

LAVERONICA

arte contemporanea

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Proloco #1

“Why don't you open a gallery in Milan?”

We started to think about the idea for Proloco during the Architecture Biennale in 2016 titled Reporting From The Front. The invitation proposed by the curator Alejandro Aravena to the participants was to identify a battle to fight. In specific terms, we were very much struck by the project *Onore Perduto* by the Sicilian architect Maria Giuseppina Grasso Cannizzo. In the catalogue text, with regard to this work, the Chilean economist Manfred Max-Neef was quoted, according to whom “the mosquito is the only animal capable of defeating a rhinoceros. Or rather, a swarm of mosquitos. A metaphor for Capitalism, the rhinoceros possesses an untamed, brute force that destroys everything that stands in the way of its interests (competitiveness), annihilating all smaller beings (local businesses). The only strategy for survival,” according to Max-Neef, “is to become so small as to no longer constitute a threat for that formidable force (and thus be left in peace), yet at the same time be able to suffocate the pachyderm if a common agreement to act is reached.”

In the project, the architect maintained that the only way to make a mark on a territory and trigger change is to work on the small scale.

The *Proloco* project arises from the encounter with a series of artistic realities that have operated in specific territories, forming pockets of resistance and adopting the small scale as an operational model.

For a year, the gallery will be transformed into a space that will tell of these encounters and will give voice to these realities through a series of exhibitions, concerts, presentation of books and workshops, in dialogue with the local community.

Among others, it will be our pleasure to host The 'E Zezi Workers' Group, a music ensemble founded in the 1970s in the Alfa Sud factory in Pomigliano D'Arco in collaboration with Marinella Senatore; Gino Gianuzzi, who will present the archive of the Neon gallery that he founded in Bologna in 1981; Giuseppe Frau gallery, a collective of Sardinian artists active in the Sulcis area, where they founded a civic school of contemporary art.

Proloco will end in August 2019, once again featuring the one-day exhibition *Wherever centro ricreativo di quartiere* by the Ispica-born painter Francesco Lauretta, previously displayed in the gallery in 2008.

Gruppo operaio 'E Zezi e Marinella Senatore

Proloco #1 - ZIG ZAG ZEG ZUG

Opening Sunday, 19th August 2018, 6,30 p.m.

19.08.18 – 08.12.18

How important can the area of origin be in the work of an artist?

Let-downs are always just around the corner. Despite the fact that in artists' passports there is just as much of the exotic as the art world demands, and although they might tell us stories that range from the Middle East to Cuba via South Africa, these stories are at times pieced together from within the comfort of a family flat in London's East End,

or dreamt up in some cool New York apartment. Members of The 'E Zezi Workers' Group and Marinella Senatore come from Pomigliano D'Arco and from Cava de' Tirreni: towns in the Campania region, poor and with an agricultural tradition yet which only a few years ago proved unable to escape from the perverse arrival of modernity, with all its industrial illusions.

On second thoughts, at the start, 'E Zezi and Marinella Senatore didn't really have anything exotic to offer the art world, although there were other things to offer the world around them: few and simple words which – although in contemporary society may seem outdated – in the art world are nothing short of unknown: the social class they belonged to.

How important can it be in art to have had any real experience of the stories that are told?

The 'E Zezi first emerged in the 1970s in the Alfasud factory in Pomigliano D'Arco. They were factory workers, students, teachers and the unemployed. For years, they simply told the stories of their lives. Stories of factories, of labour and of struggles against exploitation. They made music, theatre and visual art. An open collective that, over the years, more than three-hundred and fifty people passed through. In an era in which, in Italy, ferocious company managers can become national heroes, The 'E Zezi Workers' Group is not archaeology of the workers' movement, but represents one of its last pockets of resistance.

Marinella Senatore is the daughter of a post office employee and a primary school teacher. Thanks to her father, from a very tender age she experienced the world of political militancy to the point – as a cinema student – of joining the No Global demonstrations at the G8 in Genoa in 2001. In the face of institutional violence, she had to lower her film camera. She lived through the defeat of her generation and decided from that moment on that her only means of action in the world would be art. Over the years she has done all she can to tell her own stories to factory workers, students, housewives, and all those who have decided to contribute to the creation of her great participatory projects.

“A che po' servi?” (“What good can it do?”)

What good can it do? This is the sad question posed by one of the founders of 'E Zezi in a documentary. It's true, a whole social class would today appear to have been destroyed, first of all economically, but most of all culturally. And so what good can these artists do with this art, so full as it is with fine intentions?

However, I was struck by a sentence I came across in 'E Zezi manifesto: “Canzoni contro la mala ciorta” (“Songs Against Misfortune”).

What drives a factory worker, after eight hours of work, to shut himself up in a rehearsal room or to undertake an extenuating journey on a rickety bus? What drives hundreds of common people, for days, perhaps after having worked and looked after their own children, to carry out tiring rehearsals only to then take part in a performance a few hours long?

For this reason, together with my colleague Sveva, we decided to bring together 'E Zezi and Marinella Senatore, because people may use their art as a means to counter misfortune, and to identify themselves and once again find a class awareness.

Corrado Gugliotta