Space for Cultural and Political Experimentation in the Mediterranean

BIANNUAL REPORT

by Fondazione Studio Rizoma

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Fondazione

Elisa Capellini

Letizia Gullo

Lorenzo Marsili

Giorgio Mega Izabela Anna Moren

Patrizia Pozzo

Anna Raspanti

Séaolène Pruvot

Graphic Design

Luca Pantorno

Studio Rizoma Team Officine Grafiche. Eva-Maria Bertschy Palermo, Italy Marta Cillero Manzano November 2023

studiorizoma.org

IG: @studio rizoma FB: studio rizoma YT: Studio Rizoma

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Introduction

Fondazione Studio Rizoma is an international hub advancing an independent cultural and social program while serving the wider development of its surrounding ecosystem, with a focus on the city of Palermo. Rizoma is a founding member of the European Cultural Hubs Network of Allianz Foundations.

Since the beginning of our work, we have united our varied skill sets to construct a production platform allowing us to support local and international artists in realizing their projects and creating an original cultural program. This enlarges the local institutional infrastructure and creates a future-oriented discourse and experimental network regarding politics, the environment and culture in Sicily as a reference point for the world. While we shy away from flyin, fly-out events and initiatives, we do not think the solution is a return to localism. Our response focuses on sustainable co-creation processes and partnerships that develop a rhizomatic network of local and international permanent collaborations.

In this report you can read about the projects, programs and productions we have led with our partners in 2022 and 2023. You can also read about how we measure our progress as we continue to build up our work, and what strategic objectives we set for the coming years.

About Us

The mission follows three main lines of action:

We foster the growth, internationalization and professionalization of cultural and social actors in the city of Palermo and the wider Mediterranean region. We do this via our fellowship program, supporting individuals and organizations in their development, via our residency program, welcoming individuals from across the world to Palermo to foster a longer-term engagement with the city, and our research, training and mentorship programs promoting research, education, capacity building and skill transmission.



We leverage our geographical position to focus our work on issues of transnationality, postcoloniality, human mobility, municipalism, urbanism, the environmental conditions of the Mediterranean region, and the future of globalization.

We develop innovative methodologies that combine original artistic productions with the direct engagement of social and political groups, embedding the production process in existing sites of struggle and political imagination.

Values:

Global and Local

we believe local initiatives benefit from going beyond regional boundaries;

Creative and Experimental

we believe in the necessity of growing, acting and learning through experimentation;

Transdisciplinary we work at the intersec

disciplines and interests;

Inclusive and Feminist we believe in an open and diverse society 2. About Us

Main Objectives

Fondazione Studio Rizoma has, over the past years, developed innovative approaches to promoting cultural innovation and social change by organizing artistic' panels, residencies, artistic productions, festivals, and collective conferences by using innovative methods and by involving excluded groups in activities with a Mediterranean focus (migrant groups, local agricultural groups, youth groups, artistic organizations, cultural workers, feminist collectives).

The factor that inspires our work is the need to open a space for research, creation and experimentation linked to the Mediterranean that would operate in connection with other realities in Europe and the rest of the world.

Our three main objectives are:

Connecting, supporting and building the capacity of artists, researchers, city representatives, activists and organizations working in line with our values.

Creating and curating artistic and cultural productions, programmes and installations with a community of artistic projects.

Researching and creating experimental knowledge into new models for new political, social and artistic practices, notably in the themes of climate, environment, migration, heritage, feminism, and politics.

The Rhizomatic Structure & Methodology

Fondazione Studio Rizoma boasts an international and diverse team with members with different backgrounds and experiences. They constitute a rhizomatic structure that embodies a feminist and horizontal working structure that combines the office's work and the board's guidance. The team members are responsible for managing and implementing the work in Fondazione Studio Rizoma.

Our methodology combines original artistic productions with the engagement of social and political groups: the production process involves communities in the definition and implementation, embedding projects in existing sites of struggle and political imagination.

Our methodology applies a federative logic both locally and internationally. The two levels intersect to foster a trans-local dimension and provide a space for connecting the local ecosystem with the international scene.

The Team

<u>Eva-Maria Bertschy</u> Artistic Director & Curator

Marta Cillero Managing Director

<u>Lorenzo Marsili</u> President

Izabela Anna Moren Creative Director & Curator

<u>Ségolène Pruvot</u> Curator Elisa Capellini Digital Communications Officer & Project Assistant

Letizia Gullo Production Coordinator

<u>Giorgio Mega</u> Production, Project Manager & Music Curatorship

Patrizia Pozzo Institutional Relations

Anna Raspanti Finance & Administration Manager

The Network: Connecting Dots in the Mediterranean and Beyond

Partnerships are the backbone of all our activities and play a fundamental role in achieving our mission. Our approach to work is federal and cooperative. We focus on sustainable co-creation processes and partnerships that develop a rhizomatic network of local and international permanent collaborations. At a local level, Rizoma gives space to various local realities and ensures the social embeddedness of artistic action in Sicily. At an international level, Rizoma is a node for institutions engaged in rethinking how transternational artistic and political interventions and collaborations are conceived, implemented, and promoted. We stand for a decentralized root system, able to propagate by multiplying underground and letting different initiatives grow.

Moreover, Fondazione Studio Rizoma is a founding member of the upcoming European Cultural Hubs Network of Allianz Foundations, in which we closely work with Autostrada Biennale (Kosovo) and Postane (Turkey). This means that rather than setting up an entirely separate cooperation space, the different Hubs and partners share and open up their work program to each other, defining areas of joint action within their existing priorities. Our partners and the Hubs network do not only promote bilateral or multilateral cooperation between its members. The network becomes an open accelerator, empowering its ecosystem to create transnational social and cultural initiatives. One example is the nomadic residency scheme, in which each year, a group of artists and activists from all the Hubs regions are offered a year-long research and production residency in all the Hubs cities.

Other members of our local and international network are European Alternatives, Theater Bremen, L'Art Rue and Dream City Biennale in Tunis, Museo Civico Castelbuono, Ecomuseo Mare Memoria Viva Palermo, Genìa Lab Art Palermo, AthenSYN, Avtonomi Akadimia, Kyiv Biennale, Warszawa Biennale, GROUP50:50 (Basel/Kinshasa/Lubumbashi), La Fleur (Berlin/Paris). Centre d'Art Waza Lubumbashi, AterraTerra LAB Palermo, National Museum of World Cultures, Museo delle Civiltà in Rome, euro-scene Leipzig, Forum Freies Theater Düsseldorf, Marginal Studio, LOTS - Libero Osservatorio Territoriale Sud. Wohnbau und Entwerfen - TU Wien, Critical Urbanisms - University Basel, Warehouse of Architecture and Research, Cesura Publish, Lettera Ventidue Edizioni, Panteon, Ortigia Sound System, Viaraffineria, Observatoire Tunisien de l'Eau, Dar Meso, Palazzo Butera, Nubuke Foundation, Italia Nostra, Fondazione Macte, Studio Forward, Norwegian Business School, Copenhagen Business School, Trinity College Dublin, WAAG Amsterdam, LATRA Lesvos, KEA European Affairs Brussels, transmediale, FACT Liverpool, BBAG Berlin, the Governance Platform Berlin.

Our Work

Growing in a Complex Environment: from an Emerging Collective to a Foundation

Fondazione Studio Rizoma started operating in Palermo in 2019 in the context of the Biennale Arcipelago Mediterraneo and Transeuropa Festival. From there, we began our journey with a first collective experience in October 2020: *Pandemos*, our first project conceived as a multimedia project during the Covid-19 pandemic. *Pandemos*, an original idea by Lorenzo Marsili curated by Izabela Anna Moren, was a collective exhibition of the works of 13 artists working in Sicily, selected by a local and international committee during the lockdown, who worked during the summer to develop a series of works related to the experience of the pandemic and its overcoming. Seven months after the lockdown, we presented the first multimedia artistic reflection on the pandemic in Europe. The exhibition was conceived from the beginning as an artistic initiative entirely viewable online where all the works were imagined imagining a situation of confinement and closure of public spaces.

From this experience, we evolved our work and structure, defining our mission and vision through different experimental actions in 2021 that included the first steps of Room to Bloom, the first edition of *Between Land and Sea*, the initiative of *From the Sea to the City* in cooperation with the City Council of Palermo and the first edition of the *European Pavilion*. By the end of 2021, we put together a defined strategy for 2022-2023 by establishing key objectives that we wanted to address.

One of the biggest social challenges we address is social exclusion and impoverishment of the local territory linked to precarity in the Mediterranean. By applying artistic methodologies, research and collective co-creation, we seek to interact with the local territory, including social movements, artistic organizations, researchers, municipal civil representatives and emerging artists that work locally and transversally to have an impact on their communities and improve social justice, sustainability and cultural and ecological richness.

We believe that Palermo, and Sicily in general, is a place of collectivity and co-creation that leads to social innovation. We conceptualize our work with the idea that peripheries have a certain power, one that urban centers have probably lost. On the one hand, peripheries are important sites of industrial production – in Sicily for agriculture, for example – and on the other hand, there is more freedom because not everything is controlled by or catered to the economic market. This combination makes it an incredibly potent place for constructing new ideas. This helps to nurture an active cultural sphere that retains the possibility of creativity, experimentation, and transformation. All that is more complicated to establish in urbanized centers where time is scarce. In this sense, one question that led our work at Fondazione Studio Rizoma is, how can one construct a transnational consciousness across peripheries, a network of support between more margi-

nalized spaces where we can create collectives, kinship, and collaborations. Concretely, the communities we engage and are working with are the following:

Young people: aiming to engage more actively younger generations in the cultural scene and artistic activities of the local communities.

Unemployed and precariously employed people: aiming for at least 25 per cent participation in our public activities of people who are having difficulties finding a job.

Cultural workers: exchanging locally and internationally about methodologies and developing different projects in partnership in the cultural sector. Academia: researchers working on different topics, from migration to climate to food waste and art in general.

Emerging artists: with our residencies and fellowship, we offer opportunities to emerging artists to develop their careers.

City representatives: our node *Rhizome Cities*, works to connect civil society and cultural actors with city administrations.

How We Innovate with Our Practice

Creativity is at the core of our mission and vision. As a cultural production hub in the Mediterranean, Fondazione Studio Rizoma provides and continuously creates infrastructure for cultural projects within a political and social framework. As a team of collaborators with different backgrounds and fields of research, we approach a shared vision with multiplicity and develop artistic and political proposals.

In the production of culture, creativity plays a central role; as a mirror of society and a daily social pastime, it also has a political impact. With Fondazione Studio Rizoma, we aim to focus on social and political challenges which are strongly linked to Sicily, where we are based, while at the same time creating transnational alliances through projects that extend into multi-year collaborations. Connections are explored, compared, and debated through the long co-production of festivals, theater productions, assemblies, musical events, residencies and fellowships.

The Nodes

Nodes define a conceptual frame for Fondazione Studio Rizoma's long-term research and production, defining our public program, mentorships, residencies, and fellowships, and providing coherency of action across our work areas. Each Node is under the supervision of one or two curators, has a duration of at least two years and spans a plurality of projects.

For the biennial cycle 2022-2023, the Nodes of Fondazione Studio Rizoma focus on topics relating to Mediterranean transnationalisms; feminism and the commons; infrastructure, built environment and urbanism; water, land, agriculture, food and other natural resources; heritage, memory, migration; digital transformation, posthumanism and postcolonialism, among others. Emerging from Sicily, they contribute to animating a continuous exchange between Europe and the rest of the world, particularly the African continent.

The Nodes in the period 2022 – 2023 have been:

- → Between Land and Sea
- \rightarrow Room to Bloom
- → Regarding Colonies
- → Rhizome Cities

Between Land And Sea

Between Land and Sea is a long-term artistic research program which unites the political and environmental impact the Mediterranean is facing with a focus on agricultural activity, liquid territories and the built environment looking at them as habitats, heritages, connectors between different shores, and economic assets.

3. Our Work

The focus lies on combining scientific and artistic research practices, building collaborative alliances and exploring different practices and histories across the Mediterranean. Water is literally at the center of the Mediterranean, which etymologically translates to "the sea in the middle of the earth". The Mediterranean Sea connects the shores of different countries and cultures and acts as a habitat for many species and has been a source of food and income for people all around it. For example, its waters are shared by many fishermen, and the lack of produce is experienced by all of them, leading to social phenomena like migration in Tunisia and across the African continent. At the same time, the Strait of Sicily is (after the Strait of Messina) among the most polluted marine areas in the world.

The management of sweet water resources is equally important as it connects directly to agriculture, another substantial part of Mediterranean heritage. While the weather conditions on land become more unforeseeable with global warming, large export-oriented industrial agriculture operations often monopolize the use of precious local water resources. Small-scale farmers remain with insufficient or no resources at all. Simultaneously, the heat and extreme temperatures favor the desertification of the land, making it unable to soak in the tempestuous amounts of rainfall that represent the other side of climate change in the Mediterranean.

Processes of industrialisation and urbanisation in the postwar period have often led to speculation that favoured particular building styles that were quick, cheap and able to house a large quantity of people or functions. The ideological and environmental disasters that have been caused with the idea of progress or for sheer financial gain have still not been repaired, and it is inclear if they ever will. At the same time, we cannot overlook that innovation has also taken place in some of these circumstances, with architectural masterpieces built in the south that have never been studied or made available to be studied alongside modernism's masters from other geographies.

The research projects that are part of this node include the following.

BETWEEN LAND AND SEA FESTIVAL

Between Land And Sea Festival is an international encounter and a programme of original artistic and theatrical productions developed and presented between Palermo, Tunis, and Bremen. It created the first participatory and long-term artistic collaboration between the three port cities, acting as a bridge between Europe and the Maghreb and between the South. Since its inception, the festival has engaged more than 100 artists, workers, researchers, migrants, fishermen, farmers and citizens from Palermo, Tunis, Bremen, Beirut, New York, Abidjan, Berlin, Hamburg, Brussels, Dakar, Bamako to examine and critically reflect the existing connections between port cities and their intertwined histories, linked by global migration and trade. At a historical moment when humanity faces unprecedented planetary challenges, artists, activists and citizens need to invent new ways to come together across borders and develop transnational and solidarity narratives.

> *Between Land And Sea Festival* develops concrete transnational alliances, narratives and practices of solidarity to withstand future crises and disasters, such as desertification, conflicts arising from growing economic inequality, rising sea levels, displacement and global migration. All projects are original artistic productions developed by Fondazione Studio Rizoma, Dream City Biennale, and Theater Bremen. They have been shown together in the different festival editions in Palermo, Tunis, and Bremen as international premieres.

BLAS Festival in Palermo Pilot Edition—September 30 / October 9, 2021

BLAS Festival in Tunis Edition II—September 30 / October 9, 2022

BLAS Festival in Bremen Edition III—November 14 / 20, 2022

BLAS Festival in Palermo Edition IV—June 16 / 30, 2023

The four editions of *Between Land And Sea Festival* have featured the participation of Lily Abichahine – *OUR SEA I: Choreography for a woman and a stone / Mare Nostrum II: Secrets of the Infinite Sea (performance);* Rossella Biscotti & Attila Faravelli – *The Journey / La Traversé* (performance and listening session), Francesco Bellina – *DEAL* (photo installation); Francesco Bellina – *Pray For Seamen* (multimedia installation with texts

by Stefano Liberti; Stefania Artusi - Emerald City (sound installation); LaFleur – Trio. For the Beauty of it / Slow Travel (dance performance by Alex Mugler, Voguing dancer from New York, Carlos Martinez, High Energy dancer from Mexico City, Ordinateur, Coupé Décalé dancer from Paris and Abidjan, director Monika Gintersdorfer from Berlin and multi-genre composer Timor Litzenberger); Simone Mannino and Ensemble Studio - Prometeo: The Blue Kangaroo (theatre); Milo Rau - The New Gospel (film); Arte Migrante - Open mic session; Ruth Kemna - Sirens of Babylon (musical performance); Jozef Wouters – The Soft Layer (site specific installations); Syndicat! Summit; Lina Issa and Cheikh Sene in collaboration with Ousman Toury, Talla Kebe, Assan Sene, Magatte Wade, Aliou Mbaaye, Mbaye Fall, Imam Thiam, Amadou Niang, and the public – A Space to Hold; Genny Petrotta - KUMETA, Eliza Collins x School of Water Scarcity - WET ZONES (cooking session); Irene Coppola and Ruben Monterosso - Mammelloni (film), Irene Coppola - Fire-works (installation), concerts by Agostino, Pedro Oliveira (DESMONTE), Sara Persico and Rébétiko-Malouf.

Between Land And Sea Festival Opening (Ecomuseo Urbano Mare Memoria Viva, Palermo, 2023). Credits: Roberto Boccaccino.



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TECNOPIZZICA, Agostino x Between Land And Sea Festival (Stand Florio, Palermo, 2023). Credits: Roberto Boccaccino

La Traversée, Rossella Biscotti x Between Land And Sea (Tunis, 2022). Credits: PolGuillard

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3. Our Work

PRAY FOR SEAMEN

Pray For Seamen is an artistic research project by Francesco Bellina and Stefano Liberti investigating the decay of small-scale fisheries and port communities through the human stories that reveal the localized economic scarcity of globalization, the exploitation, and the connection between three seemingly remote places: Sicily, Tunisia and Ghana. It culminated in a multimedia installation exhibited at Ecomuseo Urbano Mare Memoria Viva, a publication edited by Cesura Publish and multiple presentations.

> In the last two decades, the work of fishermen across the world has become increasingly difficult and precarious. Working lengthy hours at unthankful times, often in dangerous conditions, they bring to shore less and less catch. The influence of global warming on delicate ecosystems, together with large-scale industrial fishing practices, has emptied the oceans, impoverishing both fishermen and the environment. While these are global phenomena, their consequences are highly localized and can be observed in various port cities in Europe, Africa and beyond.

> Weaving the single stories of fishermen into a transnational map, the Sicilian photographer Francesco Bellina explores the trade routes and systems which govern the sea, thus offering a novel view of Mediterranean heritage and its current place within global networks. Bellina confronts yet again the less exposed reasons and routes of contemporary migration. Filmed content has been produced in collaboration with the acclaimed author and filmmaker Stefano Liberti to narrate the lives of those whose lives are altered and environments obliterated by interests far away.



3. Our Work

SCHOOL OF WATER SCARCITY

School of Water Scarcity (SWS) is a multi-disciplinary research project examining water management and farming practices while connecting them to a broader cultural discourse. The project started as a collaboration between OSAE – L'Observatoire de la Souveraineté Alimentaire et de l'Environnement in Tunis, Associazione Aterraterra in Palermo, Collettivo Epidemia in Italy, and a wider network.



School of Water Scarcity Workshop, Research Trip (Tunis, 2022). Credits: Zeno Franchini

A first focus was given to discovering the knowledge held by small farmers from Sicily and Tunisia, the preservation of biodiversity through the cultivation of local native and non-native varieties and the possibility of creating solutions for the use and conservation of water reserves. What is possible despite and, maybe, even because of disaster? As Jonathan Nossiter writes in *Cultural Insurrection* (Other Press, 2019), civilization is based on agriculture and culture. To create a positive and non-violent exchange to look forward to, the *School of Water Scarcity* brought together workers of both culture and agriculture to exchange and connect while also creating alliances to communicate the fundamental importance of their work to a broader public.

SWS: Tunisia and Sicily

In 2021, the *SWS* organised two research trips with a selected group of researchers, agricultural workers and cultural practitioners to get acquainted with both contexts and allow for shared problems, solutions and projects to arise. The following topics and questions served as guiding principles during these explorations:

Mapping Possibilities. In the context of global warming, desertification and also a certain tropicalisation in which weather conditions are increasingly severe – for example, the rainfall of an entire year which falls during a few days, heat waves, fires, and at the same time, weather predictions that are less and less reliable – it is necessary to think about how and what to do to contribute to the limitation of Climate Change (changing policies and economic model) and secure local food security through the use of local knowledge. Which lost traditions can be reactivated and shared among farmers, such as soil practice (capable of absorbing water in excess and keeping it for longer use), stone-wall building techniques (capable of creating humidity), channel coils along slopes (to avoid soil erosion and waterlogging)? Which plants can resist, and would a tropicalisation of the cultivated plants pose a problem? When does protectionism become conservative? And how can the water collection and storage be relearned?

Agriculture and Resistance. Taking care of the land is an act of resistance and care. On the one hand, agricultural production provides essential nutrition and is thus necessary to survive. The quality and diversity of the products we have at hand drastically changed from small-scale farming to industrial production. On the other hand, this is true for human organisms as it is for the environment, as industrial agriculture completely depletes the soil, natural local resources and biodiversity. However, in Sicily and many regions and countries, small-scale farming is not lucrative enough for farmers to survive - the work they invest in is more significant than the return received - and leads to the land being abandoned. When droughts, flooding and fire are the new norms, this is even more problematic because unworked soil and empty fields are much less resilient in such conditions than cultivated land. Nonetheless, in a merely neocolonial and capitalist realm, these territories have little value and resources are geared towards profit. How could a solidarity network be implemented for those who cure them, and how could these territories generate livelihoods again?

Culture and Communication. Agricultural produce is more than anything treated like an economic commodity; it is grown artificially, moved around, conserved over long periods, and finally transformed into countless other products or, in the worst case, if unconsumed, it ends up in our landfills. Treating nature and workers in industrial agriculture as a limitless production line is disastrous. Yet, as we need to eat multiple times daily, productive small-scale farming could be one of the most incredible change-makers for consumers' health and the environment. What ways

of communication can be created that raise awareness, allow connection, and are accessible rather than greenwash elitist? Which dialogues between direct action, structural change, and administrative support or pressure are necessary? Which forms of expression are tangible?

The SWS x Wet Zones Kitchen: Eliza Collin

Palermo is not a water scarce city. It receives water from many springs, wells and reservoirs due to the artificial damming of rivers. Historically Palermo can boast of one of the most intricate sophisticated water systems. However today, over 50% of this water is lost before it reaches domestic spaces, and though water in the basin is not scarce, the cities resulting in over consumption inevitably leads to the quickening desertification of the surrounding countryside. The water which reaches the domestic space, once used, much of the time is often not cleaned properly before being discharged into rivers and oceans with devastating effects on these ecosystems.

The way we dirty and dispose of water today is contributing to a global shortage of fresh water and leans us into a future of complex remediation to ensure enough clean water to go around. Contributing to this, we have also disrupted the natural water cycle through activities such as deforestation and pulling groundwater. Cities survive from the resources which surround them, and many are designed for goods to enter and waste to leave. Water is one of the most important substances on the planet today, it is infinite, yet its quality is finite.

Following on from the *SWS* research trips, Wet Zones proposes a practical solution that prototypes the circular use of water in an everyday context through a modular kitchen with bio filters. The project suggests a not-so-distant future where localised water recycling presents a short term solution in allowing for the regulated consumption, disposal and reclamation of this finite resource. Mitigating damaging water habits and paving the way towards circular cities. The mobile kitchen unit proactively explores a kitchen water filtration system, using localised production and materials; the used water entering the system will be channelled through a range of filters which remove contaminants, before being purified to safe standards for reuse or discharge. This process invites us to address how we use water, what we put into it, and our day-to-day water habits, however it does not aim to demonise the domestic, but to provide temporary agency over our own water habits, sending a clear message to those in positions of power, our desired water futures.



WET ZONES Kitchen Activation, Eliza Collin x Between Land And Sea Festival (Foce del Fiume Oreto, Palermo, 2023). Credits: Roberto Boccaccino

3. Our Work

3. Our Work

AFTER – THE FIRST FESTIVAL OF ARCHITECTURE IN SICILY

:AFTER. Festival Diffuso di Architettura in Sicilia is the first festival of architecture in Sicily that proposes a multidisciplinary analysis of the architectural structures that has characterized the last 100 years (1922-2022) on the island. It is a multidisciplinary festival curated by a diverse team of professionals composed of Pietro Airoldi, Lisa Andreani, Jacopo Costanzo (WAR), Zeno Franchini (LOTS/ Marginal), Francesca Gattello (LOTS/Marginal), Valeria Guerrisi (WAR) and Izabela Anna Moren (FSR).



AFTER Festival — Palermo Nord Walking Tour (Sicily, 2023). Credits: Giacomo De Caro



3. Our Work



3. Our Work

Room To Bloom

AFTER Festival (Sicily, 2023). Credits: Giacomo De Caro

AFTER HISTORY means reviewing and rewriting a part of Sicilian history to which little attention has been paid, valorising its heritage and attempting to transform a romanticized vision that proliferates in the representation of an underdeveloped and backward South, at the same time stratified by cultures and dominations.

AFTERLIFE means starting again with a new form of historicization in order to change the point of view and investigate the possibilities of the area by offering a second life to its architecture.

During the 8-day festival, we took hundreds of participants through different cities and cities (Palermo, Gibellina, Salemi, Himera, Castellammare del Golfo, Cefalù, Gibilmanna, Augusta, Brucoli, Borgo Rizza, Gela, Catania, Librino) across Sicily to contextualise this diverse landscape and its history through explorations, guided tours, discussions, theatrical performances, musical concerts and presentations. The project has also included the publication of the book *Continente Sicilia: Sei interviste con architetti Siciliani* (Lettera Ventidue, 2023), presentations of the research in form of workshops, discussions and exhibitions in collaboration with departments at TU Wien (Wohnbau und Entwerfen) and the University of Basel (Critical Urbanisms), and a special edition of the architecture magazine *Panteon* dedicated to five case studies of Sicilian architecture selected and written by the curatorial team. *Room to Bloom* is the node of work focusing on advancing ecofeminist and postcolonial artistic practices. It aims at building a feminist narrative that is fully built on the experience and knowledge of emerging artists with a migration background but also working in technology and digital spaces. As a result of the work in this Node, we have set up a new transfeminist and ecofeminist platform that brings together emerging artists to examine and create ecological and postcolonial narratives for Europe and beyond. Room to Bloom recognises that it is time to contribute to the activation of the peripheries, including digital spaces, and to navigate against patriarchalism, different types of oppression, exploitation and racism to open new spaces for experimentation and to lay the basis for new forms of actions in the art world.

Room to Bloom wants to apply the true lessons of different feminisms, providing an efficient support network to its artists while deconstructing the Western gaze and being fully conscious and aware of the many complexities brought by intersectionality.

The projects that have been part of this node include:

RTB MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

With the *Mentorship Programme*, Room to Bloom provides a boost to emerging feminist artists' international visibility and careers and an opportunity for them to work out in a growing network in Palermo and Europe. Throughout the programme, the Room to Bloom Community and mentors accompany emerging artists in their professional development.



Irene Coppola's workshop x Room To Bloom Mentorship Programme, (Ecomuseo Urbano Mare Memoria Viva, Palermo, 2022). Credits: Elisa Capellini



ARTSFORMATION

Celebrating Postcolonial and Ecofeminist Art

From 1 to 4 November 2022, we co-organised with European Alternatives and the *Room to Bloom* partners a Festival of emerging artists on the the-me *Celebrating Postcolonial and Ecofeminist Art*.

Following the artists' gatherings organized by the Room to Bloom programme in Athens, Palermo, Kyiv and online, our community members showcased their artwork. What we lived during these days was like a collective momentum of solidarity, healing and celebration of artistic practices fighting to promote an alternative decolonial and ecofeminist narrative of Europe and the world. Nearly 50 artists from Europe, Latin America and the MENA region participated in the Festival.



Room To Bloom Festival (Malmö, 2022). Credits: Jan Vornholt, Shaimaa El-Banna and Fredrik Weerasinghe With *Artsformation*, we explored the intricate relationship between the arts and our unfolding digital society. Our mission was not just to observe but to actively engage in understanding how the arts are intertwined with digital transformation. We believed the arts could serve as a significant bridge, fostering a more inclusive and sustainable digital era.

Our approach was multifaceted. We were not only focused on theoretical perspectives. Instead, we aimed to bring the arts to the forefront as an instrumental player in the digital shift, weaving together insights from the artistic, technological, entrepreneurial, and societal spheres.

Assembled from diverse backgrounds, our team comprised academics, artists, and societal stakeholders. This collaborative spirit allowed us to



ARTSFORMATION Final Summit (LaVallée, Brussels, 2023). Credits: Serena Vittorini

ARTSFORMATION Final Summit (LaVailée _ Brussels, 2023). Credits: Serena Vittorini 41

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employ a blend of traditional and innovative research methods, like those rooted in artistic practices. This holistic approach aimed to advance academic understanding and translate these insights into actionable strategies.

Central to our research was the artist's viewpoint. We endeavored to comprehend how artists perceive and navigate the digital transformation and how their practices are influenced and can influence in return. Likewise, the project explored the role of the arts in enterprise and their interaction and influences on business methods and organizations. Artsformation also paid attention to the engagement of the arts with societal issues, with a special interest in those artistic practices that tackle challenges deriving from the

digital transformation in European society.

Community engagement was another pivotal component. Recognising the arts' potential to address societal challenges, especially those emerging from digital transformation in Europe, we actively facilitated artist residencies. We also curated diverse exhibitions in various European locales, fostering dialogues between artists and the communities they resonate with.

Our findings, summarized through exhibitions, videos, publications and even workshops we co-organised, were illuminating. A significant number of artists are channeling their creativity to contribute to a more democratic, inclusive, and sustainable digital transformation.

3. Our work

Regarding Colonies

The projects of *Regarding Colonies* address the history of migration between Europe and its colonies in Africa, between Northern and Southern Europe. They examine past and current practices of exploitation of humans and nature in the global South and the manifold expressions of resistance. They critically reflect on the forms of their transcontinental cooperation, shaped by historically grown economic inequalities and cultural misunderstandings, to transform them. Since European trading companies began to operate in distant countries, the birth of the global economy as we know it today, the protagonists of these developments – the traders, explorers, soldiers, missionaries, and colonial administrators – have promoted a global division of labor that turned the countries in the South into suppliers of raw materials that enabled industrialisation in the North. And as sales markets for the industrial products from the north. From the beginning, great efforts were made to prevent any industrialisation and autonomy in the colonies and, just as later, in the independent states.

A division of labor that continues today with the neo-colonial practices of global corporations, outsourcing of the low-wage sectors of industry and all the negative effects of Western consumer societies on the South. Exploiting the raw materials we need for our technical development destroys the habitats of people in the South and causes political conflicts and wars. Climate change brought on by the West produces the first storms and floods in the Global South. The practices changed over time, but the profits have always flowed to the North. Only since China has imitated Western practices and optimized them in a highly skilful and disastrous way has the global set-up become somewhat shaky.

Palermo and Sicily is an ideal location to rethink this North-South divide, the relations between Europe and Africa. After centuries of occupation by various imperial powers, Sicily was always considered an "underdeveloped" province by the North, even long after the unification of Italy. Today, it represents the southern border of Fortress Europe. It has become the gateway, so to speak, for hundreds of thousands of young people from the African continent who are looking for a better future in Europe. Our dedicated projects within this node have included:

THE TIME FOR DENIAL IS OVER / NON È PIÙ TEMPO DI NEGARE

With the recent return of the Benin Bronzes by the two European museums with the largest collections of African art, it became evident - we are entering a new era of postcolonial debate. In this context, Fondazione Studio Rizoma and GROUP50:50 invited more than 20 artists, activists and thinkers from Europe and Africa to set the foundations for a broad transnational restitution movement. Amongst others Bénédicte Savoy, Art historian (Berlin), Mwazulu Diyabanza, Activist (Paris), Peju Layiwola, Visual artist (Lagos), Sepake Angiama, Curator and educator (London), Christian Nyampeta, Visual artist (New York), Hervé Youmbi, Visual artist (Douala) and the GROUP50:50 artists (Basel/Lubumbashi/Kinshasa) presented and discussed artistic and political practices redefining African and European identities and reframing transcontinental dialogue and cooperation in a series of lessons, pieces, and interventions.

Since the 1960s, a movement of globally connected artists, intellectuals and activists has been persistently campaigning for the restitution of African cultural artifacts and human remains to bring forward the process of decolonisation after independence. After a long period of stagnation, the debate has accelerated in recent years, with examples of physical restitution as the Behanzin treasures to the Republic of Benin or the Benin Bronzes to Nigeria. While actual restitution will be decided at the highest diplomatic level and delayed for as long as possible, it will be up to artists and civil society to accelerate and accompany this process. "Restitution is a political issue, of course, but it is not an exclusively political issue. Moreover, restitution is only successful if it is not limited to discussions between politicians. The question of restitution touches the people, the populations that have been dispossessed, the symbolic character and many also see an ethical dimension. It is a situation that touches humanity to the core." (Congolese curator Patrick Mudekereza about Non è Più Tempo di Negare in LEFT Magazine)

The time has come to follow those who have led the way for a broad and transnational movement. "We are thinking of coming back for it, because it is important that the thief understands that our determination is not against him either as a person or as an institution: our aim is to obtain compensation. First of all, to reconcile ourselves with our history, soothe our spirits and let the wounds that were opened by these horrible acts of barbarism and pillage heal." (Congolese-French activist Mwazulu Diyabanza about *Non è Più Tempo di Negare* in *L'Espresso*)

With the restitution process, we must learn, in Europe and in the former colonies, to dialogue about the long history of physical violence, economic exploitation, alienation, cultural appropriation and dislocation of these



MAMMA PERDONAMI / MËMA MË FAL: GENNY PETROTTA

In the winter of 1944, uprisings broke out in various Sicilian villages against the mismanagement of agricultural crops by an alliance of big landowners and fascist elites remaining in the governments that left the population starving. On the 31st of December, in Piana Degli Albanesi, a town with a strong and unique cultural and linguistic identity founded by the Arbëreshë people, a group of rebels led by Giacomo Petrotta proclaimed the Repubblica Popolare Contadina.

Almost 80 years later, the Sicilian visual artist Genny Petrotta, grand-niece of the leader at the time, revisits the long-silenced historical episode of her hometown. In MËMA MË FAL (Mamma Perdonami), winning project of the 11th edition of Italian Council, she is searching for traces of what happened during the 50 days the autonomous republic existed until the police crushed it. In a six-month workshop, she re-enacts the lost theatre piece with a group of young people from her village, expanding its dramaturgy by linking it to her hometown's current economic and cultural struggles. By revisiting the episode in the history of their village, she is countering the erosion of her community's cultural and political heritage. In the research process and the re-enactment of the piece, she involves the musician and musicologist Angelo Sicurella and the local linguist and poet Giuseppe Schirò di Maggio to reactivate local musical and literary traditions closely interwoven with the farming activity of the local population. By interviewing the last witnesses of the events and documenting their accounts, she contributes to preserving the collective memory of this historical episode.

The video installation Kumeta was the first act of the project *MËMA MË FAL* (*Mamma Perdonami*). In an artistic intervention about torture and state repression, Genny Petrotta invited the two sculptors, Francesco Albano and Simone Zanaglia to polish and smooth a rectangle portion of the rock facade of the marble quarry that overlooks the village. The polished surface has the same dimensions as the box where prisoners were kept during torture. The red marbles evoke human flesh, and the smoothing becomes a gesture of caressing a sore body. The sculptural intervention of smoothing and polishing has been filmed for Kumeta. The presentation of the video installation was displayed next to the former prison of Piana degli Albanesi during Between Land And Sea Festival (2023).

Humans, not symbols, Ciraj Rasool x The Time For Denial Is Over (Atrio di Casa Professa, Palermo, 2022). Credits: La Bandita

objects that produced meaning. "The colonial lens is still there somewhere, embedded in our gaze, its function is still active, and it acts by removing violence from the field of vision, hence from consciousness." (Italian artist Leone Contini about *Non* è *Più Tempo di Negare* in Il Manifesto)

After the first stage in Palermo, Non è Più Tempo di Negare travelled to euro-scene festival in Leipzig, CTM Festival in Berlin, Centre d'Art Waza in Lubumbashi and Académie des Beaux Arts à Kinshasa in 2022 and 2023. In each city, the program expanded the network of international protagonists and involved local artists and activists in their reflections and artistic production to bring the transnational restitution movement forward.



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THE GREAT PROMISE – ABOUT FOOTBALL AND DANCE: LA FLEUR

3. Our Work

In 2022, the transnational collective La Fleur presented *TRIO* in the courtyard of the Santa Chiara monastery, a brilliant show about migration stories of urban dance styles in the metropolises of this world. During the BLAS Festival 2023 the Coupé Décalé star Ordinateur from Côte d'Ivoire (former choreographer of DJ Arafat's dance ensemble, now a member of La Fleur) returned to Palermo. Together with dancer Annick Choco and choreographer Monika Gintersdorfer, they developed a performance about dance, football and showbiz – and thus role models, ambitions and opportunities – in a two-week workshop with a group of young Palermitans.

> THE GREAT PROMISE, LaFleur x Between Land and Sea Festival (Complesso Monumentale di Santa Chiara, Palermo, 2023). Credits: Roberto Boccaccino



THE GREAT PROMISE, LaFleur x Between Land and Sea Festival (Complesso Monumentale di Santa Chiara, Palermo, 2023). Credits: Roberto Boccaccino.

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Together, they explored the many connections between football and pop culture: Many singers from African countries quote the names of the football players they love in their songs. Successful African football players want to celebrate their victories and let their most beloved African singers and dancers perform for them in the clubs. "There are two dreams: to become a great footballer or a dance star. Many people dream of one or the other. In fact, there are several guys in the group of youngsters in Palermo we work with who dream of both, and who have a talent for both! It has to be said that this is an African characteristic: in Italian or German teams there are probably not many footballers who dream of becoming dancers." (Monika Ginterdorfer about *The Great Promise* in L'Espresso) They share the willingness to take risks, to throw themselves into an unknown situation that is not yet secure, even though they are already known in their home countries.

THE EUROPEAN PAVILION A Space for Experimentation and Imagination

The European Pavilion programme has as its ambition to facilitate a space that encourages experimentation and reflection on Europe. In collaboration with partners, it sets out to support a European network of arts and cultural organizations that, through artistic and educational projects, offers the opportunity to explore ideas for a future Europe.

Fondazione Studio Rizoma co-curated the 2021 edition of the *European Pavilion* in Palermo (hosted by the Ecomuseo Mare Memoria Viva) and in 2022 in Rome (hosted by our partners Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History, Goethe-Institut, German Academy Rome Villa Massimo, Académie de France à Rome Villa Médicis, Istituto Svizzero, Museo delle Civiltà and NERO).



Listening out Loud StoryTelling Europel, Melika Ramić, Fariba Mosleh and Natalia Hecht x The European Pavilion (Rome, 2022). Credits: Sebastiano Pupillo.jpg In both occasions questions were addressed such as: How, through the metaphor of the pavilion, can we rethink the space and the landscape of Europe? What does a European Pavilion look like and what can it mean? In French, the word pavilion also refers to the visible architecture of our ear: the part that allows listening. With this in mind, the programme paid particular attention to the rich diversity of languages and voices that make up Europe, especially those that are often silenced or marginalized.

3. Our Work

Rhizome Cities

Cities around Europe and beyond – through platforms, movements and international networks – are creating paths for citizens and local communities to directly participate in and influence politics. Our work with *Rhizome Cities* proposes how cities can deal with political uncertainty and provide new visions on issues such as climate, migration, social innovation or digital transformation.

VR installation as part of the EUPavilion Eight proposals by EUPavilion collective (Rome, 2022). Credits: Sebastiano Pupillo *Rhizome Cities* node aims at building links between civil society and municipalities in view of the potential longer-term development of such links into a structured network, as well as links between representatives of social movements and activist groups. The discussions and projects around this node revolve questions of how key ideas of our time are developed, which interests are taken into account, which approaches are adopted, how budgets are distributed within municipalities, and what cooperation is established with civil society. This involves a critical reflection on the political contexts of cooperation that frame the practices and exchange with and within city administrations.

The two projects active in this node during the reporting period have been:



Rhizome Cities, Towards a municipal Charter on decolonisation restitution and new citizens (Montpellier, 2022). Credits: Patrizia Pozzo **RHIZOME CITIES**

With a trial process of 18 months (Spring 2022 – Autumn 2023), we wish to foster greater people-to-people exchange between European and sub-Saharan political and cultural communities, providing structured occasions for Municipalities and Civil Society from across Europe and the African continent to come together. The program has been led by Studio Rizoma with the City of Palermo and so far foresees the participation of the European municipalities of Athens, Bergamo, Braga, Dusseldorf, Marseille, Mannheim, Montpellier, and Reggio Calabria.

> The programme rotates around international meetings bringing together municipal representatives, cultural actors and civil society from across Europe and Africa. We have isolated three specific areas of action:

> **On Restitution**. A programme of debate and cultural exchange starting from the current political debate on the restitution of cultural heritage and involving artists, researchers and activists from Africa and Europe. Introducing a broader notion of restitution, which can refer to tangible and intangible heritage as well as natural resources, they present and discuss decolonising artistic and political practices and interventions that potentially transform the relations between Europe and Africa. This programme is co-curated by Eva-Maria Bertschy and Congolese curator Patrick Mundekereza.

> **Political Networks.** We work to begin building links between European municipal representatives and their African counterparts given the potential longer-term development of such links into a structured network, as well as links between representatives of social movements and activist groups from Europe and Africa. This program, co-hosted by the Mayor of Palermo Leoluca Orlando, cut across the other two and imagines concrete areas of municipal and activist cooperation between European and African cities and social groups, including on the questions of restitution and supporting innovative forms of civil society cooperation developed by the two other areas of our program.

New Models of Cooperation. Directly implementable civic exchange spaces that bring together civil society groups, cultural and social entrepreneurs from participating European cities and their African counterparts for structured exchange and peer learning. With a special focus on the practices of migrant-run organizations, the aim is to present and develop models of innovative transcontinental cooperation and exchange that can

3. Our Work

overcome the existing imbalances between the European and African partners and foster win-win collaborations between European and African civil society, NGOs and social enterprises.

The programme aimed to engage and empower migrants and second-generation communities, but it also aimed specifically at:

- Testing new methods and models to foster inclusion in our cities, going beyond traditional approaches to migrant welcoming and integration;

- Engage civil society from participating European countries in a joint exercise of mapping and exploiting such opportunities via innovative formats;

- Creating models for a sustainable municipal policy that fosters the structural creation and animation of such spaces / models / formats in the medium and long term;

- Mainstream European city-to-city cooperation in developing and testing new municipal policies around specific challenges, particularly migration and democratic innovation.

We have managed to put together an efficient and operational transnational working team with eight municipalities ready to move ahead and look for new challenges. A direct outcome of the process has been the creation of 'best practices' that constitute a great achievement for all partners. Together with a final declaration signed by mayors, we have put together a best practices report as a concrete toolkit available online and in different languages that will be available to welcome and support any city that wants to take these examples as a working reference within their own contexts. Moreover, the declaration is one of the key outcomes of the project that proves how municipalities can work together regardless of the political party that is in power.

The Rhizome Cities programme has involved in total more than 1600 participants and reached 20 different initiatives and engaged 40 Civil Society Organisations, of which at least 10 work with women, 15 work with first and second-generation migrants.

Cities4Refugees

Can cities become the space for a new idea of transnational solidarity?

Cities for Refugees is a project in cooperation with the City of Berlin, the City of Villeurbanne, City of Zagreb, City of Barcelona, and two Berlin-based NGOs: BBAG and the Governance Platform. It involves municipalities, activists, NGOs and other multipliers who are directly working to improve the situation for migrants arriving to Europe and within Europe. Focusing on the cooperation between municipalities from different countries and its local civil society group, the objectives of this initiative are increasing capacity-building for activists and cities through the dialogue around best practice examples in different fields of migration and cooperation.

The project works on the possibility of strengthening municipalities by creating multi stakeholder groups organized with civil society, which is already much more organized and committed at the city level, to plan strategies for the development of the city combined with strategies for the arrival of refugees in our cities. The idea is that this model would also mean more participation on the part of citizens and activists taking part in such committees and at the same time, a more direct involvement at the EU level.

Cities 4 Refugees (Brussels, 2023). Credits: Giorgio Mega



Fellowships

With our fellowship programme we provide seed funding to promising activists, artists, and social entrepreneurs to develop a plan for a long-term period in cooperation with us. The fellowship program empowers individuals and collectives to kick-start an organization, scale up their careers, or develop a cultural or political initiative.

> We provide access to micro-funding at the early stage of the development of an idea for individuals and collectives wishing to foster a long-term change in their locality by, for instance, setting up new institutions, opening a public space, permanently scaling up their work, achieving a career change, or any other action that sustainably impacts reality beyond the short-term duration of a project.

> The fellowship program is primarily focused on achieving an impact in the city of Palermo and the wider Sicilian context. We additionally may provide fellowships to international organizations working in a long-term, structured partnership with Fondazione Studio Rizoma.

> Throughout the fellowship, we actively accompany our fellows in realizing the supported initiative, whether by investing our staff time, creating connections that lead to other funding, or developing joint programming. Fellows are invited to take up a role in the activities of Fondazione Studio Rizoma and often contribute to defining the long-term vision and program of the organization.

Fellows in the years 2022 and 2023 have been:

#wallofsounds Music Festival, Sicily



4. Fellowships

Gancio Cielo, Francesco Cavaliere x # wallofsounds (Chiesa di San Giovanni Decollato, Palermo, 2022). Credits: Elisa Capellini

Wallofsounds is an international festival of contemporary music and arts conceived, organized and directed by Gaetano La Rosa to enhance the city's monumental heritage with music events ranging from experimental to contemporary classical, from sound art to radical improvisation, inviting leading players from the international music scene. In the first edition, we presented, among other things, the world premiere of *The Mayfield* – from a project by and with Heiner Goebbels, as part of Transeuropa Festival/BAM – Biennale Arcipelago del Mediterraneo (BAM), one of the greatest artists, composers and directors of contemporary music theater.

As part of the fellowship, the 2022 edition of the festival presented a mix of different generations and fields of music research. There were concerts performed on prepared piano by Giovanni Damiani and on a multipercussive set up by a group of improvisation researchers, both from Fluxus composers and most notably dedicated to Philip Corner. An exhibition by Croce Taravella and an immersive audio piece by Alessandro Bosetti that uses a constantly changing archive of vocal fragments. As specific contribution to the festival, Fondazione Studio Rizoma curated two concerts: Francesco Cavaliere performed an extract of his mutating solo opera for voice and electronics *Gancio Cielo*, presenting also the book which bears the same name with our fellow Mattia Capelletti; and Muqata'a, whose mastering of real time playing techniques on analogic electronic dispositives, constantly fractured and reconstituted an archive of samples of Palestinian music heritage and real life sound footage of oppression into rhythmic and melodic beauty.



Muqata_a x # wallofsounds (Archivio Storico Comunale, Palermo, 2022). Credits: Elisa Capellini

4. Fellowships

Irene Coppola



Irene Coppola. Credits: Stefano Casati

Irene Coppola was born in Palermo in 1991. An artist based in Palermo and Milan, she is part of the Room to Bloom platform. After completing her academic studies at NABA in Milan and the Willem De Kooning Academy in Rotterdam, she participated in national and international exhibitions and projects, including: AndAndAnd for Documenta13 in Kassel, the Do Disturb festival at the Palais De Tokvo in Paris, Dolomiti Contemporanee in Pieve di Cadore, Flight Sketches at the Cercle Cité in Luxembourg, Hanging Garden at the Office Project Room in Milan, Badly Buried at the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Guarene, and La Natura e la Preda at PAV in Turin. In 2019 she won the sixth edition of the Italian Council for the artistic residency project La Wayaka Current Tropic 08°N based in the indigenous community of Guna Yala (Panama). In 2020, she was among the artists selected for Cantica21. Italian Contemporary Art Everywhere, a public commissioning project promoted by the General Directorate of the Ministry of Foreion Affairs and International Cooperation and the General Directorate of Contemporary Creativity of the Ministry of Culture. The work produced was hosted at the Italian Institute of Culture in Dakar, where the artist released a new residency project, part of the collateral events of the Dak'Art 2022 Biennial.

Irene Coppola began her artistic research on the southeast coast of Palermo in 2017 in collaboration with the EcoMuseo Mare Memoria Viva. She began to familiarise herself with the materials that had been abandoned as rubbish on the coast for decades and that now, in layers, reflect the neighbourhood's history and the urban disaster caused by abusive housing construction and speculation known as Sacco di Palermo. During her fellowship, Irene Coppola in co-direction with filmmaker Ruben Monterosso began shooting their documentary Mammelloni, a portrait of the main coast of Palermo through its inhabitants. For Between Land And Sea Festival 2023, she built a modular sculpture made of the firework discards that she found on the beach and recalls the local ways to celebrate collective events of different types. On the hill, the so-called Mammelloni behind the Ecomuseo, the sculpture Fire-Works became an improvised meeting place during the festival. The social platform hosted the screening of a first version of Mammelloni and an assembly, where Coppola presented the interim results of her study with the inhabitants of the area, the citizens of Palermo, local experts and the international audience.



Fireworks, Irene Coppola x Between Land And Sea Festival (Foce del Fiume Oreto, Palermo, 2023). Credits: Roberto Boccaccino

Aterraterra Agriculture Lab, Sicily



4. Fellowships

Luca Cinquemani and Fabio Aranzulla (Aterraterra LAB, Palermo, 2022). Credits: Elisa Capellini

Founded in 2022 by Fabio Aranzulla e Luca Cinquemani, Aterraterra LAB is a multidisciplinary and experimental space that encourages intersection and dialogue between knowledge and practices from the worlds of agriculture, cuisine, art and activism in an urban setting.

The project stems from the need to continue and deepen the research on food plants and biodiversity conducted by Associazione Aterraterra, keeping at the center the idea that has animated the association's activities to date, namely that cultivation must go hand in hand with political thought, food education and artistic practices. In this sense, ATT LAB investigates the relationship between human beings and natural ecosystems – and the possibility of changing it – as a process that transversally crosses not only agricultural practices but also social practices of consumption, culinary practices and artistic practices and activism.

Starting from these assumptions, and as part of the fellowship, Aterraterra has developed a two-year programme that has included a series of international visits, talks and moments dedicated to cuisine that involved farmers, cooks, activists, artists, researchers and agricultural laborers. They have also set the foundations and run first activities of the Aterraterra LAB; this includes: cycle of events at the space, guided visits and the work on a first publication that will be published in 2024.



Aterraterra LAB Opening (Palermo, 2022) Credits: Elisa Capellini

Mattia Capelletti Researcher and Curator, Italy



Mattia Capelletti. Credits: Giulio Boem

Mattia Capelletti is a doctoral student in Sciences of Culture at the University of Palermo, writer and independent curator based in Torino. Interested in sound and the human voice, he has investigated its aesthetics, politics and technologies across theory and artistic disciplines. More recently his research has focused on the voice as a site of surveillance and the emerging artistic strategies of resistance, as part of his PhD and through a series of curatorial projects. With collaboration at the core of his practice, he is involved in projects such as: Idioletta (with artist Costanza Candeloro), a project aimed at fostering "borderline" literature and orality; Black Med, a platform for the traveling of sounds across Mediterranean borders initiated by Invernomuto. for which he acts as author and researcher; and Palm Wine, a website dedicated to post-global sound cultures he co-edits along with Simone Bertuzzi. His most recent writing has appeared in Flash Art, Il Tascabile, and Black Med, an anthology curated by Invernomuto and published by Humboldt in 2021.

Whilst holding his PhD on human voice recognition softwares (often questionably used at borders for forced identifications of migrant people) at the University of Palermo, Capelletti focused his fellowship with Fondazione Studio Rizoma on curating a series of concerts and

sound works focused on the voice matter. This included performances by Lucy Liu (a post-pop trans artist in collaboration with the Sicilia Queer Filmfest), Pedro Oliveira (reverting the voice recognition software into a tool for noise music during the Between Land And Sea Festival 2023) and Francesco Cavaliere, for whom he curated also the book Gancio Clelo that was presented in the same event together with a stunning music performance at the church of S. Giovanni Decollato, Another significant contribution was an in depth dialogue about the concept of Deep Listening and the use of voice as an instrument. with sound artist Diana Lola Posani after her performance curated by Fondazione Studio Rizoma that took place at AterraterraLab.



Pedro Oliveira x Between Land And Sea Festival (Stand Florio, Palermo, 2023). Credits: Roberto Boccaccino

Earth Day A Festival of the Environment in Palermo



4. Fellowships

EARTHDAY Festival (Cantieri Culturali alla Zisa, Palermo, 2023). Credits: Elisa Capellini

Earth Day is the largest environmental event on the planet, the only time when all the world's citizens come together to celebrate the Earth and promote its preservation. *Earth Day*, a moment strongly desired by U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson and promoted even earlier by President John Fitzgerald Kennedy, involves up to one billion people in as many as 192 countries worldwide each year.

Main themes are the pollution of air, water, and soil, the destruction of ecosystems, the thousands of disappearing plants and animal species, and the depletion of nonrenewable resources. There is an insistence on solutions to eliminate the negative effects of human activities; these solutions include recycling materials, conserving natural resources such as oil and fossil gasses, banning harmful chemicals, stopping the destruction of key habitats such as wet forests, and protecting endangered species.

In Palermo, under the patronage of the Municipality and *Earth Day Italia* (the national supervisory and coordinating body for the various events in the country) the first edition of *Earth Day Palermo Festival* was born in 2013 under the direction of Patrizia Pozzo (Fondazione Studio Rizoma) and Simona Gazziano (Fuori Orario Production) when especially in the south of Italy few people were talking about the Environment

and certain themes were totally out of the Sicilian public debate. With a precise format, which has always alternated moments of debate and more serious discussion with playful moments and workshops, the festival has grown year by year in terms of topics addressed, international guests, number of participants and audience until it has become an expected event for the city of Palermo, Partners include: Regional Department of Health, Regional Department of Environment and Territory, Regional Department of Tourism, Ars, University of Palermo, Gesap, Amap, Rap, Banca Etica, Coop, Comieco, Greenpeace, LegAmbiente, Coop Sicilia, Stop Global Warming: Amnesty International: Green Italia: Green Renaissance: Green New Deal for Europe: National Geographic, Legambiente; Mare Vivo; Extinction Rebellion, among others.



EARTHDAY Festival (Cantieri Culturali alla Zisa, Palermo, 2023). Credits: Elisa Capellini

Residencies

We run two types of residency programs to generate and produce innovative ideas in and around Palermo.

> Generative: Residents are invited and accompanied by the Rizoma team to meet people with relevant expertise or possible cooperation partners and to get to know the city of Palermo and the region of Sicily. Residents arrive in Palermo with a concrete project to develop, or they let the city guide them to develop one.

> Residents deal with issues and have developed practices that can be fruitfully connected with Palermo and the working focus of one of the Nodes of Rizoma. The generative phase of project development jointly makes a project tangible, fostering the opportunity for a longer-term collaboration with the resident. In this sense, the generative residency scheme also opens up the definition of Rizoma's work program enabling participatory co-design.

> Where deemed of mutual interest, and depending on the financial requirements and funding availability, residents may return to Palermo as Production Residents.

In this case, they are engaged in producing the generated idea, normally in collaboration with Fondazione Studio Rizoma and with local partners they have identified during their first, generative stay. Production residencies are assessed and planned on a bespoke, individual basis, with a dedicated production budget additionally made available.

Patrick Mudekereza

5. Residencies

<u>June 2022 — Artist, Congo</u>



Patrick Mudekereza x The Time for Denial is Over (Atrio di Casa Professa, Palermo, 2022). Credits: La Bandita

Patrick Mudekereza is a writer and cultural operator, founder and artistic director of the Centre d'art Waza, a unique independent art centre in Lubumbashi. He co-founded and directed the first three editions of Rencontres Picha, Biennale de Lubumbashi (2008-2015). He participated in the foundation and sat on the board of the International Biennial Association. He curated exhibitions such as Prise de Terre (part of GEOgraphics, Bozar, 2010), Close Openings/Vernissage Fugaces (Various venues in Lubumbashi, 2011), Mining Lubum (VANSA, Johannesburg, 2015), Silimuka (part of the ChinAfrika under construction project, Museum für Gegenwartskunst GfZK Leipzig, 2017), Aire d'oiseaux imaginaires (Congo Biennale in Kinshasa, 2019, and Bogardenkapel Brugge, 2019). The project and accompanying publication Revolution Room (2013-2016) won the African Architecture Award in the Critical Dialogue category (Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town, 2017).

At documenta fifteen, Waza presented a platform of curatorial experiences inspired by practices of the commons studied in South Eastern Congo. In 2016 he received the Congolese National Prize for Art and Culture and in 2017 the Medaille Art Lettre et Sciences. He teaches at the Universities of Lubumbashi and Witwatersrand.



Patrick Mudekereza and Eva-Maria Bertshcy at The Time For Denial Is Over (Leipzig, 2022). Credits:Tom Dachs

During his residency in Palermo, he co-curated the three-day festival *Non* è *Più Tempo di Negare* with Eva-Maria Bertschy and developed a concept for a transcontinental project that explores artistic and political approaches to dealing with the monuments of the colonial era in Europe's and Africa's cities.
5. Residencies

Hervé Youmbi June 2022 – Artist, Cameroon



Hervé Youmbi. Credits: Sara Hobson

Hervé Gabriel Ngamago Youmbi, born in Bangui, Central African Republic on March 25, 1973. is a Cameroonian artist who lives and works in Douala. He is a founding member of the Cercle Kapsiki, a collective of five Cameroonian artists. founded in 1998. Hervé Youmbi draws his inspiration from history, especially that of his country and the African continent, denouncing both Cameroon's colonial past or recent dictatorial regimes. His interest in introspection and the search for identity has led him to portraiture, which is at the heart of all his work. As a teacher at the Nkongsamba and Foumban art schools, Hervé Youmbi contributed to the development of the Cameroonian art scene. He is a founding member of the Cercle Kapsiki, a collective group of five visual artists and scenographers from Douala, founded in 1998, which also provides a cultural exchange space, the K Factory. This space serves as a resource center for young artists.

During his residency in Palermo, Hervé Youmbi developed and discussed a concept for an artistic intervention in Piazza Due Palme. He wants to create a permanent art installation that recalls the forgotten history of the square. A six-meter high totem will use artistic iconography to commemorate the dead in the Italian war of aggression on northern Italy and the battle at



Totem Rendering by Hervé Youmbi at Piazza Due Palme (Palermo, 2023). Credits: Hervé Youmbi

the Oasis Due Palme in December 1911. Thereby, the historical episode is also reinterpreted: The installation is not telling the story of a glorious victory but of a series of mass executions, deportations and bombings in an Italian vendetta that claimed the lives of tens of thousands of civilians. The contemporary sculptural signature of the totem will borrow from the aesthetics of classical African art. 5. Residencies

Lena Chen September 2022 — Artist, US/China



Mother to Mother, Lena Chen x Room To Bloom (Palazzo Butera, Palermo, 2022). Credits: Umberto Santoro

Lena Chen is a Chinese American writer and artist creating performances and socially engaged art. A recipient of Mozilla Foundation's 2022 Creative Media Award and Best Emerging Talent at the 2019 B3 Biennial of the Moving Image, her work has appeared at Transmediale, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Färgfabriken, Baltimore Museum of Art, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Sheffield DocFest, Museum of Contemporary Art Jacksonville, among others.

She has been awarded grants and residencies from Sundance Institute, Millay Colony for the Arts, Burning Man Global Arts Fund, Frank-Ratchye STUDIO for Creative Inquiry, Pittsburgh Foundation, and Arthur Boskamp Foundation. She has spoken at Oxford, Yale, Stanford, and SXSW. She is the founder of *Heal Her*, an expressive arts initiative that supports survivors of gender-based violence. Currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Performance Studies from the University of California, Berkeley, she earned a B.A. in sociology from Harvard University and an M.F.A. from Carnegie Mellon University's School of Art. The residency enabled the realisation of an artistic performance and a public event in Palermo at Palazzo Butera and made possible the publication of the Room to Bloom Manifesto.

Mother to Mother, Lena Chen x Room To Bloom

(Palazzo Butera, Palermo, 2022)

Eliza Collin November 2022/April 2023 — Designer, UK



5. Residencies

Eliza Collin



Her project Wet Zones suggests a not-so-distant future where localised water recycling presents a short-term solution that allows for this finite resource's regulated consumption, disposal and reclamation. Mitigating damaging water habits and paving the way towards circular cities, the outdoor kitchen unit proactively explores a kitchen water filtration system, using localised production and materials; the used water entering the system will be channelled through a range of filters which remove contaminants before being purified to safe standards for reuse or discharge. This process invites us to address how we use water, what we put into it. and our day-to-day water habits; however, it does not aim to demonise the domestic but to provide temporary agency over our own water habits, sending a clear message to those in positions of power, our desired water futures.



WET ZONES Kitchen Activation, Eliza Collin x Between Land and Sea Festival (Foce del Fiume Oreto, Palermo, 2022). Credits: Roberto Boccaccino

After an initial mapping of water sources and riverbeds in Palermo, Eliza Collin initiated her research on the *Wet Zones* biofilters as part of the project School of Water Scarcity. The project continued with the creation of a mobile *Wet Zones* kitchen prototype which was co-designed with the local design lab Marginal Studio. Finally, the kitchen was activated in the presence of invited guests during a food performance during *Between Land And Sea* IV Edition. Gloria Dorliguzzo March 2023 — Choreographer, Italy

5. Residencies



Portrait Gloria Dorliguzzo



Butchers, Gloria Dorliguzzo (Palermo, 2022) Credits: Gloria Dorliguzzo

Starting from martial arts and the art of the Japanese sword, which she still practices, she approached contemporary dance. After graduating from the Italian Professional School of Dance, she immediately started collaborating as a performer with the National Academy of Rome, the Wuppertal Theater and the Teatro alla Scala in Milan, coming into contact with internationally renowned choreographers and directors such as: Nikos Lagousakos, Cindy Van Acker, Claudia Castellucci, Crysanthi Badeka, Ariella Vidach, Gisele Vienne. Her meeting with Yoshito Ohono. MaluAiraldo and Adriana Boriello was decisive in her choice to direct her choreographic and performance language towards a continuous research on the body and its movement, including Visual Art, theater and new digital media in her poetics and multimedia. From 2010 to 2018 she collaborated as a performer for Monica Casadei's Artemis Danza company, taking her shows all over the world. Her works include Narcissus's way, presented at Infinito Studio Gallery TriBe-Ca, in which body, sensuality, interaction with the audience. With the OltreModo collective she presented the performance Corpi at the Infinito Studio Gallery in New York. A post-apocalyptic scenario in which real elements and imaginary references are mixed constitutes the performance of a hybrid nature. In collaboration with

Did Studio and Studio Azzurro, she created In Fieri – Dissolvenza del divenire, a performance installation in which body and sound dialogue. Since 2013, she has collaborated with director Romeo Castellucci, both as performer and choreographer, further developing the qualities of plasticity, dynamism and compositional rhythm applied to the totality of the performing and visual arts. As a performer of her shows, she worked on such extraordinarily important stages as: Adelaide Festival of Arts, Festival d'Automne, Holland Festival, deSingle, Peak Performance Montclair, Festival Transamerique-Montreal. Under Castellucci's direction as choreographer, Gloria performed in The Third Reich and at the Bonn Beethovenfest: Pavane für Prometheus' ' for the Bonn Festival in September.

In Palermo, after an initial research on local butchering traditions, Gloria Dorliguzzo realised a Movement Workshop in Palermo that led to the production of a video teaser to continue fundraising efforts. 5. Residencies

Diana Lola Posani March 2023 — Sound Artist and Performer, Italy



Scream As If Your Organs Were Made of Glass, Diana Lola Posani (Aterraterra LAB, Palermo, 2023). Credits: Elisa Capellini

Diana Lola Posani, sound artist, performer and curator, is a certified Deep Listening facilitator by the Deep Listening Foundation. She performs internationally, writes in the journal A Row of Trees, curated by the Sonic Art Research Unit (SARU) - Oxford Brookes University, and debuted in 2022 on Fango Radio with the podcast Kaikokaipuu. She is currently interested in working on the shared space between sound and poetic imagery through interdisciplinary works and sound poems. Her work has been presented at Errant Sound, Tsonami Sound Art Festival, NEXTONES festival, and in the sound art platform Licheni, curated by NUB project space. In March her translation of the book Deep Listening – The Sound Practice of a composer by Pauline Oliveros, was published by Timeo publishing house.



Scream As If Your Organs Were Made of Glass, Diana Lola Posani (Aterraterra LAB, Palermo, 2023). Credits: Elisa Capellini

Diana Lola Posani's residency resulted in a collaboration with one of our fellows, Aterraterra. A public performance was realised at Aterraterra LAB. **Ibrahim Owais** July 2023 — Sound Artist, Palestina



5. Residencies

Ibrahim Owais

The Wonder Cabinet opening 2023 - Radio Alhara at the Wonder Cabinet in Bethlehem

Ibrahim Owais, is the founder of Recordat, and one part of Radio Alhara. His work revolves around designing, developing, and creating cross-media experiences for both digital and physical spaces. He specializes in creating spatial sound performances and immersive space projects that utilize sound, architecture, and science to fabricate imaginary environments. As a sound artist, he focuses on the intersection of these elements to bring new experiences to life. Whether it's a DJ set or a sound performance his sound is in constant change, evolving with time and resonating in space. Owais uses Dj tools as instruments combining improvisational elements to create soundscapes and form cinematic sonic narratives.

During the residency, field recordings were conducted and a new piece called 'TLF' was produced. A collaboration with the Landescape collective also came about, which led to the realisation of a public event as part of the 'Glossa' format. 5. Residencies

Aylin Çankaya November 2023 — Researcher, Turkey



Aylin Çankaya





BACK TO THE LAND Aylin Çankaya x Residency On The Road at La Bandita _ Zabbara HQ. Credits: Elisa Capellini

The result of the residency was four short documentaries shot in Palermo, which were then screened at a public event at La Bandita / Zabbara HQ. The screening was followed by a debate with local producers. Marta De Pascalis December 2023 — Sound Artist, Italy

5. Residencies





Marta De Pascalis. Credits: Lisa Van Der Rhee

Marta De Pascalis. Credits: Francesco Paolo Albano

Marta De Pascalis' sonic world acts as an uncanny translator that freezes and expands emotions, conveying them into unique soundscapes. Her solo works employ analog, fm synthesis, and a tape-loop system, whereby she carves waveforms to shape cathartic sound bodies. She has performed at several festivals and venues, notably Berlin Atonal, Museo Reina Sofia, Biennale di Venezia, Berghain, Volksbühne, Café Oto, and Mutek Festival.Sky Flesh, her latest album, has been published on Caterina Barbieri's light-years imprint. The residency led to the realisation of public event at La Bandita / Zabbara HQ.

Residency On The Road: Istanbul, Prizren, Palermo

2023 — Ongoing

Artists, writers, curators, activists, chefs, architects, researchers, food, fashion, graphic and social designers were invited to apply for a transnational residency program connecting Istanbul, Kosovo, and Sicily. The first edition of *ROR* took place in 2023 as a collaboration between our Hub partners Postane in Istanbul and Autostrada Biennale in Prizren on the theme *Decolonising Food: Water, Land and Heritage.*

The residency scheme was a unique and first collaboration between the Allianz Foundation Hubs, three cultural institutions in Istanbul, Palermo, and Prizren aiming to facilitate transnational research and production in the wider European space. The Hubs aim at creating a pan-European ecosystem of knowledge, innovation and pioneering spirit.

The program consisted of two specific moments: the generative phase bringing together nine artists, thinkers, researchers, activists, chefs, farmers, anthropologists, designers and other cultural practitioners to spend one week in each of the three cities in Spring 2023, acquainting themselves with the context and possibilities. After all three visits were completed, residents were welcomed to submit a proposal for a project to be realized involving at least two of the visited hubs. The production period took place in Autumn 2023.

On this occasion, in the production phase, we hosted the researcher Aylin Çankaya (Turkey, 1989), who continued her research on the Back To The Land movement in the Palermitan area by applying the same system that had previously led to the production of short documentaries in Istanbul, in which people with an urban background who decide to change their lives, moving from the city to the countryside and thus creating a bridge to the rural world, are interviewed.

DECOLONISING FOOD: WATER, LAND, HERITAGE

The first edition of *ROR* focused on food-related practices and topics, aiming to investigate and exchange agricultural knowledge, culinary history, the practical skills needed to cultivate food and collect or disseminate seeds, research relating to livestock and the economics of alimentation and the hegemony of industrialized practices in food production and distribution worldwide.



Residency On the Road (Palermo, 2023). Credits: Elisa Capellini



Residency On the Road (Palermo, 2023). Credits: Elisa Capellini



Knowledge Production

6. Knowledge Production

Our knowledge production includes the creation and curation of short video documentaries, publications, policy reports, toolkits, books, artistic journals, magazines and academic researchers. In 2022 and 2023, we have published the following:

Between Land And Sea Catalogue

A compilation of essays, presentations, interviews and short texts to introduce the artworks, productions and exhibitions that were part of the IV edition of *Between Land and Sea festival*.



BLAS Catalogue. Design: Giulia Saporito

Room To Bloom Catalogue

An online room that explores and presents in the form of a digital catalogue some of the seeds that Room to Bloom has generated and created within the network, but also outside of it, with references of inspiration and guidance for us.



Room To Bloom Journal

Artsformation: Mobilising the Arts for an Inclusive Digital Transformation

A curated magazine that narrates the experiences, stories, challenges, and triumphs that the artists and researchers of the project documented throughout the years of work with *Artsformation*.



Artsformation Journal. Design: Giulia Saporito

Pray for Seamen

Francesco Bellina, with texts by Stefano Liberti, Cesura Publish, 2023

A photographic book investigating, through encounters with fishermen on the ground, the struggles of small-scale fisheries and port communities across Trapani, Sicily, the Kerkennah Islands, Tunisia, and Jamestown, Accra, Ghana, as a result of global warming and, notably, of the exploitative action of large-scale industrial fishing on the local ecosystems.



Pray for Seamen, Francesco Bellina and Stefano Liberti. Cesura Publish. Credits: Studio Forward

Continente Sicilia 1923-2023

Pietro Airoldi, Valeria Guerrisi, Izabela Moren (eds.), LetteraVentidue, 2023

A book of six longform interviews with Sicilian architects and historians detailing the ordinary and extraordinary developments in the field of modern and contemporary architecture, urbanism and building history that the island of Sicily has undergone. Published by independent publisher Lettera Ventidue.



Continente Sicilia 1923-2023, After Book, 2023

Best Practices & Rhizome Declaration by Mayors

A compilation of the key findings, best practices and recommendations provided by Municipalities members of *Rhizome Cities* Network for addressing contemporary injustices, embracing diversity, fostering social cohesion, and promoting the rights and well-being of all residents.



Best Practices & Declaration by Mayors, Rhizome Cities Project (Fondazione Studio Rizoma, 2023)

Impact at a Glance

7. Impact at a Glance

Measuring the impact of our work and efforts has always been a priority of the organization. By impact, we mean the effect that our work has on a specific segment in society, but also how it influences different processes that are in line with our mission and values.

This ongoing monitoring is completed quarterly by staff members and reviewed by the Board, to draw timely learnings to adjust our project methodologies and outreach where necessary.

In addition to this monitoring, our projects conduct a voluntary evaluation with participants based on a form indicating how engaging and participative they found our activities.

We also have recently put in place a MEL system in cooperation with the board to assess the quality and impact of our activities. Our MEL system is composed of quantitative and qualitative data. As part of our MEL system, we have recently implemented and published our biannual reports of activities.





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Cities of Action - Europe





South America



Funders

8. Funders

Studio Rizoma is a Foundation with legal and fiscal registration in Palermo (Italy). Fondazione Studio Rizoma is committed to transparency, being responsive to stakeholders and funders and using our resources most responsibly for long-term impact. Fondazione Studio Rizoma's governance and financial information can be found by downloading the statutes of the association and our updated accounts on our website.

In 2022 and 2023 Fondazione Studio Rizoma has been able to diversify its funders to include several of the leading foundations supporting social and cultural activities in the region, along with support from programs of the European Union, including Creative Europe, CERV and Horizon.



Vision for the Future (2024–2025)

9. Vision for the Future (2024-2025)

Fondazione Studio Rizoma organizes one strategic meeting in the Summer to set organizational priorities for the two years ahead, in consultation with our team, advisors, and partners. These priorities serve to focus our work and orientate the implementation of our programme providing also a basis for our ongoing Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning framework. We make sure that our priorities are always in line with the mission and vision of the Foundation.

Over 2024-2025 we will work towards:

1. Maintaining and reinforcing our flagship projects and events that will take place over the next few years. This includes expanding the node Between Land and Sea particularly, but also adding a new node that will focus specifically on the environment.

2. Setting up the first meetings of our newly established international Board. The Board will include leading thinkers, artists and cultural workers from throughout Europe who will advise about the direction of our work and influence our message, strategy, format and activities.

3. Serving as a point of convergence and reference for cultural and civil society actors in the Mediterranean to exchange ideas, concepts, and new ideas for culture and artistic narratives.

4. Developing further our capacity and reputation for academic research and dedicating more organizational time to producing written analysis, books, publications, interviews, and articles.

5. Strengthening our theory of change and our Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning framework in order to better measure the impact of our work.

6. Reinforcing our local work and activities by enhancing the cooperations with our fellows and the work connected to the territory.

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INPU.



Making new knowledge and ideas available for the local communities

Opening of spaces new thoughts, ideas, discussions and practices

H SOCIAL IMPAC DESIRED

Supporting social justice by creating experimental knowledge and innovative artistic practices Contributing to a vivid, local and influential artistic scene for the Mediterranean region

cratic and artistic practices by increasing the capacity of local individuals working in line with our values Strengthening democratic and

Engaging local communities in artistic and democratic practices to have a say in their future by creating networks and connections

