

Valentina Maggi
portfolio [selected works]
2006 - 2011

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My work is basically a methodological reflection on how to meet, approach and know the places of everyday life, on the possible different way to live them

and a reappropriation of an interest-sensitive toward the rituals of everyday life.

I am interested in the acquisition of knowledge through the practice of micro-history, which shows secondary aspects combined with personal projections and revisions related to the processes of remembering, memories and the peculiar experiences. Through the narrative practices it is possible to achieve higher levels of knowledge, more structured than the cartographic complex of the humanized places.

My research is located in the interstice that exists between the appearance of things and their possibilities, in a breakdown of the daily aspects of reality.

I'm not interested in certainties, my work reflects on tension, on the doubt.

I conceive the urban space as a fluid consistency that is not only defined by the form it has, but mainly by the number of connections and behaviors that establish in it. The space, through its features, defines the identities while simultaneously defined and redefined by them.

My work aim is to analyze the gap between the real and the experienced dimension, and to comprehend the concept of truth as the resulting mental representation.

Through the construction of images, actions and platforms, and working on the concept of experience, privacy, confidentiality and the public aspect of the subject, I try to test the observer's position in non-participatory and participatory dimensions leading him to the status of user and partner.

Valentina Maggi

A curator, an artist, a gallery director, a publisher and collector. Art, instruction for the use

2011, sheets, texts printed

The texts distributed to the user are taken from interviews conducted with some people involved in different ways in contemporary art, the asked questions deal with specific features related to the Italian and international art system. The persons interviewed are asked to show their own views on some critical aspects of the Italian cultural system, this is known as degenerative and negligent.

The texts would be an alternative introductory guide to the exhibition.

The guide is distributed to visitors in a camouflage, because the texts are resting next to the flyers and press releases of the show.

The guide, because it consists of opinions of people, then in an empirical way, is in a constant state of redefinition. Equally to opinions, it can not be limited and done when it is written, but is subject to hypothetical denials and adjustments.

Diametrically, working through the opinions of people through the practice of narrative and practice of micro-history, we can be involved in a really experienced, but equally true.

Through the fragment of intimacy of the experience of others, we can be approached in a practical understanding of secondary events and places.



installation view from [Open#3 Venice \(2011\)](#)



A curator, an artist, a gallery director, a publisher and collector. Art, instruction for the use

(2011) sheets, texts printed
installation view from [Turno 14/22](#), Milan (2011)

Bon Voyage

(2010-2011)

Audio-guides for neighborhoods

audio-guides for Isola neighborhood duration 188'27"

Bon Voyage realizza una "fotografia" frammentaria, ma complessa dei luoghi analizzati, il progetto comprende delle audio-guide che accompagneranno lo spettatore nella conoscenza dei luoghi indagati.

Le registrazioni che costituiranno il materiale per le audio-guide saranno ricavate da una selezione di interviste realizzate ad abitanti di alcuni quartieri nevralgici di Milano o persone più genericamente legate al territorio.

Le interviste saranno integrate da materiale audio proveniente da archivi storici o privati. Le persone intervistate saranno portate a condividere, attraverso il racconto, la propria esperienza legata ad eventi o luoghi del quartiere restituendo, per mezzo della narrazione, alcuni spazi privati e mentonieri, luoghi dall'"identità mentale" che esistono più in forma intellettuale che fisica.

Le narrazioni realizzeranno un amalgama fra l'evento storico provato e verificabile e la relatività delle singole esperienze e dei ricordi individuali, saranno così portati alla luce fenomeni secondari utili ad una conoscenza più articolata della complessità urbana trattata.

Lo spettatore ascoltando le audio-guide sarà in grado di ripercorrere parte della compagine culturale di uno spazio urbano in trasformazione conoscendone aspetti legati al presente, al passato e al futuro e osservandone al contempo le caratteristiche attuali.

Bon Voyage è un progetto site specific realizzato la prima volta nel 2010 in occasione dell'esposizione Horror Vacui. Occupare il presente evento artistico curato da Isola Art Center che indaga i cambiamenti in atto nel quartiere Isola di Milano.

Da qualche tempo il quartiere, luogo a prevalenza artigiana, operaia e popolare, è soggetto ad un fenomeno di gentrificazione. La speculazione che consegue a questo processo ha portato alla distruzione della stecca degli artigiani, luogo in cui risiedeva Isola Art Center e alla privatizzazione di numerosi spazi urbani.

Le audio-guide realizzate in occasione di Horror Vacui intersecano tracce di provenienza differente, in parte sono composte da un collage del materiale di archivio di Isola Art Center, costituito da vecchie e recenti interviste ad abitanti del quartiere e video promozionali dei progetti comunali di rinnovazione degli spazi.

Al materiale di archivio sono legate registrazioni di racconti e storie sul quartiere.

Le audio-guide trasportano lo spettatore in una dimensione spazio-temporale fittizia, poiché lo stesso, durante l'ascolto, non vede i luoghi descritti dalle tracce perché non più esistenti, oppure, non ancora costruiti.

E' mio interesse personale proseguire la costituzione di questo "archivio" di materiale narrativo e documenti sui quartieri di Milano, come strumento di conoscenza sia precipua sia accessoria della città in cui vivo e in cui sono nata. Documentazione oltretutto utile ad una rielaborazione iconografica sul territorio in cui vivo che porto avanti in parte della mia ricerca.



(2010)
audio-guides for Isola neighborhood (installation view)
duration 188'27"

General System Theory ¹

(2010)

collage, lambda prints on aluminium

The photo collage of this project, mixed perspectives and different places, united by architectural elements or landscaping, to form a single cluster.

The general system theory, discussed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy, is an area of interdisciplinary studies dealing with the properties of a system in its entirety. It was founded in the '50s by Bertalanffy, William Ross Ashby and others, on the base of the principles of ontology, philosophy, science, physics, biology and engineering, finding then new ideas and applications in all sciences, including geography, sociology, political science, organization theory, management, psychotherapy, economics and intelligent systems. The subject is treated by von Bertalanffy in a humanistic way, differing then from the mechanistic character which the theoretical conjectures of the systems are set on. For these reasons, the paper quoted is considered an important philosophical and scientific document.

Trying to define the term system, we state that: "it is a in mutual interaction of a number of elements" a system, more in general is a complex but determined set of many functional elements connected all together to form a comprehensive and distinctive whole.

A system is an "organized complexity" and may be limited by "strong interactions" or interactions that are neither easy nor linear. The prototype of their description is a set of simultaneous differential equations, so it makes sense to talk about their organizations and measurements by means of which we come to an evolution. According to von Bertalanffy, these are the fundamental bases for a theory of organization turned towards the individual's development. Less conspicuous than others, this may be called the organics revolution, with central the notion of system as central point.

A system may have integral type of incorporation:

These are the features that can be defined in a schematic way. The summable features have the property to be immutable even in the scheme, unlike the constitutive features that depend on the characteristics of visceral relationships that are create within a given scheme. In this sense, starting from the detailed single element, you do not have the possibility to provide a study of whole system or the final scheme, because the characteristics of the whole are compared with those of the individual components.

A system seen in a mystical sense, as whole of parts with their interrelationships, should be viewed as instantly composed.

There are many factors in the world, that we regard in the same way of a system: the organism meant in a biological sense of the term, the individual, the society, the association of people, the city, the state etc..

This is what leads us to insist that is useful to study and consider the factors and processes that make up an organization, whereas the parties in isolation do not have and can not get an overview. Parts and processes of any organization perceive a dynamic that shapes the nature, this dynamic is the same peculiarity that shapes life and behavior.

¹ Ludwig von Bertalanffy, [Teoria Generale dei Sistemi. Fondamenti, sviluppo, applicazioni.](#) Mondadori, Milano, marzo 1983 [ed.orig. [General System Theory. Foundations, Development, Applications.](#) George Braziller Inc., United States of America, 1967]



installation view from [Block Party](#) (2010) Vercelli IT



cm 125 x 56,14
collage

cm 74 x 26,67
lambda print on alluminium

cm 79 x 26,68
lambda print on alluminium

Untitled. Health, love and money

(2010)
miniDV video PAL, colour with audio, 3'31"

The video documents the form of a "pilgrimage" that comes from a fascination for tradition, memory and popular beliefs. Such convictions often transcend cultural and religious barriers, as in the case of the subject recorded in the video, (known to many as the "balls of the bull" in Milan), to the objects of worship are assigned important responsibilities as fortunate in love, good health and financial satisfaction.



installation view from [Latitudine 45° 28' 38" 28N - Longitudine 09° 10' 53" 40E, Milan IT \(2011\)](#)



Untitled. Health, love and money

(2010)
colour with audio, still from video
MiniDV video PAL format, 3'31"

Equilibrio (eng: Equilibrium)

Valentina Maggi, Andrea Kunkl (2009)

open photographic serie, variable dimensions

On visiting the so called "fiera dell'Est"(East Fair) – an area in Milan where Moldavian, Ukrainian, Russian and Romanian people tend to gather, it is possible to recognize various aspects of life typical of Moscow, described by Walter Benjamin in "Stadtbilder" (Town Images)².

The Milanese public space, just as that of any other large European metropolis, becomes more and more like a melting pot. Hence, also the needs of a community will tend to change, and with it, the strategies on how it will be utilized: the representation of far away places of birth.

All this might lead to dangerous generalizations, by subdividing the different ethnic groups according to space categories.

By conducting a closer examination, to avoid being attracted exclusively to the exotic elements and exclude dangerous stereotypes, we dedicate greater attention to these spaces. It is thus possible to hypothesize and perceive a profound need or aptitude, on the part of immigrants to recreate their traditions and customs, as well as searching for their roots. But all this may only represent "illusions" come true, through simple day to day objects, by praying together, meeting compatriots and in particular, by maintaining one's personal customary practices, it is clear that these people maintain a kind of parallelism between their daily activities and occupations, and these "thematic meetings".

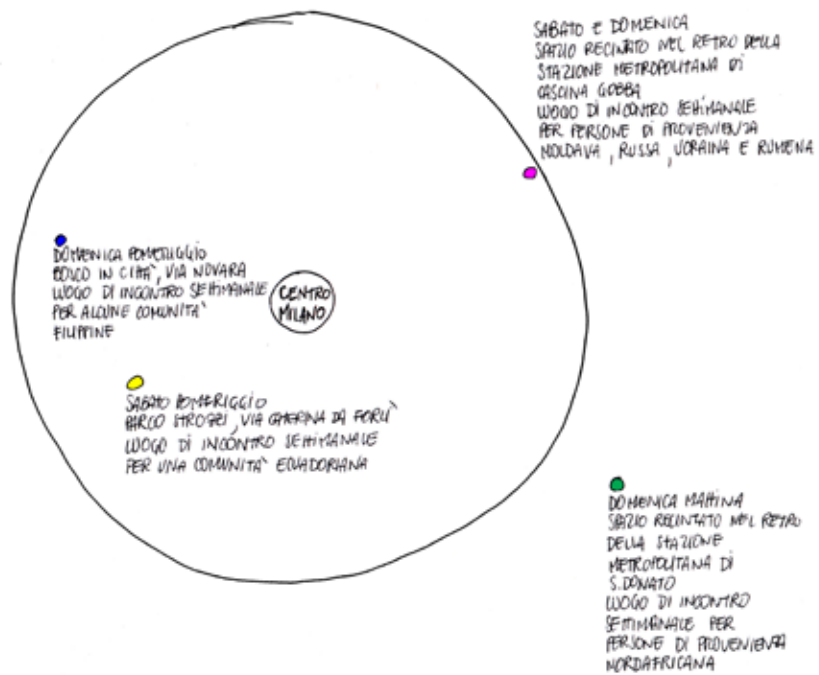
Looking through the eye, disenchanted and attentive, typical of those who do not look for the "picturesque," you ride the contrasts and paradoxes of the places tells that reveal a constant search for equilibrium.

2 A Mosca ci sono almeno tre o quattro punti in cui non è possibile andare avanti senza quella particolare strategia fatta di spintoni e mosse serpentine della cui tecnica ci si impadronisce nella prima settimana (contemporaneamente a quella di destreggiarsi sul ghiaccio)... Ma quale esuberanza ha qui la strada, gonfia non solo di gente; e com'è morta e vuota, al confronto, Berlino! A Mosca la merce trabocca dappertutto fuori dalle case: è appoggiata alle siepi, è appesa agli steccati, è stesa sul selciato. Ogni cinquanta passi ci sono donne con sigarette o con frutta o dolci,.... Vien da pensare a una nonna che prima di uscire di casa si sia guardata intorno alla ricerca di un'infinità di cose con cui fare una sorpresa ai nipotini. E ora si ferma per la strada, in piedi, per riposarsi un po',....
..., L'occhio è di gran lunga più occupato dell'orecchio. I colori acquistano, sullo sfondo bianco, un'intensità estrema,... Tutti i giorni è come se ci si preparasse per una festa di bambini. Ci sono uomini che hanno le ceste piene di giocattoli di legno, carretti e pale; i carretti sono gialli e rossi, gialle o rosse sono le palette dei bambini.

Tutti questi attrezzi intagliati e squadri sono più semplici e più resistenti che in Germania, la loro provenienza contadina salta subito all'occhio,....
..., Tutto però qui si svolge in sordina; nessuna traccia delle grida imbonitrici, consuete a tutti gli ambulanti del Sud. I venditori si rivolgono ai passanti piuttosto con perorazioni contenute se non addirittura sommesse, in cui c'è qualcosa dell'umiltà del questuante,... Il commercio ambulante è per lo più illegale, e quindi evita di esibirsi.
Delle donne - la mano aperta che regge su di uno strato di paglia un pezzo di carne cruda, un pollo, un prosciutto - stan lì in piedi e li offrono ai passanti,... Il commercio ambulante è più che mai intenso nei grandi mercati, alla Smolenskaja e all'Arbat. E nella Sucharevskaja,...
Di posti a sedere neanche l'ombra: tutti stanno in piedi, ciarlano e trafficano. Qui si manifesta la funzione architettonica della merce: panni e stoffe formano pilastri e colonne; scarpe, valenki, appesi in fila a dei cordoni sopra il banco, finiscono per crearvi sopra un baldacchino; grandi garmoski (fisarmoniche) formano delle pareti sonore,

capaci di canto come la statua di Memnone...,
Ogni pensiero, ogni giornata e ogni esistenza è, in Russia, come esposta sul tavolo di un laboratorio,...Questo sorprendente, incessante processo di riorganizzazione - qui lo chiamano «remont» - non riguarda solo Mosca, ma la Russia intera. Questa diffusa passione racchiude tanto una ingenua volontà di miglioramento, quanto una inesauribile curiosità e giocosità. Niente caratterizza di più la Russia d'oggi. Il paese si sente mobilitato giorno e notte, in primo luogo ovviamente il Partito. E veramente così: ciò che distingue il bolscevico, il comunista russo, dai suoi compagni dell'Occidente è proprio questa incondizionata disponibilità al cambiamento. La sua base esistenziale è talmente ristretta, da renderlo pronto a ricominciare daccapo anno per anno.

3 Walter Benjamin, Mosca in Immagini di Città, trad.it. di M.Bertolini, Einaudi Editore, Torino, 2007, pp. 17-29
[ed.orig. Moskau, Stadtbilder, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, 1963]



Equilibrio,

Valentina Maggi and Andrea Kunkl (2009)
open photographic serie, variable dimensions



Equilibrio,

Valentina Maggi and Andrea Kunkl (2009)
open photographic serie, variable dimensions



Equilibrio,

Valentina Maggi and Andrea Kunkl (2009)
open photographic serie, variable dimensions

Personal Urban Dimensions

(2009)
mobile urban intervention
variable dimensions and shape

The Personal Urban Dimensions bench looks like a classical Italian bench which may be easily seen around the town. The surprising feature is that it may be moved to different public spaces of the town, giving people the opportunity to live and share their environment.

This is a common object, an industrial product that retains part of its functionality and, through a slight movement of the senses, creates a utopia.

The project is modeled in relation to the single areas where it will be presented, reflecting from time to time, the different strategies that have been studied, to suit the peculiarities of the area and its urban community.

www.urbanUrbanity.com – care and urban courtesy – will bear trace of the temporary location of the benches.

Art project realized in urban areas in Milan during Public Turbulence. Turbolenze in pubblico and in Bari during the Festival della Bassa risoluzione. The benches are still managed by the local community.



installation view from Festival della bassa risoluzione (2009) Bari IT



Personal Urban Dimensions,

(2009)

mobile public intervention
variable number, dimensions and shape

installation views from [Public Turbulence](#) (2009) Milan IT



installation view from [Block Party](#), Auditorium Santa Chiara, Vercelli IT (2010)

Doormat

(2009) Installation
number of items and sizes variables

The installation consists of a reproduction of one or more doormats, the number of which may change in relation to the place where they are to be displayed. These copies represent a real doormat in dimension and size but, will be different due to the use various materials. The base of the doormat, in fact, is made of a sort of iron tray in which there are native seeds that are derived from the place where the work is exposed. While inhabiting the space, visitors will capture pick up, involuntarily, a number of seeds which will stick to the soles of their shoes and which will then be lost elsewhere, in the same manner, during the course of their random walk



installation view from Zooart (2009) Cuneo IT



Doormat

(2009)

installation, number of items and sizes variables

photo from exhibition Zooart (2009) Cuneo IT



installation view from [Da storia nasce cosa](#) (2011) Crema IT

a 25 km a est del fiume Ticino, 25 km a ovest dell'Adda, 35 km a nord del Po ed a 50 km a sud del lago di Como e del confine Svizzero

(eng: 25 Km east of the river Ticino, 25 km west of the Adda river, 35 km north of the Po river and 50 km south of the Como lake and Swiss border)

Video, colour with audio, 4'00"

MiniDV PAL, 2008

The city is a platform for stories, lives, contacts, intrusions and spaces. The contacts to which we are subject, are often only apparent and frugal. The city transforms itself into a place of illusory sharing, in which people often act as a fleeting background. The video represents a series of walks that I, myself, had in Milan, frenetically memorizing images and sound. The audio becomes a constant sound track, made up of sounds from the traffic, words, tales, fragments, music from cars, houses, shops and so on.

The whole of images and sounds is fragmented by the pace of the walk.

The title of this project is to describe the geographical location in which Milan is. city where I shot the video and where I live. This description is taken from the explanation found on Wikipedia, which is the encyclopedia entry on "Milan".





a 25 Km ad est del fiume Ticino, 25 km a ovest dell'Adda, 35 km a nord del Po ed a 50 km a sud del lago di Como e del confine Svizzero

(2008) colour video with audio, 4'00",
still from video
MiniDV PAL

Specie di Spazi ⁵ (eng: Species of Spaces) Specie di Spazi#2

(2008) colour video no audio, MiniDV PAL format, 3'18" loop
(2008) plexiglass showcase, forex photographic print, stamp-collector magnifying glass

Through the construction of devices for viewing is ironically caused a violation of one's most intimate security on which all of us depend, by symbolically violating the secure element represented by our homes.

This work has had two different outputs, a video and an installation (the two works are living separately).

In the video I have monitored and included scenes of everyday life. A fixed video camera was mounted in front of a building and the loop editing of the film, will show a lapse of 24 hours. The video will be left without any sound. The installation consists of: a photograph of the same building placed inside a Plexiglass showcase, on the photo there is a "supporting" magnifying glass used by postage stamp collectors, which reveals the inside of one of the flats.

The observer will find himself peeping at other people's homes, enquiring about the interiors and deconsecrating its intimacy and the "expression of inner self" ⁶ (Oliver Marc), peering and straining his imagination, without being able to perceive any voices or sounds, He will observe the space.

In the video and in the photograph the viewer keeps a distance, a position of non-participatory observation, conducted and relegated to the "status" of voyeur.

⁵ Georges Perec, *Specie di Spazi*, trad.it.R.Delbono, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino, 1989 [ed.orig.*Espèces d'espaces*, Ed.Galilée, Paris, 1974]

⁶ Olivier Marc, *Psicoanalisi della casa. L'architettura interiore dei luoghi domestici*, trad.it.B.Lepori, Ed.Red, Como, 1994 [ed.orig. *Psychanalyse de la maison*, Editions du Seuil, 1974]



Specie di Spazi

(2008)
colour video no audio, still from video
MiniDV PAL format, 3'18" loop



Specie di Spazi#2

(2008)
plexiglas showcase, forex photographic print, stamp-collector magnifying glass



installation view from [Block Party](#), Auditorium Santa Chiara, Vercelli IT (2010)



Specie di Spazi#2

(2008)

plexiglas showcase, forex photographic print, stamp-collector magnifying glass

Demasiado Polvo (eng: too much dust)

2006, colour video with audio, 5'14", MiniDV PAL

The video was created for a group exhibition, which took place in June 2006 at Puerto Sagunto, a little village in the province of Valencia in Spain. The exhibition is part of a series of multi-disciplinary meetings and events which have been taking place for years now, as a form of protest

against the destruction of the "The Gerencia garden city", a place built by powerful industrialists around the twenties at Puerto Sagunto. The Gerencia, as it is famously known, is a small city surrounded by high walls, situated in Sagunto. Through filming, direction and editing and clothing of the protagonist, I have created in the video, a fairytale and paradoxical atmosphere, to accompany the viewer between the soft lights of the dusty house.

In the video, a woman (me) walks into a house, walking among wallpaper torn, ruined walls, old newspapers and abandoned objects, dusting and cleaning the furniture with a spray, small pieces of broken glass sticking to the windows .

The video is accompanied by "(In My) Solitude", song of 1934, written by Duke Ellington, Eddie de Lange e Irving Mills, in a version by Billie Holiday. I chose this sound piece because I wanted a song which dates back to the period in which the Gerencia villas were inhabited.

