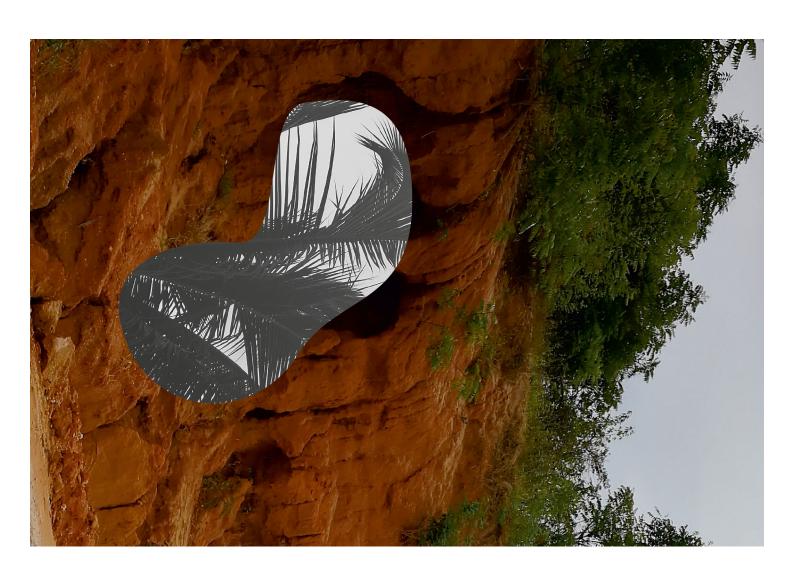
MOBILITY, **INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY OF IMAGES**

URBAN VISUALITY,







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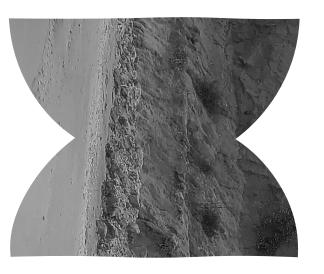
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Intercultural Trespassing: Educational Errancy between Urban Spaces and Relational Places

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Abstract

Visual communication can act as an organizer of urban space between delimitation and structuring. To become part of the information code in urban life, it requires accessible and readable styles. An information level that can be perceived immediately, on the surface, allows us to know and acquire codes and communication languages. To examine this in depth, we need a nomadic permanence that crosses fields of experience, interpreting and modulating symbols and meanings, articulating shared reflections, and developing community actions.

Information becomes a passage to access pre-existing contexts and start creative processes that lead to new paths of discovery of oneself and others. Therefore, we can talk about the educational wandering between information and messages that populate our daily life and require us to be dynamic subjects. The wandering and the journey allow us to search for plural meanings, interconnections, and interdependencies. We must then build, deconstruct, and reconstruct links, relationships, languages, and shared information, designing and implementing practices of cross-border and intercultural revision.

This paper aims to question the visual elements that indicate the human presence in the urban sphere. This presence, more or less persistent, will be investigated in relation to the forms of interaction made visible by the urban and "human-relational" architecture, and by the traces that remain inthe places of sociality. The "human-urban" approach allows us to understand how each subject is represented and configured in the environment, in a spiral

of reciprocal redefinition between presence and absence. The research on which I am basing my observations took place in two cities involved in the TICASS project - Macerata and Kilifi - and involved experiences of "urban-relational exploration" to narrate various plots of the social fabric, defined by images that testify some ways of crossing and inhabiting the city in an intercultural key.

When walking through the streets of an unknown city, we look for reference points to orient ourselves and get to know the space we are exploring. The images, road signs, symbols, and icons we find within built-up areas help us to understand how to move around and which directions we should go to reach pre-arranged points. At the same time, if we want to wander around and get lost in a place, without reaching a pre-arranged point, we can deliberately ignore the signs and proceed in a less systematic way. In this case, our eye must be more trained to be curious and, especially, we need to have time at our disposal to discover new streets, shortcuts, links, subways, pedestrian tunnels, and crossings.

The ethnographic approach I chose to use in the TICASS project required a careful observation of the context and was aided by being located in the experiences, exploring familiar places and meeting people who guided me in discovering unknown environments (Augè, 2000; Clifford, 1987; Clifford, & Marcus, 2016; Geertz, 1973; 1983). The numerous stimuli I collected created the need to deal with a large quantity of information conveyed by different media and languages. Consequently, it was necessary to rework an interpretation that might restore, at least in part, the complexity of the intercultural trespassing experienced, starting from the images and the sets of images that originated along the research path.

Images and Urban Spaces among Permanencies and Collective Transits

Visual communication can act as an organizer of urban space, between delimitation and structuring. To become part of the information code in urban life, it requires accessible and readable styles. Images can communicate functions of the space with a code considered valid in the context in which the message is placed (Lester, 2011; Mitchell, 2005). Sometimes messages are clear for multiple subjects with different backgrounds. One example would be road signage (which nevertheless has its variations). At other times, however, the images need an interpretation deriving from the knowledge of the place in which they are located while retaining a level of ambiguity for those who do not have the same cultural baggage as the subjects for whom the messages have been designed. The signage that requires language as well as symbols will not be legible for everybody; nor will the use of different colours to indicate danger or the use of different shapes to show specific functions of public spaces.

The more codes used to compose a message, the greater the level of difficulty for subjects in reading and understanding them. Parts of the same message may reach different target groups but, on the other hand, a process of extreme iconic synthesis also requires the observer to have the tools for interpretation. Contents that for an expert reader of urban images seem to be "obvious" and legible to everybody, may contain parts which are not immediately codifiable. An international airport may become a source of uncertainty for an inexpert traveller, just as the signs in an open-air market may be illegible to somebody who approaches these contexts with different codes.

The organization of space is conveyed by formal and informal communication architectures. Images may have a prescriptive or indicative function, but the responsibility and decisionality rests with the human being, the citizens who decide how to place themselves in these places and how to move through them. Icons and symbols that are conventionally used to organize the urban space (e.g. pedestrian crossings or road signs) are designed to be recognizable and to last over time, but in reality cities are studded with numerous "temporary" signs that appear for a certain period and are destined to disappear (e.g. graffiti or advertising billboards). The coexistence of numerous messages, sometimes even contradicting each other, characterizes cities and shows them to be complex places divided into several levels.

The various methods of negotiation, mediation, and transgression in the use of space allow us to generate new forms of organization, based on an agreement between the parties and the ways of (im)permanent communication. The temporary nature of the architecture and structure of spaces is linked to the different everyday lives experienced by people. The mere presence of images does not imply a homogeneous use of the space by the population, or a unanimous interpretation of them. It is in the human-image interaction that each subject decides how to react to the sign and how to use the information that is read. The sharing of several methods of response, organized by the citizens-community, will determine a shared and, at times, not very obvious code of behaviour.

The customary uses of some spaces may be understood also in the light of different methods of the use and generation of urban space; the TICASS project is focused particularly on the public space, its design and management, and its possibility to increase people's quality of life. The urban space is sustainable and accessible if it is able to welcome the largest possible variety of different combinations of people without excluding anybody and in complete safety.¹ The more diverse those who use and give shape to public spaces are, the greater will be the possibilities for the meeting, exchange, and hybridization of ideas and cultures, and, therefore, the probabilities that this will generate in social and community innovation.

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¹ http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org./post2015/transformingourworld

In this respect, we may quote the placemaking approach, which inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community. It develops a collaborative process by facilitating creative patterns of use, paying attention to several identities that define a place and supporting its ongoing evolution.²

To support processes of communication and sharing in the community, the information level in the urban space – the one that can be perceived immediately, on the surface – allows us to know and acquire codes and communication languages. Information becomes a passage to access pre-existing contexts and start creative processes that lead to new paths of discovery of oneself and others. This is not a case of an obvious, immediate passage, especially when we are immersed in unfamiliar contexts, and this is why we can talk about the educational wandering between information and messages that populate our daily life and require us to be dynamic subjects.

The Challenge of Nomadic Permanence for an Intercultural Perspective

To examine a specific socio-relational context more deeply, we need a "nomadic permanence" with which we will cross fields of experience, interpret and modulate symbols and meanings, articulate shared reflections, and develop community actions. To move from the surface of the information to the multiple meanings of the messages, we have to perform an intentional, reflexive movement requiring a recontextualization of oneself and of one's own reference codes (Catarci, Macinai, 2015; Fiorucci, Portera & Pinto Minerva, 2017; Zoletto, 2011; 2012). In this way it will be possible to learn new itineraries of meaning and motivate an intercultural dialogue that is not limited to the mediation of mutual positions but that aims to produce innovative meanings to go beyond the starting viewpoints in a continual hybridization. Critical reflexivity must lead to a review of one single point of view, making room for the birth of new, unstable, temporary, and volatile trajectories on which to base the first steps of a knowledge that is in continual movement.

I use the expression "nomadic permanence" to describe the approach of a researcher who stays in social and educational urban contexts and questions continually, moving between experiences, between sources,

and between the opportunities offered by the surrounding environment and the initiatives promoted by the interaction with the differences. This conjunction of terms indicates the constant existential and professional movement that characterizes the ethnographic and research-action method containing the impatience of immediate comprehension and expanding it over time, opening up to the plurality of space (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2001; Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Stringer, 1999). The proposed approach requires intercultural crossovers, inside and outside, and a constant dialogue with alterity to formulate new hypotheses and paths of research and intervention that might enable sharing and community action.

Nomadic subjects define their identity by tracing multiple transformations and ways of belonging according to the place they find themselves in and the references they are attached to; these subjects are open to new displacements and are able to manage contradictions and conflicts in terms of interconnections. They are considered as movable yet at the same time solid subjects, capable of recognizing and placing themselves in new realities by reworking their own affinities without losing sight of the numerous discoveries and knowledge acquired during the whole existential journey (Braidotti, 2011; 2012).

Nomadism requires the leaving of a sedentary style of life and thought, to venture out into the complexity that, as it generates uncertainty, requires orienting oneself towards plural forms of comprehension and thought production. The nomadic subject receives new, multiple, and plural identities, capable of building themselves into the relational logic of the dialogue. Nomadism needs to cross and to live in several spaces, discovering new shapes of community and new ways of migrant identities, able to cast off from known ports and sail along new relational routes (Cadei & Deluigi, 2019).

Performing intercultural dialogue requires interurban and interpersonal explorations in which the person discovers themselves as a nomadic subject interconnected with others and in which they open recompose lines of thought and interpretation that are too often turned onto a single reference reality. The disorientation deriving from this process may be mitigated or accentuated by the encounter with others and by relations with authentically plural and multiform reciprocities. The evanescence and volatility of these dynamics may leave us bewildered as we face the need for linearity and certainty but, on the other hand, only the unexpected and the untried – what goes beyond our immediate comprehension – lead us to cross boundaries and generate collective impact.

The wandering and the journey allow us to search for plural meanings, interconnections, and interdependencies. We must then build, deconstruct, and reconstruct links, relationships, languages, and shared information, designing and implementing practices of cross-border and intercultural revision. It is not an easy task since we must remain balanced and positioned between several dimensions, with the awareness that further uncertainty is being produced. Nevertheless, it is an acceptable risk in order to promote

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^{2 &}quot;Placemaking inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community. Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. More than just promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution." https://www.pps.org/category/placemaking

new opportunities for learning and experience. Becoming travellers, going out to discover relational identities, also means creating wandering narrations that comprise a form of cultural capital in movement (Aime, 2005; Maffessoli, 2000; Marfè, 2012). The encounter between identity, languages, and idioms allows critical, open, and dynamic thoughts to be voiced in a form not previously defined, and for this reason they are revolutionary since they require one to move away from one's own egocentrism and ethnocentrism start up forms of dialogue based on the relational experience (Deluigi, 2016; 2017; 2018.)

The human presence in the urban space assumes countless meanings, and the city contexts can be explored on various levels. The images guiding us while we walk generate suggestions, show us the way to go, and lead us to places for socialization, or they misdirect our search into a continual vortex of interrogatives. When faced with closed gates and half-closed doors, we have to decide whether to erect a border or try to live in frontier spaces, to better understand the transits and changes that we perform daily (Chambers, 2018; Gandolfi, 2018; Giordana, 2018). Standing on the boundary enables us to see different scenarios, and while on the one hand this may generate anxiety, on the other it promotes an opening.

Inter-urban Explorations: Information Surfaces and Meaningful Messages

There are several visual elements that indicate the human presence in the urban sphere. In the TICASS project, we have investigated this presence, more or less persistent, in relation to the forms of interaction made visible by the urban and "human-relational" architecture, and by the traces that remain in some public places. In public places we find different but interconnected architectures. Firstly, there is the actual architecture that is an art at the frontier of the arts since it is threatened with reality (Piano, 2013). With the passing of time, the urban context has to be mended and regenerated, especially if we think of the suburbs, in which the city's planning energy is condensed, and of the dimensions that buildings occupy and leave free (Piano, 2014). Secondly, we find human-relational architecture, the kind that inhabits the urban spaces, that describes the various movements, interactions, communications, and forms of organization that people attribute to the city. The traces of these dynamics are fragmented, informal, and decontextualized beyond the functions systematically attributed to the city.

Various types of time comprising the weave of an urban fabric in constant hybridization are condensed in the use of the space. In particular with reference to the temporary architecture that modifies the uses and functions of urban space, we can easily find a parallel with the human.

relational architecture that describes social networks. According to Ali Madanipour, we can identify

three forms of temporality: instrumental, existential, and experimental. Instrumental temporality is characterized by a utilitarian approach to time, accelerating quantified time for higher productivity and profitability. Existential temporality reflects the intuitive understanding of temporality, the materiality of the city, which mediates this temporality, and the vulnerability and precariousness of the social and natural worlds in the face of globalization. Experimental temporality, meanwhile, is the view of the future, drawing on events as spaces of questioning, experimenting, and innovating. (Madanipour, 2017, pp. 4-5)

The coexistence of different temporalities allows us to analyse urban spaces by combining a variety of perspectives and to develop experiences of discovery and social exploration, generating plural traces of the paths this opens. In this way, numerous meanings and interpretations of contexts emerge, and it is interesting to analyse various forms of permanence and transit in public spaces as relational movements to define some portraits of identity and belonging. Every day we cross the spaces, we take hasty steps within the public sphere, and we trace trajectories that we often cannot remember. In the same way, we move in articulated relational spaces in which we meet people, tighten ties, and start relationships that can persist over time or last just for a while.

of research aimed at describing the relationship between alterities "here and absence become categories on which to reflect and start up paths is inextricably imbricated with the face-to-face" (2008; pp. 22-23). Presence by the contemporary imperative to actively establish social relations horizons are broadened and "relational space is the social space created respect, Scott McQuire describes "the media city" in which the relational that constantly interfere with each other in the modern complexity. In this city are reflected in the fragilities and potentials of the urban and human and resources of each interlocutor. The images and representations of the to start up interdependencies that contain the challenges, fragilities, needs challenge is to learn to come out of ourselves, expanding identity confines up to the borders of urban spaces, towards the suburbs. The greatest by the same human presence, we can cross the thresholds of sociality, functional places based on the human presence and places generated city's relational movements and what is left of them in the exchange between journey and identity displacement? In the perennial weavings between the meanings, describe "other" directions, as well as undertake a migration on the fly' across heterogeneous dimensions in which the global develops thus in a blended space, made up of permanence and connections landscapes that we are able to outline. The human-relational architecture How should we build places in which we leave traces, share

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and "elsewhere," as interconnected elements characterizing nomadic identities.

The challenge of the intercultural approach centres on the need to be configured as subjects immersed in experience, placed in a specific space-time, in which each individual continues to be the guardian and bearer of countless memories and references. Generating opportunities to promote an exchange between cultures with porous boundaries (Amselle, 2010; Hannerz, 1992; Nederveen Pieterse, 2004) means designing new existential and social architectures. The human-urban interdependence allows us to better understand how each subject is represented and configured in the environment – in a spiral of reciprocal redefinition and interconnection. The fluidity of the interactions and the need to redefine oneself in the relational space requires researchers to observe and listen carefully to themselves, to others, and to the context, paying attention to the different codes (known and unknown) that emerge from the experience and outlining interpretative hypotheses aimed at narrating some horizons of meaning.

Imprints and Traces among (im)Permanence and Imperfection

The research experience that gave rise to the reflections contained in this essay was carried out in two cities involved in the TICASS project – Macerata (Italy) and Kilifi (Kenya) – describing experiences of "urban-relational exploration" to narrate various plots of the social fabric defined by images of ways of going through and inhabiting the city in an intercultural key. Below, I will consider the imprints human beings leave on the urban space.

after I had passed. I chose significant places for the research and I occupied TICASS project. in strict interconnection with the experiences created in the context of the metaphorically on the transits, reflecting on the educational wandering to understand what mutual impacts they triggered. Following this, I worked walked over, and inhabited those spaces for brief seconds, walking and trying and then I turned the camera to check if imprints or traces were left behind of Kilifi. For a few seconds I filmed my feet walking on different surfaces of Macerata, and 20 steps on an unpaved road and on one of the beaches recording 20 steps in the corridors of the university and in the old city centre outcomes. To document this activity, I created photographs and short videos was divided into spaces in which I tried to leave imprints with different times and comprising the social and relational fabric. My urban exploration of people – all make the city come alive and give it form, occupying spaces and several relational dimensions. The presence, the transits, the permanence in a city requires human beings to orientate and place themselves withir I have already demonstrated that the presence of several architectures

At this point there are two elements to bear in mind when describing reflection in an intercultural key: permanence and imperfection. If we want to deepen our knowledge of urban-relational space, a first glance is not enough; we must gradually immerse ourselves in the otherness and the alterity. And even then they will remain opaque: we will not be able to understand and classify everything to give an exhaustive definition. The first alterity we must learn to explore is that of ourselves in the field because the introspective glance is essential for understanding the different nuances that comprise our personality and professionalism. Being a researcher is a privileged state for human beings as they have the opportunity to question and interact with their own differences and those of others.

Our knowledge is always partial, as is our point of view that is organized thanks to permanence, so the possibility of exploring new urban-human territories, not denying the cultural roots from which we came but questioning them, making them more plastic, able to make space and accept other perspectives and critical readings, is to our benefit. We need to understand where the borders are located and where the frontiers of habitable spaces are positioned to decide which trespasses we can commit, and which relational positions and research trajectories we assume in a situation in order not to take ownership of reality but to become part of it (Aman, 2018; Andreotti, 2011; Spivak, 1990; 1999).

It is not a matter of invading and colonizing other contexts with one's own categories, or of applying reality models recognized and considered valid, but rather of adopting a critical and imperfect, imprecise and partial knowledge to make room for several contributions. In this way, it is possible to construct a dynamic knowledge of oneself, of the context, and of the others passing through the shared experiential element. In fact, shared experience assumes an extreme relevance in deconstructing stereotyped perspectives, generalizations, and abstractions that create distance between the imagined and the real, converging towards the building of barriers and walls inside which to take refuge or behind which to place "the different" (Fugier & Carrier, 2013).

In the urban explorations I carried out, I focused on imprints as signs in which the synthesis between contact and loss occurs, in a continual dialogue between memory and present and between the ephemeral and the interweaving of heterogeneous temporalities (Didi-Huberman, 2008). With this in mind, I developed some instructive reflections with the intention of narrating the view from which I interpreted the research experiments carried out. Among the various dimensions I considered, an interesting reflection also arises from the distinction between

the imprint [that] is made through the pressure of a body standing still on a surface suitable for receiving the shapes, [and] the trace [that] is produced by a moving body on a similar surface. It is the drag, the wake, the scraping. It signals the acknowledged presence of a body in a place, but during the time it is in movement. The imprint

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is static, the trace is dynamic. Both of them are evidence of passing in a place, but one is a sign of being static, while the other is of having moved there. (Giusti, 2015, pp. 7-8)

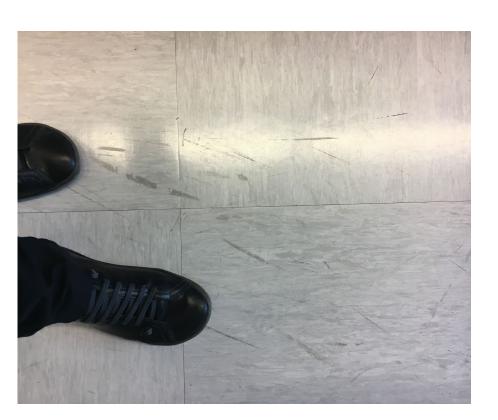
In the various transits carried out between Macerata and Kilifi, in a sort of return journey, we can observe that certain imprints are invisible in concrete reality while others are destined to disappear quickly. In the same way, the traces can dissolve over time since they may have "their own intrinsic impermanence, they are already destined to disappear when they are born" (Giusti, 2015, p. 8). What I am interested in highlighting is the action performed in leaving an imprint and in generating a trace that, even though ephemeral and fragmented, may assume multiple shapes and meanings according to the interaction and the impact between subjects and contexts.

A trace is produced when a material is present [...] [able] to compensate for the transitoriness of the event. [...] Given that the trace retains the ephemeral and holds in the past, its temporal structure has a characteristic deviation compared with that of the event that produces it. (Straus, 2011, pp. 89-91)

These are the wandering deviations that gave rise to the instructive traces shown below.

Grey linoleum: a smooth, uniform, clean, and well-lit surface without interruptions, unexpected snags, or deviations; showing linear trajectories and guided directions. I walk easily over this surface and I do not leave imprints. A few fragmented marks may be imprinted, which lose their shape with the passing of time and make the cold neon lights opaque only when there is strong pressure. Otherwise, everything slides away into the homogeneity and obscurity of repetitions of the already familiar, the known, infinitely reproducing the same structures of thought and action in which we are placed or find refuge.

Repetition requires no creativity. It sticks to the superstructures that deaden the sounds of the steps. When walking quickly over this surface, I do not cause or perceive any variation and I am content with the ease with which straight-line paths can be envisaged, described, and represented.



II. 1 Rosita Deluigi, *University of Macerata: Linear corridors* (*Macerata, 19 November 2018, 1.32 pm*)



II. 2 Rosita Deluigi *Old city centre: Temporal-spatial collocations* (Macerata, 21 November 2018. 8.22 am)

Traditional paving: historic surfaces, reminding us of the specific nature of the place and its evolution over time; stones and building materials blend to comprise or even support the surface on which to walk. The geometric quality of the surface makes way for the heterogeneous nature of the dimensions of the stones and the colour shades, which, although aimed at creating harmony, enable the coexistence of different nuances.

I walk more uncertainly here, paying attention to my steps and intercepting the lack of homogeneity and elements hindering the linearity. There are slight height differences and the imprints left by the passing of people are small items of refuse, placed silently in the cracks, waiting to be removed. Looking back and upwards, I find myself in a historical-geographical place but on the ground there is still no sign that I have passed, although the effort has been great. The feeling that emerges is of being located in a specific reality.



II. 3 Rosita Deluigi, **Sandyroad: Unsteady climb** (Kilifi, 1 December 2018, 10.43 am)

Red earth: sandy surfaces studded with imprints of nature and human tracks; traces and precarious elements destined to disappear and to change collocation with every gust of wind. This dirt road connects Kilificity to the hinterland where rural villages and built-up areas with traditional houses spread out. There are many imprints that can be seen before I even start walking. They are of different shapes and sizes, and they lead to different directions. They are sometimes imprints of shoes, sometimes of bare feet, which reminds us of the need to be in contact with the land.

I start my walk calmly, passing from the shade to the sunlight, intercepting the sounds, noises and voices of a public space that is continually transforming. My feet raise dust, and sand remains trapped between my toes. As I go on, the surface becomes more and more unstable and it is not easy to walk, leaving imprints between those that are already there. This road is an intersection of traces of human beings, cars, and motorbikes that give it shape and volume. Traces of people are not destined to last over time in the urban space but they take on a value of permanence in the memory of the experience and the plans of the person carrying out the walk.

Symbols and meanings of multiple trajectories blend and design

Symbols and meanings of multiple trajectories blend and design a plastic, temporary architecture.

Grainy sand: warm surface comprising millions of grains that move and change place continually; a wet beach on which the sea, the wind, and the sky leave small gifts, leaving residues that make it imperfect to the person who seeks smooth compactness. As I walk, I make a noise, shifting some of the ground and holding it under my bare feet. Alongside is the lapping of the sea. The land keeps the memory of my passage while I hold the places in my memory. In this case too, the landscape created is temporary but the weight of the experience gained is not.

Both surfaces change as they touch each other: my feet and the beach have no filters; there is no mediation except for that of the encounter that modifies the shape of both, expanding the space of the exchange. It is a mutual crossing in which a link and an interdependence requiring effort and plasticity are built. A continual movement that transforms and requires an attitude that is open to possibility.



II. 4 Rosita Deluigi, Mazingira: Weights and residues of the encounter (Kilifi, 2 December 2018, 1.00 pm)

Crossing Unprecedented States

Exploring different places allowed me to shed light on various intercultural meeting-points thanks to the progressive direct contact with the ground, which became more and more destructured. From closed shoes to bare feet, the distances shortened, the barriers weakened, and the frontiers became more porous, leaving residues of the experience gained.

Sometimes the impact of the differences is so strong that we may not have time to build plastic perspectives and this requires a full immersion in what seems distant, divergent, and conflictual. It is also possible to leave, not unscathed, these transits and crossings, and this is a risk that the intercultural approach must assume.

What balances must be broken to generate the encounter? What shifts do we make, what borders do we recognize and decide, not without fear, to cross? Being in a situation and starting a complex dialogue requires taking some steps, choosing and deciding to make crossings, seeking the reciprocity of the other or accepting the other's invitation to dialogue. The time of the experience plays a fundamental role as each seeks their own place before one is assigned that does not correspond.

Episodes are not enough; it is necessary to project oneself into continuity. At the same time, we can gather fragments of experience and echoes of reflection that trace subtle and imperceptible lines of crossing. Lines that can be broken, not continuous, articulated, made up of different parts, built with different materials. Between the urban-human space there are thresholds, between the inside and the outside, between what has already happened and the unpredictable, between the known and the unknown, between what I identify with and what appears different, between how others identify me and how I identify myself in them.

In these transits, on these curved and broken trajectories, there are contacts and encounters between alterities that leave their mark, trace, and imprint, which can testify that something has changed. How do you really examine this in depth? How do you generate an impact that lasts over time, that transforms and generates shared projects in which everyone must move from their focus to realize new ideas?

The desire and effort of the encounter require commitment dialogue on equal terms, deconstruction of pre-established categories and stereotypes, to make room for what is not known, in terms of form and substance. Even though the traces of reciprocity are fragile and ephemeral the weight of the impact left and received will be large and dense, beyond the current space-time, towards the possible unprecedented state of the [impermanence of life.

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