

Drawing by Federica Terracina

IT'S ONLY THE BEGINNING

by Silvia Mei

To inhabit a place is like to dress an outfit. You wear it, you take it with you, it follows you everywhere. It doesn't matter where you are, living means being able to support the change, the unknown. Men inhabit places because they know how to get around, settle in a place, build a house, create new relations, move and so on. Their way of inhabiting places is a set of techniques and flexible schemes that can be applied to different latitudes and also to different cultures. Their know-how is somehow unconscious because it has to do with the spirit of survival and the continuation of the species. Who travels often and had to move to the city or even to a different country for professional reasons knows that the only home is where one stays in a determined moment. To inhabit a place does not consist in measuring the terrain/ground/land rather than in staying - still, upright - in order to have room, to create a space, to dwell, meaning to linger (from the latin *demorari*, to delay) somewhere in expectation of something. And in the meantime the dwelling place? arranges a living space, a habitat.

Nowadays the habitat is mistaken for interior design. The living space has

become a mere question of decoration. But to have habits, which etymologically speaking refers to the verbe "to inhabit" (from the latin *habeo*) is somewhat related to the devices our body uses in order to adapt to the environment. Since the origins of the evolution of mankind, human beings compete with an inaccessible and hostile environment from which they could escape or where they tried to survive. Whether men today dominate and modify nature doesn't mean they are losing ancient techniques in order to explore the world peacefully. Migration, transfer, nomadism distinguish our times although only residential stability can provide us our rights as citizens.

It's kind of paradoxical that in times of global economy, in the melting pot and cosmopolitanism of the third millennium national borders do still exist and souverainism boils over again. A very strange idea of nationality emerges in this atmosphere and it will be hard to enable if we don't start over again from our "staying", precisely, from our "dwelling". The romantic idea of the Wanderer could be back in vogue to encourage peoples' solidarity, brotherhood and friendship. Once again, who has

already lived in other countries or often moved to different cities knows about those feelings. Solid and true democracy is built on this basis because every voice gets the right to be heard, although they only stay or dwell in a place temporarily.

Our forms of living are on the rocks, the landscape is changing, we don't see the horizon line anymore, we can't focus. Climatic and ecological issues are a matter of extreme urgency but in the first place it depends on our *filia*, meaning it depends on our consideration for what and who surrounds us. It should be an inherent skill but actually we need to learn it, all the time, at any age. These days are dark, not even the dead are safe, and even if beauty cannot save our world, at least we can try, somewhere and somehow, to imagine a better one. We start again from here, it's only the beginning.

PLACES OF THINKING IN ALTOFEST

by Loretta Mesiti

We consider Altifest as a choral and systemic work, that extends itself through the city.

Its dramaturgy corresponds to the network of routes and paths that guide the visitor through urban landscapes and domestic intimacy, crossed by artistic interventions.

The Fest's dramaturgy also consists of outlining a proliferative reflection, growing from the experiences that Altifest brings and accumulating year after year through a series of dialogues, opportunities for discussion, words and writings.

This reflection always begins anew, set in motion by the imbalance between the recurring questions that Altifest continues to pose, and the unexpected, to which the new encounters and the work in programme expose us each year.

Imaginary and Inhabited Spaces

first steps of a choral research path Together with Silvia Mei, Daniela Allocca, Meike Gleim, Dario Gentili, Raffaele Marone, Claudia Fabris, who partake and share their knowledge with the Altifest Research Community this year, we are inaugurating a journey of biennial research on Immaginario e Spazi Abitati ("Imaginary and Inhabited Spaces"), which will be completed during the next and tenth edition of Altifest.

In this 9th edition, starting with the thinking of Walter Benjamin, and through the assembly discussion entitled *Agorà*, which will involve citizens, space donors, artists, scholars, critics and researchers, we will dwell on poetic questions raised by the residences.

What happens to the everyday habitats, when these are poetically

inhabited?

What happens to an artistic work, when it loses its formal shape to become an attitude, a posture, an operation, a way of inhabiting space?

The coexistence during Altifest, of daily life and artistic creation process in the same domestic space-time, subverts the rhythms strictly related to the hosting family nucleus and produces a change of habits, determining the emergence of new rituals, often shared with the artists hosted. The house opens up to the festival community and to visitors who are welcomed during the performances. An extra-ordinary temporality is inaugurated, that brings with it new ways of living and "practicing" the house.

Participating in Altifest as a space donor, as an artist, as an organiser, as a scholar, means cultivating year after year a new imaginary, linked to forms of living, which still remain to be discovered and built.

Altifest constitutes a sort of laboratory in which to nurture the belief that in the life of a domestic space many lives may occur, ways of living that go beyond personal, family and nuclear life: new types of meeting, of confrontation, of community, of social bond that can find a space even in the intimacy of your home, if you just leave the door open.

Critical observation and participatory thinking

The 9th edition marks the evolution of the Critique Panel in a Research Community.

That of Altifest, is a shared thought, dedicated, involved, close to action that does not cease to necessitate observation and criticism, in their most genuine sense: the first understood as an accurate and precise exercise of the gaze, the second as ability to differentiate and discern.

In this sense, let us commend, once again the words of Michel Foucault, the task of evoking the inspiration that guides us in this renewed beginning:

I can't help but dream about a kind of criticism that would try not to judge but to bring an oeuvre, a book, a sentence, an idea to life; it would light fires, watch the grass grow, listen to the wind, and catch the sea foam in the breeze and scatter it. It would multiply not judgments but signs of existence; it would summon them, drag them from their sleep. Perhaps it would invent them sometimes-all the better. All the better. Criticism that hands down sentences sends me to sleep; I'd like a criticism of scintillating leaps of the imagination. It would not be sovereign or dressed in red. It would bear the lightning of possible storms.

Michel Foucault

Curated by
Silvia Mei

The journal is not meant to be an informative tool for the events of program even less claim to explain.

Drawings by
Federica Terracina

The interventions gathered here flow under the design signature traces of the festival and make an "Aesthetic guideline." As in a map, they display an erratic path given coherence by the graphic texture.

Translations by
Rosa Coppola
Valbona Malaj
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For you readers, spectators and wanderers, your task is to enjoy, and abandon yourselves in its netting or just unwind. Welcome!

altifest.net



ON THE THRESHOLD OF TIME

by Giulio De Leo / Menhir Dance Co.

The intuition that creates an artwork does not always take a coherent form.

In Solitary I've developed the choreographic writing as if drawing a series of plans for a baroque garden.

It wasn't Händel's music that gave the baroque character to the project, but the refined overflowing of signs, swirls and embroideries that I would make with the aim to wear myself down.

What fascinated me was the idea that the nature of play should be lively, frenetic, almost unbearable, like a child, in a glade.

I felt the need to challenge myself, to test my ability and at the same time to struggle through it, as if only beyond the control could something still appear that could amaze me and break the shell of the lie. In the glade, in the garden, I saw a possible space for all this. A space of suspension, a space of break with the daily practice of ability.

The stage seemed to me an adequate abstraction of that glade, I still perceived it as a place of the soul.

Over the years the idea that the creative act is a gesture of suspension has recurred several times as a starting matrix in the

MOUVEMENT D' ENSEMBLE

by Aurélien Dougé / Inkörper Company

If the anthropocene is distinguished by the violence of the relationship between human and nature, why not renew the relation itself with a less bitter one? Heavy industries, massive extractions, chain production... The anthropocene, as a symbolic era, also marks this moment of crisis when human beings become aware of their responsibilities. As the thresholds, so far well defined, flicker. The war between culture and nature is losing its legitimacy. The boundaries between Living and Non-Living, as measured by quantum physics, no longer make sense.

But the consequences of these more or less obsolete ways of conceiving the world are no less significant. By arranging space in such a way as to make the impact of the displacements taking

creation processes.

In this sense, *Solitario* has represented an important moment in my path, but today I move differently on the threshold of suspension.

I feel that it cannot have a predefined character and that the childhood of the game, its purity, is made in the patient observation of bodies, in the sedimentation of ideas, in the experimentation of intuitions, in the loving care of the gesture as a consequence of a process and not as an aesthetic prerequisite. Going back to dwell the *Solitario* matrix means for me to move the concept of habitat, from a physical place/system to a poetic place.

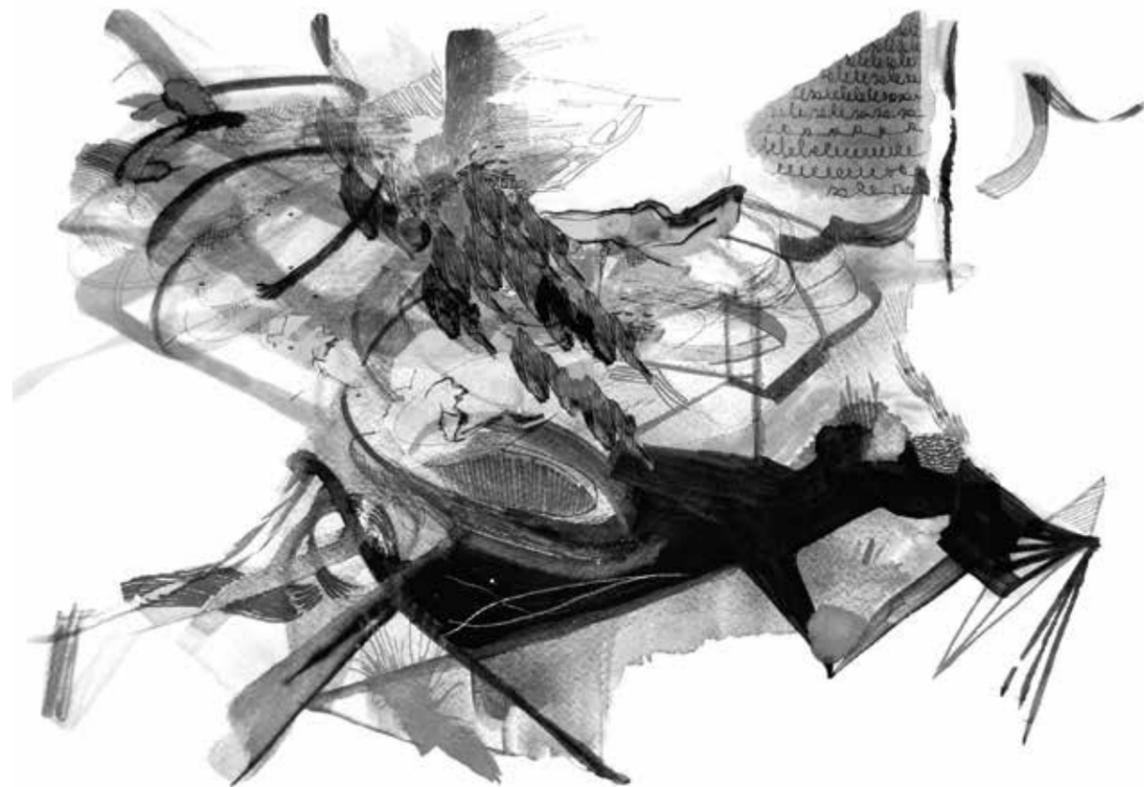
In this sense the physical space that I will experience in Altofest, I am sure will not be limited to representing the new set in which to re-generate the solo, but that will contribute in an intimate and complex way to re-define the poetic universe of the artwork. In short, the habitat is a bit of a temporal threshold that is crossed when one leaves what has happened and is well disposed to what is coming.

I can't wait.

place there tangible, Mouvement d'Ensemble (Sacré) can make cause and effect relationships visible.

In concrete terms and over the course of Altofest, I will start a physical enterprise of construction and deconstruction of the dispositif by the manipulation and organization of the elements into the space. Each day a different material is added. Repetition and endurance are part of the process.

Between performance, installation, learning and creation, *Mouvement d'Ensemble (Sacré)* proposes to put contemplation back at the centre of the action by encouraging people to slow down and listen and look at what already exists.



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HABITARE

By Claudia Fabris

In 2013 I produced the Operappartamento, the first residence of Altofest, with Antonino Talamo and Serena Gatti. I remember the process of that work as a particularly productive and rich experience. Initially, I tried to bring my visions into the house, to adapt them and transform them based on my imagination; then, inhabiting her, she started to talk and the last room we focused on turned out the most interesting one. There were books everywhere, well-bound, elegant; in particular, at the entrance, there was an entire wall, we wanted to remove them from the bookcase to create a wall-corridor that guests had to pass through it, but hidden behind those glossy editions there were crammed hundreds of comics of all types. So we just took some books off the shelves at uneven spaces. The resulting installation was far more interesting and complex than the one initially imagined because it told a double life hidden behind the rigid and decorated covers of the classic UTET's, a heroic, fantastic and colourful life; unsuspected.

You initially change the environment and the environment inevitably reciprocates you, but it takes time. If we were still in the house the work would have continued to turn into measures that were probably less conspicuous but more intimate, stratified, complex, camouflaged as part of a unique body.

Habitat in Latin means "he lives" and *habitare* is a frequentative of *habere*, which in the true sense means to continue to have. Habitat and habitation are declensions of a habit of possession. What you live in becomes yours, the more you live it, the more it becomes yours, to the point that we consider it true even legally, but similarly, you belong to it until a large part of your identity coincides with this bond.

I am Italian, I am Neapolitan, I am from the neighbourhood, I am a mountaineer, an islander ... crossing over from a declension of having to declension of being, it's some kind of prestigious game, a trick. I tried to escape this rule of identity, I didn't know how to choose a place where to stay and not feel belonging to my place of birth, so in the last 8 years, I practised some kind of

gentle nomadic life, frequenting houses which I was tied to because of affection and work. I've experienced how each home decorating brought to the surface very different traits of me, making me discover them. And I realized that I was much more than I could imagine. The clothes don't make the man but with the clothes, the identity of the man is more solid, in a way it belongs to those clothes and reassures him. To live in a place you make it similar to you, to your aesthetics, it is the simplest and most effective way. I remember having set up on the floor of a farmhouse in the country, an inflatable mattress with sheets and pillowcases embroidered with macramé and a red silk velvet worthy of a queen and every time I looked at that bed on the floor of a confused room, I felt happy and at home. I started thinking that nomadic life was the most gracious way of being in the world, so similar to our pilgrimage on earth in a body. Then I realized that everyone wanted me to be fixed at one place with one cross in order to know who I was and that our society does not tolerate nomadism; it's ok in books and movies but is considered a madness, it goes against the whole system, after all the origin of living is a declension of possession. And I, myself don't escape this vision because every time I lose my centre and I'm unwell, my identity shatters and the first thing that ends up being accused is this way of life.

Now I'm on the edge and I look at my relationship between living, continuing to have, and being. It requires a body. It is very clear to me. Only in your body having and being coincide. So it can work I have to go back to the house of the body from which I've slowly exiled. When my house coincided with my body, nomadism was a blessing, and it felt good to think and to say that my house was my body, but for it to be possible, and not just a boutade, you have to be a dancer. Which means one of the most disciplined versions of the human being, the one that devotes part of every day to bringing consciousness to every corner of its body. Perhaps the only possible way to not be what you possess is to be able to live entirely what you are.

HEADWORDS

ABITO*

by Claudia Fabris

It is worn but it is our home
the place where I live

In *Genesis*, when God chased Adam and Eve out of Eden, before banishing them, he makes a bizarre gesture:
"And the Lord God made garments of skins for the man and his wife, and clothed"

It's really unlikely that this
is the birth of fashion in human history
and with such a stylist to glorify it in
centuries to come

The vestures are our Bodies
Vestures of skin clothing the soul
and let it enter the matter
Paradise is of the Spirit
Outside there's the Matter, with its Flesh

Habit is composed of the first two Hebrew letters
Alef and *Bet*. The same ones that are in alphabet
What if this is because we have the alphabet in our bodies?
What if this is because the body is our alphabet?
With its language written one by one in the cells of DNA?

P.S. Martha Graham, the greatest American dancer of the 20th century,
"mother" of modern dance, said that "The body is a sacred garment."

Abito* (in Italian):
-habit (noun), dress, garment
-inhabit (verb)

ECO

by Daniela Allocca

It is unique that a name of Greek mythology figure becomes a noun like in the case of the nymph Echo (Ἠχώ). Slightly more common is the creation of adjectives: Promethean, Herculean, Panic. The creation of an adjective stipulates the collective recognition of a quality/character. Echo, the nymph who yearns for love of Narcissus, all that was left of her was her voice, becomes a phenomenon, a singular feminine noun. All myths have multiple versions and so does Echo. Another version of the myth narrates that Echo is dismembered by shepherds ordered by Pan, a lover not loved back. Her limbs resonate from the earth. Two different females appear in two versions of the myth: on the one hand an Echo consumed by love, and on the other an Echo that resists, opposes and finds a way to survive dismemberment. In both cases the environment embraces Echo and restores her, accepts a voice without a body, which is refracted in stone, or a body to which it gives voice, which rises from the earth. Echo, condemned to repetition without coherence and cohesion, infinite echolalia or freedom from *logos*?

Another 'echo' recurs relentlessly aka 'eco'.

Nowadays there's economies, ecologies, eco-mafias and eco-monsters, in this case 'eco' refers to the Greek οἶκος home, the environment in which we live. Analogies of sound, distant etymologies. What ties 'Echo' to 'echo' to 'eco'?

Echo inhabits the earth, makes it fertile with sounds. Echoes inhabit our minds, creating unexpected games, continue to creep into the grammar of our thoughts, creating meaningless but perhaps rich repetitions of the environment in which we live.

We choose the version we want to continue telling.

IMAGINATION

by Meike Gleim

Only the meeting of two different street names makes for the magic of the 'corner'.

Walter Benjamin

Benjamin's statement picks up what Lautréamont's phrase pronounced stridently: "Beautiful as the fortuitous meeting, on a dissecting table, of a sewing machine and an umbrella!" Both phrases imagine the site for a meeting of two systems or objects. This meeting is an imagined event, it happens in our imagination. And it describes what imagination is about. Benjamin characterizes it as magic, Lautréamont as beautiful. The banal street corner and the dissecting table turn into sites where a meeting takes place. Lautréamont's choice is not innocent, because this meeting is violent; it affects those who meet and transforms them. Therefore, the meeting is also magical, as Benjamin writes. 'Magic' is not something mystical but the moment of transformation, the fleeting instant in which a new meaning is illuminated. But how will those who meet be magically enchanted and thus changed through the meeting? The magic that takes place on the autopsy table or on the street corner constitutes a shift in the order of our perceptions, "a new distribution of the sensible" (as Jacques Rancière would call it), as latent meanings that have been excluded from our perception receive both visibility and a place in the order of the sensible. It might be accidental that magic almost fits into the word imagination, but whatever the reason of this coherence is, the coincidence points at an inherent connection.

Imagination is thus a capacity to create new meanings through finding inexhaustible new connections and constellations between things and names.

Walter Benjamin integrated imagination into social sciences, a move that has been and is very risky and scandalous as imagination is widely considered to be close to madness. Yet, it is not the proximity to madness that is scandalous and disruptive. That the imagination has anything to do with madness and consequently with error and illusion, has nothing at all worrying about it. But if in its proximity to madness the imagination is capable of bringing to light the reasons of which reason is unaware – as Goethe, Baudelaire, Benjamin or Bataille, among others, see it – then this strangely complicates the whole theory of knowledge. Knowledge cannot any longer be opposed by the irrational, but has to integrate it. It is a revolution that confronts centuries of hard work of philosophers and scientists who invested in the division of the rational and scientifically valuable from the irrational with contaminated knowledge!

Of a little consolation might be that imagination is not to be confounded with phantasy. Imagination is not phantastic. Not accidentally does phantasy link with ghosts: phantasms and phantoms, imagination with image. Phantasy derives from the invisible world, imagination from the visible. Imagination is magic images.