



reconnecting NAPLES Archis RSVP#12A

post-industrial fringes of the city, the spatial and the social program
Naples - 15-18 February 2008 - open research/editorial event with VOLUME and DOMUS



Naples: a porous modernity Under the Volcano

...To speak in and of Naples is to feel bound to a overwhelmingly historicized place....

Iain Chambers **on page 6**



Participation in Naples?

...is participatory planning a serious option to get things going in Naples?...
Maria Palestino has some doubts, Francesco Ceci believes in the potentials. **read more on page 10**



Reprogramming the Outskirts

..Smith and Barracco won't rely on large-scale reconversion. Instead they propose a tactics of 'micro-systems'.

read more on page 11



Diary From a Scarred City

..a 31 days journey splashed with intimacy and real news by novelist Riccardo Brun and his breaking portrait of Napoli..

read more on page 3/15



Back to Nature

Domus Editor-in-Chief Flavio Albanese advocates total abandonment of the Naples East area for the next 50 years. Mr Albanese suggested that all attempts to convert the area into a nice and prosperous housing district, better be stopped.

“Let nature do its work”

Read more on page 8/9



ph. Massimiliano Rianna, MADRE Project Room during the Volume vs. Domus event

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Colophon

Reconnecting Naples: Archis RSVP#12 A

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coastline, although both make a more substantial contribution to the city's economy.

For all that, Naples' transformation from a trade and industry city to a service and knowledge-based economy has taken place only in dribs and drabs. It's no wonder that they are striving to boost touristic and business traffic. Having been awarded the 2013 UNESCO Culture Forum, they are now seeking to set in motion an Olympic Games-style economic impulse directed principally at the western part of the city (where the steel industry was based). They expect to be able to develop a leisure coast with conference centers and a cultural profile. The prospects for the eastern part of the city, the focus of this journal, is far less clear. They are searching for

a future beyond the disparate conditions of oil storage and abandoned industrial complexes interspersed with half-demolished apartments and old villages. These areas could serve to relieve the city center's overcrowding. The space is there, but for the time being it is occupied by an extensive, polluting, irritating and even dangerous industry. Investing in creative industries, which are always thirsty for unconventional locations and accommodation, is a seductive possibility here in order to stimulate transformation. This is the formula which has been put in place all across old Europe in order to give formerly urban industrial areas a second life. Yet more is needed for this transformation than a few empty factory complexes. One can think of other scenarios: Naples as

'sun city', Naples as 'transport hub' for the Mediterranean. The necessary massive infrastructural transformations, the revision of water management, and tackling soil and air pollution are assignments which can only be effectively handled centrally. That does not mean that small-scale, local, even personal initiatives – one's that make a difference – aren't possible. If something is pressing then show that an idea and initiative can also be actualized, can also have practical effect. There is an enormous amount of knowledge, insight and experience available locally in municipal services, at the university and among private groups. The urban architectural research and design (Econapolis) done in the 1980s by professor of architecture Aldo Loris Rossi in co-

operation with a number of specialists at his university demonstrates that the ability to come up with an integral vision at the urban and regional levels is not the problem. Likewise, local debate about participatory planning shows that administrative reform and the search for effective implementation strategies is also under discussion in Naples. Where there is a fundamental lack is in the ability to cultivate support and enthusiasm via execution. Doing by making. In that regard N.EST (Napoli East) is a promising initiative. As a cultural art collective and with the 'project room' in the contemporary art museum Madre as its base, N.EST can work on consciousness-raising and creating dialogue as well as develop ideas which by virtue of its non-institutional background and marginality

have a chance of succeeding. That also makes N.EST an interesting organization for others. N.EST's invitation to Volume and Domus to come to the city for an open editorial meeting has resulted in this journal. It represents perspectives on (principally) the eastern part of Naples by Neapolitans themselves. In addition to the importance of pro-

viding insight into current developments in urban space and urban conditions via this kind of exploration, as far as Volume is concerned this makes especially clear that the city is too important to leave to the professionals alone.

Arjen Oosterman is Editor in Chief and Publisher of *Volume*



Diary From a Scarred City

Riccardo Brun

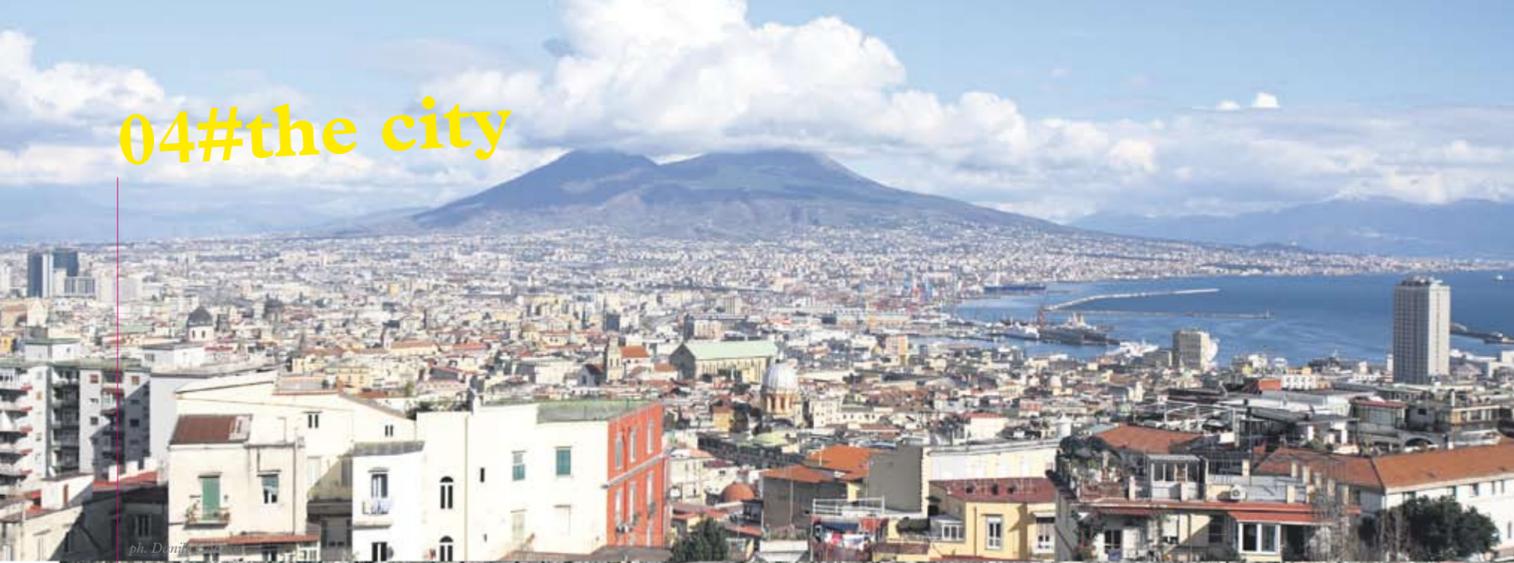
I-7th January: Pianura on fire

I wake up on the 1st of January, at four in the afternoon, cut my hair down to zero, to trim, to define, cut my beard too, I drink lots of water, look out of the window of my house in Fuorigrotta, and I'm confronted by the so-called Rubbish Emergency in display in full bloom. The foreign press is beginning to get interested, probably because of its strong symbolic charge: the south of Italy is drowning in its own rubbish. For years actually, factories from the North of Italy and other Europeans country, have been dumping their industrial waste around Naples, and this gives us the feeling of being citizens of the world, projected toward the future. The rubbish disposal Emergency is fourteen years old, which makes it quite inappropriate to call it an emergency. What has actually been lasting fourteen years is a bureaucratic procedure that enables local administrations, by using the term Emergency, to manage huge sums of money and pass acts and procedures which would be impossible in an ordinary administration regime. The streets covered in rubbish bags are the consequence of 14 years of superficiality, corruption, incapability. The rubbish is overflowing, spilling, it turns the air foul: the picture that hundreds of photographers are presently taking shall remain an un-perishing memory. New Year's Eve's refuse adds on to the mass of non-picked rubbish: let-off fireworks as well as faulty unexploded ones, broken chairs and bottles, soak clothes. The night toll is one person dead, over a hundred wounded people, and a hundred fires. Thus 2008 starts here, in the scarred city, province of the Empire. There are riots in the morning of January the 2nd in the areas of Pianura, Naples West, where since the 29th of December there is a permanent sit-in of citizens in opposition to the opening of a new site for depositing 'eco-bales' (bales of compressed garbage) in Contrada Pisani, a rubbish-dump closed eleven years ago. Riots start when the police tries to dislodge the demonstrators. They shall not leave. During the night of January the 3rd an ANM Bus – ANM is the city's transport company – is set on fire. The following morning four ANM buses with flat tires are positioned by demonstrators so as to block traffic coming or going out of the neighborhood. Smoke from bins and rubbish set a blaze in enormous fires invades the whole area of Pianura, covering it in a dense grey cloud that makes air un-breathable. And I'm working at a movie script that I find amusing, a visionary film, but also on retrieving credits, an activity most Neapolitans consider like a second job: I make kind, gentle phone calls, sudden visits, violent shows-up, allusive threats, my whole repertoire on display, shifting in between my five debtors, so that nobody shall feel privileged. And I wonder through the city. Pianura's rubbish-dump – says the prefect of Naples Alessandro Pansa – represents the only solution to drag the city out of the Emergency and will stay open at least up till the end of 2009. And close in coincidence with the opening of Acerra's incinerator. In the meantime we receive news from Brussels that the European Commission will decide – by January – whether to carry out the procedure opened against Italy the 27th of June for the rubbish disposal situation in region Campania. The prefect Mr. Pansa believes Brussels has been frightened by TV reports but 'there has been no criticism to our plan which is not stalled – on the contrary – is going ahead'. The 5th of January four busses burn in Pianura: they're the ones used yesterday for blocking the road. Then I discover that a few days ago Region Campania – with an incredible sense of timing, disregard of all appearances, and uncertain use of



Alessandro Cimmino, MAY-DAY#2, 100x128cm, pure carbon pigmented print, 115, courtesy of the artist





Naples 2013?

Diana Marrone

Naples, one of the marvelous world edge cities, is constantly under siege from un-solved administrative and social problems, such as: traffic control, garbage and garbage cycle, corruption (6 public officials were convicted to jail or home arrests only on January 2008), school drop-outs, infrastructural gap and digital divide. Since 2005-6, emigration rate increased like in the black 1980's of the dreadful earthquake.

from the special Euro Objective 1 funds that are meant to help those regions with a personal income less than 75% of European average. But these funds come to an end with the next five-year Euro Program, in 2013. And after, this state-assisted economy will become a free market one. Campania was and is the poorest Europe-15 region with its 66.9% of income per inhabitant. Naples Council total 2007 budget was almost 1,5 billion euro, of which only 1.25% is invested in culture.

The capital investment in culture per year was:

2004	27.612.390 euro
2005	5.668.598 euro
2006	4.947.427 euro
2007	3.472.586 euro

(that will be approved June 30, 2008!)

Naples' region Campania, is one of the European Regions benefiting

So the city that will host the International Culture Forum by Unesco in 2013, strongly decreased the capital

investments in culture in the interval 2004/2007. The state and local investments to make the application for the Culture Forum were over 5 million euro (of which nothing can be seen in actual implementation yet). Naples 2013 Culture Forum will host the biggest archaeological show ever exhibited and foresees to create 10.000 new jobs (in some areas, especially in East Naples, unemployment rate is more than 20% on a population of 148.990 citizen - mainly young people - living there). The Culture Forum will be hosted in the western part of the city, while the most relevant infrastructure networks (port, airport, central train station) and the main accommodation industry is located in east and downtown Naples. The west part has been chosen for the presence of the Fair district (Mostra D'Oltremare) and because the urban plan prepares the development of the former area of the steelworks (Bagnoli). Here the pollution level is extremely serious and the cleaning process is still ongoing, lead by the Urban Transformation Company (STU) Bagnoli Futura.

Curiosity killed the cat: former Bagnoli Futura general manager was Sabatino Santangelo, present vice-major of Naples Council; present Bagnoli Futura general manager is the former vice-major, University professor Rocco Papa. With its 62,3 million Euro of capital, Bagnoli Futura SPA (90% owned by Naples Council) can buy industrial areas to reconvert and administrate the funds for the ecological disaster recovery. Money that comes from the Italian central government, notwithstanding firm opposition from Lega Lombarda the secessionist north Italy party and former government in the past years. The funds has not yet lead to any visible public work or restoration. Meanwhile in East Naples suburbs, where no Urban Transformation Company has been yet founded (and the pollution is more than 5.000.000 cubic meters just on the coastline!), the owners of the former industrial areas are issuing road shows to sell their plants.

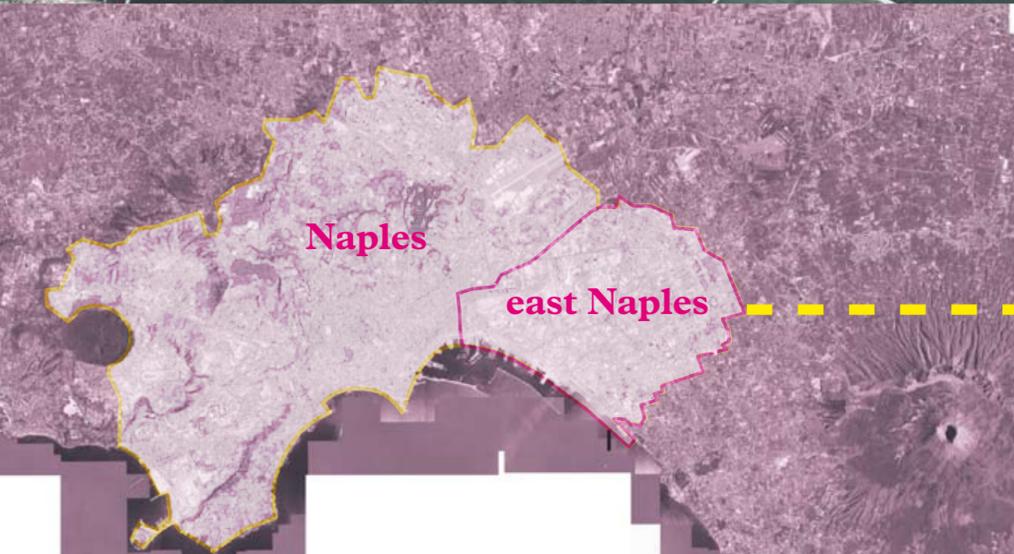
Italian political elections will be on April 13-14, 2008 after the fall of the shortest government of the Republic: depending on who will win the elections, the country assets for South, and Naples especially, could vary enormously.

Diana Marrone (1973) is journalist, relation & event designer

Naples coordinates

40°50" N 14°15" E

- City area >117 km²
- Population (2006) >1,046,987
- Density >8,334.5/km²
- Metro area >1,171.13 km²
- Population (2005) >3,092,859
- Density >2,641/km²



// language – has communicated that 'coming into being a new scenery in which the safekeeping, reclamation, retraining of regional territory will be at the core of new strategies – it intends organizing an occasion of debate – on a scientific and financial basis' and has put in 245 thousand euros for a conference about: Environmental Sustainability. On January the 6th twenty-one dummies hanging by nooses with the names of the president of the Region, Antonio Bassolino, and the Naples major Rosa Russo Jervolino, are found not far from the major's house. Bassolino acknowledges criticisms, accepts political responsibilities, but says he will not resign. More riots in Pianura: about 200 demonstrators have a confrontation with Police forces between via Montagna Spaccata and via Paolucci. Great tension at dawn with the arrival of trucks for the preparation of the storage deposit for eco-bales. Some policemen and demonstrators wounded. Even ambulances suffer the effects of the protest and have to be escorted by police. While assisting an emergency case, the personnel of an ambulance is assaulted by a group of people taking part in the road blockages. Informed about the turmoil in Naples, president of the Republic, Giorgio Napolitano – from Capri – comments 'to set rubbish bins on fire is barbarous and harmful to public health, causing dioxin exhalations into the air'...

Chaos brakes out in Pianura again, after just one peaceful night. January the 7th all access roads to the neighborhood are shut-off by demonstrators' footprint blockages. More fires still. An extensive fire breaks out within the dump. More confrontations with police forces during the night amidst burning bins, barricaded streets, Molotov bombs being set-off. Sircana, spokesman for the government, declares: 'Radical solution within 24 hours'.

Jervolino, major of Naples: 'Prodi had knowledge of the situation a year ago already'.

President of Confindustria (employer's federation) Montezemolo: 'unacceptable disgrace'.



06#inside NAPLES: a porous modernity Under the Volcano

Iain Chambers

The word 'history' stands written on the countenance of nature in the characters of transience.

Walter Benjamin,
The Origin of German Tragic Drama

I remember that my heart finally broke in Naples. Not over a girl or a thing, but over an idea. When I was little, they'd told me I should be proud to be an American. And I suppose I was, though I saw no reason I should applaud every time I saw the flag in a newsreel. But I did believe that the American way of life was an idea holy in itself, an idea of freedom bestowed by intelligent citizens on one another. Yet after a little while in Naples I found out that America was a country just like any other, except she had more material wealth and more advanced plumbing.

John Horner Burns, *The Gallery*

To speak in and of Naples is to feel bound to a overwhelmingly historicized place. The evidence is irrefutable: a gaping hole in Piazza Bellini reveals the Greek walls of Neapolis; the ubiquity of Baroque buildings; the disrepair and decomposition of antique streets and irregularly paved alleys. All this material evidence of the passage of time seemingly provides an immediate set of explanations. After all, this is what the hundreds of books on the city tell me again and again. It is also what the local account, suitably crossed with Oriental and Greco-Roman myths, and then amplified in folkloristic details, also provides. The Sirens (Homer's adoption of a Phoenician myth) and the passage of Ulysses between Capri and the tip of the bay at Punta Campanile, the Sybil of Cuma and the entrance to the underworld at Lake Averno in the nearby Phlegrean Fields, traces of the Asiatic cult of Mithras, the adoption and solace of souls in Purgatory through the polishing and personal care of skulls in the city's underground cemeteries: all deepen and disseminate the mystery. In this narrative Naples emerges, in Curzio Malaparte's words, as a survivor from an 'antique, pre-Christian world, that has remained intact on the surfaces of modernity.' Evoked against the timeless intensities of the Mediterranean sea and a slumbering volcano, such accounts color, if only tangentially explain, the textures and temper of the contemporary city, its sedimented reason and unfolding rationale, its passionate geography and psychosomatic philosophy.

Naples is a multifaceted city attached to the edge of southern Europe. As such it has often provided a favorite site for examining the loose ends of a European formation, where civil society and the state seemingly wither away in the chaos of its streets and the snarled up complexities of its in-

stitutions. For it is here that the urban web tends to come undone and expose a living museum of archaic fragments, customs and practices. Yesterday its ruined landscape was the source of the Romantic sublime (Goethe, Turner), or later of a disenchanted capitalism (Benjamin, Sohn-Rethel). Today it increasingly attracts the gaze of anthropologists as they retreat from previous peripheries to considering Europe's own internal frontiers and the peculiar rituals of its native populations. Yet Naples is not simply the laboratory of the archaic, or a zoo of arrested urban development. Its crumbling historical core toasting in the sun has also been abruptly interrupted by the modern skyline punctuation of a commercial and administrative centre that was conceived in Tokyo, complete with mirrored-windowed high rise office blocks and external express elevators.

With its violent mixture of antiquated street rites and global design capitalism, Naples confronts us as a riddle. (...) Neapolitans consume five times more water than the inhabitants of Paris; not only bodies, but also floors, are washed daily. Although managed by capital the city seems frequently to be out of control. Only an exasperated individualism, everyone free to invent his or her own highway code and building legislation, manages to leave its mark. (...) Still, the modern myth of the rational organization of urban space, of production, labor and profit, continues to be interrupted, decomposed and deviated by innumerable pockets of social resistance, mercantilism, barter, corruption and crime that frequently cross-fertilize each other: the corner deal concluded on the cellular phone, black market couriers on their scooters, the buying and selling of favors, the institutionalized bribe. This is the tangled undergrowth of another city, and of a cultural formation that loses its strands in the labyrinth of kinship, street culture, local identity, popular memory and urban folklore.

(...) Naples certainly proposes its own particular configuration of modern life. Here conflicts and contradictions are uncovered, sometimes brutally, and often violently registered. This is a manner of being contemporary that is strikingly different from those institutional proposals that persistently mask social, economic and cultural tensions behind the glass and steel facades of an official modernity that simply exorcises and consigns to the 'market' what it cannot absorb and manage. (...)

An Architecture of Transit

The inhabitants of the Mediterranean belong more to a city than to a state or a nation.

Predrag Matvejevic, *Mediterranean: A Cultural Landscape*

Like many Mediterranean cities, Naples refers to itself and its local hin-



ph. Danilo Capasso, typical fish meal

"The inhabitants of the Mediterranean belong more to a city than to a state or a nation"



ph. Danilo Capasso, Bagnoli bay, west Naples

terland long before the nation state appears in its sense of identity. Even the Nativity scene becomes a Neapolitan scene. The papier mâché models and ceramic figures of biblical Bethlehem that constitute the Christmas presepe are invariably populated with local market figures, piazzas and pizzas. Two myths are fused into a miniaturized language of representation in which the religious and the secular, the past and the present, the distant and the immediate, the dead and the living, share the same world. (...) The visceral gestures of self-referentiality – and the presepe and a local literature deeply self-absorbed in the city's dissolution and imminent demise are only the most documented exposure of this daily narrative – continue to propose all the pathos of that loss. This is to appreciate that there is no overall project or unifying design able to encompass the Neapolitan experience. It is a story that can be caught in fragments, in the economy of disorder, in the cathartic laughter induced by a tragic comedy, in the flickering half-light of a seemingly ineluctable decay. Paradoxically, as a built environment, an architectural reality, a historical testament, the sense of the city continues to be represented as though it were homogeneous: the teleology of temporal stratification has at all costs to be respected and

conserved. (...) The social and cultural problems of the historical centre continue to be architecturally dominated by the ideological insistence of conservation. (...) Naples has the lowest amount of recreational space and parks in the whole of Europe, and probably in the First World. (...) That is why when observing some of these decaying buildings, often accentuated by the effects of the 1980 earthquake, it would seem better, despite all the difficulties of resolving the personal situation of those who live there, to remove the building, not in order to build again but rather to change the use of that space by leaving it open, unbuilt. (...) As a propped-up environment, a propped-up city, an uncertain ambient that experiences continual mutation, Naples inadvertently suggests a more transitory sense of habitation.

from "Le molte voci del mediterraneo" Italy, Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2007, chapter 4. Iain Chambers teaches Cultural and post colonial studies at University "L'Orientale", Naples. He deals with social sciences, popular culture – themes mirroring in his books, many of them published also in Italian.

ph. Massimiliano Rianma, Marco Zizza sports streetwise



Sustainable Shelter

Fabrizio Tramontano

In an area hallmarked by fragmentation, disruption, and discontinuity, a 4000 year old way of living might provide clues how to recolonize the area. Tradition to the rescue.

After the earthquake of 1980, the national plan for building '20,000 new dwellings' tried to restore and complete the old settlements in the area. Gianfranco Caniggia (University of Rome) had provided the cultural correct analysis to do so. It didn't prevent that the last empty areas around the historical centers of S. Giovanni, Barra and Ponticelli got filled with poorly designed expansions. Most of the new buildings were constructed with 'heavy prefabricated' building techniques (the already obsolete-at-the-time French 'Tunnel'), the use of which was justified by the 'time emergency'.

While the 20,000 new dwellings were being built, many people actually lived in 'Container Cities' and 'temporary dwellings'. Some of these temporary shelters had been insulated using asbestos, and some of them are still standing in the

ph. Fabrizio Tramontano, Ponticelli courts



area – like the so-called bipiani – currently squatted by illegal immigrants. But in this disrupted landscape there is continuity too. In fact, a millennia old housing typology survived the ages and is still an inspiration for new housing. The once ubiquitous 'domus / vernacular room', that as basic shelter developed in over 4000 years of continuous living in the area, could become a starting model for the development of a more conscious, human centered and sustainable way of inhabiting the areas left by the former industrial activities. The room takes its origin in prehistoric village huts, in the already mentioned one family Roman domus and in the Greek megaron. In both Ponticelli and Barra this 'matrix' of the human settlement is clearly recognizable. The organic juxtaposition of these cubes along the sides of the atrium, created, subsequently in the course of the centuries, a more complex house and urban fabric, like those we can still admire 'frozen' in their first Century A.C. development in Pompei and Ercolano, and in the current multi familiar courts. Built against ground, where possible, and out of stone as a continuous structure the dwelling unit is covered with an 'extrados' stone vault or a wooden roof, and the main dwelling level and the gallery (ballatoio) is reachable thanks to arched open staircases juxtaposed to the facades to which they provide also shade in summer time. An underground water tank built to collect rain water coming from the vaults or the pierced wooden roof would provide a flat area on a sloping ground and of course a reserve of water in the long dry season. The thick walls and the openings of the room, always facing south even in the urban fabric of the village or town, would (and still does) provide the perfect environmental control, protection against glare, heat and noise, plus natural ventilation; in other words: well-being and sustainability. Most of these 'cubes', which punctuate the area outside the denser settlements, lay abandoned and neglected, because they recall to its former inhabitants the rural origin of the area, or have been surrounded by car-parks, high-rise, highway viaducts, former industrial and currently also abandoned shed buildings. At the same time people from nowhere nestle in prefabricated concrete shells, which should be demolished and its inhabitants moved to those former industrial areas, which have now become available once again, in less dense and more environmentally conscious new settlements.

Fabrizio Tramontano is an architect and contributing editor for various Italian magazines. He is chief exhibition designer for the Italian Gallery Lia Rumma.

// Diary from a scarred city (2)

8th-15th of January: arrival of the super commissioner

On the morning of January the 8th schools in Pianura are open, but there are no children in class, and public transport is not circulating. At 2.30 pm Gianni De Gennaro, former chief of Police during Genoa's G8 congress of 2001, charged with instigation to false testimony, is appointed Executive Commissioner to the rubbish-disposal emergency. Yet another night of great tension in Pianura. Groups of young men on scooters patrol the streets stopping and checking anybody on the roads. A sort of curfew descends upon the Neapolitan neighborhood around 10 pm. Streets are deserted and the atmosphere is almost spectral. But for group of people presiding access to Contrada Pisani, and garbage bonfires punctuating the night with uncertain lighting, it could look like a ghost town.

Tension still smoldering under the ashes suddenly violence breaks out again: first two photo reporters' car pelted with stones, then a huge banger thrown inside the fire brigade's building, then more stones against a police car. And then again cars turned up-side-down, or some, barricades. Prime Minister Romano Prodi calls for cohesion of all State institutions to face Naples' rubbish-disposal emergency.

Lombardia, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Liguria regions refuse to receive garbage from Campania. Only Sardinia is ready to accept the arrival of shiploads of rubbish starting from tomorrow.

The 9th of January I accompany the film directress whom I'm working with to visit the contemporary art museum Madre, just by via Duomo. M. is from Milan, and while talking to her I try to pay a small tribute the city deserves, depicting in all its complexity. At Madre I silently grumble against contemporary art, while she walks around fascinated and tries to explain what we are looking at. We stop, slightly dazed, by Venus in Rags, by Michelangelo Pistoletto, that in a way seems to render the city's situation perfectly.

Coldiretti – the farmers association – issues a warning: rubbish emergency is marring Campania's reputation and image with severe economic damage to business – loss estimated in 30%.

At 8 pm the first ship containing rubbish from Campania arrives to the port of Cagliari (Sardinia). Groups of citizens fight against police forces till late at night, trying to prevent the ship from coming into the harbor or unload its contents.

The 13th of January M. leaves again for Milan. I catch a train too, for a trip to Rome where I have a job meeting. I go to a dinner with all people from the movie ambient. A small affable world, that lives in an enclosure. They ask me – in between a savory tort and a glass of wine – and wearing a concerned expression – about Naples. An actress tells me that 'Naples is passionate and paradoxical...' The 14th of January is a morning of road blockages around the Naples area by citizens demanding rubbish to be removed. But the rubbish just refuses to be bossed around by anyone. Situation is at its worst around peripheries.

About one hundred thousand students of the province of Naples will fail to attend lessons today, while all around its just fires, stench, smokes, blocked roads.

Bosnian writer Predrag Matvejevic declares 'I suffer for Naples just like for Mostar Bridge'.

A banner appears on E-bay together with the picture of a mountain of rubbish: 'D.O.C. Campania rubbish, variable acreages. Special: rubbish over 30 days old. If you purchase large quantities you will still pay the same postage fee.'

Maybe somebody will buy it.

// Diary from a scarred city (3)

16th- 23 th of January: his wife under arrest, he causes the Government to fall.

The 16th of January the judge for preliminary enquiries of Santa Maria Capua Vetere puts Sandra Mastella, President of Regional Council of Campania and wife of Minister of Justice Clemente Mastella, under house arrests. Charge is attempted bribery. Mrs Mastella's house arrest will infuriate her husband causing him to resign from the office of Minister of Justice and then to make the Government fall by withdrawing the votes of his group in Parliament.

Rubbish Emergency triggers imagination of passionate lotto followers [interpretation of events or dreams resulting in a series of numbers], who try to work out the winning terno (combination of three numbers) for playing the lottery.

Cultural Activism

A debate between Domus and N.EST

During the N.EST 2.0 Volume/Domus open editorial meeting, Domus Editor-in-Chief Flavio Albanese interrogated the N.EST-team on their hopes, goals and ambitions. A discussion on options for intervention, the economy of action and the peculiar conditions of Naples to work with.

Domus — Flavio Albanese:

Nowadays in Italy public opinion is awakened by many organisations which we call "subjects of opinion". These organisations are capable of putting effective pressure on public opinion regarding particular issues. These "subjects of opinion", but which could also be called "political subjects", exist in an area between the public and the private sector thus creating strong interaction. Concerning territorial national politics, and due to the pressure they can put on institutions, these structures play relevant roles in the creation of infrastructure, both big and small. However, despite widespread belief, these are not spontaneous, self-managed subjects: actually to be reliable and concrete actors, to put necessary pressure on institutions and to swing public opinion to a specific theme, these subjects of opinion must have strongly economised structures, i.e. Legambiente Italia which is able to employ around 1600 people. In such a scenario, it's legitimate to wonder if NEST thinks it can become a "subject of opinion" capable of swinging public opinion and exerting pressure, and at the same time remaining a spontaneous and self-run exercise, which can interact without the support of an economic structure. I was struck by the K-8 Petroleum Italia case (which N.EST contacted directly in order to document the urban transformations forecasted in view of the oil refinery decontamination - to which we received a negative reply) which I consider somehow emblematic. It seems very difficult to become one of the recognised interlocutors without having bargaining power deriving from an economically robust and organised structure. I think you will inevitably be exposed to the risk of being dominated by actors and structures, because, unlike you, they have a defined economic structure and can use supports and mobilisations to intervene in society in a precise manner. If you want to become a subject of opinion, you will eventually become an economic subject

N.EST — Giovanni Ferrarelli:

The project is the result of some citizens' will (in their thirties, just starting to work) to change the territory where we work and live. Based on personal experience, we need a network of people different to the existing means available to designers. We have also witnessed that often urban projects in the eastern part of the city do not succeed. We are 4 people (Danilo Capasso, Giovanni Ferrarelli, Diana Marrone, Massimiliano Rianna), who, while not currently living in a neglected periphery of Naples, have a dream: to live in a city like Naples and put it in line

with other European cities.

N.EST — Danilo Capasso:

Good challenging questions. I can answer your question straight away. An operation like N.EST will surely have a future as economic actor, even though it originally started as a wish. N.EST wasn't born by magic. It was born as a result of an attempt to live on the territorial economy. To open an office in the Eastern part of Naples (before founding N.EST) while living in a city with an immature urban economy not in line with those of other European cities, means becoming a full economic subject. N.EST, in fact, was born thanks to a pre-existing economy like mine. I've run a communication company for eight years in Gianturco. It gathers the different professions which are part of the informal economy (artists, professionals, designers, craftsmen). It roughly represents our economic model, which is not necessarily a multinational company or other form of economic business.

The operation we are conducting, which started from a will to improve the livability of Naples, is the result of the lack of urban and social quality of life and the lack of an economic platform, which is far from the reality of other European cities. The starting point is always a sensitive desire: idealism applied to a territory. We are professionals, but first of all we are people who compare our own culture and aspiration to enjoy the city with what it has to offer. Because urban opportunities and professional aspirations don't match, we search for a way not to drown in the lack of contact between reality and desire. This leads to the will to start something which could eventually become an economic reality. All the work in the last few years, with the support of many people and artists, aims to change the eastern part of the city.

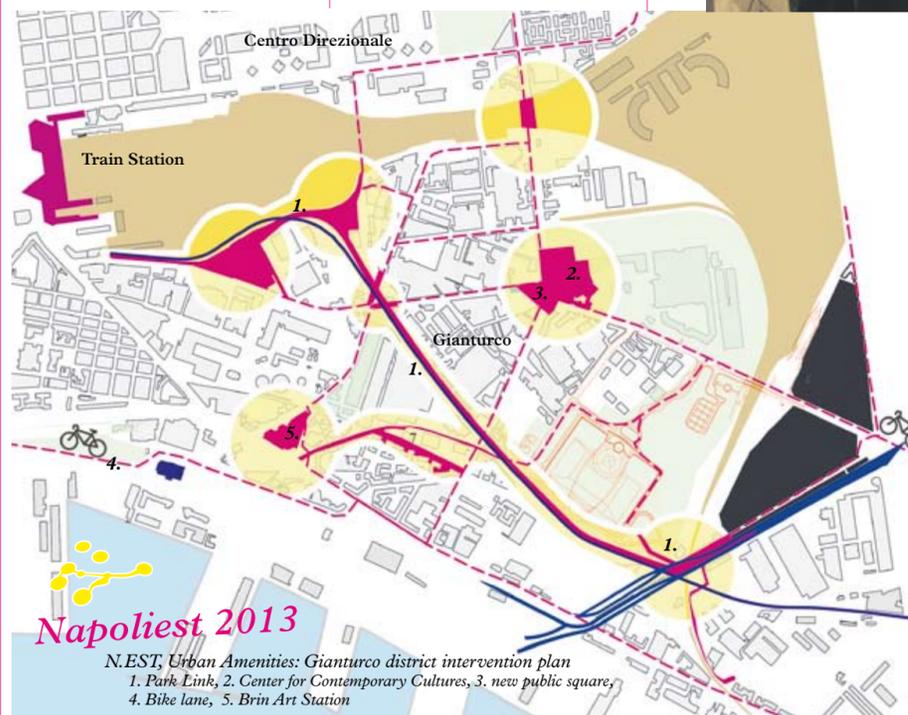
When we talk about change, we do not imagine a utopian change of direction. We refer to changes of the most common aspects of daily life. In the districts of eastern Naples, there is little social life. There are little public relations. It's an area where politics crucially affects every aspect of daily life. This is due to the fact that there is no-one and nothing fuelling the economy in these areas from the bottom. And that's where we are starting from: from the bottom, on our own, with our own means of what I call-sustainable persuasion we are laying the foundations for something that we would like to do in the future. It's not a game. Maybe it started as such among friends, but we have the will to change the urban reality strategically. The cultural project N.EST will try to become urban and architectural. We want to gather a group of professionals who can form a driving force, based in eastern Naples, strong enough to re-launch production and the economy of the city. We'd like to use the institutions and the arts to bypass the classical system of urban interventions. We have built a database,

a web TV and a sort of site-specific YouTube for the districts of eastern Naples, the N.ESTube, www.nestube.com (featured at the Creativity Festival in October 2007 and funded by the region of Tuscany). Thus we have a small integrated online presence.

N.EST - Diana Marrone

Unlike Giovanni, Danilo and Massimiliano, I've always thought of N.EST as a real cultural project. I was dragged into the N.EST project by Danilo 4 years ago. I've brought pragmatism which would provide N.EST with operative technical instruments. I'm not personally interested in making N.EST my job, but I just wish that such a complex project could exist and function in a city like Naples where conditions are very hard. What I wanted from N.EST was only what we needed to create a cultural project (bilingual, provided with a da-

you to let nature do the job (hic sunt leones!). If we manage to trust nature's long term work, and its capacity to repair and restore diversity, we could find ourselves facing a living fabric, with which we could open a serious discourse. Let natural factors take their course, without any intervention, for 30 years (which is the average time it takes a tree to mature) and we will find out, surprisingly, that a well defined situation will be reborn, in which it will be possible to reason seriously, outside of any apparent logical economy. This is the only possible long term solution that I think is practical for the area in the net financial investments. Not even making the parks that so attract architects, but that cost so much, and that draw away energy that could be used to build hospitals, schools and kindergartens. Refusing to fence it off, refusing to let nature do its job,



tabase, mailing list and instruments of communication) which could be exported, and represented a precise net investment so that something normal could grow in Naples, and for Naples. It should have clear aims and objectives, with a clear schedule, in order to make it an actor with alliances and agreements in the territory. Unfortunately, Naples is not an easy city to live or work in.

DOMUS — Flavio Albanese:

On the other hand, you need to wonder if the haste to intervene is not bad advice. I think so. If I were asked what to do in eastern Naples, given what I have seen, I would reply: 'Everybody out, including N.EST! Let's fence it off, let's sow weeds, let's close the gates, and see what happens after 50 years, let's see what Mother Nature does — nature will sort out the area getting rid of all that ails it.' We are talking about an urban area that for 20 years has been used as a dumping ground. If I had to suggest a project for the areas we have seen, I would tell

just because the area is inhabited, therefore means achieving nothing.

NEST — Danilo Capasso:

We have a program. We started four years ago, gathering information on the eastern parts of Naples, identifying areas of social and urban need. Then we invented a methodology (The Urban Amenities Program) which uses these important data to intervene in the territory (gaps and public spaces). This enables us to modify the negative perception of the urban quality and to make it more pleasant to people like us and all those who live there. If we consider a portion of eastern Naples, let's say Gianturco, during the day there are more than 30,000 people working, while at night there are barely 6000 inhabitants. If those who work there in the day were to decide to stay for another two hours, or even came to live there, then eastern Naples would acquire a new social structure. We would like to cross-breed these areas on a social level.



ph. Annalisa Ferrari, MADRE Museum Project Room, RSVP interview and portraits



ph. Massimiliano Rianna, N.EST 2.0 Tour of Eastern Naples



ph. Giovanni Ferrarelli

DOMUS - How so?

N.EST— Danilo Capasso:

To become actors, to participate in something that may emerge in the form of projects or designs (for the territory), we have also founded an architecture and design practice next to N.EST.

Let's wait for our credibility to reach a level at which we will be listened to seriously.

Naples, February 17th, 2008

Flavio Albanese, Italian architect and art collector, is the Editor of Domus Magazine since May 2007. Domus joined a research program on Naples with Volume Magazine with the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the Italian magazine. Invited by Diana Marrone, during the exhibition N.EST 2.0 / the making of the city, guest at MADRE Museum Project Room, Domus has been represented also by its deputy Editor, Stefano Casciani, and by Massimiliano Marchica, assistant to the Editor.



ph. Massimiliano Rianna

N.EST, Urban Amenities, Art Station

N.EST Napoliest is a project that documents the urban transformations of the eastern zone of Naples through art, creativity and new media. It was launched as a web platform in 2004 through the creation of an online database, which has been collecting and publishing artistic, literary and technical contributions ever since. N.EST is an attempt to reconstruct the fragmented identity of an urban area, that of eastern Naples, which in the course of the past century has undergone far-reaching transformations driven by industrialization and which today appears as a valuable territory with an enormous urban potential for intelligent enhancement.

N.EST Napoliest is:

Danilo Capasso/Giovanni Ferrarelli/Diana Marrone/Massimiliano Rianna
info: nest@napoliest.it

last exhibitions: 2008/2007: MADRE Museum Project Room - N.EST 2.0 the making of the city - curated by Giglietto Del Vecchio & Stefania Palumbo (Naples)/// Annali dell'Architettura e delle Città - 20.07 In Forum Versus - curated by Luca Molinari (Naples)/// Festival della Creatività 2nd edition - presentation of the N.ESTUBE platform (Florence) read more at www.napoliest.it



ph. Danilo Capasso, WALK, Napoliest City Sightseeing tour



ph. Danilo Capasso



10#democracy

The Death of Participation in Naples

Maria Federica Palestino

Optimism is a strong emotion, a source of energy that can move mountains. But is participatory planning the way to go, a serious option to get things going in Naples? Maria Palestino has serious doubts.

Participation has never been taken into great consideration by Neapolitan decision-makers, let alone participation to programs, projects and plans dealing with urban and town planning issues. Up to twenty years ago for politicians and lawmakers governing the city and managing urban transformations, producing participation meant letting citizens exert their right to make observations on the urban plan according to law 1150 of 1942, or at the most, letting their voters represent them when it came to evaluate the adequacy of decisions for the future of the city. After all there has always been plenty of rhetoric justifying this stance. Such rhetoric was – and still is – based on the grounds that governing Naples means fighting against something very complex, therefore those in power feel for some reason that they are authorized not to undertake

any pathways that would make this complexity even more intricate. In the name of the emergency that has always afflicted the city, citizens are requested – sometimes forced – not to disturb the ‘driver’. This trend to cut down on participation, considering it as a luxury we cannot afford, makes the difference between Naples and cities like Turin and Rome, where participation is now permanently an item on urban planners agendas. This is due to the latest generation of urban revitalization programs and strategies, but also to the fact that participation has become a precondition to apply for targeted funding within the framework of European regeneration policies. In Naples, instead, it is difficult, if not impossible, to include participation in an integrated planning scheme. This deadlock could only be broken by making a change at the administrative and managerial levels, supporting transversal and intersectorial competences, promoting the interaction between different councillorships and various points of view. Local administrators though are willingly preventing this from happening on the grounds that it would just be ‘troublesome’,

opening up conflicts, invading protected territories and posing a threat to partisan interests. This lack of preconditions that could instill a participative culture in the decision-making process was accompanied in the 1990’s by an unusual type of governance that introduced a temporary change – which was more of a ‘media’ event than an actual change – labeled as ‘Neapolitan renaissance’. This resulted in a widespread demand for participation on the part of citizens-users but also of thoughtful and up-to-date urban policy-makers, not only from public administrations. Much could be said about the cathartic value of the so-called ‘symbolic policies’ implemented by the mayor of Naples and his council between 1994 and 1997-98, as well as on the sharing practices aimed at the moral and cultural re-appropriation of the city by its dwellers. It will be enough to say that this all resulted in a surge of civic pride and the ensuing restoration of citizens’ trust towards their government, which, like a tumultuous wave, embraced the whole city, from the center to the suburbs. For a moment it seemed that the city could be governed again according to ‘normal’ criteria and that this normalization would open the way for committed citizens and also for participation practices, which in the meantime were starting to spread in the territories in a spontaneous and self-promoted – yet confused – way. The reality of things

is that this emotional wave wasn’t followed by any normalization at all nor by the expected innovations in the city governance. What happened next? The city plunged back into complexity and, accordingly, the rhetoric of ungovernability and emergency were restored. However something has actually changed in the governing style of some local politicians: they use the citizens’ demand for participation (which in the meantime has grown) to gain consensus. It is sufficient to look at the coarse management of the various Forums organized by the municipal administration – the last of which was organized to launch the Strategic Plan – to see how practices aimed at building empowerment and creating occasions to stratify a shared culture around the city and its transformations were instead manipulated for a partisan interest. According to careful observers this all triggered an irreversible process of discouragement and loss of trust especially among those (many) people who had invested in the ‘renaissance’. This is why the city seems today so irresponsive and does not ‘swallow it’ when it is offered to share common pathways. Too many times in the past few years have the dwellers, associations, artists, scholars, shopkeepers, entrepreneurs, involved in participation processes in the broad sense – from practices targeted at projects, to negotiating

tables in support of decision-making processes aimed at development – felt to have been manipulated. And never did any participative process result in an implementation. If any pathway was undertaken, it was then invariably and inexorably abandoned halfway. This struck a hard blow on the city’s social capital, dramatically reducing listening and interaction skills as well as creativity and propositional skills of participants from every cultural and social layer. What happened is that we lost motivation and willingness to socialize our city – both inside and outside of it – and today, paradoxically, we have to face the fact that we are no longer capable – neither from the cultural nor from the technical point of view – to produce participation.

Maria Federica Palestino is professor of Urban and Planning Science at Naples Architecture University.



ph. courtesy Casa della Città participatory session



“The reality of things is that this emotional wave wasn’t followed by any normalization at all nor by the expected innovations in the city governance”

ph. courtesy Casa della Città, S. Giovanni a Teduccio coastline

Eastern Naples

Betting on Participation

Francesco Ceci + Gilda Beruti

‘Dialogue to the rescue’. Participatory planning and the focus on smaller scale quality projects might trigger developments that seem beyond the scope of traditional top down planning. Francesco Ceci and Gilda Berrutti, both working at the planning department, discuss a test case in the eastern part of Naples’ agglomeration.

On the eastern coast of Naples, in San Giovanni a Teduccio, the Town Council has made a twofold bet on

participatory planning. A bet on the inhabitants’ skills in making suggestions for the future and a bet on the capability of the institutions to learn a new approach to urban decision-making. The occasion has arisen from an integrated urban program, the Innovative program in the urban area of Naples (Piau), which started in 2005. This ongoing involvement of the local community in decisions concerning the planning of their district is a remarkable experiment for Neapoli-

tan public institutions. As a matter of fact, such an approach, far removed from Italian conventional policies, is alien to Neapolitan cultural customs and usual procedures. Thus, it is a very real test which is tried out in San Giovanni. At the beginning, the Town Council opted for participatory planning, mainly in order to inform and verify the inhabitants’ acceptance of urban transformations. Yet, they were skeptical about the inhabitants’ skills in giving suggestions for the project. Today, it has been three years; some key ideas of the urban project come from the inhabitants’ suggestions. In San Giovanni the main spatial problems to solve are the lack of connection with the coast, due to the presence of the railway line, the demand for new public spaces along

the waterfront, long since occupied by many production facilities (often used faulty). It’s clear that there are many ways to solve these problems, but the question at stake is, according to us, whether it is possible for local communities to influence the image of the future of their district in regards of its difficult context. Most determining choices already seem to have been made (by economic forces or due to conventional procedures). The experience in San Giovanni proves that this challenge can be met only if the discussion regarding the future of this area are held in an ‘open space’ in which everyone is willing to learn and listen to the others. The most remarkable outcome of the participatory process until now is a new vision for the east coast, namely as an ‘Art district’ where ideas can take shape, in a dysfunctional factory on the other side of the railway line. This place works as a new chance for social and economic progress, mainly for the new generation, but potentially also as a large public space, with urban facilities, connecting with the main street of the neighborhood and with the waterfront. The idea which comes to mind is that of an ‘out-reaching’ space, with a lively and productive environment, but also a hostel for foreigners coming to Naples. In other words, the dream is to create a place with its roots in Naples and

its spirit in Europe. The participatory process started with the field work which led to the discovery of resources and the problems of San Giovanni. The second step was constituted by an important event of public consultation in the form of ‘Open space technology’ (OST). During this event all the citizens were invited to exchange ideas on the way to re-appropriate the sea. Some ideas coming out of this event have been studied in depth over several meetings (via focus groups, workshops, etc.). At present, inhabitants’ suggestions are developing together with urban projects, economic plans and political agreements in what we think is a challenging development. A process of hope is thus under way, namely the hope that political decision-making processes and participation can find a common path, bridging the conventional gap. In order to obtain this result, hard work was necessary, mediating between the local community, the planning team and politicians (work carried out by the ‘Casa della Città’, a special unit of the Department of Urban planning). This mediation has been a messy process, causing anger and disappointment, since winning trust is a tricky question, and since the patience to wait is one of the challenges to be faced. We found out that the first answer is not necessarily the right one, there are more solutions than those devised at the beginning, and outcomes are often delayed but not transient. Planners have to play an atypical role, using their tool-case

as creatively as possible, learning to take a step backwards towards local inhabitants. As a matter of fact, fostering dialogue between citizens, and discussing with the planning team, in the end, can have an actual impact in the subsequent planning stages. This seems a good reason for making bets on participatory planning. Finally, the actual step: the Department of urban planning is working hard to complete the master plan by next summer; to this extent we are organizing a workshop on the Art district’s construction with a selected group of inhabitants and experts. The main problems to solve are how to finance the project, how to imagine a democratic management of the Art district. Another crucial issue is winning the political consent, because this is a really new approach for politicians, but this is a different story!

Francesco Ceci, social scientist and journalist, is head of Naples Council Urban Center
Gilda Berrutti, architect and PhD, is researcher and consultant in Urban Planning in Naples

ph. Giovanni Ferrarelli, oil pipelines and houses



The most popular numbers for tonight’s drawing are 12 (the Army), 60 (Naples) and 70 (rubbish). Last week’s best combination was 24 (police), 38 (the beating in allusion to riots in Pianura), and 70 (rubbish). Now that the situation is a little calmer, experts have changed previous numbers leaving 70 unvaried. During the night of the 17th of January the army begins to remove piles of rubbish from Scampia and Pianura. 60 men are at work together with 14 between trucks and bulldozers. In the evening I go to the house of friends in Sanità district for a party. We drink, eat, dance to loud music till 3 am. The next morning I discover we came close to having a huge fight. Two families in a house nearby the party were in mourning for a so-called camorra death – somebody linked to a ‘family’ was killed by a rivaling family group. They found late night blaring music disrespectful and wanted to come up to the last floor, where we were, armed with sticks and chains. Luckily they were stopped by a little old man who lives on the first floor and who knows there. In order to stop them he said that on the top floor, at the party, were a M.P. (Member of Parliament) and a member of city council and that moving against that sort of people was hazardous. On the 19th of January over a thousand people paraded along Pianura to show their dissent towards the reopening of the Contrada Pisani Dump. The demonstration starts from San Giorgio Square and ends at the Monteliveto traffic island, where a white sheet with all the names of those killed by malignant tumors or blood related illnesses throughout the years is put up. It is a wall of memories so as not to forget how much the neighborhood has already sacrificed to severe environmental pollution. Contrada Pisani’s dump has in fact been active for over 45 years taking in rubbish from the whole of region Campania. Meanwhile shop owners and salesman from Vomero district start a class action for the protection of their associates (over 1600 local members) and citizens ‘against the obviously pitiful degraded state the city is in’. The alleged charges formulated and deposited at the general attorney’s office, range from the subtraction of public funds, theft, abusive acts in public office, down to

ph. Danilo Capasso, the dismissed Corradini factory in S. Giovanni a Teduccio



12#ideas

Reprogramming the Outskirts

Spontaneous auto-reorganization

Sila Barracco + Mauro Smith

For reprogramming suburbia Mauro Smith and Sila Barracco won't rely on large-scale reconversion. Instead they propose a tactics of 'micro-systems'.

Re-conversion does not adapt well to times of great urban symbols. The typical discontinuity of the outskirts, compared to the density of the centre, has to be considered a reserve, a last chance for a territory that always consumes too fast all its capacities of regeneration.

Re-programming the outskirts means recognizing the remaining capacity of that living tissue that survived at the centrality of the factory and its logics of production, open to new choices that have to be reversible, pliable and diffused. But our architecture does not consider the possibility of experimenting new ways of analyzing the complex structure of suburbia. It considers only its own historical origins, not yet ready to deal with micro-systems of industrial production, enclosed within their own walls, connected to a weak network without a plan, ready to be continuously changed by economic success or by crisis in the market due to unpredictable geographic events. The collapse of the principle of permanent function causes the death of the relationship between plan and function. Programmatic fluctuation, determined by the market to the scale of entire urban sections, undermines the very roots of contemporary architecture and urban policies as well. The suburbs are the boundaries that ask for a new way of imagining lines of demarcation between urban and rural district, between compression and decompression, between historical and modern times, between nature and industry, between emergency and normality.

And it is normality that periphery claims! Normalizing the suburban border makes us realize our inability to understand, at a glance, the complexity of the relationships that are part of this landscape. Connections, relationships, permeability and sustainability are the themes of strongly programmatic projects that can transform enclosed areas and interstitial spaces in open, not separated places that can develop in parts of the metropolis, with a dignified self-consciousness. If something of the old structure is to be kept, it is the main connection system, terminating in enclosures and factory buildings. We may say that some outskirts are very rich in infrastructures. Suburban connections are, like wiring and pipes col-

lected in bundles, spread on the landscape. Their capacity exceeds what the connected parts of the city need. The allowed speed of information, of goods, of travelers is too high; their route is absolutely out of context.

This is the first layer of the network that has to be rehabilitated, redesigned and reduced in a network of connections which slows down speeds to resettle weakened social relations. The strategy of intervention is based on this paradox: a dynamic regeneration program – environmentally reversible and sustainable – for entire parts of discontinuous city, interweaving reduction of mechanical technologies on the ground with an acceleration of human relations.

Foot and bicycle paths as well as tramways, marked out on green or concrete surfaces, draw a light geometric pattern of a fabric that colors without covering the whole area, without hiding it, that sets free still unspoiled areas, that regenerates areas deprived of vegetation, that emphasizes their own discontinuous character, that reactivates connections between separated parts. What is considered today as a limit, is instead a possibility of conjunction on which new urban molecules can be arranged one next to the other, as if according to a natural law, but with a possibility of re-programming always new, different functions.

To concentration we prefer diffusion. The programmatic shape of the new cityscape looks critically, but not indifferently at the history of the place in evolution. Evolution without shame and remorse that compares different combinations of always changing activities, in an attempt to reveal the complexity of urban sites which, incredibly venough, are similar to the weakness of human nature.

Mauro Smith is an award winning architect and musician.

Sila Barracco is an architect and researcher, who recently transformed a cowshed into a Museum of Emigration and the farmhouse into a residence for tourists.



Image Barracco+Smith

Suburbs as Center

Matteo Belfiore

Matteo Belfiore suggests that suburbs can learn from the center. In Naples the ancient layout of the city could offer inspiration for qualitative uplifting of the post-industrial areas.

Why is it that, unlike the suburbs, the city center shines its own light and attracts interests and investment? Maybe this is because of its capacity to always re-invent itself without losing its peculiarities, something the suburbs can't do because they usually look more or less the same in every part of the world. To achieve their regeneration, suburbs must learn from centers and imitate their characteristics in terms of structure, namely mixité and civil Magnificence. In a founded city like Naples the center is made up by a long-lasting housing consistency, which is the result of the rigorous metrics and geometry of the ancient design. The architecture of the city underwent many changes since the ancient times, but the survival of the layout and of the relation between full and empty spaces is still recognizable in the city preserving its genius loci.

The revitalization of post-industrial areas can take its cue from the rediscovery of the ancient layout and adapt it to the contemporary usage. The marks left in the course of time by water, wind and human action can be traced to design new centers. As John and Nancy Todd wrote about bioshelters in the post-modern ecologist period 'the living world is the matrix of every project'. With the right structure, suburbs can become places where contemporary cities fulfill the needs that saturated and consolidated centers cannot satisfy. The bigness of the French linear parks or of the Archigram macro-organisms – which are no longer an utopia – could be the right solution for suburban areas in order to [...]

reconstruct the Whole, resurrect the Real, re-invent the collective' (Rem Koolhaas). The mixité, the functional and social coexistence that guarantees the vitality of urban centers, should replace zoning, the method used in the planning of marginal areas. No urban planner would ever dream of zoning as an instrument for planning a city center, which is by nature an integrated system and has several functions. Yet, most urban planners do apply zoning to the planning of suburbs. The evidence of this is the failure of one of the most controversial cases of residential buildings in post-war Naples – the so-called Vele, designed by Franz di Salvo. He treated the periphery as an undifferentiated receptacle to be filled, with as result the development of a social ghetto. A positive example to imitate for Naples, which I like to present here, comes from Japanese cities: every building boasts a complex social stratification that makes the urban fabrics of the center similar to those of the suburbs.

In a territory with a new dignified structure and enriched by the so-called mixité, dwelling quality also depends on a new civil Magnificence. Once again, Naples makes an exemplary case. Here the Bourbon dynasty, especially in the 18th century, left numerous examples of civil architecture worth of this name. The constraints imposed on this part of the city because of its design can be overcome in the suburbs, with contemporary architecture playing a central role. Maurice Nio writes about his approach to suburban areas: 'I find it challenging to work with these kind of spaces, because they are just nothing – they are culturally dead, and without a soul. But at the same time they offer countless opportunities in terms of feedbacks and experiences. Marginal areas then are very good places for architectural experimentations connected with contemporary languages, for new forms of sociality, for art. In countries like Holland, the Magnificence is expressed through quality works scattered throughout the territory without any geographical discrimination. Everyone can democratically benefit from the economic and social wealth produced by it. Thus, to achieve dignity suburbs need to be considered as an independent organ, a center, just like the historical and consolidated center, no longer as an appendix to or a mere outgrowth of a 'main' center.

Matteo Belfiore (1979) is architect and PH.D researcher. He is partner of Zoone Studio (Naples)

Emergence

Saverio Pesapane

In philosophy, systems theory and the sciences, emergence refers to the way complex systems and patterns arise out of a multiplicity of relatively simple interactions. Emergence is central to the theory of complex systems. (Wikipedia.org)

On 23 November 1980 one of the biggest earthquakes in modern Italian history destroyed a number of villages in Campania, causing one of the biggest disasters since the war. 2,735 people died, 8,850 were injured. The call for help evoked a huge response from all round the world, and it was clear that the situation called for extraordinary measures to be taken by the government. So, after a few months law number 219/81 brought into operation the biggest and prob-

ably the worst managed financial aid plan in Italian history. Although the area affected by the earthquake was in Irpinia, the eastern part of the region, the aid plan covered an area that in time grew bigger and bigger, like a soap bubble constantly on the point of bursting. Eventually it came to include the whole of the Naples metropolitan area, which was how the area's new road system, which had been on the drawing board for years but had been blocked by lack of funds, finally managed to be realised. 20,000 new houses were built in the northern metropolitan area, together with a complex system of roads linking them with the city. At that time the area between Naples and Caserta had already mutated from a typical rural area into an extensive urban sprawl, not dissimilar from those found in other parts of the world. It was a wild city, a totality of dozens of municipalities growing without any kind of control. Many of them then lacked – and still lack today – any kind of urban planning; it was a place that had no need of architects to design, to build, to come into being; a kind of self-organising system stronger than any rules or attempt to control.

One of the main issues in the reconstruction of the area after the earthquake was the creation of an enormous road system to connect the city of Naples to its suburbs and to the new 'shelter houses' built to house evacuees. The road system was built in country which by nature rejected any kind of intrusion. After almost thirty years of adaptation this road system became the most important generative core for urban and suburban mutations. Two overlapping cities lie together in one of Italy's most troubled areas and their cohabitation has not been peaceful. A city of roads, commercial malls, manufacturing plant and infrastructure, and a city of unauthorised building, self-imposed rules, and urban sprawl are forced to share the same space. The second city, with its extreme liveliness, is constantly trying to steal space from the first: semi-legal activities sprout around interchanges, the cities' present-day gates, the points where they come into physical contact, the sites where the two different worlds collide. The shelter districts, located in the centre of the two cities but belonging to neither of them, have developed into slums, abandoned by the world outside. Few places can better demonstrate the friction generated by the collision of two different approaches forced to cohabit. As one drives through the area, which lacks any kind of public transport, one's perception of the landscape of roads and houses is interrupted by a myriad

of little branches of the countryside which still provides the territory with its connective tissue, demonstrating a level of strength and power that would be hard to find in any other element of the landscape.

If we see the area as a self-determined city, we can view these pieces of nature as a sort of self-determined urban park, a unique system resisting the changes to which the territory is subjected, deeply and sometimes dramatically. Any regeneration of the area will have to start with the preservation



ph. Saverio Pesapane, the area between Naples and Caserta



and renovation of the countryside, of what can be thought of as the area's third city, the only city capable of reconnecting this fragmented landscape. These pieces of countryside provide the raw material on which we will have to work if we are to propose a new future for the area.

Saverio Pesapane is architect in Naples and researcher in the rest of the world. www.studio-mobile.org



environmental pollution and unintentional spreading of epidemics. Again on the 19th, the first of 11 preliminary sessions scheduled to decide on the prosecution of Antonio Bassolino ad other 27 accused started by the general attorney's Naples office as part of the inquiry on the rubbish scandal began in the Poggioreale bunker courtroom. The accused are being charged of swindling the state and of fraud in supplying public administration.

The 21st of January De Gennaro – the super commissioner – presents his plan: nearly all the former dumps are to be re-opened: Villaricca, Difesa Grande, Montesarchio, Pianura should take in twenty-thousand eco-bales.

I wander around the historical centre: I stagger up the slope of via S. Sebastiano, circumnavigate Bellini square, plummet down again post San Severo Chapel, then somehow I take a wrong step and fall deep down. It is a well known fact that Naples is empty, underneath. A slight mistake in going down some stairs and I find myself underground, where the air is cool and clean: I seat down on the ground, between skulls and amphorae, while all around me I hear the booming of rock music coming from some basement, and I think 'might as well stay there'.

On the 22nd the Tobacco Processing Plant of Gianturco – chosen by De Gennaro as temporary deposit for the Naples rubbish – is occupied by demonstrators.

The occupation is carried out by the districts inhabitants and political activists who try to turn the place in a base for differentiated gathering and disposal of rubbish (separating plastic, paper, metal materials from common garbage not). Various sacks containing asbestos are found within the structure.

Diary from a scarred city (4)

24th – 31 th January: gold of Naples

On the 25th of January, while Bassolino manages to escape the centre-right wing coalition's no-confidence motion with astounding aplomb, a new simple videogame – based on intuition – makes its first appearance.



ph. Danilo Capasso, "vele" buildings in Scampia

14#ideas

Supportico

Lopez: a curatorial emergency

Gigiotta del Vecchio + Stefania Palumbo

Recently a friend told us – in answering to our question whether Beirut, the city he lives in is a dangerous place – that Scampia, district on the outskirts of Naples, is certainly much more dangerous. The situation we live in confirms it-self once more to be one of constant emergency and alarm. Working and living in a city that feeds upon the very same emergencies that squash it is difficult, can be discouraging and its clear that to resist and not leave, you must get organized, with no fear of exposing yourself, opening up to others and to the city. Challenge the city. And this is where the history of Supportico Lopez starts from. Located in the dark heart of Naples, Supportico Lopez – named after the road it is in – is a cultural association in constant relation with a multi-faceted reality made – up of episodes of violence, destruction, dangerously, far from any civil or cultural form of interaction. In extending the concept of shelter to housing dimension, we decided to give room to get another emergency – the lack of an open space for art – by hosting it in one of the rooms of our own house.

The exposition activity we carry out at Supportico Lopez as independent curators, is our professional statement. We have given ourselves a valve to let out our creative steam, to have the chance of a totally free form of work and expression. Supportico is a place to be discovered, one you have to look for, not of immediate access, not so close to the road, almost secluded, but the spirit that gives life to it is one of an open free space, for sharing. Its logistics make it a place hazardous to interpret, and could really turn Supportico into a shelter, an enclosed space defined, isolated, with few people aware of the problems it tries to tackle.

What was clear right from the beginning of this experience was that our skills and activities as curators were not going to be restricted like in a cell, but were going to open up to the city without any compromise. The precarious social conditions of our country seem greatly amplified in our city, making necessary the creation of many small cultural, social, professional entities, thus putting at risk widespread development and collective growth. This conception of a shelter in a place like Naples can be dangerous and should be eradicated. This idea of a shelter as a place in which to isolate one's self from the world and create a private dimension as a strong attraction and has become the lifestyle of many who try to defend themselves from things happening all around them against their own will. Thus forms of participation within society

are crumbling general welfare is being parted into small drops of individual wealth which fail to pull again into a collective wealth.

Isolation of the individual creates a gap between what the world should be and what it actually is because man is not intended to be alone, mankind wouldn't exist without at least two people together. Even if in such precarious times our survival instincts call for a form of a social selfishness and safeguard of one's own interests, it is in living together and in multitude rather than progress that development should be sought. The concept of multitude – the way of being of the many – theorised by the philosopher Paolo Virno (a grammar of the multitude for an analyses of contemporary forms of lives, 2002) is our standpoint for the comprehension of many aspects of contemporary social behaviour. What should especially guide many of the social, cultural and political choices of our present times is the concept of "Multitude" rather than the concept of "a people". "Multitude has a plurality persisting as such on the public scene – in collective actions – in the taking care of collective activities – without being reduced to One, without dissolving in a centripetal dynamic". Thus from this basic standpoint the concept of "shelter" can be interpreted as a research laboratory of single people whom, gathered in a mul-

itude, feed society on the sap of a plurality of experiences with a feeling of being in trenches as curators we experimented different forms of social aggregation.

Our collaboration with Madre museum in Naples – the managing of the project room, a separate space from the rest of the building, a real shelter, a tree – house - has given us the chance to share the experience of a multiple level communication in a public and institutional dimension. Thus we have re-invented our activity as contemporary art curators linking it to an idea of social involvement and communication. We feel this chance is today our most precious possession and we shall continue to struggle so that our future experiences may always stay collective and partaking of the multitude.

Stefania Palumbo (1978) & Gigiotta Del Vecchio (1971) live and work in Naples. They are art curators and critics. www.supporticolopez.com



ph. Roberto Conturso, Supportico Lopez



ph. Salvatore Velotti, graffiti walls in eastern Naples

used for different purposes (advertising billboards, road signs, telephone boxes, electrical booths, shutters) are favourite places and surfaces for graffiti-writers, identity shelters in a society marked by standardization. It is no accident that in a society where the form of writing is digitalized, graffiti writers are the last rampart of handwriting, which they regard as a weapon of resistance and an affirmation of their identity.

Writing landed in Naples – just like in the rest of Europe after all – in the mid-1980's. It developed mainly in the suburbs, and was recently the subject of debates and experiments aimed at assessing its potentials within urban contexts. These experimentations were promoted by Evoluzioni group, which have been dealing with graffiti-writing for ten years. One of them is called "Circumwriting" and was carried out between 2003 and 2004 in partnership with the Councillorship for Transport of Regione Campania and the Circumvesuviana rail transport company. About 150 graffiti writers were involved in the project, upgrading 10 stations (over 1 km of linear walls) of the Naples-Sorrento line with their chromatic art. For the first time in Italy public administrations, railway companies and graffiti writers interacted to achieve a common goal.

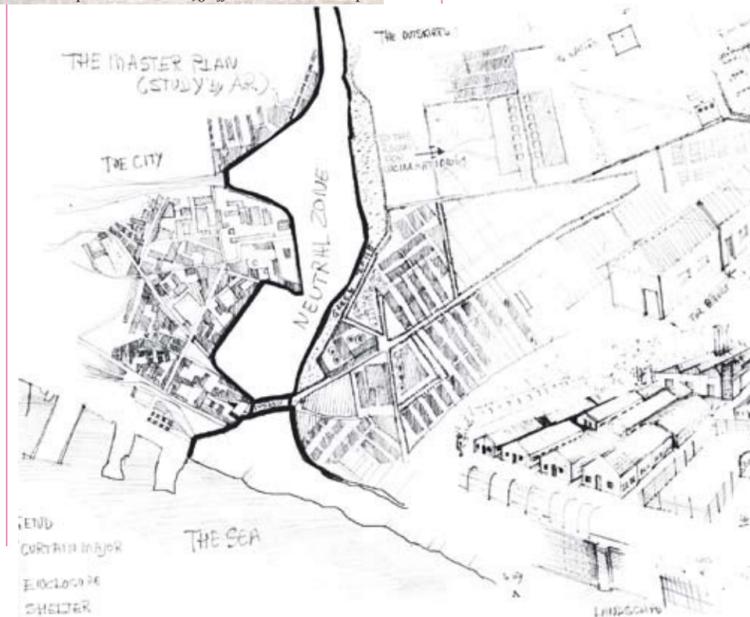
Another experiment was carried out in 2005, once again in conjunction with Circumvesuviana. The project

consisted in commissioning to 8 Italian graffiti writers original graphic works to be used on the coating films of electric trains, which to date remains the only example in the world of this type of collaboration.

The third example is the W3 format, with which Evoluzioni tested the potentials of Writing in unusual urban contexts, such as historic places (Italian squares) and natural places (public parks or gardens of 18th-century villas).

W3 consists in parallelepiped painted with lively colours, which provide a surface for the writers' works. Halfway between installation and performance, it caused a shock to passers-by, for the rapidity of mounting, executing and dismantling operations (the whole thing lasted 24 hours). The purpose is to stress the boundaries of graffiti writing, eluding purisms and emphasizing the urban dimension.

Luca Borriello, is PHD researcher in Cultural Heritage and founder of Inward think tank (www.inward.it) Salvatore POPE Velotti, architecture student and writer since 1992, spent half of his life in graffiti designing in various Italian cities.



drawing by Aldo Rianna

Suburbia Central

Aldo Rianna

'Suburbia' and 'periphery' are indications of a 'non place' outside the city that can be used and occupied at will just because of that. In the approach of Aldo Rianna the periphery becomes as important and as present as the city centre by converting it into a special zone.

Urban centres – more commonly 'cities' – do not occupy the whole of the territory in which they are located, but comprise

a) the city, i.e. that part of the territory more exposed to people's judgment, where its services and infrastructure are apparent to the stranger's eye

b) the municipal territory, i.e. all the rest. The part of the territory that we are concerned with here is 'all the rest'. It is anonymous, generally unknown, remote, and only referred to on rare and ambiguous occasions and under the generic title of 'suburb'. Not only is it a geographical anomaly but there is also a discrepancy in its official denomination as 'urban periphery', a part which has no status and is therefore exposed to questionable decisions. Indeed, if a territory is to be upgraded, it must first recover its dignity, otherwise it will remain easy prey. Because 'all the rest' forms an integral part of the city -

<<it should be constantly watched over to prevent crime or illegality; it should be a matter of constant concern to decision-makers and should be provided with the efficient services and structures essential to everyday life regardless of its distance from the centre >>.

From this one can understand how simple the necessary intervention could be, and what the order of priority should be.

Demarcating the periphery precisely and unmistakably is an operation of some delicacy, because of the need to avoid parts properly belonging to the city being erroneously included in the suburbs. Moreover, there will undoubtedly be many attempts to interfere, requiring the designer to turn down offers of 'assistance'. After all, setting lines of demarcation means including a building, and the people who live in it, in a specific area (or excluding them from that area) and this will have consequences. The operational phase includes the construction of an impassable curtain wall, with fine turrets, properly located and manned, together unequivocally demarcating the suburban territory. Money and effort could be saved by using construction material already available on site. This simple intervention could heal the decay of the city that matters, and would offer the advantage that there would always be somewhere to dump excess effluent. The periphery, in turn, would have a well-defined identity and purpose, a clear expansion and filling; it would refine its own vocation and would certainly be mentioned less frequently than it is today. Unlimited but selective access would make it safe, a shelter for outcast citizens, retirees, temporary workers, young unemployed waiting for a job etc., a place for such people to stay at an affordable and regulated price. As a refuge from the dangers of the sprawling city it would once and for all offer a solution to the problem of security. Another notable and brilliant idea would be to build a sort of 'enclosure' or camp within the periphery, to accommodate non-EU citizens and others. Even better would be to house each category of citizen in one of an indefinite series of enclosures or independent circles (rather as in Dante's Inferno), happy islands interconnected by securely watched underground tunnels (which incidentally could also serve as shelters in the event of air strikes). A prerequisite would be that the periphery would need to become autonomous, no longer depending on the city. This could be achieved by providing large common areas for meetings, and systems for waste disposal and incineration.

The result would be a new architecture, based on our most authentic traditions and artistic heritage, testimony to the recovery of its natural vocation.

Aldo Rianna, born in the middle of World War II is an artist, screen designer, architect. He still works and dedicates himself to studies that have been with him for the last 50 years.

// As in graphics it resembles the first videogames from the eighties. Its background is a golden frame, enclosing the picturesque bay of Naples, Vesuvius included. Goal of the game is to destroy as many rubbish bags as possible. The rubbish bags are thrown in at the same time by both the mayor of Naples and the governor of Region Campania who protrude smugly from each side of the frame. Every bag you hit is worth one point. Every now and again the former Minister for Environment Pecoraro Scanio – here intimately renamed pecora (Italian for 'sheep') – appears along the lower point of the frame and launches a trash bomb. If you get hit by a trash bomb you lose five points. If you manage to destroy Mr. Pecora (it takes five shots), then you gain five points.

26th of January, 48 burial niches are assigned through a lottery, at Marano Province of Naples in an attempt to shun any suspicion of favoritism. All participants have been selected by taking account of the chronological order of requests presented in the past.

I sail along, stumble, fly over the Rettifilo (Corso Umberto I), skip the Central Station, head towards the eastern part of Naples. I stop in via Galileo Ferraris, in front of the ex Pirelli factory. The entrance of the building with five doors closed by five heavy metal structures is covered by a cement roof much in use in the fifties and sixties architecture. Because of this roof, from the road, the entrance looks like a vast shaded cavity, sheltered from rain and wind. This is why some tramps have chosen it as their own shelter for the night.

Some graffiti painters have put their signatures on the rolling shutters – the silvery writings, half erased, contribute to the sombre, holy atmosphere of a metropolitan crypt.

Today I pass by to see two collages added on recently by Neapolitan artist Marco Zezza: an old man's face and a naked girl's silhouette. This installation in progress is called Monument to the fallen of Modern times. The effect is quite impressive. To me the girl is nature, beauty's birth. The old man's splintered face is gloom, greed, wicked.

But who knows if I'm even getting close to it... Somebody bought it in the end. The 27th January we finally admire the Venus of Rubbish, piece of work by the two artists Alessandro Monticelli and Claudio Pagone, who made it with genuine Neapolitan rubbish purchased through an E-bay auction.

These two artists have bought 300 kilos of it and have turned this heterogeneous matter into the Venus of Rubbish, a name recalling the more celebrated Venus of Rags, exhibited at Madre Museum. This sculpture has a strong olfactory significance, as Neapolitans can very well understand – possibly better than any other people: the first hundred visitors shall receive a small waste to protect them from the intense scent signed by the artists themselves.

On the 30th Police and Carabinieri forces free the Tobacco Processing Plant from occupants.

January the 31st F and I go to have lunch at San Giovanni a Teduccio, Eastern areas of Naples, in a restaurant by the sea. After lunch, we stay on the beach for a while, chatting about this and that, looking at Naples from an unusual perspective.

We both love this city and can't bear watching it sink down so low. But sitting down like this, two old friends watching the calm sea, fishermen's boats neatly kept on the beach, the sun high up in the sky, it almost seems as if it's just a bad dream and the situation is not so dramatic after all.

For a few minutes we even plan a great renaissance, an expedition to conquer the sky. Then, when the stench from the sewers gets too strong, we extinguish our cigarettes under the soles of our shoes, put the butt ends back in our pockets and go back to the car.

PS.: Well after this one would say: 'these Neapolitans protesting because they don't want the reopening of former dumps are a pain in the ass, people who just don't care about solving the problem.' Maybe that's the way it is, even I think so by now. If not that the 18th of February Gianni De Gennaro – shattering all my confidence and certainties – says 'I'm sorry, I was wrong, those dumps designated in the plan couldn't be reopened due to environmental impact and hazardous risk (dioxin leakage, underlying illegal dumps, strong risks of landslides or collapses). The citizens who were protesting were right.' Pieferdinando Casini, leader of UDC (Union of Christian democrats) and running for prime-minister remarks: 'he is a true gentleman!'

Riccardo Brun (1974) lives and work in Naples and Rome. He is a freelance journalist, writer and screen writer.



#6

*The motorways with their speed emphasize that Vesuvius
quit smoking in public,
but vulcanologists cannot tell
where and when a new Pompei of the 2000s could happen.*

*Antonio Niego
flying over Eastern Naples 1975*