of new audiences, bringing them closer to unusual, contemporary, cosmopolitan and international artistic practices.

The building hosts:

- Gnracion, the exhibition space dedicated to contemporary art and music;
- a space for artistic residencies, for artists and curators hosted by the cultural centre;
- the operational headquarters of Braga 2030, the city's cultural programme that led to the city's recognition as a UNESCO Creative City for Media Arts;

- the operational headquarters of “Circuito”, a programme of courses and seminars open to all inhabitants of Braga;
- StartUp Braga, a coworking space dedicated to Braga’s startupper.

Gnration

On the ground floor of the Gnration Building is Gnration, the exhibition space whose artistic direction is entrusted to sound artist and curator Luís Fernandes. Since 2012 the gallery has been conducting research on two themes that are at the same time independent but interconnected: contemporary music and the relationship between art and technology. These are the watchwords for the programming of activities with a performance, exhibition and educational tendency. Many festivals take place in Gnration, such as “Semibreve” or the “Festival for Gente Sentada”, of electronic music and digital art, also invading open spaces, such as the inner courtyards that light up at night, creating a natural architectural setting, perfect for sharing on social networks.

One of the centre’s objectives is to become a national point of reference and dissemination in the contemporary art world for the relationship between art and technology, through exhibitions, concerts, performances and educational services aimed at a wide and diversified audience, contributing to the affirmation of Braga as an international reference in the field of technological arts.

The Braga 2030 Programme

Under the artistic direction of Joana Menezes, Braga 2030 is a cultural programme open to citizenship, for the shared construction of the cultural values that distinguish Braga. The programme has led to the city being recognised as a UNESCO Creative City of Media Arts and competing for the title of Capital of Culture 2027. In their mission statement we can read: “We are collecting the voices of all those who live in Braga and building a map of the identity of a community that contains several. A map that becomes an atlas. Braga’s cultural strategy 2020-2030 identifies culture as one of the pillars of a city’s sustainable development. Culture is at the centre of this reflection. But not only. This Braga lives and grows from the balance between culture, economy, social inclusion and environment. Be-

cause we do not imagine a single path to the future. Because we want the whole to be the result of each individual part, we are thinking of a future Braga built together. Think about a new Braga with us”.

This plan was designed in six phases and at the time of my interview with Joana they were in phase three. The phases are:

1. prepare: think and imagine a strategy;
2. giving voice to the participants: open conversation to collect ideas and suggestions, to create the cultural map of the city through different directions and different agents;
3. writing: a document containing all the contributions and suggestions of the participants;
4. listening: to improve the project with suggestions from the participants;
5. finalisation: drafting of the final document;
6. sharing: public presentation and dissemination of the strategy.

“Circuito” Braga Media Arts

One morning of my job shadowing was dedicated to the children’s workshop WE! Caixa Mágica: experiments with light from the “Circuito” training project. That morning, photographer Adriano Ferreira Borges from the PAVAC association, which runs the light and photography workshops for the “Circuito”, held two classes, one for children aged between 7 and 8 and the second for 12 to 13 year olds: the workshops aimed to discover the principles of light and shade and photographic development. The workshop is part of “Circuito”, the new educational service of Braga Media Arts of the Municipality of Braga, which aims to promote a series of activities that stimulate creativity and artistic experience in all age groups. From primary school children to high school students, “Circuit” offers different types of courses, including courses for educators and training for teachers and other professionals, establishing a dialogue between their profession and the digital arts.

The “Circuito” activities include:

- “Mini Circuito”, with activities and workshops for children and their families;
- “Circuito Escolar”, with activities and workshops for schools;
- “Circuito Avançado”, with workshops and advanced training for teenagers and adults;

- “Circuito Para Todos”, with activities and workshops for all ages;
- “Fora de Circuito”, special and specific projects on a demand basis.

“Castelo”, the new home of the Urban Innovation Laboratories

As part of a process of urban regeneration of buildings in the historic centre, Braga’s former Town Hall has now also been converted into the operational headquarters of the three Urban Innovation Laboratories: the Laboratory for Cultural Innovation (LIC), the Laboratory for Social Innovation (LIS) and the Laboratory for Urban Innovation (LIU), to promote projects in the different social, cultural and urban areas, which help to improve the administrative performances of the municipality.

Urban Innovation Laboratories is an incubator for social projects and a support system for entrepreneurs through coworking, training, mentoring and experimentation. The labs were opened at the end of 2019 and at the time of my visit in February 2020, with 23 people employed, it was the Laboratory for Social Innovation, which had just launched the call for the two-year funding of 20 projects.



Gnration Building in Braga (Portugal) Entrance.

The call did not have a precise focus: as it was the first call from the municipality of Braga, the team wanted to understand the topics of most interest to the community. However, the responding projects showed that the interest of citizenship is focused on the issues of care for the elderly and use of leisure time.

Funding for the selected projects comes partly from the European Community (EUR 370,000) and partly from the City of Braga. The projects should become autonomous by 2021.

The Laboratory for Urban Innovation and the Laboratory for Cultural Innovation were not yet active, but according to the Municipality they will become meeting points for creative people and places for training, confrontation and experimentation, for a constant transfer of skills and knowledge, promoting the creative economy in specific sectors such as visual arts, entertainment and music, intertwining them with the sectors of architecture and urbanism.

Architecture, art and social practices, i.e. “(Re) Write our Neighbourhood”

Architect Daniel Duarte Pereira presented the project “(Re) Write our Neighbourhood”, carried out with Space Transcribers, an interdisciplinary network of architects, urban planners and artists, which questions the contemporary built environment in terms of its representation and collective imagination. The heart of the project was a series of workshop and artistic interventions between 2018 and 2019 in the Barrio of Braga, inhabited mostly by gypsies. The aim was to redefine the images of an area that is now negatively stereotyped, and which consequently also stigmatises the people who live there. After one year of the project and the publication of the book *Transcrever: Ações participativas nos bairros sociais de Braga* (*Transcribing: participatory actions in the popular districts of Braga*), which collects the work and testimonies of more than 180 practitioners, published with the collaboration of Braga City Council, it would be interesting to see how much this awareness triggered by the project will influence on the one hand the future local political decisions of the City Council and on the other hand the active participation of the Barrio residents.

THE CASSERO LGBTI+ CENTER

THE CASSERO LGBTI+ CENTER AND ITS ROLE IN URBAN REGENERATION MIX

Giuseppe Seminario

The Cassero LGBTI+ Center
President

Andrea Berna

Gender Bender International
Cultural project manager

Mauro Meneghelli

Gender Bender International
Artistic co-director

Bologna is a lively city full of new ferments. A solidarity-based approach in the dialogue between institutions and the most advanced and innovative social proposals has made this territory a constantly evolving laboratory for cooperation and mutualism. Thanks to the uniqueness of the Bolognese milieu, one of its most important assets is its plural model; a descriptive notion of a fac-

tual reality, developed within a sociological perspective, for which the same concept of culture has as its logical corollary the impossibility of the existence of a single culture¹. A model in which consensus is enriched and nurtured by dissent, and within which the integration of differences is not the exception but the rule. A “concordia discors”, made possible by everyone’s acceptance of common values and aims².

In Bologna, “Il Cassero” is the historic headquarters of Arcigay, the Italian LGBTI+ association that works to develop the rights and welfare of the community of gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans and intersex people. The structure is located within the Manifattura delle Arti, the area identified as the main target of the URBACT III project Urban Regeneration Mix (URM), and, in its Urbact Local Group (ULG), many of the members of “Il Cassero” have contributed, with an active participation, in the co-design and implementation of the initiatives carried out in URM from April 2018 to December 2020.

Participation in URM was an important occasion for the Association. It was an opportunity both to cultivate long-standing connections and to outline new and future association and organisational scenarios.

As for the first of these aspects, it was the testing ground to demonstrate,

¹ Cirese A.M., 1999. *Cultura egemonica e culture subalterne*. Palermo: Palumbo; Sartori G., 2002. *Pluralismo, multiculturalismo e estranei*. Milano: Rizzoli.

² Dworkin R., 2010. *I diritti presi sul serio*. Bologna: il Mulino.



The "Cassero" LGBTI+ Center. Bird's-eye view.

once again, its ability to build projects in a network with the Bologna administration, its different levels of government and local stakeholders. In this, it was able to rely on solid cultural backgrounds and its long tradition of civic activism.

The movements against violence or discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, and for the rights of the LGBTI community, already found institutional recognition in the early 1980s thanks to the Porta Saragozza structure, the first public space in Italy to be explicitly and formally allocated by the State, in order to provide a "home" for these new demands. The cultural centre that was built at the time was such an important achievement that even today those struggles are still in a relationship of direct continuity with the activities and initiatives aimed at all citizens of the members of "Il Cassero", which since 2002 have moved to the Salara, the former salt depot inside the Manifattura delle Arti.

The reasons for that recognition are still fully visible in the articles of its Statute dedicated to the values of social inclusion and the rejection of all forms of discrimination.

Values inspired by Article 2 of the Italian Constitution, in which equality and equal social dignity of citizens are established through an

open-ended provision, representing an example of how, in the spirit of the Charter, there is a desire to allow a continuous expansion of the list of fundamental rights. Statutory values for the development of a positive relationship between each individual and the social and natural environment which, in the European perspective, are also linked to the reference to “human dignity”, solemnly contained in the opening of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of citizens and residents of the European Union, for which, the Union: “is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity; it is based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law. It places the individual at the heart of its activities, by establishing the citizenship of the Union and by creating an area of freedom, security and justice”.

On the other hand, as regards the added value that URM has brought to the future programming activities of the cultural offer of “Il Cassero”, this cannot but be seen in the collaborations that will be possible at an international level, thanks to the relationships built within its European consortium. Collaborations which, relying on the lessons learnt at URM, will seek to increasingly combine the critical consumption of cultural products with civic engagement³.

The activities in which we took part

As already mentioned, the members of “Il Cassero” took part in the meetings that, from March 2019 to April 2020, marked the evolution of the ULG of URM. Giuseppe Seminario, in 2019 president of Arcigay “Il Cassero” in Bologna, directly participated in the cycle of interviews “Vox Pop”, planned within the “local transfer activities” in the first year of the project. Thanks to his testimony, he was able to give both his individual and the Association’s point of view on the challenges which, thanks to URM’s support, have been faced in its two years of existence.

Finally, during the Trans National Meeting “Porto Culture” (TNM “Por-

³ Bartoletti R., Grossi G., 2011. Pratiche culturali e reti di consumo. Luoghi plurali e nuove forme di partecipazione. *Rivista Pic-Ais. Cultura e Comunicazione/Culture and Communication*, 2; Bartoletti R., Faccioli F. (a cura di), 2013. *Comunicazione e Civic Engagement. Media, spazi pubblici e nuovi processi di partecipazione*. Milano: Franco Angeli.

to Culture”) held in Bologna in December 2019, representatives of the Association gave a report during the panel that, on the first day of the conference, was dedicated to the two main fields of intervention in the Manifattura delle Arti area: that of collaboration between the different cultural institutions present there, and the new ways of opening up the area to citizens, which, thanks to this collaboration, was intended to support. They also guided the delegates of the foreign partners invited to Bologna in the discovery of the novelties introduced by the URM enhancement process in this cultural area and explained its history.

The “Porto Culture” TNM was a central initiative for the whole project. During its three days, the key stakeholders for the success of the cultural valorisation process were mapped and strategic actions defined for the setting up of the future co-designed multifunctional spaces in URM and for the definition of their specific identity.

The Association has thus had the opportunity to increase its competencies by adapting the parts of the “city transfer” model proposed by URM which are more functional to it; specifically, with regard to its internal mechanisms, in the priorities given during the processes of cooperation



An evening at the “Cassero”
“L’Altra Sponda”
(The Other Side) event.

between its different sectors and in the value that is attributed to these processes in its organisation.

But this review cannot really give an account of the Association's commitment over these two years. URM has also given the opportunity to create a new ground for discussion regarding the planning and updating of its cultural offer. A dynamic that has always pushed "Il Cassero" to search for new and more advanced balances between its "two souls": that of non-profit "cultural enterprise" and that of "creative enterprise" concretely engaged in the production sector defined by the Regional Strategy of Emilia-Romagna for Smart Specialisation - S3 as the "orange economy"⁴.

Critical and responsible consumption of cultural products as a form of local *civic engagement*

The Association's reflections stimulated by URM, with regard to urban cultural enhancement and the dialogue of cultural institutions with the territory, focused on the themes, investigated by Sociology and Communication Science, of "cultural performance" and collective communication processes⁵. In particular, on the theme of critical consumption of cultural products as a field of *civic engagement*. The Manifattura delle Arti area itself was conceived as a "performing device catalysing the imaginary" through which cultural practices belonging to artistic forms of production and consumption, such as the "media-performances" hosted by the Association during its multidisciplinary festival "Gender Bender", can give shape to plural, collective places for new forms of participation.

Modes of expression based on the active role assigned to the spectators and spectators, and which, in that festival, combine appointments of various types, from dance to theatre or cinema, also offering opportunities for meetings with the artists involved. The aim of these methods is to achieve two objectives: on the one hand to satisfy the participatory

⁴ D'Isanto M., 2020. *Le imprese culturali e creative ancora nel limbo*. Impresa Sociale Forum, 11 giugno 2020, disponibile on-line su: www.rivistaimpresasociale.it (ultimo accesso 29 ottobre 2020).

⁵ Gemini L., Antonioni S., 2011. Performing space. Quando la logica della rete prende forma negli spazi urbani fra arte, media-performance e agire spettatoriale. *Rivista Pic-Ais. Cultura e Comunicazione/Culture and Communication*, 2.

needs of those who attend the shows, thus fulfilling their socialising role, and on the other hand to entertain, thus cyclically strengthening their relationship with the respective collective.

In this way, the Association believes it can bring art back to claim its social, public and participatory character in the urban environment⁶ through a critical and responsible consumption of cultural products capable of triggering processes of *civic engagement*. Critical consumption, as an expression of collective orientations and public interest, since these initiatives are aimed at promoting greater awareness of civil rights, overcoming prejudices and combating discrimination in public opinion. And an expression of *civic engagement* in so far as, in the case of "Il Cassero", the citizen/consumer of cultural products performs these acts of civic engagement in consumption in full awareness of their potential effects, thanks to the values and community commitment demonstrated by the Association.

Lessons learned in Urban Regeneration Mix and their use to "design the new"

During the two years of the project, actions were planned which, given the current Covid-19 pandemic crisis, are currently impossible to implement. Nevertheless, the added value of the project has not been lost. The collaborative practices developed will be used for the redesign of the post-Covid cultural offer. The study activity to "design the new" will also draw on the methodologies learnt during the project, and the search for a balance between initiatives for the resistance of the "orange economy" sector and initiatives for its re-start will certainly be aided by the wealth of knowledge and notions acquired.

⁶ Colombo F., 1998. *La cultura sottile. Media e industria culturale italiana dall'Ottocento ad oggi*. Milano: Bompiani.

THE BAM! STRATEGIE CULTURALI COOPERATIVE SOCIETY

Rosanna Spanò

BAM! Strategie Culturali
Project Manager

Federico Borreani

BAM! Strategie Culturali
President

BAM! Strategie Culturali is a consultancy and service company that supports cultural institutions and projects in the **construction of strategic paths**.

It was founded in 2009 as an association by a group of students from GIOCA, the University of Bologna's Master's degree course in Management and Innovation of Cultural and Artistic Organisations. In 2012, four of

them founded a cooperative society and chose to devote themselves to the entrepreneurial project full-time.

Since then, BAM! has been working in Italy and Europe with museums, festivals, theatres, cultural districts, local authorities, universities, foundations, associations and private social organisations, discussing issues of **cultural management and communication**. Its team today is composed of a group of professionals from different backgrounds, who offer their expertise as consultants, designers, trainers, communication and marketing experts, audience development and audience engagement experts, to build together the most effective strategies, focus on objectives, study feasibility and sustainability, monitor results or evaluate the impact of cultural actions.

The services of BAM! services help cultural organisations to build complete strategic paths, from the preliminary and study phases to the final evaluation of results: **analysis** (of the public, the territory and the resources) builds databases that help to make the right decisions; **design** helps to line up objectives, targets and results to structure the best strategic plans; **training** and *capacity building* bring innovative approaches, new skills, and practical tools to enable and support their teams; **communication** and digital strategy bring projects to the public: from branding to online presence, up to audience engagement actions.

Since 2013 BAM! has been animating and managing **"Work in Pro-**

gress", a coworking space in the centre of Bologna, in Marconi street 45: halfway between the station and Maggiore square, and just a few steps away from the Manifattura delle Arti.

Our vision

In recent years we have observed and accompanied the change in the Italian cultural sector, addressing all the issues and practices that have marked the debate: the advent of digital and social media; cultural business models and support for cultural and creative enterprises; European cultural policies and European projecting; culture as a lever for urban regeneration or territorial marketing, from the Anglo-Saxon perspective of *cultural planning*; *audience development*, with renewed attention to cultural audiences and approaches devoted to involvement; finally, the role of culture in welfare and community *empowerment*.

We have tackled more than 100 projects in these 10 years of work, always with one ultimate goal in mind: **ensuring participation** and facilitating access to cultural content by ever wider and more diverse audiences. We work every day to **break down the walls and invisible barriers** that keep citizens out of cultural venues, in the belief that by building increasingly open, inclusive and non-rejecting cultural spaces, we can bring communities closer to heritage and develop in them a sense of care for the commons.

We try to **break down the top-down approaches** that still represent the most classic *modus operandi* of cultural organisations; we convince institutions to let go of a piece of their power and hybridise their competences, bringing in new ideas and fearlessly confronting practices far removed from the cultural sector.

We are convinced that the **quality of cultural communication** and marketing in Italy can and should be raised a lot more, by promoting the right use of it and not opposing the real and the digital.

We build projects that **focus on the audiences**, on dialogue and involvement, on knowledge of demand and its needs; remembering that these considerations must then be reflected in the offer, in the content, in the construction of new and increasingly relevant cultural products.

We think that **innovation**, in a very practical sense, is fighting every day against organisational inertia: making an effort not to do things “as they have always been done”, trying to shift the routine, even if only by a millimetre.

Urban regeneration and cultural-based territorial marketing. Some recent projects

Open Vicoli

Designing and activating a community network in the alleys of Genoa

www.openvicoli.it

www.bamstrategieculturali.com/portfolio/open-vicoli-rete-comunita/

Open Vicoli is a project that unites museums, cooperation and social aggregation realities, enterprises and cultural associations that live or operate in the alleys of Genoa’s historical centre. The areas of Via Prè, Via del Campo and Via della Maddalena are an area of Genoa’s alleys that has been perceived for decades as a wound to be healed in the historic centre. Yet they preserve a priceless heritage – noble palaces, Baroque churches, votive shrines and portals, historic shops – and they border on the city’s most important museums: the Strada Nuova Civic Museum and the Museum of the Risorgimento, the National Museums of Palazzo Reale and Palazzo Spinola, the Galata Museo del Mare (Maritime Museum), the “Casa dei cantautori” (Songwriters’ House) in Via del Campo 29 rosso.

In March 2018, the Compagnia di San Paolo [Italian Bank Foundation] launched the “Open Community” call for projects focused on audience engagement, submitted in tandem by cultural community networks and *audience development* professionals. During this opportunity, a wide network of actors working in this area got to work on a common project.

The aim of the project is to bring together the efforts of different worlds and to create a stable alliance that can experiment with methods of involvement and participation and bring citizens closer to the area’s cultural heritage. The challenge is to build together a new vision of al-



Open Vicoli in the Genova alleys.

leys: from problem to proposal, from excluded territory to shared value. From constraints to drivers.

BAM! supported the lead partner, the Il Laboratorio social cooperative, an entity that has been active for more than 30 years in the management of educational services for minors and young people and in the promotion of social and cultural integration processes, in all the planning phases following the publication of the “Open Community” call for proposals and in the process of refining the candidate projects that went through autumn 2018. At the end of this process, Open Vicoli came first in the ranking among the 9 selected projects, receiving funding of EUR 100,000 for 18 months of actions, from February 2019 to July 2020. During the project, BAM! will have the role of *community manager*: activator of the community network, trainer of the subjects that compose it, facilitator of the processes of public involvement. The aim is to make the communities autonomous protagonists in carrying out the process even after the end of the activities financed by the call.

Municipality of Medicina

A participation project for the former Carmine church

<https://www.bamstrategieculturali.com/portfolio/progetto-partecipazione-ex-chiesa-carmine/>

<https://partecipazione.regione.emilia-romagna.it/news/normali/news-2020/ex-chiesa-del-carmine-1>

The former Carmine church, located in the historic centre of Medicina, was closed in 2016 because it needed consolidation and restoration work. Until then, it constituted an important container for cultural and artistic activities promoted by numerous organisations both local and from neighbouring territories capable of involving different audiences. In 2018, Carisbo's "Regenerazione Urbana" [Bologna Savings Bank Foundation] call for tenders allowed the start of the building site to make the sacristy of the former church usable again.

At the same time as the works, the Municipality of Medicina launched a process aimed at reactivating the site, writing a "manifesto" [published declaration], setting up a management committee and identifying the areas of activity that will find a new home in the spaces of the Carmine sacristy.



Carmine church in
Medicina (Bologna).

The next step is to activate a participatory process to define, together with the community, the reuse of Carmine church.

The participatory process consists of two phases with several intermediate stages, each of which involves the active participation of BAM!

Phase 1, sharing: it consists in carrying out a mapping, analysis and a series of public meetings to bring out and collect in a document the requests and needs of the inhabitants of Medicina towards their own city, with the aim of identifying some thematic areas of activity, around which to build the future offer of Carmine church.

Phase 2, co-design: after a preparatory training – conducted by BAM! through a series of meetings – a small group of associations, students and citizens will meet to co-design activities, actions and a coordination system for Carmine, which can be implemented from 2021.

The role of BAM! Strategie Culturali in relation to the public meetings will be both to conceive and plan the sessions and to facilitate them. During each phase of the process, BAM! will develop communication materials, aimed at disseminating the progress of the project and improving the involvement of stakeholders.

European project INNOCULTOUR - Veneto Region

Strategic advice for territorial promotion

www.bamstrategieculturali.com/portfolio/innocultour/

www.regione.veneto.it/web/cultura/innocultour

INNOCULTOUR is a project focusing on innovation and promotion of the Adriatic cultural heritage as a *driver* for tourism development, financed within the framework of the Interreg Italy-Croatia Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2014-2020. The project involves five partners, located along the Eastern and Western Adriatic: Veneto Region, Molise Region, Natural History Museum of Rijeka, RERA Territorial Development Agency of Split (HR) and the lead partner Delta2000.

On the basis of the project commissioned by the Veneto Region, BAM! conducted a territorial analysis and data collection on the areas covered by the two museums and on the museums themselves, with the aim of drawing up a proposal for a cultural and tourism marketing strategy

based on the heritage of the Museo dei Grandi Fiumi in Rovigo (Rovigo Major Rivers Museum) and the Museo Civico della Laguna Sud (South Lagoon Civic Museum) in Chioggia. These activities respond to the objective of promoting the area's cultural heritage and developing new ways of involving, consolidating and empowering audiences, with particular attention to young people.

BAM! provided expert support on two further operational levels:

- the co-design of the comparison activities foreseen by the project, on the themes of territorial marketing and tourism promotion: two focus groups with territorial stakeholders and two workshops in museums with students from Chioggia and Rovigo;
- the evaluation of the projects for the promotion of the museums involved in INNOCULTOUR received through the Joint Call Competition, a competition for creative industries, jointly promoted by the five INNOCULTOUR partners.

BAM! is also part of the Technical Tourism and Culture Expert Group (TTCEG), a comparison group of experts nominated by each project partner under INNOCULTOUR.

Don Gallo and the old town

Design of a participatory planning process

www.bamstrategieculturali.com/portfolio/percorso-partecipato-don-gallo

"Don Gallo e la città vecchia – Nessuno escluso!" (Don Gallo and the old town - No one excluded!) is a project financed by Compagnia di San Paolo [Italian Bank Foundation] in the framework of the call for proposals "CivlCa, progetti di Cultura e Innovazione Civica" (CivlCa, Culture and Civic Innovation projects) led by the Community of San Benedetto al Porto. It is part of a regeneration process that has already been underway for some years in the alley area of Genoa, which aims to enhance the redevelopment of the area and promote its social, historical and cultural aspects and to transmit a system of values and meanings that find a symbolic figure in Don Gallo.

Don Gallo, street priest, founder and animator of the Community of San Benedetto al Porto is a symbolic figure for the city of Genoa, so much so



that he has given his name to the largest square in the Prè Ghetto area. Its archives constitute a fundamental historical and cultural testimony, consisting of 4,000 paper documents (correspondence, diaries, pamphlets, notes, writings), about 1,000 photographs, 560 audio cassettes, video material, from 1968 to 2003. Recently rearranged, this heritage is a key resource for the construction of a story that can convey positive values (tolerance, acceptance, respect for minorities, social integration, fight against discrimination) to counterbalance the problems that characterise the neighbourhood.

The “Don Gallo e la città vecchia” project aims to generate a choral narrative from the materials in the Don Gallo Archive, which will allow an entire neighbourhood to speak through a set of design and communication tools. The intervention of BAM! starts from the design phase of development and systemisation of proposals and contents to bring them to fruition.

The activity consists in the construction of a participatory design process, addressed to citizens and stakeholders of the neighbourhood. Through the activities (preliminary meetings, workshops, moments of restitution) of subjects gathered in two parallel working tables, the pathway will allow to identify problems and possible answers to the needs of the neighbourhood.

It will also work on stories and content that can convey a different, positive idea of the old town to visitors and tourists.

The Malpensata Creative Park

Studying the audience

<https://www.bamstrategieculturali.com/portfolio/parco-della-malpensata/>

The Comune di Bergamo has planned and implemented a major regeneration project for the Parco della Malpensata, reviving its green spaces and building the “Gate” multipurpose centre. For years now, this urban area has been at the centre of actions designed to bring about change, experimenting with the US model of *comprehensive community development*. The “Parco Creativo della Malpensata” project developed by the Patronato San Vincenzo Social Cooperative, the Municipality of Bergamo and BAM! Strategie Culturali, co-funded by Cariplo [Italian Bank Foundation], forms part of this context, putting forward an action plan targeted first and foremost at young people living in the area and, more generally, at the city of Bergamo as a whole.



Baleno Festival
in Bergamo.

The project objectives are: to turn the park and the “Gate” space within it into a cultural reference point for the Malpensata neighbourhood and to strengthen the network of cultural venues in the area, so as to actively involve more and more of the city’s young people. The park is no longer just an open space dedicated to leisure and play, but is also a centre for artistic expression and cultural production within the city, oriented towards inclusion and dialogue between different communities.

In March 2018, BAM! organised an *audience development* strategy planning and fine-tuning workshop with a view to bringing participants and those running the space into line with the project objectives, encouraging the work group to come up with ideas for boosting the potential of the planned activities, and to identify the various target audiences and the activities for involving them on different levels.

In June 2018 the Festival Baleno, a key element of the project, took place: a three-day event involved cultural initiatives open to everyone (theatre performances, film screenings, creative workshops, Parkour courses, etc.), some of which were based on ideas that emerged during the workshop in March.

During the Festival Baleno, BAM! carried out an audience survey using questionnaires (250 collected), which it then used to produce an analysis of festival visitors and their relationship with the Parco della Malpensata. The information that emerged was used by the event organisers to assess its achievement of its set objectives and to rethink future programmes.

In February 2019, at the end of the project, BAM! held a sustainability workshop during which it provided partners with training on funding options and methods for future initiatives after the closure of the project. Following on from the success of the previous year and thanks to new sustainability opportunities, in June 2019 the Festival Baleno organisers launched a second edition of the event. BAM! took the opportunity to carry out a second audience survey (209 questionnaires collected), with a view to exploring potential developments in the audience make-up and in its relationship with the park.

THE MERCATO RITROVATO FARMER MARKET

Giorgio Pirazzoli

Mercato Ritrovato
Coordinator

The Mercato Ritrovato [Rediscovered Market] is an association of around 60 members, including local agricultural and craft producers, whose aim is to promote local agriculture, in particular by organising a farmers' market held every Saturday morning (and Monday evening in summer) in Pasolini and Magnani squares.

The Mercato Ritrovato was born under the name of the Mercato della Terra di Bologna [Bologna Earth Market] from a project by Slow Food Bologna [global, grassroots organization that promotes local food and traditional cooking], Cineteca di Bologna [Bologna film/multimedia library and archive] and the Province of Bologna (now the Metropolitan City), and developed from November 2008 with the first edition of the Market, in which around twenty local farms took part.

Developed together with the international network of Earth Markets, the project shares with the entire network a protocol with strict rules for selecting producers and their products.

The association was founded in 2011, under the name of the "Mercato della Terra di Bologna", of which Slow Food is a member together with the producers who are part of it. Since 2017, Slow Food has left the project, which can stand on its own two feet with the strength of the producers who have joined it over the years. In agreement with Slow Food, the same protocol is maintained and the association takes the name Mercato Ritrovato, in homage to the "Cinema Ritrovato", a popular festival held by the Cineteca di Bologna, the association's main partner. The Mercato Ritrovato association has been a partner in the Urban Regeneration Remix project since its beginning, as a cultural activity in the Manifattura delle Arti area. In the context of the European project URBACT - Urban Regeneration Mix, we took part in several organisational and holding meetings between the cities involved.



Aerial view of the Mercato Ritrovato in front of the entrance to the DAMSLab.

I travelled to Toulouse in June 2019 to meet the project team from that city and the other European participants involved, and took part in the meeting held in Bologna in December 2019.

With the funds of the project we carried out an activity at the DAMSLab entitled “Bologna La Rosa: the city opens its gardens to relations”, creating an installation in its spaces, open to the citizens, and hosting a debate on urban greenery.

Given the scale of some of the city contexts of the other European project partners, it was an interesting challenge to readapt the same dynamics to the dimension of the Bologna project.

In the cultural and agricultural field in which the association operates, it has been and is every day a function of our activity to keep in touch the rural territory with the city, promoting local farmers and their productions in a valuable context. The challenge is to bring together geographically separate worlds with different cultural traditions and bring them into play with each other. The discovery is that the preservation of rural areas through agricultural practices, thanks to this project, runs parallel to the preservation of urban space with the presence of local, agricultural and ethical businesses, creating a virtuous mechanism of culture and participation.

THE CANTIERI METICCI CULTURAL ASSOCIATION AND THEATER COMPANY

Pietro Floridia

Cantieri Meticci
founder

Angela Sciavilla

Cantieri Meticci
organiser

Cantieri Meticci is an ensemble composed of dozens of theatre artists, artisans, illustrators, organisers from over 20 different countries. It was founded in 2014 as an evolution of the “Compagnia dei Rifugiati” (Refugee Company), directed by Pietro Floridia within the ITC Teatro di San Lazzaro, but it progressively widened its range of action through training activities in handicrafts,

in order to enhance the skills that migrants bring with them. Since 2017, it has transformed the former warehouses of the Coop supermarket into a set of art studios, called MET: Meticceria ExtrArtistica Trasversale (Cross-bred ExtrArtistic Cross-sectional).

“Meticceria” because it wants to be a site of social cross-fertilisation. “ExtrArtistica” because it tends to conceive artistic projects with effects that



Theatre workshop of the project partners in the DAMSLab theatre.

go beyond the field of art, triggering processes of social transformation. "Trasversale" because it practises overcoming the barriers between disciplines: a mixing of the arts that favours the mixing of the most heterogeneous people. In a nutshell, the cultural strategy is based on three lines: training people, i.e. building a learning system that intercepts young people with artistic talents in contexts that are cut off from the cultural offer and leads them in successive stages to become cultural operators; forming groups, i.e. transforming the many amateurs who attend the courses of the "Quartieri Teatrali" [Theatre districts] project into Neighbourhood "Meticce" Theatre Companies that take cultural care of districts in the city of Bologna; creating innovative devices that enable cultural activities outside the usual contexts. In addition to its local activities, it carries out theatre projects and performances in many European countries, as well as in South America, the Middle East and Africa.

The Nigger of the "Narcissus": an installation, a performance, a workshop

Cantieri Meticci took part in the project by presenting an installation, a performance and a workshop at DAMSLab based on Joseph Conrad's novel *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*. This novel was chosen because the dynamics, more or less explicitly present in the work, represent an excellent starting point for activating a hermeneutic community made up of the most diverse people who, starting from common ideas offered by some fragments of the text, could interpret, rewrite and discuss trends present in our city today.

The proposal is part of a research project that Cantieri Meticci has been carrying out for years, which focuses on the invention of artistic devices that allow for the expression of the most heterogeneous people, around themes and spaces that are felt to be common.

Joseph Conrad's *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* is the story of a ship shaken by the arrival on board of James Wait, the black man of Antillean origin whose presence triggers opposing reactions in the crew and upsets the ship's order, leading to an attempt at mutiny.

By proposing a contemporary rewriting, Cantieri Meticci gives life to a

work halfway between a performance and an installation, in which the migrant, the African – branded as the original and eternal enemy – is seen as a real and ghostly figure. The spectators, free to move around in a maze-space made up of the cubicle-cabins of the ship *Narcissus*, meet the performers as they take on stories and actions that connect the pages of the story to the ghosts of the Western culture.

The Installation. The labyrinth of stigmas

The installation is designed to transform any place into a cultural space, not just theatres. It is designed to be able to stand out in the open, in public space, and to provide an interactive experience for spectators.

The installation (which becomes a constantly moving set during the performance) consists of a labyrinth made up of 10 black cubes, each measuring 2.40 metres. Each cube has as its thematic core a different stigma/ghost that Western culture has associated with people of African origin, and is designed as a device capable of assembling within it materials belonging to different artistic languages: starting with 'radiating phrases' from Conrad's novel that are displayed on the walls, works created ad hoc by the Iranian artist Sara Pour, audio recordings of interviews and narrations, short films and writings by the spectators are assembled in a constellation, all in constant interaction with the physical actions of the performers.

What are we talking about when we talk about "ghosts"? What very different matrixes can there be for phenomena that we generally define as "ghosts"? And, in the presence of the body of a person of African origin, what reservoirs of fantasies and fears, what cultural frameworks, often unconscious, are opened up to release the most diverse "ghosts"? Starting from these questions, Sara Pour conducted research into different material supports that could give substance to the dynamics investigated, and at the same time echo and interact with the performer's body. Amorphous works that use as a support: ancient maps of Europe and the Mediterranean; textile sculptures; medical plates; assemblages of bottles and specimens; engravings; sand cast bas-reliefs; shadow figures.

This installation aims to experiment with a spatial device that is at the

same time an interactive installation, an archive of materials created by the spectators, a location for workshops and a stage set for the performance. Its aim is to make the most wide ranging people interact, i.e. with very different preferences and behavioural habits. All this, however, with a common base of grafting and cooperation in which to assemble, assemble, compose constellations of materials belonging to different artistic languages that revolve around a common thematic core: the cubes contain figurative works, sculptures, audio recordings, videos, writings, as if they were large blackboards, with the performance of the actor. This plurality of languages makes possible and enhances the polyphony and heterogeneity of visions assembled together in each cube (and which also mark the rewriting of the play's dramaturgy): having as its centre radiant phrases by Conrad, each cube collects quotations, audio-interviews, narrative acts, small videos generated during workshops carried out in the most diverse contexts with the most diverse people (from ghettos inhabited by tomato pickers to university classrooms, from shelters to old people's clubs) so as to create a layered field of heterogeneous visions. This device (the walls of the cubes are large blackboards, equipped with micro loudspeakers and video projectors) is intended to stimulate, and then, at a later stage, to welcome the writing/audio/video recording by the people who pass through the installation, or who take part in the workshop, so as to make it also an increasingly articulated archive of different points of view on certain thematic cores.

These materials, among other things, become the object of the work of the nine performers, who in the first twenty minutes of the performance, when the spectators wander freely around the installation, improvise short verbal acts in which they assemble the different textual materials present in each cube.

The performance. In the belly of the "Narcissus"

In the course of the performance, on the other hand, the cubes become above all a device for organising the space and the relationship between performer and spectators, who continually oscillate between a look "from outside" and the sharing/intimacy of the space with the performer.

Five times every twenty minutes, the cubes are moved, generating different spatial arrangements, and literally changing the viewer's point of view, with all the implications in terms of problematising the point of view, also on an ethical level. From an initial labyrinth that emphasises fragmentary, individualistic, solipsistic visions of the black man's ghost, we move on to the bridge of the ship where the spectators are embarked together with the actors, in a space that begins to be common, until they enter the cubes that create a cross/great Christic body of the black man, the claustrophobic belly of the ship, where, around the now dying body of the black man, the sailors manage, even if momentarily, to become a resistant community of "apostles", concluding with a final arrangement that recalls the "panopticon" in which the power (of the captain) has quelled the mutiny and regained control of the black man's body, and prepares for his expulsion.

A group of about a hundred spectators are taken inside the ship *Narcissus*. Everyone is given a small, ultra-light stool with which, at first, they can wander through the labyrinthine maze of cubes/cabins of the merchant ship.

Then the journey begins and, as the five chapters of the novel unfold, the cubes too are set in motion, repeatedly changing the spatial arrangement, the spectators' point of view and the relationships with the nine performers.

Strongly physical choral actions alternate with moments in which the performers interact simultaneously with small groups of spectators in the intimacy of the claustrophobic space of each cube.

Despite the fact that the cast includes four African actors, no actor plays James Wait, the black protagonist, who instead remains a presence-absence evoked by vaguely anthropomorphic textile sculptures and apparitions videodrawn live by Iranian artist Sara Pour.

The performance is intended to be a ritual experience through which the spectators will experience the passage from a condition of distance to a condition of proximity, making them all enter the same ship. In other words, to think of themselves as a community of destiny.



Theatre workshop of the project partners in the DAMSLab theatre.

The workshop. Deconstructing the view

Joseph Conrad's novel can be read as a very detailed map of the ghostly dynamics activated in the Western world by the presence of the Other. In *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*, in fact, James Wait, the black protagonist, is not "treated" by Conrad in the same way as the other characters. Conrad does not portray him as a sailor with tuberculosis, but turns him into a kind of compendium of "negro's nature".

The man disappears, or rather, is subsumed into the identity of the Negro, which Conrad creates by crossing the projections of the other characters onto him. The result is a figure that is a prism of ghosts, inscribed in the tradition of representations of the Other by the West, but also sinisterly similar to those that are re-emerging throughout Europe.

On the basis of this hypothesis, Cantieri Meticci has set up a number of theatre workshops to explore how the most diverse communities, some of which are particularly exposed to the "spirit of the times", can react, interpret and rewrite Conrad's pages. These workshops brought together a wide variety of people, students, asylum seekers, cultural workers, mediators, who collected testimonies about the Somali prisons.

The aim is to make certain problematic nodes/passages in the text resonate in the most diverse contexts, but also to make the participants in the workshops interact with the company's actors (who come from five different countries as well as from very different life experiences and worlds) with the intention of soliciting rewrites, of which fragments are then assembled into lyrical acts/poetic structures, assemblages of heterogeneous rewritings, so as to compose a kaleidoscope, a "shattered mirror" rewriting whose fragments refract different visions of the same object (textual/thematic) watched/examined/mirrored.

The workshops were carried out inside the installation, so as to creatively confront the themes at the centre of each cube, as well as to problematise the superstructures inherent in looking at the different. Each cube, through windows, slits and transparencies, generates frames, cages within which to force both the "watching" gaze and the "watched" body, allowing the viewer to experience the multiplicity of cultural frames surrounding a gaze, in this case on black people. The workshops alternate phases of crossing and interacting with the works present in each cube with phases of re-elaboration of the stimuli received, in which, under the guidance of the artists of Cantieri Meticci, the participants create, in consonance with the different languages present in the installation, short writings, narrations, improvisations.

Cultural vessels

Cantieri Meticci's strategy has public space as a decisive dimension. Therefore, Cantieri Meticci aims at renewing the cultural space by building "Cultural vessels", i.e. stage-installations that intervene in the public space. These installations must fulfil several functions. Firstly, they must be the result of participatory processes. In other words, they must literally be built, with the mediation of the company's artists, by the people who will then use them. During the process of constructing the modules, through scenography workshops, manual practices are accompanied by exercises of interpretation and narration, so that it is evident that the final assembly is the result of the assembly of very heterogeneous visions. Secondly, they should be designed as mobile furniture.

In other words, they can be installed anywhere. In other words, they can be set up anywhere, so as to be able to go into areas where the cultural offerings are not available, but also to seek out people who would never come if they were to wait for them inside a cultural institution. To go to the suburbs, to set up in public spaces where they will be highly visible, in transit areas, in areas of the city that are cut off from the cultural offer. And to do so with installations equipped to allow people to express themselves through languages they are not in subjection to, starting from themes they feel are of interest to them. Otherwise, it will always be only the already educated, those with a cultural background who will inform themselves, intercept the advertising campaigns of the initiatives and, finally, take part in the initiatives.

Thirdly, as was the case with the "Narcissus project" at DAMSLab, we experiment with cultural spaces that can also become "grids", i.e. that can receive contributions/modules created by people in a form that allows for synchronic display, matching, composition, assembly and even some forms of combinatorial play. Also because it is a fundamental part of our poetics that these materials are - with different degrees of intensity but also of experimentation with formats - easily matched with materials that, starting from the same themes, have created artists or selected curators.

Finally, it is important for us that these mobile cultural spaces also have a metaphorical dimension. In "Project Narcissus", the spectators entered a space defined as a "ship", i.e. a multiple and deliberately ambiguous metaphor that oscillates between different dimensions. The ship can be seen as a metaphor for the individual journey of existence, but also for the "common world in which we are all in the same boat", as Calamandrei recalled, but it can also mean going back to those ships which, as children, immersed in our first books, forgetting everything else, kidnapped us and transported us to distant countries, making us meet the Elsewhere for the first time. At that time, reading was a magical experience, the metaphors were not rhetorical figures but were experienced physically with the whole body. We came back with a different knowledge, changed, feeling almost like "initiates", eager to experience what we had discovered there and apply it to our everyday world. These installations – which at a first level of communication often deal with

themes linked to current affairs – it is as if, deep down, they seek the meaningfulness of that “mythical” experience: an adherence, even physical/bodily, to the material of which a metaphor is made.

We enter a “womb” which, in its separation and “envelopment”, can “teleport” us far away, to an outside where we can meet the Other than ourselves. Ultimately, our strategy is based on cultural vessels whose authors are the hundreds of people who discuss their meaning while building them and, once built, decide on their destinations and programming. We believe that at such a difficult time for cultural institutions, many of which are finding it increasingly difficult to keep up with and respond adequately to changes in both contexts and people’s needs, shifting the focus towards participatory governance of cultural policies, creating machines that are both a symbol and an instrument and, finally, providing them with the mobility necessary to allow people to decide collectively in which areas they are going to carry out their activities, can help re-establish a pact between artists and citizens towards cultural objectives and functions that are once again seen as important for the city as a whole. In the hope that these machines will be versatile enough to adapt to the changing scenarios ahead, we conclude by summarising their possible uses.



Theatre workshop
at the DAMSLab
theatre.

THE CANTIERI METICCI THEATRE WORKSHOP PARTICIPATION EXPERIENCE

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Eight months have passed since the experience of the theatre workshop and the participation in the performance “Il negro del Narciso” by Cantieri Meticci, which took place during the three-day meeting of the Urban Regeneration Mix project. Three days of meetings, workshops and reflections between the various local stakeholders and the six European part-

ners who, gathered in the setting of the Manifattura delle Arti cultural area, deconstructed and articulated the role and capacities of culture both as a driver and as a prospect for urban regeneration. In the period between that experience and today, the perception and the way we interact and imagine public space, cultural spaces and social relations have completely changed. We have faced, and are still facing, a period of collective emergency unprecedented in our time, during which all spheres of cultural production and fruition have been severely affected.

In this paper we will try to retrace that experience eight months later taking into account how in this period a pandemic has intervened that is still in progress. To do this we will ask ourselves some questions regarding the role of cultural practices in our society and the consideration that we have of the impact that they have on cities and communities of reference in curbing inequalities, inequalities and social exclusion. Thanks to participatory observation, we will try to do this without ignoring the context in which this reflection is developed and taking into account how much of this experience remains emotionally settled in the present day and how much fermented together with the knowledge of those who carried it out.

The black matter that belongs to us: the workshop of participatory art as a practice of collective regeneration

Can a different narrative, an inclusive and non-subordinate image of art that puts the relationship with *the other*¹ at the center, lead us to a different understanding of what diversity is and place itself as a central element of innovation for a cultural regeneration of the urban fabric?

Cantieri Mettici responds to this question by imagining, developing and experimenting with artistic practices which, thanks to new forms of participation and cultural cohesion, lead to overcoming an assimilationist model of social inclusion and thus possibly to generative forms of intercultural welfare. In the theatrical practice of Cantieri Mettici we recognise the will to promote cultural diversity and to facilitate access to cultural expression through participation in the symbolic space of narrative whose contents and processes are often linked to the urgencies of marginalised minorities or contexts of oppression and subalternity.

Their work clearly aims to deconstruct the stigmatised image of migration created by the mass media and political rhetoric, as well as to experiment collectively with new forms of social inclusion that are capable of enhancing diversity through artistic participation.

Theater as a juncture ground, as a *space in between*² art and activism, begins to be created as soon as one takes part in the workshop: a space made of cross-sectional interweaving between past and present, object and subject, what is close with what is far away.

In fact, at the center of the proposed theater workshop is *the object* as a medium of this space below. A tool to bring people together, mix and collaborate and that will later turn out to be a key element of the show, becoming an action-research tool that links the two moments of artistic construction.

The object enters the scene initially in the form of a concept: it is the Ghost the protagonist. Does it scare us? Torments our past? Threatens our present? Shall we welcome him? Do we reject him? Its meaning and its symbology are intertwined in the practice of a stream of con-

¹ It refers to the category of others as described by Zygmunt Bauman in *Stranieri alle porte*. Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2016, p. 76.

² Bhabha H.K., 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.

sciousness that guides the participants to the construction of a collective conceptual map of their emotional, symbolic and conceptual reactions related to the interplay or memory that everyone has with it. the ghostly object enters the physical form of a mannequin at that moment. A mannequin made with a series of recycled materials wrapped in pieces of black cloth that make up the shape of a body.

Through the art of empathy the participant in the workshop enters into intimacy at this point with this object and with what it represents, begins to feel compassion for him, and together with him pathos.

From this emotion comes the collective decision to save him. This decision changes the center of the scene on which now the protagonist is no longer an object but a living subject. Subject with his own willingness but also with his fears, his ghosts, his otherness and his desire to redeem himself towards the *black matter*. Willingness able to make the participants understand how the black matter is not so far away but that, in every form, belongs to them. Starting from an abstract concept and transforming it into a cultural object, the participatory art of Cantieri Meticci shows us that it is possible to reach the social worlds by stimulating a sense of sharing, of co-construction and of the possibility of confronting and transforming individual areas of darkness into areas of collective regeneration.

Not spectators but witnesses

"What is happening in these centres is not just the responsibility of Libya, but of the entire international community. It is very difficult to argue that the landing in Libya is a safe landing". This is what Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, said after visiting a detention centre in Tripoli, it was 4 April 2019³.

"Il negro del Narciso" is an invitation to reflect on the present and to awaken consciences at a historical moment in which Libya is not a safe harbour for those who leave and for those who inhabit it.

Based on the famous tale by Joseph Conrad, the play tells the story of a

³ Francesca Mannocchi, "Italia senza più alibi", article published in *L'Espresso*, 26 luglio 2020.

ship and crew that James Wait, a black man from the Antilles, joins only to fall ill during the journey.

A narrative story that is rewritten as in a Maria Lai book, stitched together with a lived story, that of those who today face a migration path full of horror and suffering and who today habit and lives our cities, spaces together with us.

In this theatrical work, which gives life to something that exists on the threshold between performance and installation, the other, the migrant, the African, the black, is depicted as both subject and object, as both real and ghostly figure.

We are in front of a theatre where the presence of the dimensions of encounter and negotiation between different cultural sensitivities takes place in multiple dimensions: the temporal one, with a pre-existing dramaturgy that is reworked to be adapted to the needs of the present, as well as the spatial and physical one, which sees in the same setting formal elements or content from different cultures and practices.

Attending "the Negro of the Narcissus" we are not mere spectators. Those who attend, or rather those who take part in this performance, are free to move in a kind of labyrinthine space composed of large room-cubes made of movable material that make up the cabins of the ship. We move through the shadows of the stage, meeting the eyes and touching the moods of other spectators and the actors-characters on stage, whose bodies and stories cannot be separated. The character is one with the human being who reworks and stages his own experience and who, using his own inner and expressive resources, opens up to the collective sensibilities of the audience to give form to processes, emotions and energies consistent with the aims of the performance.

All this happens as minds and bodies cross past and present stories about colonization, exploitation, social stigma, racism, suffering, fear and human relationships.

The scenic space becomes the space of the testimony of something that, resonating in the bowels, arrives as if it were a living memory, shattering the wall of distance and stimulating both the sense of culture and that of resistance. We are not mere spectators when we choose to take part in this performance, but we become witnesses of a past and a present that



Show rehearsals at the DAMSLab theatre.

is no longer distant, but is something we feel we belong to, just as we did with the black matter during the participatory workshop.

When cultural practices become spaces of transformation

The Cantieri Meticci are the example of how a cultural practice can influence a territory, of how places of culture can not surrender to the idea of being places of inequality but, through practices of participatory art and working on the cultural imagination, transform themselves into a *threshold*. A threshold that represents that in-between space that divides us from the other, the inside and the outside, the included and the excluded, which is no longer a barrier but becomes a highly creative fluid space of recognition and relational creation and therefore of encounter.

One of the true meanings of Cantieri Meticci's activities is found in the encounter and relationship with others: "bringing the other closer with art", reducing the gap between the theatrical world and changes in society, such as those brought about by the phenomenon of migration,

through practices that are always choral, whereby collectivity and weaving appear to be essential elements for transforming society.

A cultural path of deconstruction, learning and awareness of social issues which, through art, its observation and experimentation, opens up the city's public space to experiences that consciously oppose any kind of standardisation which risks dissipating cultural complexity. A deep-rooted experience that goes with capillarity down like a sensor into the ground of the foreign communities involvement. An experience that is also radical, popular in its openness to participation in the proposal and in the same shape of the cultural proposal.

Relationships and encounters with *the others* are therefore fundamental to triggering change in our societies, since, as Kwame Anthony Appiah⁴ (2007) would tell us, we are at a crossroads on the path to our futures: one road leads to prosperity based on collaboration while the other leads to collective extinction.

We often hear, as the current political responses to the actual crisis show, that "art cannot change anything".

As Oliva Laing⁵ would say, what art does is provide material with which to think: new registers; new spaces. Cantieri Meticci shows us that this is possible and can change things, if only because it makes inequalities evident and offers new ways of looking at ourselves and the world around us.

⁴ Appiah K.A., 2007. *Cosmopolitismo, L'etica di un mondo di estranei*. Roma-Bari: Laterza.

⁵ Laing O., 2020. *Funny Weather. Art in an Emergency*. London, UK: Pan Macmillan.

THE DAS DISPOSITIVO ARTI SPERIMENTALI CULTURAL CENTER

Tommaso Giordani
Mianù Catenaro

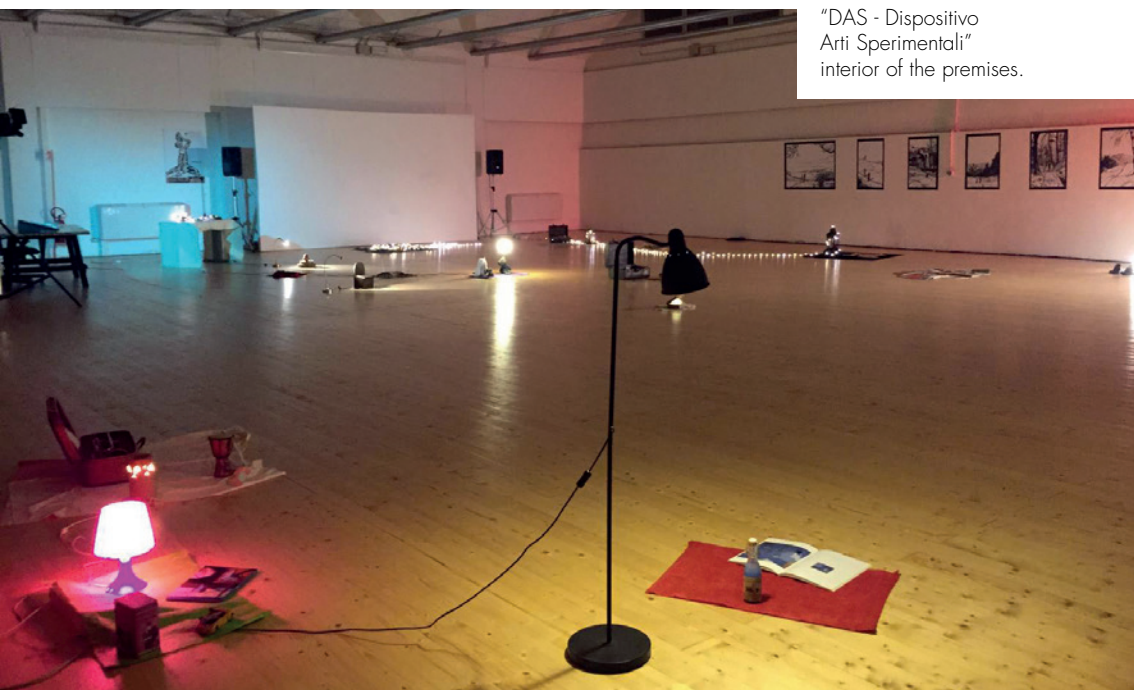
DAS - Dispositivo Arti
Sperimentali co-founders

Knowing and recognising each other

It may seem counter-intuitive, but it is not so often that a very young Cultural Centre¹ is given the opportunity to talk about itself outside of an institutional contexts. The physical encounter (now more than ever...) conveys a different informal freedom, an openness that generates sincerity.

Moreover, if this happens in front of an audience of cultural planners from all over Europe, who have come specifically to explore Bologna's cultural humus, to converse and find out about the heterogeneity of the

¹ Niessen B., 2019. *Cosa sono i nuovi centri culturali, l'avanguardia della trasformazione culturale.* cheFare. <https://www.che-fare.com/cosa-sono-nuovi-centri-culturali/>.



"DAS - Dispositivo
Arti Sperimentali"
interior of the premises.

city's cultural offerings directly by words of mouth of its operators, it is certainly a moment of great enrichment.

This is what happened last 10 December 2019 in the DAMSLab, at the Urban Regeneration Mix network meeting.

Like all "mixes" properly *blended* they are very nutritious.

We, the operators of the "Experimental Arts Device", also known as DAS, were also present at the meeting: we were there to listen and to be listened to, to produce that healthy and positive confrontation with other realities that allows us to open our minds, to reflect, not only on ourselves but on what surrounds us, to not take certain convictions for granted and to feel part of a much larger process that is happening slowly. Different cultures and stories from which we felt inspired, which gave us hope, because that is what happens when you are soaked in a virtuous circle of testimonies rich in diversity. Being part of the Urban Local Group Porto Culture of DAMSLab has allowed us to get in touch and get to know not only the stakeholders of the Bologna area, but also and above all the cultural actors of other European cities such as Birmingham, Baena, Toulouse, Braga and Zagreb. The workshop we attended in December forced us to get out of our "comfort zone" where everything happens and in which we are immersed every day, both physically and digitally, in order to create new collaborative synergies. And if linguistic diversity is sometimes a barrier, in other cases it turns out to be a bridge of opportunity: because this is what culture does, this is what people do with the tools at their disposal, they create new scenarios and visions.

The theme of urban regeneration and the role of the new cultural centres in this convergence of social, cultural and political vectors has been a burning and prolific issue in recent years, and probably this widespread public and sectoral interest is due to the capacity that these centres have had and are demonstrating (together with the networks that collect, narrate and involve them) *to respond* to certain social, cultural and political problems, as well as to intercept them and bring them to the surface. This is not taken for granted and, on the contrary, it is very difficult. Moments like Porto Culture and Urban Regeneration Mix, in fact, are not runways of presentation, but occasions of dialogue and mutual welcome with which we feel aligned.

The “Device” and its habitat

DAS was born, as a project, in 2018, inside a public property building that had been in disuse for a long time: a former coffins depot... and this always bring out our bring out black humour.

The process that led to the creation of the MACbo Committee (the body in charge of the concession, renovation and management of the space) was very particular and “unique” in its kind: of the many projects submitted in response to the public call for proposals for the allocation of the space, not one but 11 were chosen. Eleven projects in many cases already formed by members of several bodies, each with its own vision on the practices of “cultural Housing” to be triggered.

This complex and articulated beginning, which saw most of the operators involved getting to know each other for the first time, around the co-design table, resulted in the awareness of having to abandon the personal expectations that each body had formed on the basis of its own research and processes, and to converge instead on a series of completely new and white sheets, walls, floors, tables.

DAS is a hybrid case (and certainly not the only one in Italy), not only from the point of view of governance, but from its outset because of the conformation and plurality of different associations. Meeting each other first and then choosing each other is a mechanism that is still in operation, a never-ending co-planning process that takes shape in ideas, proposals and projects. We have chosen not to have a vertical hierarchy, *no one is CEO and decisions are always made by a group; rather, each one is the expression of a collectively hybridised and self-organised form of work, in which output is arrived at through the mediation of transversal sources and skills, activated by temporary dedicated ribbing*².

However, being hybrid configures us as a group of people who are building a cultural enterprise: we are part of the third sector and a theme that comes up again and again is our characteristic to recognise ourselves in the term **Entreprenariat**³, precarious entrepreneurs who wish to

² Da Pieve D., Nesxt - network internazionale dedicato ai centri di produzione artistica e culturale indipendente. <http://www.nesxt.org/das/>.

³ Lorusso S., 2018. *Entreprenariat – Siamo tutti imprenditori. Nessuno è al sicuro*. Brescia: Ed. Unità di Crisi.

build and create new working models to meet both our needs and those of the community around us.

However, according to the **“Io sono Cultura - Fondazione Symbola”** study, *the cultural industries alone produce EUR 35.1 billion in added value (2.2% of the national total), employing 500,000 people*⁴. In Emilia Romagna specifically, in 2018 culture brought 8 billion in added value and 134 thousand employed, so what is it that is not working?

What is the gap between this evidence and the everyday situations we experience? Where can we, in our own small way, start to facilitate innovative social change?

So we started by recognising each other and, above all, by identifying the common characteristics that we could leverage.

First and foremost, the geo-morphological context in which DAS was to be built: the Manifattura delle Arti in Bologna, already a reference point for the city's culture and the cradle of the “Porto Culture” project, whose institutions were among the *stakeholders* in the MACbo call for tenders that gave rise to the “Device”.

In an extremely prolific context of *cultural displays* of high national and international standing, surrounded by more or less independent art galleries, busy public parks and libraries, we have interpreted the mission of our Cultural Centre as a place capable of filling perhaps the Manifattura's only *gap*: to host and show, that is, *art in its process*, in *becoming* art, before the finished art product, before exhibition and “fruition” as it is generally understood.

A place for artistic work and research, primarily aimed at young artists, students and emerging artists, where the spotlight is on production as work time and process rather than on output, presentation, result.

The co-design group of DAS was very broad from the beginning. We can say that almost every artistic practice is directly represented by a DAS unit. We acted by applying the “logic of subtraction”: leaving large, open spaces with few connotations; setting them up in a minimal and movable way, allowing us to redesign the space according to the single practice hosted

⁴ *Io Sono Cultura: i dati della cultura nella ricerca Symbola*. <https://www.symbola.net/approfondimento/io-sono-cultura-i-dati-della-cultura-nella-ricerca-symbola/>.



"DAS - Dispositivo
Arti Sperimentali"
interior of the premises.

each time with minimal effort; assigning each space in the Centre more than one function and designing the rooms not as static containers of practices, but as **intersections of workplaces**, possibly living together at the same time. This internal project arrangement was designed with a view to being efficient both for the co-designing associations and for potential partners, the result of future collaborations, so as to create a physical and managerial structure that did not necessarily depend on the people who were preparing it: hence the idea of calling it a "Device", understood as an instrument which, once triggered, has a relative autonomy of operation capable of, in a certain sense, self-determination.

Enjoying or crossing?

From the first co-design meetings, facilitated by designers from the Municipality and the University of Bologna, to the actual structuring of the physical space, the process was completely self-managed: even the construction site and structural work, where possible, were carried out by volunteers and coordinated by Architetti di Strada, an association also part of the MACbo Committee.

The space lives on the energy of individuals and organisations who have contributed to the realisation of the Centre in all its many dimensions. The heterogeneity of the composition of the Committee, in this sense, has helped as an extremely varied pool of professional skills on which we have been able to rely both in the management of the public investment required for the restructuring and start-up of activities, and in the management of the physical and cognitive energies that have contributed to the birth and growth of DAS to date.

Most of the energy has been spent on the design of the governance of the device, so far as it is perhaps the area that has absorbed most of the Centre's staff - often taking time and space away from the design of the public cultural offer in these first two years of activity. But, again, a space whose aim is to **promote artistic work as a process** cannot avoid reflecting on an organisational structure that responds to its design vision of horizontality, cooperation, contamination, reproducibility, self-determination, and accessibility. The difficulties in establishing a governance that corresponds to the project vision have often been shared with experts in the field, related cultural centres, teachers and other actors: all exchanges and consulting in this regard led to the necessity of implementing an experimental legal and organisational set-up.

Horizontality and self-management

Today, DAS is formally managed by the MACbo Purpose Committee, which brings together all the remaining co-designing associations within the process. The committee has recently been joined by DAS APS, which was created to develop an open forum for citizenship with a view to increasing public and individual participation.

The organisational structure of the Centre is based on a decentralised model of shared responsibilities and tasks divided by areas of reference: specific self-organised units with coordinated practices dealing with Administration (1), Communication (2), Technology-Logistics (3), Planning (4), Participation (5). The Board of Directors of the MACbo Committee and the Board of Directors of DAS APS are responsible for coordinating the modular structure represented by the units.

The Design and Participation areas, due to their characteristics, are the ones where the above-mentioned experimental approach was necessary. This is managed through the “TeamQ” method, in which a horizontal and open artistic direction is guaranteed, without hierarchies: the TeamQ is the creative body from which programming is generated through weekly meetings.

The *Blending DAS* protocol: a mixture of practices and audiences

In order to smooth out the work of the TeamQ and the working areas, we have created a protocol of intentions that communicates to the space, the city and the world, the issues we want to deal with, the practices we intend to implement, the cultural positions we want to take up. We called this protocol ***Blending DAS***.

Blending DAS constitutes a kind of statement of Intent and, at the same time, an identity document, defined collectively and starting from the first initiatives, practices and residencies that we have triggered within the Centre. From a study of the recurring issues of what we have done so far, we generate the directions of what we will do in the near and not so near future, trying to overcome the limits of curatorial work, which is often individualised and sometimes exclusive, working instead in favour of a fluid, organic and mixed conceptual design.

This model allows us to act on the territory by intercepting additional actors and communities for which DAS can be an active device at the service of emerging needs, not necessarily only cultural and artistic. Moreover, it is a very versatile, integrable, commentable, open, transparent document: the internal experimentation phase, in which *Blending DAS* “guided” the design of the TeamQ in the phases immediately preceding the lockdown, gave good results. We now intend to integrate it and open it up to the outside world as a device for *audience engagement* and activation of public participation, to which we can refer as a glossary and/ or “conceptual map” of our cultural activities.

Shared ill versus public good

The health emergency meant that DAS had to suspend its activities at a delicate time, but the Centre's experimental approach ensured economic sustainability that could be injected into cultural activities and proposals. On the one hand, the relatively fluid structure we have given ourselves and our 'tender age' allow us to face the historical moment with more freedom of action.

We have formulated a project proposal to make part of our space available to educational institutions, guaranteeing together with school staff the right to education of students in different but safe ways, through the availability and knowledge of the Centre's facilities. With DAS - Scuola Diffusa (scattered school) we would like to offer the conditions in which distance learning can be shortened and fair, beyond social, income or cultural differences.

This operation also envisages the creation of a network of Cultural Centres potentially interested in joining, in order to make the project really widespread and really impactful, each with its own characteristics and possibilities. One of the medium-term objectives is to promote education in art and culture based on practice and horizontality, beyond the frontal nature of teaching.

At the same time, we are waiting for the end of the caulking on the vaulted roof to start a coworking for young people in short-term employment and a series of performative residencies. The start-up of coworking for us represents another form of experimentation, as a service offered designed to respond to the needs of a part of the young and creative citizenry, but also as a source of economic sustainability to be reinvested in artistic production activities and other projects to bring to light new ideas and new services, encouraging a circular cultural economy. What unites these implementations, the Scuola Diffusa (scattered school) and all the work done so far is the awareness of trying to give a practical, concrete and reliable definition of a public place, a common good and a community.

PORTO 15

WHO WE ARE AND OUR ROLE IN THE MANIFATTURA DELLE ARTI AREA

Federico Palmas

Co-inhabitant of Porto 15

Porto 15 cohousing, for young people under 35, is one of the stakeholders identified in the Urban Regeneration Mix project (URBACT III programme) co-ordinated as a partner by the Metropolitan City of Bologna, with the aim of encouraging the involvement of young residents of the neighbourhood or users of cultural infrastructures, in a context of proximity.

It is one of the first wholly publicly-owned cohousings, probably the first in the strict sense of the term, i.e. with common areas and a community of inhabitants structured to *share living space*. It is a pilot project, and in many ways a daring one, promoted by the Municipality of Bologna's Department of Housing and implemented by "ASP Città di Bologna" (Public Company for Services to the person), in partnership with ACER

Italian Cohousing Network
Assembly 2019.



Bologna - Azienda Casa Emilia-Romagna (public body that engages in economic activities for the management of public and private real estate assets), with the technical assistance of the Su Misura Cooperative of Turin, which benefited from substantial co-financing from the Italian Presidency Council of Ministers' Department for Youth¹.

The project has distant roots; presented for funding in 2009, it will be completed when the inhabitants move into the building in del Porto street, right in the centre of Bologna, in August 2017. The length of time it took to complete the project, which is atypical even in the context of the generally long processes involved in setting up an intentional community from scratch, is also representative of the challenges this project had to face.

These were the first years following the great economic crisis of 2008, which was to hit the so-called *millennial* generation as fiercely as it did silently, and whose entry into adult life was to be characterised by a certain attitude of disconfirmation on the part of politicians (the stigma of the '*bamboccioni*' – pushovers) and by total job, housing, economic and relational precariousness in general, in a society that was increasingly frayed, especially in the cities. These were also the years in which cohousing in Italy was beginning to break out of its niche and spread to the cities, initially in the North and later also in the South, only to arrive ten years later at becoming a word almost in common use (even if still in 2019, of the successful RA!play series "*Liberi tutti*" – free all – the authors would have declared that they could not simply call it "*cohousing*" because "It seems that to get Italians to say cohousing they needed a speech therapist, and RA! said it was "*very dangerous*" to call it that")².

With great affinity with the Polish experience of Łódź, which is being networked by the Urban Regeneration Mix project, which in the former manufacturing area of Księży Młyn is modernising the buildings and diversifying their uses to mix residential uses with socio-recreational activities and territorial animation, the Municipality of Bologna's project en-

¹ On the site www.porto15.it all information regarding the design phase is still available.

² Interview with Giorgio Tirabassi on tv.fanpage.it of 29 December 2019.

visaged a challenging urban regeneration intervention with which to refunctionalize an old public housing building, This would keep it as part of the public housing stock, but transform it into a potential centre for experimentation and dissemination of good housing and relational practices (there was no mention yet of “cultural” potential, which would naturally develop thanks to the fortunate alchemy of different individualities merged within a single community of inhabitants).

The cohousing project was carried out with a major building renovation project in a portion of a very large building which, from number 15 on del Porto street, extends along two other streets, forming a quadrilateral, a term often used to define the building of the Istituto di Aiuto Materno e di Assistenza ai Lattanti (Maternal Aid and Infant Care Institute), a listed building as a cultural asset, built in the early 20th century and intended to house young single mothers. Over the years, the building has housed flats for residential use, assigned at subsidised rents, while the adjacent buildings have also housed welfare services such as the Day Centre, home to one of the city’s three soup kitchens. The entire complex was progressively evacuated due to structural problems and abandoned for ever after the 2012 earthquake, with several portions damaged. Porto 15 was the first portion to be recovered and returned to the city’s public building heritage.

The Municipality of Bologna’s project was ambitious, especially because in order to bring cohousing into the public sphere, it was necessary to overturn an unforeseen perspective: first preparing the housing project and then creating the community of inhabitants who would live in it.

The two construction sites, the architectural one assigned to the Diverse Righe architectural studio of Bologna, and the social one, also assigned by invitation to the Su Misura cooperative of Turin, ran in parallel, with very limited intervention in the architectural project by the future inhabitants, generally predetermined by the project itself.

The main objective was to help young people under the age of 35 to become self-sufficient in housing, with particular attention being paid to the so-called ‘grey bracket’, that section of the population that is not poor enough to have access to public housing and not rich enough to have easy access to decent housing that meets their needs, in a

housing market such as that in Bologna, which year after year has increasingly tightened the conditions for access to decent housing.

The economic requirements for access were set at a minimum ISEE of 6,000 euro and a maximum of 35,000 euro, and an assortment of household types (single, couples with children or without children) guided by the different sizes of the 18 flats.

However, in addition to the strictly housing-related objective, there was a second objective, that of selecting from this pool of young potential co-housers those who could effectively make co-housing work and function as a **community of solidarity** (in the most intimate sense of the term, i.e. linked to one another in a housing system that is both value-based and management-based). For this reason, in order to participate in the public call for applications, a survey was also requested, almost a motivational letter, which served to profile the future co-housers from the point of view of their past living experiences and future housing aspirations, and which also asked them to project themselves into life within a cohousing. The survey was used to order the rankings according to qualitative criteria alongside the quantitative criteria of purely demographic and economic indicators.

But not only that, even the *propensity* to choose cohabitation would not be enough. The aspiring co-habitants were required to take part in a group training course aimed at providing them with the means not only to deal with community life, but also to self-build that same community according to their own aspirations, expressed as a group. It was a training course that was expected to be long and demanding and that not everyone would complete, which is why more than twice as many households were admitted than the actual number of flats available: 40 households compared to 18 flats available. The 40 households, with some bewilderment, were told from the very first meeting that not all of them would make it to the end, that the course would help many to realise that cohabitation was not the right choice, or at least not at that moment.

The training/workshop course was structured in two phases, one preparatory to the other. The first phase was more strictly devoted to the management of group dynamics, the functional definition of spaces,



Cohousing Assembly.

reflection on a common value system, the imagination of more concrete management problems, and the management of decision-making processes. At the end of this first phase, the participants had to be self-selected in order to exclude 22 of them, thus arriving at the 18 who would actually be assigned and who would take part in the second part of the training, during which a charter of values and a set of rules would be concretely defined and more concrete decisions on the management of the spaces and the group would be taken.

Fortunately, the trainers were right, and at the end of the first phase of the labs came “only” 21 households, most had abandoned the path not only for low affinity, but also because he had had a duration unpredictably longer programmed: for many has meant not being able to put off the search for a home.

Only 21 households, meaning that in any case it was necessary to decide with what criterion to exclude 3. Even one, after all that time spent together designing a common house, would have been a huge number: it was the most traumatic passage of the community of Porto 15, no one wanted to feel expelled and no one wanted to disperse the energies

invested in this path. The options might have been different, but in the end only two were found: to draw the assignees or to choose each other. We opted to choose ourselves, and to take responsibility for the fact that choosing us implied “not choosing someone”: each households sent the trainers not the list of the three excluded, but the list of the 17 households it did not want to renounce. It changed little in substance, but in some ways it lightened a burden that would not have left us easily.

Both the first phase of extensive participation and the second phase of exclusive participation were decisive in making Porto 15 what it is today. In those months, we first hypothesised, then defined and chose, and then put into practice once we were in the dwellings: the intended use of most of the spaces; the decision-making method of consensus; the plenary assembly as an elective decision-making moment; the mission and vision of the community of inhabitants; the setting up of an association with the same mission and vision; the structuring of a programme of openness to citizenship, starting from the neighbourhood and ending up in the city (and quickly well beyond the city).

The cohousing was inaugurated on 23 September 2017, in the presence of Mayor Virginio Merola and representatives of all the city institutions involved in the project’s implementation³. Once the cohousers had entered the flats, Porto 15 for the promoting bodies could in some ways be considered a completed project: the inhabitants were included and all the project activities carried out, although there would still be an assembly with the accompaniment of the Su Misura trainers, Chiara Mossetti and Paolo Sanna, and an evaluation focus group at six months.

For us, however, it was a project that was really beginning: if we had set up the assembly system, the test was to self-manage the assemblies in the absence of external facilitators; if we had decided that we would take decisions in plenary and consensually, we also had to understand how not to encumber daily life and the many solicitations; if we had defined the intended use of the spaces, the test was to find the resources to set them up; if we had defined a public dimension

³ In Alessandro Levratì’s short film, an extract from the institutional opening: https://bit.ly/unanno_Porto15.

and a restitution to citizenship of our experience, the test was to begin to weave a network with the many realities around us, starting with the Manifattura delle Arti, in which we were immersed.

And it was precisely because we were inside this Manifattura delle Arti, most of us coming from outside the neighbourhood, that we started to make our own inauguration with an incredible organisation for our forces, but also being able to count on a contribution from the Porto-Saragozza neighbourhood and the Foundation del Monte. The contributions not only covered an important part of the initial furnishing of the common/public areas, but also allowed us to pay for the basics for the opening party, from small fittings to flyers and insurance, while the tidal wave of artists and performers who invaded the building for the opening party participated out of love for the network set up by the cohabitants: 7 musical groups, 11 artists including exhibitions and artistic performances, 6 associations that set up their own information stall, as well as the Urban Center (now the Foundation for Urban Innovation) which set up a point for assisted voting on the city's first participatory budget⁴.

Since that first party in November 2017, in three years, we have realised dozens of events in del Porto street, promoting the different activities each time as an opportunity to see cohousing from the inside, to chat about this strange place that, although widely announced, seemed to suddenly sprout like a mushroom in the city. Among the most important activities, and of wider connection with the fabric of the city, in 2018 we were among the co-organisers of the Par Tòt Parade of Children, one of the most important bottom-up social events in Bologna, which brings together dozens of realities in a busy calendar of free workshop appointments, uniting the centre and the suburbs in the preparation of a final performance in the form of a carnival parade, at each edition under the protection of a different guide animal (in 2018 the camel, the subject being the "green oases" to be preserved in the cities).

⁴ In this video by Ivano Lollo the images of the moments of the inauguration of the cohabitants: <https://bit.ly/PortoAperte>.

In that case, we responded to the usual call from the Associazione Oltre... (Beyond...), not only giving our availability to lead and host some of the workshops (clay, stencils, themed cardboards to take to the parade) in collaboration with the students of the primary and secondary schools of the Pilastro area (eastern outskirts of the city), but also helping to raise funds for the parade, with a large self-financing lunch held in our courtyard. The courtyard finally underwent a major transformation for the occasion: from a blind alley between the buildings, occupied by badly parked cars, to an "urban oasis", filled with recycled furniture, plants and lots of soil. Much to the annoyance of motorists who lost a free and convenient parking space, the courtyard has since been returned to a more social use and shared with our neighbours from the DAS - Dispositivo Arti Sperimentali. These collaborations also led us to carry out the first project thanks to which we were able to enhance our membership of the City of Bologna's **Pact for Reading**⁵, promoted by the Department of Culture at the end of 2018. After two read aloud appointments held by Ser-

⁵ <https://pattoletturabo.comune.bologna.it/>.



Event for children
at Porto 15.

ena Rossi⁶ (with particular success for the readings from Buzzati's *I Condomini* (The Condos), on the occasion of the 2019 *Porte Aperte* (Open Doors) days) and a first evening dedicated to the presentation of the book *Attis: sogni dal terzo pianeta* in the presence of the author Stefano Spataro, we co-designed and implemented the project "Bestialopoli: scopri gli animali dentro e intorno a te" (Bestialopoli: discover the animals inside and around you)⁷. Among the activities hosted by the cohousing, there is a cycle of figure theatre performances by the *Teatrino a Due Pollici* (Two-inch Theatre) and a cycle of different types of reading meetings with the formula of peer-to-peer reading (children reading stories to younger children) and a concluding one of women's readings, held by the cohabitants with the musical accompaniment of a third cohabitant. Also on these occasions, the constant was always to combine the activities with brief introductions to the place where they were held (the cohousing), accompanied from time to time by opportunities for conviviality to facilitate the meeting and getting to know each other among the participants/spectators. Still in the field of cultural openness to citizens, at the end of 2019 we set up, together with the *MondoDonna* Association, an important Bologna-based anti-violence centre, a small, experimental **condominium library**. *BiblioNOI*⁸ is a thematic library made up of a collection of literature for children and adolescents on the themes of gender and migration, dedicated to workshop activities for girls and boys focused precisely on the promotion of reading as an early means of combating prejudice and discrimination. A real experimentation also from the cohabitation point of view, because it has led to the launch of a structured public service within spaces with a primarily residential vocation: the space equipped with bookshelves and soft furnishings for children is the same space that hosts our dinners and moments of conviviality, as well as assemblies, or extemporary coworking.

⁶ Blogger, reading enthusiast, and reading aloud: <https://www.laserelegge.it/>.

⁷ Realized with the co-financing on the Culture strands of the Emilia-Romagna Region and the Municipality of Bologna: <http://agenda.comune.bologna.it/cultura/bestialopoli-porto-15>.

⁸ <https://www.mondodonna-onlus.it/nasce-biblianoi-piccola-biblioteca-per-ragazzi-e-ragazze/>.

Networking has been fundamental in the development of all the activities of **openness to citizenship** within the cohousing, not only with regard to preeminently cultural initiatives, but also, for example, in making spaces available for many presentations or activities by other realities: the first one with Camilla - L'emporio di Comunità (community shop), in January 2018, then the CSA ARVAIA (Organic farmers and citizens' cooperative)⁹ with which we associated, becoming an area distribution point that turned out to be fundamental during the lockdown of March 2020, the public assemblies of the JUMP LGBT group, the returns of the inclusion workshops for people inserted in the SPRAR paths of the Arca di Noè Cooperative, the self-financing evening for the festival "Muri DiVersi", until the last public meeting in January 2020 with the local group of Extinction Rebellion.

One of the crucial factors that has enabled Porto 15 to carry out so many opening activities since its early years is also that of being able to count on common spaces that can host both shared internal life and associative and opening activities without worrying too much about financial coverage for the costs of managing these spaces, with the sole exception of insurance to protect third parties and the building itself. The fixed costs are in fact covered by the individual co-habitants, who, according to the regulations attached to the contracts, cannot avoid managing the common areas through the condominium expenses. This has sometimes allowed us to host activities promoted by outsiders, for a symbolic contribution calculated on the basis of average annual expenses (heating, electricity and insurance), which in any case remains available to the Association for reinvestment and is never returned directly to the cohabitants who cover those costs. With regard to activities promoted by outsiders, we have set limits to prevent the public dimension of the spaces from overwhelming the private one, so we tend to host only events and activities that are open to the public and free of charge, unless they conflict with other planned

⁹ From the Citizens' Farmers' Cooperative (<http://www.arvaia.it/>) we have also borrowed our main internal self-financing mechanism, the "auction" system whereby, given a target budget and defined an indicative share, each participant contributes according to his availability, but also according to his interest in spending.

uses (birthdays, assemblies, dinners, internal recreational activities such as singing, yoga, etc.).

In 2019 we also developed new and important **network projects**. Participation in the co-designing tables of the Emilia-Romagna Region's call for APSs on the priority of living allowed us to start collaborating this year with AUSER Bologna in the framework of the "Casa Facendo" (Home Making) project, within which we facilitated the realisation of research on the local realities of collaborative living and a training cycle on the same theme. We have co-designed the "Abitare la Città" (Inhabiting the city) project with COSPE Onlus, which is currently underway and which aims to experiment with forms of cultural promotion that can have a link and an impact on everyday life practices, particularly in terms of housing/condominium and mobility. The desire to be able to share and in some way give back to the citizens our experience of collaborative living has always been a constant feature of our activities, accepting the numerous requests we have received from the very beginning, from the visit of Ingela Blomberg (Cohousing in Sweden) to the architects of Bari Cohousing - Coabitare a Sud (Cohabiting in the South) to the Catalan delegation which, as part of an exchange project between the municipalities of Bologna and Barcelona, brought to Porto 15 representatives of the Barcelona Housing Department and representatives of urban regeneration experiences underway in their city¹⁰. One of the last delegations accompanied was precisely the one that came to visit on the occasion of the Urban Regeneration Mix project Conference "Culture as a perspective of regeneration", held in Bologna from 11 to 13 December 2019.

We soon joined the Italian **Cohousing Network**, initially invited to participate in the coordinated calendar of the European Days of Intentional Communities, in Italy the May of Collaborative Living, to host and co-organise in January 2019 the national meeting of the network in Bologna. Through the Italian Cohousing Network we got in touch with dozens of realities that in Italy and Europe deal with co-housing, including Porto

¹⁰ Among the deliverables of the project, The Handbook of good practices on collaborative living: http://bit.ly/abitare_collaborare.

15 in the Eurotopia¹¹ guide and in the database promoted by the Urbamonde¹² programme, and recently in the national mapping carried out by HousingLab¹³. In September 2019, we joined the Ecolise poster of events, coordinated at European level, by organising the event “The house like a tree, the community like a forest” within the framework of the European Day of Sustainable Communities, which involved the residents of the neighbourhood, supporters and friends of our project and the co-habitants themselves in the theoretical-practical activities proposed¹⁴. Porto 15 is, in conclusion, a self-managed reality capable of dialoguing with local actors and economically self-sustainable precisely because of its pre-eminently housing-collaborative dimension, which has been able first and foremost to solve the pressing housing problem for all the current tenants (some, at the time of entry, had been without houses for months).

¹¹ <https://eurotopia.directory/>.

¹² https://bit.ly/cohabitio_porto15.

¹³ <http://www.housinglab.it/hlab/>.

¹⁴ <https://events.communitiesforfuture.org/>.



Children's workshop
at Porto 15.

And in solving the housing problem, it has managed to create a new space in the city that has proved capable of quickly repaying the huge economic investment with one of the most important intangible currencies for the progress of a society, the strengthening of relations of collaboration and mutual support between people in the first place, followed by a social, cultural and relational enrichment of the fabric of a city.

Photo credits

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Stefano Di Luccia, pp. 49, 50, 53

Juanmi Cuesta - www.juanmicuesta.com, pp. 101, 105, 108, 112

The book illustrates the project URBACT - Urban Regeneration Mix (URM) and the testimonies of the network of stakeholders participating in the project as subjects operating in the Manifattura delle Arti area in Bologna. The URM pathway is part of the experience already started by DAMSLab for the urban cultural valorisation of this area, oriented to the dialogue with the territory and between different knowledge. In the context of DAMSLab's various projects, a number of reflections were born, which were in turn at the centre of the URM process, giving space to an important process of confrontation between the various subjects involved. The book therefore aims to present the reflections that have animated the project in a dialogue of several voices. In particular, it intends to highlight: the dialogue between culture and urban regeneration, practices of cultural production, cultural participation, processes of civic engagement and cultural capacity building, practices of collaboration and networking in the cultural field.



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