

**PRESS RELEASE**

Performing Resistance
Dialogues on Art, Migrations, Inclusive Cities
online talks | inquires | discursive practices
part of *Atlas of Transitions Biennale 2020*
June 16th to 20th 2020

Emilia Romagna Teatro Fondazione, the Department of Sociology and Business Law of the University of Bologna and Cantieri Meticci present ***Performing Resistance. Dialogues on Arts, Migrations, Inclusive Cities***, a series of online talks, lectures and meetings **streamed on Facebook and Youtube** channels featuring scholars, curators and international artists. It is intended as an alternative and resilient reconfiguration of the Summer School expected to be carried out in June as part of *Atlas of Transitions Biennale 2020*, the festival taking place in Bologna as part of the «Creative Europe» funded project: “Atlas of Transitions, New Geographies for a Cross-Cultural Europe”.

The third festival edition of *Atlas of Transitions Biennale*, devoted to arts, migrations and forms of citizenships planned for June 2020, won't be carried out as imagined. On this matter, in artistic curator **Piersandra Di Matteo's** words: “the overwhelming intensity of the pandemic has forced us to experience radical transformations in only a few months. It's an epochal mutation that enacts, at first, a drastic reduction of reality. But everything has become vastly complex in the paradoxical frame of a brutal contraction of time and space. If our bodies were clogged by the lockdown, held back by the uncertainty that keeps the field of *the possible* in check, disarmed by forced confinement, numbed by individualized guilt, a fundamental affect defines these days: it is a desire of bodies, that affects not only human bodies but everything, animal, vegetable, mineral, any portion of matter. It is a desire to be irremediably a body among bodies. In relation.

To tune ourselves into this desire, the activity promoted by *Atlas of Transitions Biennale* will not be postponed to the Fall but will be redesigned through an *exercise of imagination* that takes into account our current sensitivity and awareness. This means conceiving the performing arts as the outpost for a bodily, affective and collective training for proximity, able to reinvest the public space, the right to the city and domestic behavior under new conditions, shaping them through new alliances, making-kin outside of normative familial or species-bound structures, bodily postures intensified by differences, against any form of migrant fetishization”.

The performing events of the festival in June were closely linked to the theoretical and discursive moments of an International Summer School aimed at exploring the connection between the performing arts and migration, with a specific focus on the contemporary city. The Summer School was to host 30 participants selected through a public call. The reception and interest shown was remarkable: more than 130 people coming from countries ranging from Cuba to Afghanistan, from Brazil to Mexico, submitted their applications. And yet, the current situation has led the team, headed by Pierluigi Musarò (Department of Sociology and Economics Law of the University of Bologna), to overhaul its format and thus redesign an online program, open to all those interested. “This proposal is rich in political value, open and inclusive, as all knowledge should be. The

program”, says scholar **Pierluigi Musarò**, “goes beyond the borders of emergency, from the invisible enemy that recently landed in Europe to the more chronic and spectacularized one that migrants and asylum seekers experience in their bodies. Indeed, the health emergency will pass, and it will probably not be the last, yet it will leave many victims in its wake, for whom we must have deep respect. Then, it will be up to those who remain to roll up their sleeves and re-imagine the work to be done. First of all, by inventing different narratives to define what has happened, experimenting with schemes and speeches capable of opening up new possibilities of solidarity and social justice, no longer ignoring our common destiny of vulnerability. A destiny, whether we like it or not, without frontiers”.

Out of these premises, the Summer School *Performing Resistance. Dialogues on Arts, Migrations, Inclusive Cities* was born, a digital platform for study and exchange with international scholars, activists, curators and artists who explore the ways in which artistic practices build spaces of resistance, forms of subversion, counter-hegemonic affirmations on migration, actions capable of outlining other visions of and in contemporary cities, promoting, at the same time, collective processes of participation, re-appropriation and imagination in public space.

Collectively curated by Piersandra Di Matteo, Pietro Florida, Melissa Moralli, Pierluigi Musarò, *Performing Resistance* analyses the nexus that binds together art and migration from different perspectives. Using different methodological tools, from Sociology to Performance Studies, what emerges is a agonistic space where differences, other narratives, and new relationships between inhabitants and urban environment, can emerge and interact each other.

Deconstructing paternalistic, neocolonial and exoticizing positions that stigmatize the migrant as a “figure”, the talks and lectures transversally investigate issues such as the borderline between art and activism, the creation of alternative devices for knowledge, countering silenced and fragilized subjectivities, the notion of participation, “poetics of the relationship” and forms of affective citizenship, setting them in relation with urban space, whether real or imagined.

From 16th to 20th June, *Performing Resistance* offers a program of dialogues accessible in **live streaming** in English. To participate, all you need to do is access the Atlas of Transitions Italia’s [Facebook page](#) or [Atlas Youtube channel](#) on the day and CET time indicated in the calendar posted on the website www.emiliaromagnateatro.com and follow the live stream. Each meeting, lasting one hour, also includes a question time session where questions and comments coming from the online viewers will be collected, scanned and addressed to the lecturer. The program consists of two lessons per day **in English** plus a lesson organized by one of Atlas of Transitions’ international partners, in **its specific European language**, embracing the cultural and creative richness of the network on which the project has been developed.

Greek scholar **Lilie Chiuliaraki**, professor at the London School of Economics and Political Sciences – known for her book “The Ironic Spectator. Solidarity in the era of post-humanitarianism” – investigates the processes of symbolic representation of “victims” in the current pandemic, focusing on a precise analysis of populist rhetoric. Addressing the pandemic from another perspective, the Director of the Research Unit in Public Cultures at the University of Melbourne, **Nikos Papastergiadis**, proposes a reflection on the future scenarios of public art and its key role in sharing imagery and collaborative practices in the post-pandemic urban context. The Italo-Belgian sociologist and political scientist **Marco Martiniello**, director of the Center for Ethnic and Migration Studies at the University of Liège, turns his attention to the “post-racial” generation and its manifestation through collaborative artistic practices locally rooted but interconnected at a transnational level.

Political theorist and activist **Sandro Mezzadra**, from the University of Bologna, and American philosopher **Michael Hardt**, from Duke University, discuss the experience of *Mediterranea* #Saving Humans, of which they are both promoters. This is their starting point for a debate on crucial issues in current migration policies: from the mutations of humanitarianism to the human rights crisis, from freedom of movement to migration autonomy. Finnish-Nigerian journalist **Minna Salami** investigates the notion she has coined of “Afropolitanism” and the need to activate a feminist and “sensitive knowledge” (Sensuous Knowledge) capable of opening up to decolonial and anti-racist approaches. **Daniel Blanga Gubbay**, co-director of *Kunstenfestivaldesarts*, investigates the device of knowledge, educational projects conceived within artistic institutions, capable of producing spaces and modalities of transmission for invisibilized forms of life. Moving from urban centers to the outskirts of Europe, the University of Westminster scholar **Federica Mazzara** analyzes the strategies implemented by artists to challenge the narratives that negatively stigmatize migrants, focusing in particular on the issue of death at sea. The Finnish socio-anthropologist, **Karina Horsti**, professor at the University of Jyväskylä, proposes a critical reflection on how institutions and cultural operators, artists and activists can transform borders made invisible into something visible again, analyzing the consequent effects. Starting from the notion of “wayward” by Saidiya Hartman, the Afro-American dramaturg and lecturer **Tunde Adefioye**, reflects on the spaces occupied by black people and their archives in Europe, suggesting the urgency of a black dramaturgical foundation that looks at who occupies European cities and how some are allowed or disallowed, written in or written out of these realities.

In addition to those mentioned, other artists and scholars, invited by our international partners, round off the program. University of Lille researcher **Sophie Djigo** engages in a political consideration about politics and the ethics of the “refuge”, starting with the Calais jungle experience, Albanian scholar **Hektor Ciftja** will reflect on the relation between mass media and social inclusion, while pathways, experiences and artistic strategies linked to narratives, diversity representations and migration will be the topics on which the French director and performer **Léa Drouet**, the Syrian playwright **Mohammad Al Attar** and the Polish director **Weronika Szczawińska** will ground their discussions.

The online talks are moderated by experts who have been dealing with these issues for years, and include among others: Pierluigi Musarò (University of Bologna), Piersandra Di Matteo (Iuav University of Venice, artistic curator of *Atlas of Transitions Biennale*), Annalisa Frisina (University of Padua), Emanuela Piga (University of Bologna), Ilenia Caleo (Iuav University of Venice and coordinator Master Gender Studies and Policies-Roma Tre), Francesca Guerisoli (University of Milan-Bicocca, curator and journalist), Melissa Moralli (University of Bologna), Emilie da Lage (University of Lille), Edith Bartholet (Théâtre de Liège), Ardiana Kasa (TVO ngo), Paweł Sztarbowski (curator *Teatr Powszechny*).

Performing Resistance is part of **Atlas of Transitions. New Geographies for a Cross-Cultural Europe**, a European project that promotes common routes between European residents, foreign people and newcomers, experimenting new ways of interaction and reciprocity between different cultures. The project involves artists, curators, researchers, experts and activists from seven countries with the aim of promoting spaces of urban conviviality through culture and performing arts. In addition to Emilia Romagna Teatro Fondazione, the University of Bologna and Cantieri Meticci, the project is promoted at European level by: Backa Theater and Gothenburg University(SE), Le Channel Scène Nationale and Lille University (FR), Motus Terrae and Athene University (GR), Théâtre de Liège, DC&J Création and CEDEM (Center for Ethnic and Migration

Studies) at Liège University (BE), Powszechny Theatre and CMR (Center of Migration Research) at Warsaw University (PL), Tjeter Vizion and Elbasan University (AL).
www.atlasoftransitions.eu

Performing resistance supports **Mediterranea #SavingHumans**, a civil society platform operating in the central Mediterranean sea with a ship flying the Italian flag. Prepared to monitor, it is also ready for rescue operations, knowing better than ever that saving one life in danger means saving all of us. Its main goal is to be where it is needed, to witness and document what is happening, and if necessary, save whoever risks dying, surrounded by the silence and indifference of all governments. Mediterranea is present on land as well, through the support network it has created.
<https://mediterraneaescape.org>

The international Summer School “Performing Resistance” is **free of charge** and **open to all**. It is possible to Follow the live stream on our [Facebook page](#) and [Youtube channel](#), at the date and **CET** time indicated on the calendar, as well as **join the discussion** in real time, by sending questions to the live stream on the Facebook and Youtube chat. The **streams will be available** for a few days on our social networks and **on our website**, under the descriptions of the single events. It is furthermore possible to receive a **certificate of attendance** by writing to: laboratori@atlasoftransitions.eu

Performing Resistance. Dialogues on Arts, Migrations, Inclusive Cities is

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