



ROMA 15>16 MARZO 2014

Resoconto del partecipante Carlos Costa della compagnia partner Visos Uteis di Porto (Portogallo)

Rome welcomes the PACE teams with sunny days and a programme of sessions designed around a tour in the city, crossing generations, working models, artistic areas and private and public agents. The idea is to get a closer picture of the ways being found not only to make sense of the performing arts in a crisis situation but also to build a new economy for the arts.

1) GOING OUT

We travel to the *Quarticciolo* area, a long way from the center of the city, just where the tram line ends. And we get to know the project of the *Teatro Quarticciolo*, one of several public venues working in a circle far away from the centre. In the meeting we get to know not only the director of the *Quarticciolo* (Mariano Grimaldi) but also the Director of *Teatro Villa Torlona* (Filippo d'Alessio) another member of this network. And although the *Teatro Quarticciolo* is public, the management is private, and this in an Italian context in which the discussion about the pros and cons of private management are being discussed with lots of energy, within the traditional division of left and right wing parties.

Besides the performances, the *Quarticciolo* engages in strong activities to involve the local community, always keeping social prices, in order to keep an open door to a population with severe social and economic problems (drugs, unemployment, crime). One of the strategies is to open the theatre to local based projects, inviting them to present themselves on stage. Trying to transform the theatre in another “public square” in the neighbourhood.

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2) GOING OFF

We now have the chance to know *Teatro Argot*, a *Off* venue created during the 80s that seems to be trying to find a new meaning to being *Off*.

The *Off* still presents itself as an alternative to the mainstream speech. Of course this alternative is no longer the “fiction of the 90s” (alternative to the soap operas) because the fiction is now the

mainstream in TV. But the social function is the same. And even here, in the centre of Rome, the idea of building a “public square” - like in *Quarticciolo* – seems to make sense.

The Director of the Argot, Tiziano Panici, still thinks the *Off* can not find a market solution and depends on the existence of an industry that enables the artists to be paid outside the organization, by selling the same technics required by the artistic projects in *Argot*. Tiziano is also a member of *Cresco* (an association of theatre artists and other workers).

But even so the *Argot* is seeking for new solutions that can be found in separate ways. For instance, giving up the naive desire of institutionalization, so that the resources can be distributed directly to the artists (this means small organization operating in a thin line between legal and not legal). But on the other hand, developing new solutions to save resources, reach the audiences and promote the brandt (yes, although not completely legal, the *off* talks like a marketer).

And a good example is the project *Dominio Pubblico* in which *Argot* joins *Teatro Dell' Orologio* in a joint venture between two *off* venues, now sharing a annual season and many resources such as promotion, marketing and press releases. This makes the *off* more representative and that means being more closer to power, to the people making decisions regarding cultural policy, citizenship and territory.

So, this is the *off* giving up the teenage days (at least until a certain point), and starting to lobby to divert the public investment from the more institutional and conservative theatre to the small *off* stages and teams. The *off* is not trying to go *inside* but is trying to make friends *within* (for instance when associating its self with public institutions that don't support it as much as that... not yet). And it's the second time – it also happened in *Quarticciolo* – that we hear about the importance of “friendship” between artists and politicians.

3) GOING DOWN

And for a last but so powerful moment, we go to *Cinecittá*, once the center of a golden age in Italian cinema. Today a very strange mix between a cinema studio still in action and a fun park, a tourist attraction that seems to be trying to justify its self as a “monument” of public interest in Rome. And so demanding too for some public investment? Not anymore for the sake of the cinema but for the sake of tourism? But will there be someone to visit it when the memory of the Italian cinema dies among the younger generations? Undoubtedly, one of the most powerful experiences in all the PACE sessions trying to approach solutions on how to deal with a crisis situation. Because in *Cinecittá* the crisis becomes plain and clear in every one of the empty and enormous buildings we pass by.

Touring along Rome, along this 3 different paths facing a crisis situation – and talking to some of the main actors involved – gave all the teams the chance to return home with many questions, just like in the previous PACE sessions. But it seems that now we are also returning with answers. Different ones, of course, considering the differences among our national contexts. But answers anyway.

We leave Rome with a song. See you all in Sweden!