

The female condition and the Pasolini's approach to social issues

Pier Paolo Pasolini has been incredibly influential in Italy most of all for its radical critique of the social and economic changes across Italian society between the '60's and late '70's: his fame is not uniform, as well as being motivated by sometimes contradictory reasons but what can be certainly said is that his work was constantly addressed to a social, collective awareness.

Novels, essays, articles, film, television participations, every tool was the right one for him if it was able to show how Italy was changing and how these changes were provoking a transformation of a cultural and social background, a world that had evolved through centuries and was fast being destroyed by liberalism. Possibly, the wide spread action of Pasolini and his seeming versatility across so many fields, moved the critics forward various researching paths which are still capable to create disagreements and several opponents, even until today so many years after his death, but I believe this has also had the side effect of leaving largely hidden and less considered an important characteristic of his work: the close and deep attention to the lives of people and Pasolini empathic attitude towards humankind.

This description of Pasolini, his work and life, to be a focus on his essential social and political choice based on his incessant research of what he believed to be the truth in the human being, and his belief that to see the true being he should have been focused on the hidden part of the society, the one which carries on the history, the deep history, but also the one which is left at the edge and most suffers under the weight (social and economic) of the consequences of the social change moved by liberalism.

What is consistent in Pasolini is really this Copernican revolution of the narration, who supposes to be the protagonist (the one who makes changes) is put apart than who witness the events is the protagonist. "The Gospel According to Matthew" (1964) is going to be our starting point to explain the path of our program 2021/22.

What is more a protagonist of history than Jesus? But, since the first scene, the Italian thinker shows a clear statement about the point of view which he meant to be central to the understanding for the history of the world: despite to focus on Christ he decided to make central to the narration what mattered for him, which is the effect that Jesus had over the people around him, and the way in which these witnesses shaped their lives and the world around them afterward.

To do that he makes this film a large use of close up of the people who were present but who were before seen only as background at the time of the Saint Matthew narration, making the attention on their reaction, the way in which they welcome the Word: people so often overlooked in the story - the crowd, the witnesses, the people who pass through the story, the people gathered around in the background of paintings, the "extras" in films of the story - but actually the ones who moved and spread their experiences, not only the disciples, but the others who

lived and were there. In his film Pasolini acknowledges and gives place to those who are to make the world, just as he believed that the history, he believed was being lost in Italy was made by the people. He spoke in his work to the passion, and sometimes rage, he felt in his belief that the people he brought to the foreground were the true voice of history, and of the present. In this he reflected dramatically the sense of a slow history informing the present that social historians like Braudel were opening at the time, and like them it led him to a politics and faith. The power of the film is in both the recognition of this deep history and of a moment of revolutionary change in which the forgotten witnesses are to be the protagonists.

This simple recognition made me think to the outcome of "Il Cambiamento Oltre il Visibile" that last summer showed us that who needs now to be under the light because invisible witness of the history but at the same time are the necessary architects of history are the women.

Looking to the history of women, it was impossible to escape the feeling that while the world has changed in so many ways, women's struggle is still very much present and, in many ways, it is too similar to what women have lived in the past: how much of our society is based on women's unpaid work? And how deeply embedded patriarchy is, as the strongest form of exploitation because still so widely socially accepted! Reading of the past of Naples (one of the cultural capitals of Europe in the XVIII century) and listening to the stories of lives lived today in the center of Naples (still one of the major Italian cities) although it's our familiar reality it never ceases to be shocking that so much of social life and economic production assumes the unpaid labour of women and significantly depends upon the limiting and denial of women's economic, social and sexual freedom.

This world and Naples need the same kind of Copernican revolution made by Pasolini in his work and in his famous "Comizi d'Amore" (1965) when he thought that to build up a strong awareness of the world and of the history was necessary to cross out every form of authorship to let the people to become the author of the narration through their lives which are actually the real strength and protagonists of family, society and the lives of all of us.

In fact, if author like Elena Ferrante have had success with books in which is described a peripheral society (even if the meaning of what is peripheral is not so clear) where women fight fiercely in a morally and cultural violent world, the necessary dramatization of the narration if it's helpful for the author leaves the women inside just an aura of real which inevitably diminish the strength of the real.

What we need now is to shake the awareness also between women: like Eleonora Pimentel Fonseca struggled in spreading unsuccessfully the values of equality and democracy, also now we live the same kind of drama about the condition of women, leaving to storytelling of the female condition to book like the one of Ferrante but keeping apart what instead is the daily struggles of endless story of female deprivation.

In fact, as it happens with the Republic of Naples in which the intellectuals who moved the revolution to build up a democratic and equal society were unable to spread through the populations the values of their emancipation at the same time, feminist movements have been

moving for the last 30 years from a fight for the civil rights to more an intellectual debate less effective in the daily problems of the women.

Our program will move from a first stage in which using, in Pasolini's anniversary year, the film "The Gospel According to Matthew", we will reverse the prospective in which to read the history through a video study of this film (giving a radically new attention and emphasis to what has been overlooked and misunderstood!). The new reading will be made as a work of art in itself and as an opening to the next step: the world of the women.

Next there will be a round table to move to a first step of this different narration, the world of women given voice, together with a sound installation by Marco Messina as an artwork and pivotal point from Pasolini's hidden world to the hidden world of the present denied. The round table will describe the history and the field, and speak to the present - the female narration and tradition to move towards achieving the final stage:

The making and showing of the activist video "Comizi di Donne" in which the artist-protagonists will be the history of Neapolitan women. Carrying through the promise, long overlooked, that there was a premonition of in Pasolini's work, and which was waiting for its true voice to be released: the testament of women. Their gospel.

In the meantime, a cycle of four concerts of electronic music made in collaboration with the Academy of music will be focus on the language and the way in which is translated in the protagonist of the Pasolini cinema.

Maria Teresa Annarumma

Pasolini, Grotowski and the narrative revolution.

"A work of art no matter how old or classic is actually, not just potentially, it is a work of art only when it lives in some individualized experience. (...) But as work of art, it is recreated every time it is esthetically experienced".

"In art, as in nature and in life, relations are modes of interaction. (..) But they exist as actions and reactions in which things are modified. Art expresses, it does not state; it is concerned with existences in their perceived qualities, not with conceptions symbolized in terms. A social relation is an affair of affection and obligations, of intercourse, of generation, influence and mutual modification. It is in this sense that relation is to be understood when used to define form of art."

(John Dewey, "Art as Experience", 1934)

I came across this book and the writings of John Dewey during my time as guest researcher at MacBa in Barcelona when I was studying the model of the museum developed by Manuel Borja-Villel in his time as director of the MacBa and later at the Reina Sofia in Madrid.

John Dewey was an American philosopher of the earlier part of the XX century, even if today we can say that far more has been theorised since his time concerning art and relation, some of it already touched on in these texts about Comizi di Donne, for example in the work of Craigie Hosfield, it is sadly true that his intuitions, almost a century later, are still far from being widely accepted and, most of all, are still far from being lived.

In 1934, Dewey was questioning the meaning of museum, art and exhibition and what they could be as part of a living culture in a country only slowly recovering from the great crash of 1928 and the economic devastation it caused. His was in many ways a very conservative and deeply divided society. And, of course he is writing not long before the Second World War which was to scramble and eventually reset a lot of the social dynamics that he knew. But what he anticipates, what he is reaching for, however conditionally, can be perceived as having a long, if also for long hidden, path, which was to find its expression, and its struggle with both its contradictions and its profound and revolutionary implications, in the work of two artists whose lives were critically formed by the war and the reconstruction that followed it. Two artists in different parts of a then divided Europe who were part of what can be seen now as a renaissance of art and culture, in East and West, that was to be followed by a crisis of ideology and of social cohesion. Traversing this flux Pier Paolo Pasolini and Jerzy Grotowski searched to find not only a language but a way of thinking and being that could answer to the profound questions that each was asking concerning individual and social being.

In fact, if Dewey was trying to open the perception of the people towards art, Pasolini and Grotowski, in front of the ruins of the second World War and the two newly predominant political models, determined by the victors, which were starting to be affirmed in their countries (capitalistic in Italy and socialist in Poland), imagined that to activate this kind of perception it was necessary to begin from a radical process of changed awareness. They took very different

perspectives but, in both cases, they came more and more to understand art and its production in its relational meaning which looks for conceptual connection with time, place, history and society. We can discover as much from their different paths as we can from that which they can be said to have shared. And while the political structures and ideologies of the societies in which they lived came increasingly to be destabilised by the widening fractures and failures that were already inherent in the immediate post war years, each artist was driven to go further and further in their search for a resolution that neither would, or perhaps could, finally find.

It is a disquieting thought that we now can recognise the still corrosive legacy of the world that Pasolini and Grotowski struggled for meaning in, even in a time when so much appears to have changed. The conflict of East and West, the yet more fragmenting irresolution of the interrelationship of individual and the collective, the evident failures of systems of government in the face of disease and conflict, and the cruel inequalities become so much greater than in their time and that eat like a cancer in our society.

In front of the modernist models in which politics appeared to be putting apart centuries of cultural identity in Europe, a rupture, as Pasolini certainly perceived it, that was happening in society and in the self, decided to use art as a tool to think about how to go beyond what they saw as the impossibility of their present and they did it choosing to experiment with models of individual and collective awareness, to speak to the reality that lay beneath the compromised world they inhabited.

I will not claim here that they achieved some definitive outcomes with their research but I believe that it can be important to reappropriate some of their artistic and methodological choices now, in a time in which the compromises that were just being sketched out in the societies in which they worked have come to fracture our world and when the changes that they saw beginning, and which they protested, have lead to cycles of crisis, repeating with increasing severity.

As I have said Grotowski worked at first within a society of great cultural change, and a renaissance that is now rarely acknowledged. Released from the overriding imperative of reconstruction that had shaped the immediate post war years in Poland, and with the coming to power of what was effectively a proto-nationalist government following the death of Stalin and the consequent fall of his clients there was, for a period of between ten and fifteen years, a brilliant period of cultural renewal, most of all in the performative arts, in new music and jazz, in cinema, and, very significantly, in theatre. And theatre, traditional theatres, folk theatre, opera and operetta, flourished, as did political cabaret and student theatre, navigating with increasing freedom between church and state, the two conservative powers that dominated the society.

It was in student theatre that Grotowski, first developed his radical interpretation of what theatre and art could be, a way of thinking that would come to influence theatre in Poland and beyond for several generations. This stage of Grotowski's work in some ways prefigures what was to come but not yet the crisis that it was to lead to. This was an increasingly physical theatre, and highly visual, a theatre of events and of confrontation. Over a relatively short time the work came to focus on the breaking down of the separation of performers and audience, becoming yet more physical and urgent in attempting to create instants of shared being, of feeling and understanding. In the struggle towards this breaking down of walls Grotowski left Poland first for America and the downtown experimental theatre scene of New York in the 1960's, bringing with

him an idea of an almost viscerally experienced theatre. The most famous of his theatre groups from this period was "The Living Theatre" And his influence lives on until today in the Wooster Group of Liz Leconte, amongst others. But more and more he came to face a perhaps inevitable crisis and in a move that at the time shocked many he left New York for Italy.

And this comes to the point of why his work signifies beyond experimental and alternative theatre. In Italy he struggles to find a language, a method, a way of being, which erases all the separations and the conceptual framework that conventionally sustained theatre and performance. He attempts to find how to articulate what we might imagine as the co-being of once-audience and once-performer in an instant of becoming. This sounds metaphysical, but it wasn't, it was imagined within the sphere of everyday experience. Of course, the performers could not come to this otherness that Grotowski was struggling to resolve, seemingly in his own thought. Some at the time said that he must have become mad, or was chasing a chimera, abandoning again what was known for something that could never be. For me, and for some others, this period of his work brings forward profound questions about the nature of experience in telling the world, questions of protagonism and authorship, and of performance and of who makes art and of what it may be. And these are questions that relate, very directly, to Pasolini, whose path follows a very different trajectory.

It can be said that for Grotowski performative arts can be tools to transform the perception and the presence of the artist, in a process imagined through two different steps: the awareness of the artist who supposes to cancel every kind of technique to get closer to the audience, and the awareness of the audience through a direct and intensely experienced relation with art in its making.

This perhaps is the point where Pasolini's work most evidently is closest in its negotiation of new conceptions of authorship to the late experiments of Grotowski.: Pasolini decides to have (almost always) non-professional actors, in fact non-actors, to play in his films and to create a conversation without filters with the people, where their stories and their world, as though unmediated, were to be the creators.

But it is important to understand the context in which Pasolini has come to this. It may help to explain why Pasolini and Grotowski are significant to this project, and beyond it, and why Pasolini is at the beginning of the project and Comizi Di Donne at its end. And here I have returned to an interpretation theorised by Craigie Horsfield, whose work on these ideas has formed the matrix for much of the project, as I noted in an earlier text. My reading may be a little different but I think that it is useful in order to understand better Pasolini's conception of history and the everyday, to see it alongside the work of Fernand Braudel and the social historians of the "longue durée". Ideas that were developing at about the same time. Pasolini passionately believes that he is living through a cataclysmic change in culture and society in which the life and ways of being that had sustained and underpinned the world, generation after generation, the life of workers, of farmers, of everyday toil, the lives so often overlooked but which carried the true story of being, was in a single generation broken. The notion of the "longue durée" acknowledges this same sense of a profound world, unacknowledged, appearing as background, as the crowd, as the foot soldiers of armies, as the workers in the fields, and the factories...and the homes - and all the work of domesticity. It argues that this being, and their voices, are not lost, and must be recognised if we are to ever come to an understanding of our own world and its true history. For the historians the

record of this deep story could be traced through the records of ecclesiastical courts, through the records of the collectors of tithes, through the incidental and overlooked chronicles of villages and small towns. A whole world glimpsed through the cracks, the disregarded stuff that went unexamined behind the record of royal courts, of great events, of politicians, generals, and bishops, beneath the world, that is, of rulers and governors.

You can see from this the relation to Pasolini's vision. He believed that through such a world unmediated there could be discovered a very different sphere of being and experience than the one that was destroying its own foundation, sweeping away, in its wilful ignorance, the stories of the people. It's not too great a step to see in Pasolini's work with non-actors a parallel with a pre-modern theatre, although a very different understanding from that which had shaped Brecht's notions of theatre and which were by then widely known. Pasolini's players are closer to the relationships of the religious and secular performances of saints days and civic celebration: the bank manager as Pontus Pilate, the carpenter as Joseph...and so on. The audience recognised them as neighbors and fellow citizens, and their performance functioned, in some senses, as an allegory might. Even the casting of a known actor or artist comes to play a different function within this conceptual framework, as Pasolini people's the drama with family, friends, and chance acquaintances. But even more than this Pasolini is drawn to the telling of tales that come from every level of society and are told, and listened to by all. It is the undertow of "the gospel according to Saint Mathew" that we could trace so vividly in our earlier film installation. And it comes to be the central preoccupation of his film work. Much of this was misunderstood at the time, or was overlooked, or even derided as commercial folly. The Decameron of Boccaccio, the Canterbury Tales of Geoffrey Chaucer, the Arabian Nights, all follow on from this thread that runs through the gospel of Mathew. These are the stories of the onlookers beneath the cross, the fishers and farmers and carpenters. The world is being told by those whose voices and perceptions went largely unrecorded. This longing to release, from the servitude of an imposed and imposter history, the lives of generations unacknowledged drives Pasolini's search for a language that gives authorship, gives making, volition, and meaning, not to performers but to the living and the having lived. It is a radical step that searches to find its own language.

From this we may say that Grotowski can be described as having worked towards a process of individual experience within the social space of the theatre, of players and audience - until the final search to step outside what was known - a process of awareness which can be imagined to have been "vertical" (immediate, in the instant, urgent, physically insistent, and then searching for the erasure of all separation). Pasolini's Process is a collective one, happening over time, and which can be imagined as being "horizontal". But for each their drive was always toward the perception and the living experience of art related to an understanding of the story in a mutual exchange between "audience" and "telling", as a conversation shared in its making, and that making happens between us.

This account is important to the understanding of how Comizi di Donne works as a contemporary art project and where it aims to go. It is intended to show the roots of the life and creation of art and to propose a different approach to curatorial work, a way of thinking and working that shares the same will of Grotowski and Pasolini: to understand art inside this conversation with the world.

We have of course come very far from Dewey, Grotowski, Braudel, and Pasolini, we live in a very different time, but, as we will see in the final part of *Comizi di Donne*, each may have a significance for us now.

If we hold to the necessity of collective and individual awareness as the starting point of living and creating art, the society in constant transformation needs a practice which finds a way to both respond attentively, to speak of ourselves and others together, and to speak of new being.

This is what artist, exhibition and curator should look to, and one of the great possibilities that we give to art is that it may become more strongly and more effectively the way to imagine alternatives to the world today. The world very much hurt by the pandemic but even before that hurt not only by the failure of the predominant social models, failures exacerbated in the face of disease and war, but also by the valuation of the individual and the individuals' possibilities above all else. This last, the emphasizing of individual being - that works, of course, most significantly to the advantage of the wealthy and powerful - effects a separation of awareness that diminishes both the scope of common and shared being and, in consequence, the realisation of an individual's full being in the world and in themselves. Moreover, the single person, isolated from full and equal participation in the world, comes to be incapable of awareness of their own condition.

Comizi di donne starts from this understanding and translates it to the female condition, which has known, throughout recorded history, a process of cultural and economic exploitation. The work to mend, to heal, the deep tears in the fabric of society, that come from this - the separations that fracture the world, and the wounds to the common place of lives and to individual being - becomes ever more urgent now. Yes, so much has been done, but look around us, in the third decade of the twenty first century, how much is yet to be done! It is as if what had been gained just stopped, and began again to be lost. While, at the same time, so much around us appears to change. This is not only because of the "thinning", the weakening of the coherence, of personal and collective awareness, but also because it looks to have been absorbed into a collective perception in which we have come to talk about women's condition as being framed by extreme cases like rape, brutal sexual abuses, or in terms of femicide: the killing of women by men. But behind this there is the unremitting social and economic struggle of the everyday lived by millions of women across the globe. However, within this reality, if we are attentive to it, if we look at what is happening behind the news cycle of crisis and sensation, we may discover currents of thought and action that can be imagined as the ground of a new dispensation, a new common ground. It is something that both Pasolini and Braudel apprehended, that in the commonplace of the everyday, in the intimacy and the community of lives lived unchronicled and often unattended to there may be understood not only the struggle to get by but also of how we may come to be sustained, a coming community, a new republic. We want to believe that art, amongst the many things it can be and do, may in its working, as thought and action, open a path for other ways of being. And this comes to the thought foreshadowed in Dewey's writing, the recognition of the profound portent within the understanding of relation and art. And from it what art may be.

The next chapter of our project opens to these questions, and will make a radical proposal.

Maria Teresa Annarumma

Comizi di Donne. Female condition and the Pasolini's approach to social issues

Opening 8th of April 2022 h 7.00 pm

Marco Messina "Nuova Repubblica Napoletana", site specific sound installation

Curated by Maria Teresa Annarumma

Sound system designer Alberto Gaetti

Marco Messina is famously a member of the group 99 Posse, and as a composer, for theatre and film, he has throughout his life been engaged with protest, social activism and resistance. The work that is to be installed at the Purgatorio is even for him a radical and challenging new step. It is no less than an epic of the suppressed history of Naples, and of the sound of the city today, it traces a story that is too often hidden and lost beneath the long settled conventions of fiction and documentary that reduce Naples to stereotypical drama. From the lyrics of traditional music to the exhortations of Marx and Engels, Messina builds a work that has the sense of a manifesto being made for a new republic of Naples: the republic of women and of the true message of their stories, vivid and urgent. This is no exaggeration, fierce and passionate it is a diary of love without illusion, a construction of sound and space, a collage of impressions and an assertion of a kind of faith. More than a collage it functions as a tapestry in its interweaving of disparate threads, stories, songs, clamorous outcry, the sound of work and fragments of a world that does not cohere and which is always pulling apart. This is Messina's testament to his place, to memories and hope, and to the present. Like me he is conflicted in his relation to the city and the people but more than me he believes in the will to protest, to speak out and to contest, in the belief that something can be done. Like many others I don't know if I can go on in this belief, and think of leaving, but I watch, fascinated and uncertain.

OUR STORY UNTIL NOW

The installation follows on and is in conversation with the first two parts of the Comizi di Donne project in which we have tried to open a space to get closer to an understanding of Pasolini in his relation to history and society, from the perspective of our present, a different world which makes some things more opaque but which liberates meanings that were closed or were heavily policed in his lifetime. We began from Pasolini as a point from which we could come to an attention to the true experience of shared and long hidden lives.

I have described it through the developing of our project as a way to the heart, the pulse, of Pasolini's poetic, a poetic which is throughout his life focused on the histories and lives of the people who have been supposed in the official record to have been almost without significance, the people written out of history, and yet who have carried the world and its stories through all of time. The people of a slow history who, largely unrecorded in their day to day lives, nonetheless sustained a deep culture of profound connection, connection one to another in the common good, and together to the natural world. Pasolini believed this deep history, and the being that it informed, to be disappearing in his lifetime. The poetic he shaped to speak to this was capable of crossing medias, and of crossing social and political division, even when it was contentious and

was drawn into hard and even fatal political conflict. It gave attention to those who were put to the margins, those at the border. And over time this came to be not so distant from the lives of many people, and possibly not so distant from us. This is then a story of the deep meanings and potential of relation.

In fact, if at the time of Pasolini the illusion of a collective social and economic improvement was vigorously encouraged in the politics that followed the second war, making a significant part of the society unaware of the true, and even devastating, consequences of what was really happening, his work was determined to break the hold of this illusion. To denounce the fake empire that was emerging and that had the appearance of familiarity and security, and to build in its place a new awareness of a world that was in fact dramatically changing and was abandoning many of those who had trusted in it.

From this I have come to consider his work, however contradictory it may sometimes appear, not only as a guide to a socially engaged art but also as having a bearing on the imagining of possible societies and revolutionary alternatives to what has been almost continually affirmed through the last 50 years. The conventions of a politics of market priorities, the hollowing out of the common place, and the complacent toleration of cruel inequities, but even more the conception of the single person as being separated from the common and shared space of thought together and of clear-sighted attention. Even in writing this I come again to why Pasolini still matters so much today.

The sound installation by Marco Messina as well as being of powerful significance in itself serves as a turning point in our program as it carries us from a thoughtfulness about Pasolini, his life and work, to the present of women, our protagonists, women who are still after so long under the pressure of an unequal society, a society that is still based on the exploitation of female work and on pervasive cultural and sexual oppression, just as the working class has been since Pasolini's time. The world may have changed in so many ways but the inequalities have only become greater, and with accelerated ferocity, as wealth and power are concentrated in a narrower and narrower stratum of society and the poor are increasingly cut adrift.

In fact, this crucial passage in "Comizi di Donne" is not only about bringing in to new practice Pasolini's understandings of engagement, his passionate activism in his work, it's also about finding inside the "grammar" of art the conceptual frame to realize a contemporary understanding across media of his vision of the society in which he and we live, based on the belief that art can draw revolutionary perspectives. Because of that, to produce a sound installation inspired on the one hand by the example of Pasolini's social engagement and the struggle of consciousness, so often searching and unresolved, that informed his work, and on the other by our own lived experience in our no less conflicted present is to attend to shared experience, our common place. To be thoughtful about the possibility of our present, however confusing it may sometimes be.

ABOUT SOUNDWORKS

Looking to the history of sound works in contemporary art, while it can often be seen as a radical choice there are two major characteristics above the others which are relevant to our purpose here: the use of "found" sound and what it opens to, and the capability of sound to create an

alternative architecture of the space in which it is installed. An architecture in the sense of the perception of space and of our position within it, of sound shaping an awareness of the space that we inhabit, and of a heightened sense of our own presence, most significantly together with others, in that space.

The modern history of sound works has conventionally been seen as beginning with Luigi Russolo in 1913, although a conscious articulation of sound beyond music in changing perception long preceded the twentieth century, whether it was in the shaping of the acoustic characteristics of space in religious buildings or in the complex interrelationships of media in the "gesamt-kunstenwerk" of the 19th century. The sound works of the modern period are no less diverse in their meanings and purposes. The need for many was to open the space of the sound with the thousands of possibilities which come from the world around us: it can be a mixture between tradition and contemporary understanding of it for a composer like Halim El Dabh who started his research in the '40s, or it can be the catching of the sound from urban situations as it was for Max Nehaus from the '60s, but, in every case, it is possible to see the profound will to amplify and open the space we inhabit to the world around us.

The breaking down of orthodoxies in attention to sound and presence in the experience of music has been extensively explored in the work of composers from John Cage and La Monte Young to the Japanese minimalist composers of the last decades, both within and outside the traditions of classical and contemporary music. To this can be added the development of the use of so called "found sound", recorded sound of everyday phenomena, which has by now become a familiar element even in popular music, evident in the sample structures of hip hop and rap. While this may very often just add another element in a rhythm pattern it can also act as a changed attention to the sound of the world around us. It's most significantly about the working of attention and the consciousness of a different sense of time and space that is opened in this attention, and with it the opening to the possibility of meanings that before were hidden or were unexamined.

However, while there has been a history of experiment with sound through the last hundred years, it is significant that until very recently there has been little crossover between mediums. The simple fact is that the separation between mediums has trapped much experiment within disciplines that knew very little of each other. Even within music sound experimentation has existed largely at the margins, and sound in the museum and in exhibition spaces, aside from occasional concerts, or the clattering mechanisms of Jean Tinguely, finally happened as an unconsidered effect of film and video entering the museum. Until today it would be difficult to describe a consideration of sound as a familiar constituent of exhibition making, excepting regarding the containment of intrusive sound, the control of ambient sound, or managing the interference of the soundtracks of juxtaposed projections.

But something else is happening, and has been happening now for some time even if it is not in the mainstream. I believe that sound works have a powerful potential to translate concepts from abstraction to lived experience in a very direct way, maybe more directly even than with performance art: in fact, sound works can transform space, transform place, developing its own meaning when it is able to shape the architectural structure through the construction of the sound. To shape new and sometimes profound meanings. It has the power to transform each exhibition space into a common space, a place of shared attention, precisely because of its relation with the world around us, and the connections which are created between the audience.

As noted before I have used throughout our project as a matrix the work and interpretation of Craigie Horsfield regarding Pasolini, and later Grotowski, and significantly Horsfield's work on relation. It was the sound works of Horsfield from the 1970's coming out of contemporary art rather than music, and ideas of relation, and of Horsfield and Reinier Rietveld from the 1990's and 2000's, that opened the way to the revolutionary potential of sound as a radical step towards our purpose and the revelation that awaits in the voices of the women.

MARCO MESSINA AND THE COMING REPUBLIC

Marco Messina "Nuova Repubblica Napoletana" (New Neapolitan Republic) 2022, is a multi-channel soundwork of 4 hours built up through found sound, recordings of the voices of women and men, and through acoustic and electronic composition. It takes the form of a complex, interweaving, narration. Installed in the hypogeum of Purgatorio ad Arco it makes an impassioned and prophetic proposition. It acknowledges the understanding - held through generations of faith, perseverance, and the belief in a coming world - of the souls in purgatory waiting to be raised to heaven through prayer and, of profound significance here: **through the care of the women who attend to them**. And it asserts a parallel meaning in speaking to the understanding that through ages, across time and through history, generation after generation of women have fought to be heard, and to be acknowledged, in their caring, their love, and their faith, waiting for their release into their full being. Their release into a world that no longer denies them. The coming world.

This is the revolution it prophesies and speaks to. Over four hours the work builds to an epic of hope and dismay, of joy and loss, of endurance in the face of sometimes seeming impossibility. Messina takes the world he grew up in, the world he lives in, the modern world he inhabits, with all its contradictions, and shapes from it a story that is at once clear sighted and engaged. A story that does not escape into fantasy or false hope, or into bitter resignation.

In doing so the installation is constructed from sound to create a different perception of the architecture of the building, of its material, of the space, and the sense of being present for the audience. Making a new space from the stuff of the existing world, new meanings from the words that surround us and that we have used, familiar words made unfamiliar, as though to say "it is here, it is already prefigured in what we know, and it may become". Messina's fragments of sound and memory, his recollection and his vivid perception of the world around him, and the way in which they weave together, touch on our own recognitions, things that we too have known, a sound-world that we too have experienced, and their meanings are made new in this re-arranging, this weaving that does not, and cannot, resolve an unresolved world but which finds deep and unconsidered connections in it. In its working it may bring us to an unexpected awareness of our shared experience, of place, of our everyday, and of what we have in common. The sound work, it's "working", what it does as well as what it is, draws attention to the experience of the city beyond the walls as being shaped and understood in terms of the lives of its inhabitants, their past and their present, that is: of ourselves. The narration may find its form through the path that each of us as visitors choose to take through it, how we listen, through our attention and the associations and recognition we bring from our own life experiences to it, and in our physical movement in following the story through this new space. This is not from chance, the work feels as though made in a fervor, a fire, passionate and engaged, the outpouring of belief, of

politics, of protest, an assertion of the significance of small and unconsidered things in the experience of the everyday, and the rage that comes unbidden to the surface at the loss, the wasted lives, the inequity that does not end but only becomes greater. And there is something more.

In its detail the formal structure is sewn together by the sound of a group of women working "bobbing" lace, together they share in the work, and talk to each other, it is intricate and nuanced, the filigree of thread growing between their hands. On the base of this collective making and the rhythm of the repetitive sound of the women's work - women's work that is so often repetitive and overlooked, work that sustains society and yet is so often unacknowledged - there builds the counterpoint of their voices. Messina gradually draws in the threads of sound, of stories, and half remembered phrases, fragments of music, that come together to create a fabric as intricate as the lace. Here are intimate accounts of life, fragments of other histories, storytelling from popular song, stories of place, of life, and of family, of generations and of the contested present. And from this he fashions a manifesto and a premonition. From the fragile and ephemeral material of sound, using the stuff of the everyday, and of too often unconsidered lives, the overlooked world of the city, of Naples, there emerges the sense of other possible being, waiting, even within this present.

There is a beautiful symmetry to this, from the everyday, from mundane things, from the stuff left out of history - the same world that Pasolini struggled to give voice to, the world which for so long has been disregarded - Messina creates a powerful call to action.

"Nuova Repubblica Napoletana" concerns the personal and collective experience of a space where we may look to ourselves in front of an historical struggle and present reality: as the past lives together with the present of women in Naples and in the world. In the midst of everyday life, the life which goes on outside the walls of the Purgatorio ad Arco, the sound work gives time for recognition, and thoughtfulness, speaking to the creation of a possible alternative world, and revolutionary action in the dramatic time that we are living through, a time of pandemic and distant war. It speaks of the coming republic, the new Neapolitan republic, a republic born from women before us, as we all are, women and men, the republic which acknowledges our story together.

Maria Teresa Annarumma

"Nuova Repubblica Napoletana" is produced by Opera Pia Purgatorio ad Arco Onlus

Opera Pia Purgatorio ad Arco Onlus thanks very dearly Ing. Alberto Gaetti for his collaboration

Comizi di Donne

Video installation - curated by Maria Teresa Annarumma

Opening 30th of June 2022 h.19.00

Complesso Museale Santa Maria delle Anime del Purgatorio ad Arco-Naples

Via dei Tribunali 39

During the pandemic thousands of women lost their jobs (in Italy, 98% of the people fired as a result of the pandemic have been women and it has been calculated that globally women have lost around \$ 800 billions in income) and of these very many came to be overwhelmed by the lack of effective welfare support (the series of lock-downs pushed women in many cases to be the only one taking care of their children or of their elderly and infirm parents). Now we are living at a time of a new war in Europe in which we see men in conflict with other men, men trying to negotiate, men trying to flee but being turned back and driven to war by their own people. And women? Women escape with their children, women wait, and women become part of the landscape of war. It is a scenario that we could have seen through centuries. It is a scene my mother knew as a child and one from which I have been spared.

Women's lives have been always under pressure, across centuries, even if with different consequences depending on the specific context. They have needed to fight social, economic and political structures which set apart the participation of women and which exploit their work (domestic and not).

Nowadays, in our societies, it's common to imagine women as emancipated and as free to shape their lives as they choose, but, of course, the daily reality for the great majority of women is very different. Much of daily life is experienced as an obstacle course in which the problems to be negotiated, economic, social and political, are still very much present, even where the cultural and societal circumstances can be said to have changed. If we have, for example, almost universally overcome the limited access to jobs (recognizing at the same time that there are many countries in which this is not yet the reality) because of political decisions shaped by economic as well as by wider social pressures, there are still very significant differences in the levels of wages between men and women.

But if we are generally aware of wage disparities, or that women are still very often victims of a double morality in society in which they are judged very widely for their sexual choices or even their clothing style (thinking of the way in which this is put under a magnifying lens in sexual harassment cases, the judgement being decided on the evidence of a too short dress or the contents of a mobile phone that betray a too eager interest in carnality), I believe that it is even more important to give attention to the daily efforts that women have the habit to face even just to get the most basic of equal opportunities in life: how many times should women still have to face the life determining choice between maternity or career? How many times should women have to substitute for the lack of welfare to support children or elderly people in care, sacrificing their own hopes and aspirations? And how many times will a business plan, reorganization, a "downsizing", inevitably result in the women employees being "let go" while the men get to stay? It is in these daily decisions, and in many others like them, that the imbalances and inequities that persist deform lives and betray not only individual hope but the hopes of society, of men as well as of women.

We have all experienced directly or indirectly situations of gender inequality, it is sadly evident that this is a social injustice commonly accepted as the normality, maybe regrettable, but just the way things are. After the "golden age" of the feminist movements and the several achievements that they got, we haven't seen a wider cultural revolution. Instead, there has been a progressive polarization of the female fight for a personal agenda, always recuperated and contained by the lack of a collective determination. The wave of attention to women's predicament ebbing in the face of overfamiliarity, economic recession, the next big thing, gender disparity, and the assumption that everything had changed - when, as we see from where we are today, the look, the dress, the means of expression, may not be the same but so much that we hoped and believed would be different remains much as it was. It's well into the twenty first century and still this is how things are. The promise of a way forwards through the economic demands of society for a larger and better educated work force, or the seeming invitation of new technologies that would free women in every part of their lives, in the home, in their families, in the new work place, even in dating and in pleasure, bringing with it a new limit, a new condition, so much like the old one.

The pandemic and the consequent economic and social crisis showed us how much the belief in a new society built solely on the promise of new technologies capable of freeing people, was a chimera, as the promise has always been, the new freedoms and benefits opening to new cages, new brutalities, and the same old inequities, but yet more extreme. It was the first time since the start of the industrial world, and its globalization, that production was everywhere curtailed and the workers forced to stay home where they were dependent on technologies that both enabled their lives and developed dependencies that constrain them. And this didn't only help to push forward new, and sometimes more dramatic, forms of worker's exploitation, the consequences of which are yet to be played out, but was able to create a polarization of individuality - the yet more isolated mother and career, the home office worker, the gig economy worker waiting for a call that may come just one day a week, the on-call taxi driver, etc. A world that emerges from the sense of personal and societal danger and the feelings of the lives of family, friends, neighbors, and fellow workers, being precarious and uncertain, emerges from the isolation that many experienced, maybe for the first time, into a precarious present. There is both the memory of a very recent past and a collective social and psychological hurt, and, for many, loss, as well as an uncertainty about the present. What we have witnessed through this time, everywhere and throughout society, was the need of care and relation: the care which many missed because social relations were limited, and the care that many others were in need of.

The large project of *Comizi di Donne*, of which this is the final part, began with Pier Paolo Pasolini and his understanding that we need to attend to the living, and to lives for too long overlooked. And, with this, relating Pasolini's thought to that of Fernand Braudel and the social historians of the "longue durée". The work taking as its base a conception of history as being traced through everyday lives and not, as convention had for long determined, of history as a chronicle of events, of great men, and great victories. For Braudel history as the everyday is the history of the world that carries all being, of which great events are only one, and by no means the most significant, part.

"*Comizi di Donne*" aims at the revolutionary possibilities of what art can be, how it may act, with us as protagonists in its making. And to do that, we propose from this also a revolutionary reading of the history of Naples and of Neapolitan women supporting the idea of the New Neapolitan

Republic: The Republic of Women, a step that was prefigured by the female voices of the sound installation by Marco Messina that marked in its revolutionary assertion the transition between the past, of Pasolini and Braudel, and the contested present.

Of course, Naples is the city where this project takes place, but I also believe that the history of Naples and of the first Neapolitan Republic, as well as the history of a part of the Neapolitan feminist movements, can give us a possible alternative settlement in a new shared awareness.

This is the proposal of Comizi di Donne: an affective art of caring and relation, and a new republic of Naples.

Why Naples

Historical background

Naples has several historical and social sides which can be seen as being particularly helpful in this. The revolution and the establishment of the Republic of Naples in 1799, even if can be seen as very distant from us in time, had several aspects to it that have significance for us now. And one in particular: despite its having been a revolution from an intellectual "elite", it was totally focused on the idea that the core of every democracy was the education of all the citizens. Those who later in the century will be called proletarians. The fatal irony of course is that this republic that was founded in the notion of the emancipation of the people was to be overthrown by the very citizens it longed to free, as the populous, manipulated by the deposed monarchy and estranged from the revolution, rose up against it and brought it down. In doing so opening the way to the return of a corrupt and slowly degenerating regime that would last until the events of the later part of the century, and the coming of another, more equivocal, revolution, a republic that would come to diminish Naples and the Neapolitan world.

Looking at this history alongside the path of the feminist movements of the later part of the twentieth century in Naples, we can see so many parallel experiences, even across the almost two centuries that separate them. And these can be inspiring for a different historical understanding. It is because of this that our conversation began with the association "Madrigale per Lucia" concerning what I believe is a significantly interesting part of the history of Italian feminism reflected in the life of Lucia Mastrodomenico and the "Mensa dei Bambini Proletari" (Canteen of proletarian children) of which she was one of the founders.

A laboratory of activism born in 1973 the Mensa showed, in the 10 years of its life, that political consciousness needs to be able to develop pragmatic answers responding to people's needs, to help and to be useful. It was set up when several leftist intellectuals decided to challenge the difficult reality of what was one of the poor districts in Naples (actually feeding and giving educational tools to hundreds of children). With it they experimented in the forming of a feminism that could look without illusion or prejudice to the everyday life experience of women in attempting to understand in what pragmatic ways they could be helped to free themselves from the struggle simply to survive.

The story of the "Mensa" can show us that even when there is at the center of a feminist approach to society an interpretation of women's skills, like the practice of caring and the attention to relations, skills in which they are already valued, it is possible to see an alternative way of living daily life which can free them from much that oppresses them. A change which makes a giant difference to individual lives and to a community. In fact, through the testimony of some women who were part of this group (between them also Cinzia Mastrodomenico), we will see that education, caring, and attention to relation, which are still significantly a part of women's daily lives, can be democratic instruments in the forming of a new society, as it was hoped by the first Neapolitan Republic.

But it may also be imagined that the gap of recognition of the reality of this part of female experience, so widely overlooked, can be seen to be one of the reasons in which the cultural revolution hoped for by feminism found an incomplete outcome. It may be that the distance between intellectuals and the simple practical issues that women face and from which many intellectually engaged women, through education, inherited wealth, and familial security, are distanced, however sincere their purpose, could be the reason of this incomplete revolution. It is of course true that these are not only matters of class and inequality, arguments continue to rage around race and ethnicity, cultural distinctions, religion and historical division. That which separates, and which traps us in an unbroken cycle of disappointed hope, has deep roots.

Messina's Nuova Repubblica Napoletana asserts that while the great promise and possibility of the first Neapolitan Republic was in the strength of its people, however it and they were betrayed, its base were, and continue to be, in its women, in general and in particular, in female social being and in individual lives. That is, in this hidden and essential part of the society that in the past would have been identified with the proletariat, but, in a time in which capitalistic exploitation is spread across every social class, it comes to stand for, to represent, and to most clear speak for, the reality of the female condition, and, from this, it comes to be the ground for revolutionary change.

What Nuova Repubblica Napoletana, as well as the stories that I have spoken about here, and that we are going to hear about in *Comizi di Donne*, show is also the attitude that is maybe peculiar to this city and which relates to the history of Neapolitan women. As becomes ever more evident: there is a Neapolitan incapability to go beyond the present, and the past, in near total blindness to the future. At the same time tradition, and of course superstition, are a part of daily life in constant conversation with the experience of each inhabitant. It is as though there is always a sense of there being no horizon, and an awareness that it is pointless to plan for the future and that all experiences get lost beyond the life of those who live them.

The common rule is to get the best from the present without thinking too much about the consequences.

But women are about creation and future! And might it not be that part of this cultural and social malaise comes from the displacement, the denial, of the truth of the female condition which still looks in vain for social, cultural and political recognition?

Cultural reason

Pasolini had a curious affection for Naples, writing, almost fifty years ago now: *"(...) Although it has been a long time since I last visited Naples, Neapolitans are for me the kind of people that I really find likeable, and in addition to this they are ideologically likeable. They are the ones who have not changed during this time (the last ten years), and in fact they have always been like that (...)"* (Lutheran Letters, 1976). What Pasolini could well have been describing is the kind of dramatic, direct and possibly theatrical way in which Neapolitans are used to live without filter, beyond the one of expression.

Naples, in terms of its urban development, doesn't really have at its center a distinct separation between districts that can be characterized by social class: it's possible, in many cases, that wealthy people and poor people live not only in the same districts but even in the same buildings (there are districts where this is not the case but they are outside of the center). This cohabitation, together with the high density of the city, allows for this kind of easy dramatic expression in the face of often significantly different cultural backgrounds. Diversity is, or has been, welcome (as in every port city) but alongside this there is the near impossibility of building the kind of bubble of protection, the separation, that contemporary cities have increasingly constructed around wealthy neighborhoods.

In fact, this peculiarity is considered by many a fundamental influence that Naples has had on Italian culture in the early XIX century and it's important to remember that it was significantly influential in post-war Italy of the twentieth century in the development of the cinema of Neorealism, and its reading of society and history which shaped in part Pasolini's filmmaking, and inevitably "Comizi di Donne".

Naples, until the First World War (until Mussolini decided to build up Cinecittà in Rome), was the center of Italian film production. The first Italian company of film studios, "Partenope Film", was Neapolitan. The city had an illustrious history of theatre, production and performance, and the infrastructure to support the newly developing industry, it was also of course the base for the vibrant and prolific production of Neapolitan songs (which until now are internationally recognized). The films that were being made in the new studios were based on stories of social injustice and a dramatized reality that was familiar to the audiences of the day. It's not by chance that the Neapolitan Peppino Amato who grew up in Naples, as an actor, and who then became a producer in Rome, was the one who helped Vittorio De Sica in his career and supported Roberto Rossellini for his films.

The Neapolitan way to live, and maybe even to overact, forms a part of the inheritance of Italian cinema as it does for theatre and popular song, and it's a background that was deeply influential for Pasolini and his conception of realism. Specifically, in his "Comizi d'Amore", which is one of the references for my work. It was a film in which Pasolini, travelling across Italy, through conversations with people of every social background, was asking about love, which he believed to be the most sensitive part of human being, and that which can give an understanding of social change at a level that was beyond the reach of all other means.

"Comizi d'Amore" is a reading of history which relates to the work of the social historians like Braudel. It may appear at first to be dealing with quite another reality than that described by

these historians but there are significant parallel meanings. And it aims at the kind of art without authorship - or of radically shifted authorship - towards which Grotowski struggled in his work and life. As we examined in an earlier part of our project.

"Comizi d'Amore" is a film which looks at history as a lived present, listens to people whose voices and stories shape the meanings that develop within it, it does not rely on research through documentation, it is informed by those who speak in its conversation about love, and in its effect, it comes to describe a society and a world that we share, at once familiar and profoundly strange. It is not polished or sophisticated in its filming, but it touches on things that art, until today, rarely speaks to. And it asks of us as the audience a way of seeing, and an attention, that we don't have the habit of. It asks that we can conceive ourselves as being within the conversation of the film in our attention to it, becoming complicit through our recognition, the experience and relationships that we bring to it, and our shared sensibility. It asks us to be open to an unfamiliar language, an affective language, of sensibility and shared being. It is a precursor to our present understandings of the common place and of community but through the revolutionary perspective of an affective aesthetic: recognition, empathy and caring.

"Comizi di Donne"

Taking place over several hours, Comizi di Donne is made from intimate accounts of life, fragments of other lives, other histories, stories of place, of families, of generations, of friendship, stories of hope and of fear. Two things happen in the long duration of the work, those speaking become, over time, both the protagonists and authors of their stories, strongly individual in their telling of their own lives, and, at the same time, and in the same action of telling, there is a correlation that tells of community and of the social world.

How does this happen? It may perhaps be seen as being analogous to the weaving of a tapestry in which the threads of individual lives, when woven together, are seen to form an image through their interrelation with others, in some ways resembling society itself. But it is more than that, the effective power of each person, their fierce individuation, understood in correlation, both asserts the singular volition of the person, and their particular experience, while bringing into being a community of shared experience. And this is not such an easy perception in Naples, which can so often be seen as lacking the civic activism, the consciousness of shared purpose, or a notion of consequence beyond present need, that other cities, other societies, more clearly have. It is often difficult to imagine Naples as having a coherent society beyond family or allegiance to a football club. This is why attention to an overlooked present can be both the beginning of a vivid tapestry of voices and impressions, to be woven over time, and a manifesto, a premonition of a coming community.

This is not the Naples of too familiar stereotypes. Made from the everyday, the voices of the women of Comizi di Donne are not the voices of lives at the margin but bold and passionate voices that assert their presence, the presence of a world too long ignored.

Just as Pasolini does in "Comizi d'Amore", I aim to cancel every possible form of conventional authorship and to make women within the sphere of Comizi di Donne protagonists and authors of

history itself, of their own history and that of society, as they are actually in the world. In this it will be the present talking through the lives of women who fight daily between economic, social and cultural difficulties. Pasolini's fascination with Geoffrey Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" and Boccaccio's "Decameron" concerned the telling of stories in which the social or economic circumstances of the protagonists do not determine the truth or effect, the narrative is carried not through heroic identification, or through hierarchical conventions, but through lived experience and by the accumulation of individual tales and fragments that are glimpsed of the everyday world. What matters in this reading is the capability to understand the world looking at the relations that inform it, and in attention to the ways in which people shape their own histories, and in this way our history and the world in which we also live. This is both a simple and a complex notion. We are all of us aware of how great events may shape our lives, pandemic or war, in ways over which we feel that we have little control, and even within the day to day of lives distant from war, and freed from immediate fear of contamination and infection, there can be, for many, a sense of only having a tenuous hold on how we can shape our lives as we may wish them to be. Nonetheless within the possibility of our lives there is a negotiation of the day to day that not only sustains us but which comes to form, in its commonplace of relation, work, shared effort, and persistence, the basis of community and of society in large. In this is the deep history of the "longue durée", the for long unacknowledged present that underpins the world. And its meanings matter to us now.

In gossip, in conversation, in the day to day of relation, there is an unattended present, a world that can often be overlooked, as something too familiar, too mundane, that is in the background but which is of little significance. But in attention to the ways, we are together and to the ways we tell our world, and our relationships, to each other, we may discover a world that is familiar and moving also in its difference, affecting in this tension between a place we know, a place we inhabit and recognize, and the dissonances, the half noticed things, and strangeness at the margin of our own lives. It doesn't make the evening news, and may appear to be just another part of the "static" in the air, like texting, or the constant online of a phone we carry, it is the unconsidered stuff of other unacknowledged lives. But in hearing these stories juxtaposed, just as they are in life, there emerges the trace of a society that exists alongside the official, "legitimate", the established, world. Just as Braudel's deep history existed unacknowledged alongside the story of kings and queens, power and wealth, alongside it but underpinning everything. Its aspiration and its betrayal were equally evident in the first Neapolitan Republic.

Because the most unacknowledged voices within this long history have been those of women in their everyday, which is the commonplace that we share with them, the world which I have written about here. Comizi Di Donne, in brief testimonies and in its conversation, happens now in our time, as immediate living history - the history that is shaping each of us - and as present: in its hope, its subdued rage, its assertion of life, and even in the curious melancholy that it sometimes evokes. And in this, even in its contradictions, there is the frame of the missed cultural female revolution, its obstacles, of course, but also its possibility.

This is the material of the new Neapolitan republic, a republic that may finally speak for all of its citizens, equally.

If we believe, as many of us do, that inside the recognition of what is the peculiarity and strength of the female identity, like care and relationality, as Lucia Mastrodomenico used to say, (and these

are neither elemental characteristics nor simply culturally determined attributes. At a time when even having a womb is seen as a relativism there nevertheless can be imagined to be a female principle that informs our humanity) there can be found a way through this struggling contemporary time. We need a reading of history which allows this understanding, and looks to what must be done to free the potential of it in our present. And a new sensibility, a thoughtfulness about the present that continues beneath the surface of great events, of political dramas, pandemic, and of war.

And this comes to the most difficult part.

Corresponding to these meanings is a way of looking at art that works, that acts, differently. There are forms of art that ask us for a familiar reading, and forms of art that ask of us rather different kinds of attention. Attention in which we are conscious of being a part of a conversation. The artist Craigie Horsfield, whose thought has helped to inform this project from its beginning, describes an affective attention, a way of seeing and of listening that opens to caring. An attention that relates to what the feminist theorist Bracha Ettinger has called "withness", a witnessing, an attention, in which we too are protagonists, we too are engaged and are complicit. An attention without separation or distance. The look of the film is conventional but what is happening and what it asks of us is different in this way.

And about duration. I have written earlier in the project about long form work in relation to Marco Messina's four hours soundwork. I have described the changed relation to reading and experiencing art that it creates. But still for many the idea that there should be the choice to stay watching throughout the duration of the film or to simply only watch a part, or return day after day to watch in sections, can feel uncomfortable, a kind of false or knowing disruption in the way that some books are published with loose leaves so that the reader might rearrange the story. But, of course, throughout the twentieth century, and since, long form film works have existed, from Abel Gance to Andy Warhol, and each invited a different attention. And it has continued with artists as diverse as Aleksandr Sokurov, Christian Marclay and Craigie Horsfield. In fact, even with these precedents the film may appear too long for many of us because we have the habit of watching short videos through social media, or because we have become familiar with video in art which is most often structured in loops of just a few minutes so that the fickle attention of the viewer might not wander to other distractions. There is quite widely reported a kind of panic about shortened spans of attention that new media supposedly encourage. But set against that there is evidence of a different dynamic in the popularity of multi episode series on streaming services, in which narratives develop over very much greater length than ever they did in even the most elaborate of Hollywood epics, and "binge watching" that during the pandemic could consume whole days for many marooned in isolation. The duration of *Comizi Di Donne* looks first of all to none of these antecedents. I would describe it in another way, a way that corresponds with what I have returned to again and again in writing this, *Comizi di Donne* is meant to be a date with a group of women, and an experience of closeness and empathy: it's possible to watch it for all its length or just a part of it because what matters is the will to meet, and to give time to a different awareness of the hidden history of women, which is familiar but also not ours, in the recognition of other lives. There is also an effect that may just be a very personal reflection, the cumulative impression, over time, is one of melancholy, a touching sadness. It doesn't come from these often vivid lives but from the feeling of our own stories still held between seemingly irreconcilable forces.

What does any of this mean beyond description, critique, and exhortation? Its substance and its true thesis is in the voices of the women in the film who have made it from their own lives. And whoever sees it, and is open to it, will bring their own recognitions and understandings to it. This is its lived consequence, as a continuing conversation.

"Comizi di Donne" shows us a deep history and the choice for a revolutionary path which asks first of all an action of awareness: female awareness of their own condition, of our own condition, and a collective awareness of what is necessary to change to free a real shift in a social revolutionary change. It is why, as rough and as provisional as Comizi di Donne is, it is a manifesto born from the present.

Maria Teresa Annarumma

Comizi di Donne has been generously supported by Opera Pia Purgatorio ad Arco onlus

Thank you to the collaboration with:

"Associazione Amici di Carlo Fulvio Velardi" onlus

"Associazione Madrigale per Lucia" onlus

"Associazione sportiva "Champion Center la Scampia che Vince"

Special thanks to:

Cinzia Mastrodomenico for the support and her dear friendship

Caterina Cibelli for her generous help

Thank you to Michele Federico for his passion in editing